



Sievers, Sharon L. Of Scottsbluff, Nebraska and Long Beach, California. Born May 27, 1938, died April 5, 2010, after a long illness, in Long Beach, California. Daughter of the late Celia (Pahl) and Edwin Walter Sievers of Scottsbluff. Survived by her life partner Eugenia Odell of Long Beach, sister Beverly Hall of Tacoma, Washington, dear friend Maylene Wong of San Francisco, and many devoted friends in California, Nebraska, and elsewhere.

Born in Scottsbluff, Sharon was educated at Augustana College in South Dakota, where she was active in campus politics and served as first president of the local chapter of Tri Beta, the National Biology Honors Society. Forgoing a career in science or medicine, Sharon instead pursued graduate training in Japanese history, earning an M.A. at the University of Nebraska and continuing on to Stanford University, where she received her Ph.D. in 1969.

Professor Sievers began her academic career in 1968 at California State University, Long Beach; she retired in 2008. At CSULB, Sharon was Professor and Chair of both the History and Women's Studies Departments. Author of a number of important books and articles, Sharon was recognized as a noted specialist in Japanese history even before her first book, the award-winning *Flowers in Salt: The Beginnings of Feminist Consciousness in Modern Japan*, was published in 1984. Later, she was one of eight prominent historians of women to be selected to write volumes in the "Restoring Women to History" series of the Organization of American Historians. She also served the historical profession in a variety of leadership and editorial roles.

Yet Sharon devoted most of her professional life and energies to CSULB. She helped found the Department of Women's Studies and was named coordinator during a tumultuous period in the 1980s. In 1982, with the assistance of the ACLU, she and others brought legal suit against the University to save the Women's Studies program, which had been attacked from outside by political conservatives who charged that the feminist perspective of departmental faculty represented nothing more than "an intense desire to undermine the very freedom of our government." For Sharon, these difficult struggles reinforced her steadfast beliefs in the transformative power of education and in the duty of all scholars to uphold academic freedom.

Sharon was subsequently elected Chair of the Department of History, a position she held for an unprecedented 12 years. Her efforts to improve the quality of undergraduate education, rebuild the faculty after waves of retirements, and lead the Department into the forefront of history education are evident today. Possessed with a brilliant mind and wry sense of humor, Sharon was a formidable presence on campus. Among her greatest achievements was to mentor the many young faculty members at CSULB who have achieved prominence as teachers and scholars. As lasting tribute to her advocacy and influence are the dozens of acknowledgments and statements of gratitude to Sharon in the publications of those whose lives and careers she touched. In recognition of her successes, she was named CSULB's Outstanding University Professor in 1999.

Professor Sievers was not only a widely acclaimed historian, but also a talented poet and photographer. A true daughter of the Plains, she enjoyed fly-fishing, birding, wildflowers, a good laugh, college basketball, and the still blue of a summer morning sky; her other passions included Japanese art, classical music, the Lakers, fine scotch and good food. She was a tough, fair-minded, kind and compassionate person. She will be deeply missed.

Memorial service scheduled for 4 p.m., Saturday, May 8, 2010, at St. Luke's Episcopal Church of Long Beach, 525 E. 7th Street, Long Beach. Interment will be in Scottsbluff. Donations in Sharon's memory may be made to the Sievers Scholars Program, c/o Department of History, CSULB, 1250 Bellflower Boulevard, Long Beach, CA 90840.