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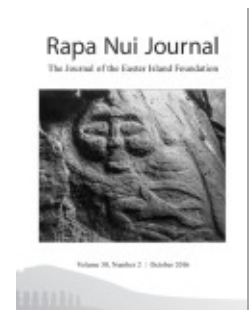
## Remembering Georgia Lee

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# Remembering Georgia Lee

Georgia Lee passed away in her home on July 9 2016 after a brief illness. By her side was her granddaughter Rachel Lee and Cynthia Morin, daughter of Georgia's lifelong partner, Frank. Georgia was loved and respected by many people. She inspired us with her sense of humor, intellect, work ethic, and knowledge. Georgia will be deeply missed by her family, friends, and colleagues.

Georgia was born in Alameda, CA, and lived in Orinda for most of her childhood. She married Charles Fleshman in 1947 and they lived in Fresno. They had three children: Stephen, Wendy, and Stacey.

Georgia received her Associate of Arts degree from Stephens College in Columbia, MO, in 1945. In 1948, she graduated from the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland with a Bachelor's degree in art and a teaching credential.

Later in life, at age 45, Georgia decided to go back to school, proving that it's never too late to follow your dreams. In 1978 she received her MA in art history from the University of California, Santa Barbara. In 1986 she received her Ph.D. in archaeology from the University of California, Los Angeles, with her thesis on the rock art of Easter Island. When asked what she would do with a Ph.D. in archaeology, she replied "there's always room at the top!"

Georgia's Ph.D. was based on six years of fieldwork on Easter Island and culminated in the publication of her classic book, *The Rock Art of Easter Island: Symbols of Power, Prayers to the Gods*, which presents the first comprehensive documentation of thousands of petroglyphs and rock paintings found on the island. Georgia began her fieldwork on Easter Island in 1981, entering into close relationships with the islanders, both men and women. In her 2006 book, *Rapa Nui, Island of Memory*, she describes her relationships with the Rapanui people, weaving strands of communal tales together. She also wrote the first guidebook to the island, *An Uncommon Guide to Easter Island*, in 1989, a time when tourists were not common. Much of Georgia's work on Easter Island and in Hawai'i was implemented by University Research Expeditions through the University of California, Berkeley. Always an artist, Georgia sketched and painted the many places she visited and worked at during her lifetime.

In addition to her work on Easter Island, Georgia undertook extensive archaeological work in Hawai'i, leading several projects to document the rock art of the Hawaiian Islands. Her seminal book, *Spirit of Place, Petroglyphs of Hawaii*, has been reprinted several times and continues to be a popular book to this day.



Photograph courtesy of Sheila Hollingshead.

Georgia's extensive research in California included the study and documentation of Chumash and other rock art sites in Central California. She wrote the children's book, *A Day with a Chumash*, as well as the classic publications *The Portable Cosmos: Effigies, Ornaments, and Incised Stones from the Chumash Area* and *The Chumash Cosmos*.

Georgia was a founding member of the Easter Island Foundation, established in 1981, whose mission was to build a research library on Easter Island in addition to promoting awareness of the island's fragile cultural heritage. Under her guidance, the Foundation has supported the creation of the William Mulloy Library at the Museo Antropológico P. Sebastián Englert, established a scholarship program for university students of Rapanui ancestry, provided grants for research projects on Easter Island, and sponsored international symposia about Easter Island and the Pacific. She initiated the Easter Island Foundation's publishing program and was the founding editor of the *Rapa Nui Journal*, which began publication in 1986.

In 1985 Georgia met Frank Morin. Frank, a retired physicist, would become her lifelong partner and collaborator. He accompanied Georgia on field excursions throughout many parts of Polynesia and California, surveying and mapping the sites she documented. They also worked together as a team on many of the Easter Island Foundation's book publications and the *Rapa Nui Journal*; Georgia as the writer and editor and Frank as the designer and setup person. They were rarely apart, and had many wonderful adventures during their time and travels together. Frank passed away in 2012 and left a huge void in Georgia's life.

Georgia was featured in Sky Bergman's 2015 documentary, *Lives Well Lived*, which tells the life stories and philosophies of 40 elders and captures their ideals and ideas. When asked to define a life well lived, Georgia replied, "I think doing something you love, contributing to something. I've always felt you need to sit loosely in the saddle of life as you go down that long trail."

Georgia inspired many people who she met along the path of her life, several who went on to become archaeologists themselves. She made an impression on

everyone she met. She was always ready to help and share information with anyone who contacted her with a request. She had friends all over the world and many that she knew via email, which was her preferred daily method of communication.

Georgia's collection of modern replicas of ancient Rapanui wooden carvings was donated to the Burke Museum in Seattle, Washington; her extensive Easter Island slide collection is housed at the Bancroft Library at U.C. Berkeley and at the Museo Antropológico P. Sebastián Englert on Easter Island, and her Chumash materials have been donated to the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, where she was a Research Associate for many years.

Georgia is survived by her children Wendy Lee and Stacey Osborne; grandchildren Rachel Lee, Jeremiah Specker, Joshua Jeschien, Brent Fleshman, Kevin Fleshman, Stephanie Kinley, Megan Hylland, Peter Osborne and Zachary Osborne; great grandchildren Cassidy Meehan, Kai and Juliana Specker, Caitlyn and Evan Kinley, Eli and Aliya Fleshman, Maren, Anika and Elsa Osborne, and Jacob and Nicholas Hylland, as well as nieces and nephews and their children, all of whom she was very fond.

