

Jane Sinclair (1939-2021)



Good Afternoon,

I am very sorry to bring you the sad news of the loss of one of our beloved Association members and former Art Department faculty, Professor Emerita Jane Sinclair. Jane was also an artist who exhibited at solo and group shows. Jane joined the Chapman faculty in 1965 and retired in 2001.

Jane passed away in Santa Rosa, on September 2, 2021. Fortunately, especially important as she declined, Jane enjoyed the ever-present attention of her dear step-daughter, Constance "Connie" Sinclair, who as always, watched over Jane and provided her with the close embrace of family. I am attaching an obituary that Connie wrote that provides us with details about Jane's early life, her education, career, artwork and her family life. Connie was also so kind as to share a photo of Jane.

On a personal note, I will never forget kind, gentle, talented Jane whose face was a vision of mirth each and every time I spoke with her. Like Tony Garcia and the other friends and colleagues we have lost, Jane will be very much missed.

My condolences go out to Jane's family and friends.

All the best,
Claudia Horn

In Memoriam: Professor Emerita Jane Sinclair



Joy Juedes

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Professor Emerita Jane Donaghe Sinclair, who taught art at Chapman University for more than 35 years, passed away Sept. 2, 2021. She was 82.

Sinclair, who was born in Tulsa, Okla., moved to California to teach at what was then Chapman College in 1965. There she met Cameron Sinclair, a father of four who taught in the English and religion departments. They married in 1968.

Jane Sinclair taught painting, drawing and art history at Chapman from 1965 to 2001. Art by Professor Emerita Jane Sinclair hangs in Chapman University's School of Communication.

Her interest in art went back to middle school, where a teacher encouraged her talent. She won art competitions as a teenager and got a grant to attend the American Academy in Rome after earning her master's degree in fine art. Chapman was her first teaching job.

Sinclair received the Valerie Scudder Award for excellence in teaching, scholarly/creative activity and service to the university. Stepdaughter Connie Sinclair says that Jane "treasured her Chapman friends, traveled abroad with them, and celebrated holidays with them."

Professor Emeritus Richard Turner taught in the Department of Art with Sinclair for 30 years. "She put the rest of the world on hold when she was in her studio," he says. "But she was a beloved teacher – she was generous with her students and forthright in her teaching style."

Sinclair painted and created collages from paint and photographs. Her work often included parts of images from well-known pieces.

"She integrated her teaching of painting and drawing and love of art history into her work," Turner says. "Her interest in art history gave her paintings and collages an additional level of meaning."

President Emeritus Jim Doti attended a lecture Sinclair gave on contemporary art when he arrived at Chapman as an economics professor in 1974.

"That lecture represented a quantum leap for me in my understanding and appreciation of modern art," he says. "Jane's lecture also helped me realize the strength of Chapman's faculty and why our little college, even back then, almost 50 years ago, was a very special place."

Doti and his wife, Professor Emerita Lynne Doti, have long collected Sinclair's work.

"Our house now is a veritable Sinclair Art Museum. When people visit our home, the artworks that provoke the greatest aesthetic interest and pleasure are Jane's pieces," he says.

Sinclair didn't talk about her work much, but "I knew from the amount of time she spent in her studio and the amount of work she produced that it meant a great deal to her," Turner says.

Sinclair entered juried art exhibits, and won many awards. Some of her work is in Chapman's Escalette Permanent Collection of Art.

She encouraged her students to pursue art "because it's a lifestyle." "You can't go into [art] thinking you're going to make your mark in history," she said in a magazine interview. "It's something that you love and you feel incomplete without."

Sinclair also loved her family, traveling, reading and dogs. "Living with Jane was fun and magical," Connie Sinclair says. "Thanksgiving was celebrated lavishly with family, Chapman friends and often with foreign students. Every year, Jane decorated a breathtaking Christmas tree, and she and Cam entertained friends who came to enjoy it with tea and fruitcake."

Cameron Sinclair preceded his wife in death. They will be interred together in the Columbarium at Chapman's Fish Interfaith Center.