

# DOROTHY LaLONDE STOUT (1941-2001)

*Jann Vendetti*



Dottie Stout was an admired and revered leader in geoscience education, one whose friends and colleagues described as “a remarkable person” and “an incredible friend.” She was born and raised in Ohio and studied at Bowling Green State University, receiving her bachelor’s degree in geology and history. In graduate school at Bowling Green, she

focused her Master’s research on understanding the relationships between fossil marine epifauna: “I wanted to learn why some critters like corals lived on the shells of clams.”

While raising three daughters, Donna, Diana, and Deborah Stellar, Dottie went back to school to get her Ph.D. from Claremont Graduate School in California. Her dissertation, titled “The Development of Geologic Knowledge and Education and Its Application in California before 1934,” uniquely wove together oral history, education, and geology. This subject remained one of her main interests throughout her career. She made taped interviews with several notable older geologists to have a permanent record of their accomplishments.

A dedicated mother, educator, and scientist, Dottie began teaching part-time in 1967 at El Camino College, Long Beach City College, and California State University at Fullerton. In 1974 Dottie began her distinguished career as a professor of geosciences at Cypress College in Cypress, southern California; she was honored as Orange County Community College Teacher of the year in 1996.

The year 1985 had special meaning to Dottie, as that is when she and professor Martin Stout married. When Martin died of cancer in 1994, Dottie declared, “I spent the ten best years of my life with him.”

Dottie’s contribution to the geoscience community over the years has been immense and her many accolades are well deserved. She helped create the GSA Geoscience Education Division, and the national Coalition for Earth Science Education (CESE). In 1994 she organized the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Chapman Conference “Scrutiny of Undergraduate Geoscience Education” In 1990, as the first female president of the National Association of Geology Teachers (NAGT), she established their James Shea Award, to recognize excellence in earth science writing. In 1999 and 2000, she worked at the National Science Foundation in Washington, D.C. and helped create the Digital Library for Earth System Education (DLESE), an initiative that promises to transform teaching and learning earth science at all grade levels.

To many, Dottie is best known for her smiling leadership as she organized and led dozens of geologic field trips from China to the Galapagos, from Kamchatka to Kenya, that revealed the fantastic world of geology to her students and to her professional colleagues alike.

Just three months before her passing of brain cancer in August 2001, Dottie was the recipient of AGU’s “Excellence in Geophysical Education Award.” She was the first woman and only the fourth person to receive this international prize, which acknowledged her sustained commitment to teaching, and her impact on earth science education throughout her career. “She served the geoscience community with vision, dedication, and boundless energy,” said Ed Geary, her citationist at the AGU Awards ceremony.

Both the NAGT and Cypress College have created the Dorothy L. Stout Memorial Fund for scholarship in her honor.

A poem to her late husband Martin, is signed “Dottie Stout, Soul Mate:”

So let us celebrate this life well spent  
Sometimes in a house, sometimes in a tent,  
He has taken and given from us all  
Through joy and strife  
And has shown us how to make the best of life!