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### *For Georgia Lee, with admiration and friendship*

Paul G. Bahn

In 1986 I published a paper on vulvas in Ice Age art, entitled "No Sex, Please, we're Aurignacians" in the Australian journal *Rock Art Research* 3(2):99-105). As is normal in that journal, it was followed by comments from a number of other specialists, and then my response to them (Reply: "Cherchez la Femme". *Rock Art Research* 3(2):116-20). The following year the journal received a comment on my paper from Georgia (Further comment [on Bahn 1986]. *Rock Art Research* 4(1):51-54). At that time I knew little of her or her work, but the tone of her comment came as a great and pleasant surprise. In particular, her sentence that the "Great Vulva Debate" had until then been a purely male-oriented exercise, and that she would "like to inject some seminal data from Polynesia" showed me that she had a tremendous and somewhat bawdy sense of humor. I therefore replied in the same vein (Reply to Georgia Lee. *Rock Art Research* 4(1):54-5), thanking her for this "probing analysis" of the carved

vulvae of Easter Island, mentioning Orongo's "littoral clitoral displays, and artists beaver away at engraved portraits of the island's finest"! Georgia loved my reply, and this was the start of a deep and lasting 30-year correspondence and friendship which meant a great deal to me. We subsequently met many times, and she was always a warm and welcoming hostess at her home, and enormously generous with her knowledge and contacts. She even gave me a modern *moai kavakava*, which I treasure. I greatly admired her creation of the Easter Island Foundation and of this journal, and was very proud when I was invited to be a member of its editorial board. It is my fervent hope that her invaluable creations will not be allowed to disappear along with their maker. Be that as it may, Georgia's wonderful work on the island's rock art, along with her many other books and papers, and the 30 volumes of this journal, will always stand as a monument to her profound love of Rapa Nui, its people, and its past.

## A memory of Georgia and Frank

Mike Chamberlain

One of my fondest memories of Georgia was watching her and her life partner, Frank Morin, sitting in their downstairs office working on the *Rapa Nui Journal*. Georgia would be sitting on one side of the sliding glass door with the morning sunlight streaming in, reviewing and editing papers. Frank would sit at his computer on the other side, formatting papers and artwork. Sometimes they would sit there without speaking for hours, content knowing they were in each other's company.

Occasionally something might come up in their work that would get Georgia stirred up. Then they'd go upstairs and have their morning cup of tea. They'd talk about what had happened, and Frank would find some way to poke fun at it. Soon they would both be laughing. Then they would finish their cup of tea, head back to the office, happily back at work and all was right with their world.



Georgia with colleagues at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History. Photograph courtesy of Mike Chamberlain.

## In memory of Georgia Lee

Paul Horley

Great people are instantly recognizable by their immense and interminable capacity for doing things on a monumental scale, inspiring others and leading to considerable progress in the field. Georgia Lee was a wonderful example of this; her never-ending enthusiasm and interest in Rapa Nui culture and history was truly captivating. Since the beginning of the Easter Island Petroglyph Documentation Project, she generously shared this joy of working and learning new things with other people, including numerous volunteers helping her during field seasons, her fellow scientists working on the island in the good-old 1980s, and many other people who later read her books. Georgia's love for the island and the Rapanui people was deep and life-lasting; every page of her heart-warming book *Rapa Nui, Island of Memory* is literally soaked with love, care, and nostalgia.

As a scientist, Georgia offered us a strong example of how to do the things right. Her dedication to her work was truly remarkable. The readers of the classic book *Rock Art of Easter Island* know and enjoy about 200 drawings documenting individual motifs and entire panels in minute detail. What not so many people know, however, is that these carefully selected drawings represent the proverbial "tip of an iceberg"; the total number of working sketches in the archives of

Georgia Lee easily approaches 500. These numerous Mylar sheets, traced by Georgia's sure hand, carefully scrutinize petroglyph details as well as adjusting the mutual position of boulder faces to compose the optimal representation of a three-dimensional monument on a flat page. Such attention to quality was a key factor making Georgia's book a standard reference on Easter Island rock art. To understand the true scale of her project, it is worth recalling that the number of individual motifs documented on Rapa Nui approaches 4,000, with over 4,600 cup-shaped depressions (cupules) completing the record. Such an extensive project was very impressive by itself – yet tireless scientific talent called Georgia Lee to work in the Hawaiian Islands, where she marked another milestone, completing (in co-authorship with Edward Stasack), a similar reference volume on petroglyphs of Hawai'i that documents over 12,000 individual motifs and more than 17,000 cupules.

Georgia's attention to detail was not limited to drawings; all people who communicated with her clearly remember her unmatched ability to recall a discussion carried out months ago, suggesting new possible ways to solve a long-standing problem. This erudition in all things Rapanui was instrumental for another project: the *Rapa Nui Journal*. Starting from a modest four-page



publication called *Rapa Nui Notes* in 1986, it grew into a full-fledged peer-reviewed journal of international circulation, reaching a hundred pages per issue in the 2010s – the important and beloved stage for academic discussions about Easter Island in particular and Polynesia in general. The brilliant organizing talents of Georgia Lee got their full implementation in 1989, when the Easter Island Foundation was established. Since then, the Foundation has participated in and accomplished many important projects such as the establishment of the Biblioteca William Mulloy at the Museo Antropológico Padre Sebastián Englert (Hanga Roa), the creation of the Scholarship Program for providing funding for young promising Rapanui students, the organization of

scientific conferences dedicated to the island, and the publication of numerous books.

Georgia's extraordinary social skills established many long-lasting friendships. It was such a pleasure to see her arriving to the Easter Island and Pacific Conferences – as soon as Georgia entered the room, she was immediately surrounded by people, everybody happy and smiling.

Georgia Lee was a great scholar, superb teacher, tireless organizer, great enthusiast, and very kind person. She generously helped all of us with her timely advice, her patient attention, and her sparkling humor. She will be living forever in our hearts, surrounded with warm memories and a deep feeling of gratitude.



Georgia with Jan Boersema at the 8th International Conference on Easter Island and the Pacific in Santa Rosa, CA, 2012. Photograph courtesy of Paul Horley.



Kay Sanger, Georgia and Marla Wold in Los Osos. Photograph courtesy of Tom Sanger.

## Remembering Georgia Lee

William Hyder

"You need to meet Georgia Lee."

Mark Oliver and I were sharing our slides of the few Chumash rock art sites we had managed to find with friends studying archaeology at the University of California, Santa Barbara when I first heard her name.

"Georgia is an expert on rock art and we think she would like your pictures."

That was forty years ago. We were introduced to Georgia and she invited us to her home to present our slide show. I know that many ARARA (American Rock Art Research Association) members and rock art enthusiasts shared a similar experience. Georgia welcomed so many of us into her world and encouraged us to develop our own interests in prehistoric art. My evening with Georgia changed my life. She became my mentor, my friend, my co-author, and my business

partner in our consulting enterprise. Now her spirit walks with me as I continue to explore the mysteries left by long-forgotten artists in the wilderness.

Georgia had begun establishing her credentials by the time we met in 1977. She had published a paper on Chumash cupule rocks, and Travis Hudson encouraged her to explore the use of Chumash myths recorded by J.P. Harrington to interpret selected rock art sites. She was putting the finishing touches on her MA thesis in art history at the University of California, Santa Barbara. She worked with Daniel McCarthy to record the rock art of the Sierra Madre Ridge in Santa Barbara County and the rock art of the Stanislaus River before the sites were inundated by the waters of the New Melones Dam.

Between 1978 and 1985, Georgia authored and co-authored a number of papers based on her research

in the 1970s. Her 1997 “Chumash Mythology in Paint and Stone” (*Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 13(3):1-14) had opened the door to interpreting Chumash rock art. Writing in 1979 with Travis Hudson and Ken Hedges, “Solstice Observers and Observatories in Native California” (*Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 1(1):39-63), she helped popularize the interest in archaeoastronomy that swept rock art studies in the 1980s. She and Travis Hudson opened another door to the study of shamans and ritual with their 1984 paper “Function and Symbolism in Chumash Rock Art” (*Journal of New World Archaeology* 6(3):26-47).

Looking back, I am astonished by her discipline and capacity for work. Georgia led a recording project in the Carrizo Plain including the famous Painted Rock. I visited one day and heard about how the work was hot and the living conditions and food less than ideal. Georgia later related that someone suggested that they could be working someplace exotic, like Easter Island!

In 1982, Mark and I met Georgia on Easter Island and spent the next few weeks photographing rock art to support her dissertation research. Georgia had already moved to Los Angeles to start her doctoral work in archaeology at University of California, Los Angeles. I rented her Santa Barbara house, and it became my family home until I moved to Santa Cruz in 1990.

Georgia fell in love with Easter Island (Rapa Nui) and its people, and we found her love addicting during our stay with her host, Edmundo Edwards. Evenings were spent around a table in the dining cottage listening to stories of the past, marveling at the “eye” of a *moai* used as a table decoration until its real significance was

recognized, and enjoying the conversations reliving the day’s adventures. Many days were spent waiting for El Niño rains to pass before we could make our way to the sites we wanted to photograph. I distinctly remember a horseback ride to a remote part of the northwest corner of the island and Georgia reminding us how the homemade wooden saddles left us with bruised butts. Also, a flight over the island in the Chilean sea rescue plane, in order for us to take aerial photographs, resulted in everyone talking about the plane buzzing the governor’s house before landing.

Georgia met Frank Morin in 1985 in time to celebrate the receipt of her PhD in 1986. They became inseparable, and further adventures with Georgia became adventures with Frank as well. Her work on Easter Island led to the 1992 publication of her dissertation, *The Rock Art of Easter Island: Symbols of Power, Prayers to the Gods* (Monumenta Archaeologica Volume 17, The Institute of Archaeology, University of California, Los Angeles). In the fashion of Georgia’s dedication to her academic interests, she encouraged others to work on the island, founded the Easter Island Foundation, and published and edited the *Rapa Nui Journal*. Through the foundation, Georgia was able to create a research library on the island and fund scholarships for island students to attend mainland universities.

In 1992, Georgia and I formed a business together, called United Rock Art Consultants. We secured grants to record Modoc rock art at Lava Beds National Monument and Chumash rock art at Vandenberg Air Force Base. We also received a grant to evaluate and recommend management priorities for the California State Parks.



Georgia with Frank and Rachel in Italy. Photograph courtesy of Mike Chamberlain.

Georgia, with Frank by her side, undertook a project to record the rock art of the Hawaiian Islands after her work on Easter Island. That led to her 1999 landmark book written with Edward Stasack, *Spirit of Place: Petroglyphs of Hawai'i* (Easter Island Foundation). I did not have the opportunity to work on her Hawai'i project, but I did have the opportunity to travel to Hawai'i with Georgia and Frank as part of an Internet educational project. This was their last trip to the islands because Frank was having difficulty negotiating the uneven volcanic surfaces. My daughter was with me, and we were honored to visit the sites with them as they shared their love of the rock art with us. My daughter fell in love with Frank, who entertained her as if she were his own granddaughter.

In 2009, Frank and Georgia travelled with my wife, Debbie, and me to the ARARA conference in Bakersfield, CA. We went to the Carrizo Plain for their last visit. Frank and Debbie laughed when I pointed out the rundown California Valley Hotel and identified it as the first hotel Georgia had taken me to. Across the road was the abandoned cafe where the idea for the Easter Island project was born.

Frank and Georgia were as important in Debbie's life as they were in mine. They were guests at our wedding, and we visited them often over the years. One visit was not long before Frank passed away. Frank was the cook in their partnership, so Debbie and I proposed that we make dinner for them. It was a grand meal of filet mignon with mushroom sauce, roasted potatoes, Caesar salad, one of Frank's fine wines, and a dessert. When we were finished, Georgia complained that we had made too much as there were sufficient leftovers for another meal. Frank just looked at us and smiled,

because we all knew that Georgia much preferred food for thought to food for the body.

Georgia and I collaborated on one last project, "Chumash Paintings on Stone," an overview article for the 2015 School for Advanced Research publication, *First Coastal Californians*, edited by Lynn H. Gamble. It took a couple of years for the publication to make it through the drafting and editing stages, and Georgia wrote me every few months to find out the status. She was afraid she would not live to see it in print. I was elated when the book arrived and knew she was enjoying holding it in her hands.

Georgia's vita includes over one hundred books, edited volumes, articles, agency reports, and manuscripts. A few cover topics other than rock art and may not be known to the ARARA community, but all grew out of her love for prehistoric art.

Debbie and I were fortunate to be able to visit Georgia two days before she passed away. We spent a few hours sitting with her, taking turns holding her hand, and talking to her about the good times we had shared. She slept most of the time, but when I mentioned ARARA and talked about her many friends in rock art, she would open her eyes and look at us. While she never said anything, it was obvious that she was responding to wonderful memories. We made the drive home in silence, happy that Georgia was at peace and ready for her next adventure.

Georgia left us on July 9th. Since then, I have heard from many in the rock art community asking about Georgia and sharing a similar story. "She took me under her wing; she encouraged me in my own studies; she was my friend; she stirred my soul through her passion for rock art."

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William Liller, Viña de Mar

When I first heard that Georgia had passed away, I was utterly devastated. I knew that Georgia was not doing too well, but still...

We first met over 30 years ago, on Easter Island, and have been almost like sister and brother ever since. She, her beloved Frank and my dear late Matty, now all departed, shared homes, working rentals and vacation villas in Tuscany, Burgundy, Kauai, and of course Easter Island, times I'll never, ever forget. My current love, Gabriela, likewise a grand admirer of Georgia; soon adopted some of Pete's mannerisms including her frequent pause-word, "Anyway..."

A few people know that when I was a small child, my father nicknamed me "Iggy" because of his admiration for the Polish pianist / president Ignatz Paderewski, and when Georgia, much amused, heard

this, she thereafter always called me that—or simply "Ig". Similarly, she was "Pete" to me. That was her father's nickname for her; he always wanted a son.

I learned in 2000 that I needed to have some major, though routine, surgery (aorta aneurism), and Georgia, a bit skeptical of Chilean surgical procedures, reacted in a manner that was typically swift and blunt: "Ig, you get the hell up here." And so Matty and I moved in with Pete and Frank and following my totally successful surgery, we remained with them for several weeks before I was allowed to travel back to Chile. A happy consequence of a somewhat worrisome fortnight and yet another example of Georgia's limitless generosity.

From down here in Chile, Gaby and I wish you a peaceful and well-deserved rest, Pete.

Mary Dell Lucas

In 1985 I drove from Marin County to Santa Cruz because I had learned of a talk at the university on Easter Island. I had never heard of Dr. Georgia Lee, but was interested in hearing about the island. Georgia's presentation was told with such wit and humor that, afterwards, I was the first one up to the stage to speak with her. 'Let's do a tour to Easter Island', I asked her. She, for some crazy reason, agreed! My business was barely two years old and the fax machine wasn't in use yet so I had to use letters and phone calls. I had no idea how to put together this tour, but Georgia helped me by telling me about Rosita Cardinali and Rosita agreed (after a bunch of phone calls) to put the first group into her little hotel, and since there wasn't enough room there, she put me in her house. And somehow we found the owner of the only large vehicle (a station wagon from the 1960s) who agreed

to drive us around. The most amazing thing was that 7-8 people gave me money for the tour, and we were off! That first tour was riotously funny, not just because of Georgia's outrageous stories about the island, but for so many reasons. One of the participants was a bit crazy (we borrowed a dog for her to hold which calmed her down – as Georgia would say, you can't make this stuff up!), the old vehicle was not very comfortable, we had fresh tuna almost every night for dinner (and Rosita apologized, not realizing that our little group was in heaven). Georgia and I definitely bonded during that trip. Over the years, Georgia was to become much more than a cherished friend. She was a mentor to me and was consistently supportive of what I was trying to do with Far Horizons. I will greatly miss her, especially her intelligence and ability to see the humor in all situations. She was a one of a kind!

## Remembering Georgia

Grant McCall, Sydney, Australia

Our friendship was based on two firm pillars: Rapanui and fondness for red wine.

I can include her life partner, Frank, in that friendship also.

Georgia and I met at the Rapanui and Eastern Pacific conferences that have run from 1984 and there we would exchange thoughts and ideas about our research.

We respected one another's investigations. If I had a question on rock art, I would consult her. If she on social anthropology or history, I would get an email from her. I did some reviewing of RNJ manuscripts also.

But also we traded thoughts and experiences about our personal knowledge of the world's most remote inhabited place, Rapanui.

Georgia was different from some of her other colleagues in that she had a real affection for the island's people as individuals and friends. She could be critical of some of her Islander friends, but that was based on warm friendship and deep respect.

*The Rapa Nui Journal* began as an enthusiastic Newsletter recounting visitor encounters with *moai* in various outlandish places, but also serious thoughts by serious people about Rapanui, its absorbing past, fascinating present and intriguing future.

There were the passionate amateurs who seized on an area of interest and pursued it to its extreme detail. These stories often had insights that the more discipline restrained had not picked up. Georgia had seen the value and, so, published the piece.

Owing to Georgia's enthusiasm as editor of the

RN, professionals began to take an interest as well, until the RN became the RNJ, a fully professional and refereed publication where the latest authoritative research on the island could be found.

There is no other publication like it in the Pacific Islands, especially as it encouraged Islanders themselves to develop professional interests in Rapanui studies.

The Easter Island Foundation scholarships fostered that goal as well, resulting in many Rapanui who have the qualifications to take their island confidently into the future.

This mix gave the RNJ the richness that so demonstrated Georgia's inquiring personality and wide interests.

Reading an RNJ was like having an extended conversation with her, with references.

There should be a biography on the writing of Georgia Lee as she certainly merits one.

My little contribution is my goodbye to a special colleague and friend whose legacy will be felt for many years in the professions she touched and on the island she loved, Rapanui, Tepitootehenua.

I think that Georgia would have been pleased to see that in August of this year a Rapanui entity, "Ma'u Henua Comunidad Indigena", has become part of the co-administration of the Parque Rapa Nui, that most people would know as CONAF.

Georgia had her reservations, but in general supported self-determination for the Islanders.

I and many others will miss Georgia Lee: Vale Georgia!





Georgia hiking with Chris Ryan in the Guadalupe Dunes, at the site where *The Ten Commandments* was filmed. Photograph courtesy of Jon Picciuolo.



Grant McCall, Atholl Anderson and Georgia at the VII International Conference on Easter Island and the Pacific in Gotland, Sweden. Photograph courtesy of Paul Horley.

## A letter to Georgia

Mark Oliver

I first met you in your living room in San Roque in Santa Barbara in 1978. I remember how astonished you were when Bill Hyder and I showed up with our Kodachrome slides of all these unlisted Chumash rock art sites in the Santa Ynez Mountains. You could not figure out how we had found them. But the truth is we had triangulated Campbell Grant's crude map from his seminal book onto a topo map and found them fairly easily. We overcame your skepticism that evening and you threw open the doors to all the Chumash sites you knew. Joan Seaver Kurze was there, too. After that, I was hooked on rock art, hard.

In 1982 you invited Bill and myself to be the photographers for your second trip to Easter Island. We purchased about 500 rolls of Kodachrome 25, packed tripods, cameras, and the assorted gear necessary for an expedition to an island that at that time lacked all but the basic necessities and flew for hours on LAN Chile to the Mataverí Airport in the middle of the Pacific. You greeted us in a grizzled Land Rover held together by wire and hope. We set off for the house you'd rented in the middle of Hanga Roa, a one room concrete block bunker glued together with mortar made of sea sand oozing salty moisture, lit by a single 25-watt bulb. We were simply stunned.

Edmundo Edwards was with us and seizing on the frozen looks on our faces offered refuge at his compound, a few miles away on the northern outskirts of town not far from the cemetery and Ahu Tahai. It took no convincing Bill and I, though you took a bit more. But the compound turned out to be a great

find, though the nightly parties and pisco were not so conducive to the work to be done: we didn't get many early starts. But we did do the work and we shot more than 15,000 photos while there, forming a solid base for research for decades to come.

I'll never forget shooting at 'Orongo. Aside from precariously perching our tripods on petroglyph covered basalt boulders on the edge of the cliff with you repeatedly reminding us you wouldn't be liable if we fell off the cliff, most vividly I remember crawling on hands, knees, and belly into the stone masonry ceremonial houses of Mata Ngarau. Some did not seem to have been entered in a long time, and through the cobwebs and dark we made out amazing figures carved on stones that made up the interior walls, looking ever so much like *rongorongo* script. Hauling all our gear inside the tiny rooms barely 3-4 feet high, we were able to shoot the dramatic figures looming out of the walls and gloom, a striking memory that has never left me.

Lots of folks came and went (like me), but you were the stable rock, researching and writing papers that inspired so many other to do the same. Founding the Easter Island Foundation and writing and publishing the *Rapa Nui Journal* was an insane thing to do and insane amount of work but absolutely the right thing to do. I have no idea how you did it, but you persevered and succeeded magnificently.

I will never forget our time together. It was a crazy, improbable, wonderful adventure, and I thank you for taking me with you.

## Georgia Lee

Kay Kenady Sanger

Georgia Lee left a legacy of scholarship, publications, and philanthropy that touched people across the globe. She began her professional life as an artist in Central California, earned her PhD in archaeology at UCLA, went to Easter Island to record its rock art and made a deep impression on everyone she met along the way.

Georgia will be remembered best by her friends for her ability to tell a good story with humor, especially when it revealed her own foibles. Whether it was a tale about her naiveté when she started working on Easter Island or her recent story about finally getting a “friggin” hearing aid at age 90 because she missed hearing a compliment from a young “fox” of an oncologist during an examination, her self-effacing humor endeared her to all.

I first met Georgia in 1977 when as a UCLA archaeology student I volunteered to help her set up the new Rock Art Archive, where she served as the first director. I was drawn to her because of her enthusiasm for archaeology and rock art, and her generous willingness to mentor me as I began my studies. During the next few years I helped her draw and photograph ancient art at archaeological sites in the Southwest, and served as her project manager while recording the pictographs at Painted Rock on California’s Carrizo Plain.

When Georgia began her documentation project on Easter Island in the early 1980s, I was among her many helpers. The task she assigned herself, to record all of the island’s 4,000 petroglyphs, was a formidable one and although it took her nearly 10 years, she did it with characteristic thoroughness, persistence, and

humor. She brought more than 100 volunteers to the island to work with her for periods of about one month at a time, through the University Research Expeditions Program. She inspired us all to appreciate the island’s rich traditions and unique culture. Best of all, she infused our work at a variety of island sites with a sense of adventure and fun.

I learned quickly that she had great stamina and an unrelenting mission to record even the most remote petroglyph panels when we began our work at Hau Koka, at the bottom of the Rano Kao crater. A zig zag trail of loose scree led down from the west side of the crater’s rim to the lake below. One wrong step could cause a slip, sending us and our recording materials bouncing down the slope. It was easiest just to slide down on the long grass, trying to avoid jutting rocks along the way. At the end of the day we needed to claw our way back up, grasping fistfuls of grass and scrambling on our knees with our hearts beating in our throats. To Georgia though, it was well worth the trouble.

“Despite the wretched and torturous hike up and down the crater’s slopes to reach Hau Koka, the site was exhilarating, one of the highlights of my project,” she wrote. “There are no petroglyphs elsewhere in Polynesia that can equal these designs.” She recorded this site over the course of a year, having each recording crew work on the project for only one or two days during the time they were on the island, so the difficult work was spread among many people. After we worked there, she ordered extra beer and fresh empanadas prepared by our Chilean cook to reward us when we returned to the *pension* compound.



Georgia with José Miguel Ramírez Aliaga at the VI International Conference on Easter Island and the Pacific in Viña del Mar, Chile. Photograph courtesy of José Miguel Ramírez Aliaga.



Georgia with a friend on Rapa Nui in the eighties. Photograph courtesy of Kay Sanger.

Georgia admitted that she had vertigo and lost sleep when we worked to record the exquisite bas-relief carvings of Birdmen at 'Orongo. "I would toss and turn at night, reliving the day's events, having nightmares about someone falling 1,000 feet down the ocean-side cliff to their death." Still, she wanted to record every petroglyph in that sacred region, so she admonished us to be careful, but also enthused us with a sense of purpose and adventure.

One evening Georgia took a small group of us in an aging Land Rover known as the "African Queen" over rough dirt roads to a remote rock art site on the northeast coast, now known as "Papa Vaka." The petroglyphs were eroding on the surface of the flat volcanic lava rocks (*papa*) so they were hard to see in direct sunlight. She decided the best way to document the complex, overlapping designs was to do it at night, using light from a Coleman lantern shining obliquely across the grooves. Then we could see to the images on the black rock and paint them with a white mixture of flour and water before we drew them on graph paper. Under a canopy of more stars than we thought possible, we worked for several hours, painstakingly tracing the shadowed grooves with paint brushes dipped in the flour mixture. At midnight, we finally finished our painting task, which had taken about three hours. We were preparing to draw the panels on graph paper when clouds suddenly rolled in and a deluge poured down on us, washing away all our work. "It must be the Aku Aku spirits," she said, referring to the supernatural Rapanui spirits of the dead. Then all she could do was laugh, and we took our cue from her as we merrily bounced back to Hanga Roa in the rain.

For Georgia, it was all part of the experience of life on Rapa Nui. She wrote to me once about her time of living on the island in the 1980s before I went there: "Time moves slowly here. A flight from Santiago might arrive once a week ...or not. The island stores often run out of basic supplies like propane so one resorts to cooking on an open fire. Occasionally the supply ship fails to arrive – or worse, sinks on its way to the island with all cargo lost. The islanders take it all in stride. As for those of us from the 'outside,' we have learned to roll with the situation as there is no point in stressing over things that can't be remedied."

As Georgia stayed on the island for longer periods of time each year, she became more and more involved with the people there. Everywhere she went she made friends. She asked each of her volunteers to bring suitcases full of children's clothes and household items such as mirrors and can openers when we flew to the island to work with her.

Georgia was a keen observer of the Rapanui people and the way they negotiated the confluence of their traditional beliefs and Western ideas brought in by outsiders. She always went to the Catholic church

on Sundays where she could mingle and talk with the people who congregated outside after the service. She delighted in seeing the sanctuary's new wooden statues, carved by islanders over a period of several years, that depicted Christian saints wearing robes and crowns decorated with Birdmen and *rongorongo* figures.

One colorful individual she became acquainted with was Ana Lola, whom Georgia referred to as a force – "una fuerza!" She was a former leper-colony resident, then living on her own with medication. Georgia wrote to me once that she had observed Ana Lola walking by the *pension* every night for months. "As she walked by I could hear her clicking her Catholic rosary beads. When I asked her why she was praying, she told me it was to ward off the dreaded Aku Aku spirits." Another island friend, Lucia Riroroko, opened a guest house that she named for Georgia: "Mahina Taka Taka Georgia Residencial."

Georgia's many friends and acquaintances in the U.S. who had once come to Easter Island or who wanted to know more about it wrote to her, and she found herself writing letters about her experiences over and over again. After a few years, she grew weary of the repetition. She reported, "So many have asked for news from "their" special island that I have decided to try a newsletter format in order to reach what has become an impossible number of



Georgia loved the children of Rapa Nui.  
Photograph courtesy of Kay Sanger.



correspondents.” Thus, *Rapa Nui Notes* began. After a couple of years, as her audience continued to grow and other researchers who worked in the Pacific wanted to contribute, *Notes* morphed into the *Rapa Nui Journal* in 1989, and it is now a respected publication that reaches people all over the world who have an interest in Pacific island cultures.

As influential as the *Rapa Nui Journal* became to the archaeological community, the Easter Island Foundation (EIF), which Georgia started in 1988, contributed to the well-being of many more people, some of whom knew little of her academic pursuits. As she told it, one evening after a long day of recording rock art on the island, she came back to the *pension* that was owned by then-Governor Sergio Rapu, for dinner. Her long-time partner and helpmate, Frank Morin, and the astronomer Bill Liller and his wife Matty were also there. “I was tired and thirsty and Bill had just opened a bottle of chilled Chilean wine. Sergio announced that the late anthropologist, William Mulloy, who had worked for years on Easter Island, had willed his extensive library to Easter Island. Some of Mulloy’s long-time colleagues had also promised to send their book collections to the island. This was a grand gift for the island...but there was no library to house them. And that, the governor announced, was the problem: ‘I want you folks to create a foundation

and raise money so we can build a fine library right here on Easter Island.’ I remember thinking, ‘MOI?’ ”

Georgia needn’t have questioned whether she was up to the task. She returned to the U.S. in November, 1987 and started the Easter Island Foundation (EIF) the next year. Over the next 10 years she worked tirelessly to raise the money needed to build the library. In December, 1999, I went to Easter Island with Georgia and other EIF members to celebrate the beginning of the new millennium in one of the remotest places on earth. We enjoyed an all-night New Year’s Eve party with the entire island population in front of the flood-lit statues of Ahu Vai Uri at Tahai. It was broadcast world-wide by the BBC. Georgia joined in the dancing and sipping from communal cups of pisco sours. The next week we flew to Santiago where Georgia and I, as president of the EIF, signed the papers to establish the new William Mulloy Library with the Chilean government. The library opened officially in 2002, next to the museum on Easter Island. She told me that was a very proud moment in her life and she was extremely relieved to have accomplished the task.

Perhaps most indicative of Georgia’s love for the island and her evolving sense of purpose there, was her desire to do more for the Rapanui people. One day in 2001, she wrote to me wanting to discuss what we could do for the island now that our fundraising for the library was finished and it would open soon. We set up a meeting with a professional fund-raiser I knew who specialized in helping nonprofits determine their purpose and implement it. Georgia flew to Los Angeles to meet at a hotel near the airport with me, Fr. Francisco Nahoe (William Mulloy’s grandson), and the nonprofit guru. We spent the day discussing the key values and mission of the EIF. There, Georgia brought up an idea she had obviously been thinking about but I hadn’t heard her express before: that the EIF could give scholarships to aspiring Rapa Nui university students. At the time, graduation from high school ended the formal education of most islanders. There were no doctors, nurses, teachers, or engineers of Rapanui descent on the island. At the EIF board meeting in April, the idea was unanimously adopted. Since then, the EIF has given more than \$150,000 in university scholarships to deserving Rapa Nui students. Many of them have returned to the island to live and share their skills.

Georgia was justifiably proud that the organization she created has contributed to the well-being of so many Rapanui people. She had a heart as big as the huge *moai* “Paro” and she leaves behind an even bigger legacy. Georgia Lee will be missed by all who knew her around the world and especially on Easter Island.



Photograph courtesy of Kay Sanger.



## Goodbye . . . Georgia

Joan Seaver Kurze

Georgia and I were late-in-life graduate school students when we met at UCLA's Rock Art Archive in 1978. Sharing her interest in Chumash Indians, I soon was camping with her participants in Santa Barbara's back-country looking for rock art. Finding faded paintings in rock shelters was hard work under the summer sun. However, Georgia's participants knew how to have fun; donning "costumes" one year to celebrate the 4th of July atop a sandstone stage. Much of Georgia's extensive work on California Indian rock art is now archived at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History.

In 1981, Georgia decided to document the rock art on Easter Island for her UCLA doctoral thesis and asked me to be her assistant. Funded by the University of California's tight budget, and with only slight knowledge of the Chilean Spanish language spoken on Rapa Nui, we began our remarkable reconnaissance trip south. We left LAX for Santiago and Rapa Nui in August, the apex of the austral winter, bearing large cartons filled with materials for Georgia's future participants.

Room rates were too high at the first Santiago hotel we checked, so, despite the cold, rainy weather, we moved on. Our next stop was a more prestigious hotel whose ongoing renovation had closed the front entrance, but also reduced the hotel's rates. We decided to stay and dragged our gear down a rain dapp alley to a closet-sized elevator at the hotel's back door. A porter suddenly appeared and climbed atop a carton for the trip up to Reception on the 4th floor and down to our lower level room. The room was icebox cold since the hotel's heating system was down during the reconstruction. In the following days, the bathtub provided our only warmth! Happily, we left cold Santiago for sunnier weather on Rapa Nui.

Rosita Haoa, the owner of Rosita's Residencial (an early type of Rapanui B&B) cheerfully welcomed us at Mataveri Airport. Georgia liked the accommodations, so her groups always stayed at Rosita's during the next decades of her archaeological work and island touring. Rosita served the island's tastiest meals and watched over her "*gringas*" like a mother hen. She was their chaperone at the weekly *discos* and even provided a young participant with food and a horse for a romantic week-end with her Rapanui suitor. Our dear friend Rosita's recent, but untimely, death greatly saddened us.

Thor Heyerdahl's successful archaeological expedition to Rapa Nui in 1955 opened the island's doors to future archeologists. After his expedition, tourism increased on the island causing a rise in pesos sent to Santiago that gratified the mainland.



Joan and Georgia. Photograph courtesy of Mike Chamberlain.

Georgia benefitted from Chile's attitude toward foreign archaeologists when, in 1981, she applied for permission to document the rock art of Rapa Nui. However, once on the island she quickly became a pawn in an ongoing political quarrel between the islanders and the University of Chile archaeologists. Questioned one night in a darkened room about her purpose on the island, Georgia aced the situation, despite her lack of Spanish fluency. In fact, she soon became a very special "other" to the Rapanui due to her knowledge and dedication to her job as well as her generosity to the islanders' children (asking participants to bring baby clothes in their luggage).

Partly because of the islanders' reverence for the United States, "the big country in the *norte*", we were never frightened on Rapa Nui during the '80s and '90s when we traveled alone in the field or walked home from the *disco* late at night. Of course, our security may have also been aided by the American Air Force soldiers who camped at 'Anakena Beach in the late 1960s to improve Mataveri Airport. Popular with the Rapanui, these American men left the islanders with happy memories, along with the occasional descendant.

Some islanders became our good friends: Rosita Haoa Cardinali and her family, for example, as well as Lucia Haoa Riroroko, who entertained Georgia's island tours with island dance groups and *umu* (earth oven meals). Eventually, Lucia made a small tourist *residencial* from unused buildings on her father-in-law's land and named it *Mahina Taka Taka Georgia*. Another islander befriended by Georgia was the Rapanui archaeologist Sergio Rapu who had been educated in the United States and was married to an American linguist named Cindy. Sergio's wife told us she'd learned to speak Rapanui to communicate with her mother-in-law. Sergio became the island's first Rapanui governor while we were on the island. Georgia also connected with Edmundo Edwards, a Chilean archaeologist who is also related to a well-known Santiago publishing family. During his many decades on the island, Edmundo had learned much of the island lore that he passed on to Georgia. She duly recorded the stories in her notebook, but did not publish the information until after her last trip to Rapa Nui.

Determined not to miss a carving or a painting on the island's rocks, Georgia crossed a very rough channel from 'Orongo to the tiny, rocky islet of Motu Nui. Leaping out of a Zodiac onto a wet, slippery boulder, she entered a nearby cave. At this important site of 'Orongo's annual rites, Georgia found rare pictographs that later appeared in her publications.

Georgia's participants were usually good workers. For example, one young woman hung 1000 feet over the ocean at 'Orongo to draw petroglyphs, and an excellent cartographer was discovered among her male participants. However, why some people came to Rapa Nui, was baffling. There was the elderly "Mary Poppins" lady who arrived on the island in high heels.

During a rainy, wind-storm at 'Orongo, she raised her umbrella, but, fortunately, was not swept out to sea.

To keep her participants informed about the island's local happenings, Georgia started a newsletter called *Rapa Nui Notes*. Eventually the *Rapa Nui Notes* grew into the more scientific and widely accepted *Rapa Nui Journal*, with Georgia as its founding editor. For a while the journal continued to report local Rapa Nui events in articles like "Moai Sightings" and "What's New in Hangaroa". Eventually, the journal's view of the Pacific broadened along with its increase in scientific status. It is only fitting that the current issue of the *Rapa Nui Journal* serves as a memorial to its multi-talented instigator, Georgia Lee.

In 1988, with support from the World Monuments Fund of New York, Georgia and her colleague, archaeo-astronomer Dr. William Liller, founded the Easter Island Foundation. The EIF's first project was to construct an appropriate library on Rapa Nui to house the archaeological works of Dr. William Mulloy. A member of Heyerdahl's team, Professor Mulloy returned many times to Rapa Nui to continue his research and later bequeathed his archaeological library to the islanders. The Biblioteca Mulloy opened its doors to the Rapanui in 2002.

Georgia ran the Easter Island Foundation from behind the scenes with great skill. She identified the right person to do a particular job, gained the individual's acceptance and then provided whatever support and encouragement was necessary. During the last several years, the EIF's annual board meetings have been held near Georgia's house in Los Osos, and, typical of Georgia, everyone was welcomed into her home.

Known as the "Easter Island lady", Georgia was loved by her peers and greatly respected for her work.



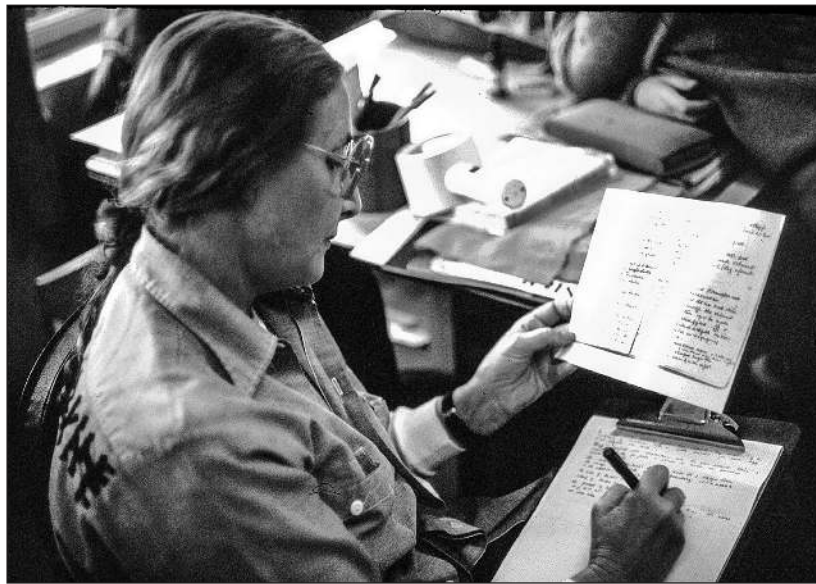
Georgia documenting Hau Koka in the Rano Kau caldera. Photograph from the EIF Archives.

She never sought the limelight but willingly shared her vast knowledge of her field with anyone who asked. A talented artist and author, Georgia's unique style of depicting the rock art of California Indians and Pacific Islanders is easily recognizable in many journals and books published in both English and Spanish.

Then there was the late Frank Morin. A retired physicist and classical pianist, Frank became Georgia's housemate and her soul-mate. Georgia never had a problem attracting men, but she recognized Frank was someone different, and together they built a life that became the envy of their friends. He understood and supported her devotion to her youngest descendants, and was so helpful on her rock art tours she refused

to leave him at home. Frank meditated a lot due to his Jungian beliefs, so Georgia answered his phone calls, "Sorry, Frank's still in outer space." The pair shared an office in their hospitable, "California Hotel" home. When she cried out, "Technical support!!", Frank was right at her elbow with his computer expertise and desktop publishing skills. Members of the Easter Island Foundation sadly miss Frank and his many talents.

Over the decades, Georgia and Frank became my close companions and, on occasion, my traveling mates. For years their home was my Los Osos base. When Georgia left the planet, a shining star in my life darkened and then disappeared.



Georgia studying the notes of Katherine Routledge. Photograph courtesy of Bill Hyder.