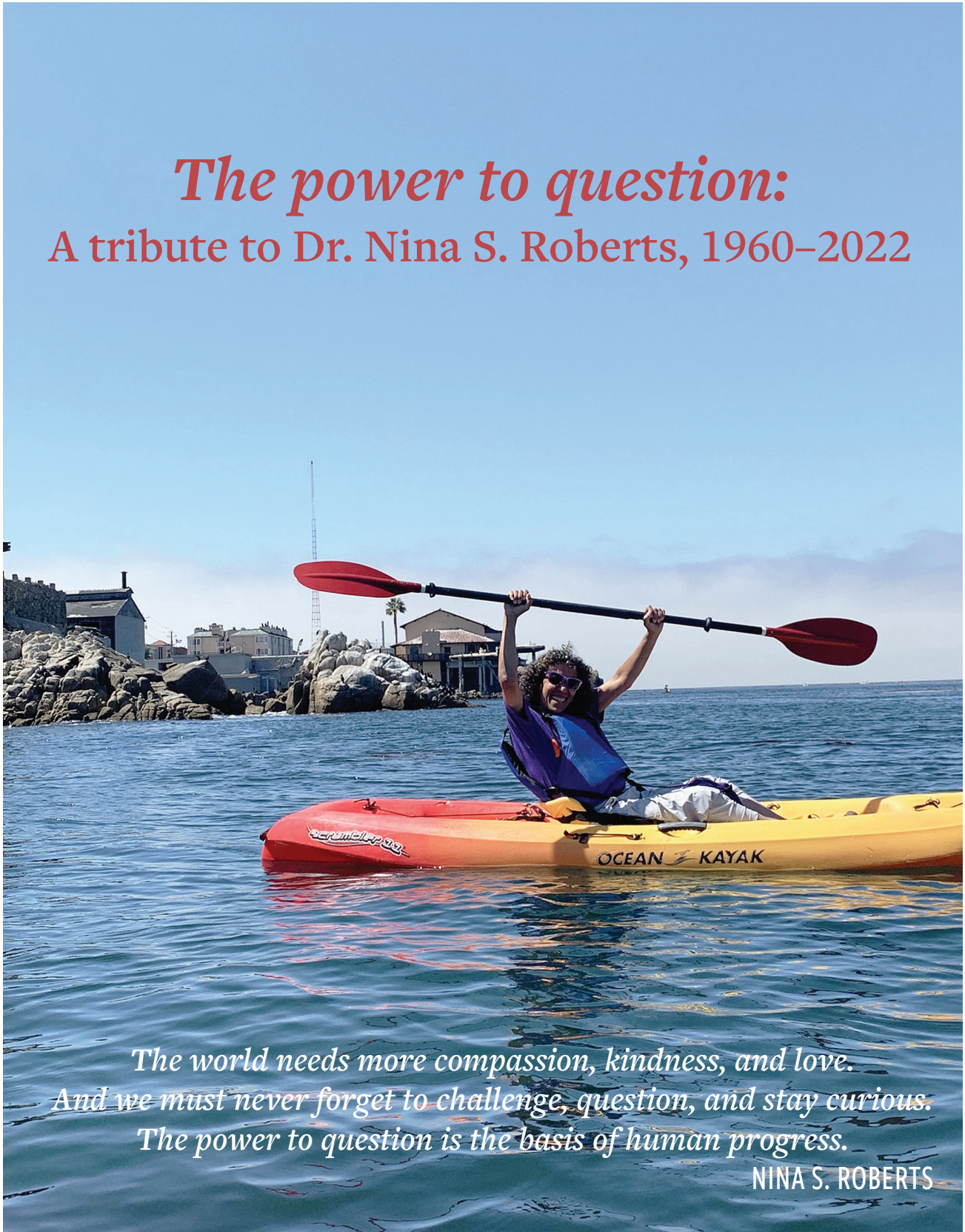




COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

The power to question: A tribute to Dr. Nina S. Roberts, 1960–2022



*The world needs more compassion, kindness, and love.
And we must never forget to challenge, question, and stay curious.
The power to question is the basis of human progress.*

NINA S. ROBERTS

When the George Wright Society and the UC Berkeley Institute for Parks, People, and Biodiversity decided in 2019 to team up and launch Parks Stewardship Forum, one of the early decisions was to identify a new columnist to debut in the inaugural issue. We quickly agreed that that person should be Nina Roberts. Nina was well known to both organizations. She contributed to PSF's predecessor, *The George Wright Forum*, and attended several GWS Conferences, and also worked with the founding executive director of the Institute. She was also well regarded in the academic world and around the San Francisco Bay Area for, among other things, her commitment to JEDI: justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

So we were delighted when she accepted our invitation to conduct a regular column in the journal's pages. We asked Nina to come up with a name for it, and, after some reflection, she dubbed her new column "Coloring Outside the Lines." If ever there were an editorial column title that succinctly captured the essence of its author, "Coloring Outside the Lines" as authored by Nina S. Roberts, PhD, is it. A faculty member at San Francisco State University, Dr. Nina, as she was affectionately known, spent her whole conservation career (and, to judge from the obituary provided by her family, more or less her whole life) pushing beyond the bounds of convention.

Nina was just getting the column underway when she received a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer—widely regarded as one of the deadliest forms of the disease. In the face of this devastating news, Dr. Nina did what she always did: drove forward, fueled by a fierce optimism that, against all odds, persisted right up until the time of her death on March 29, 2022. The last photo her family shared online showed her smiling broadly, lighting up the hospice. Even though she was about to die, she looked like the happiest person on earth, surrounded by loved ones.

Dr. Nina completed seven installments of "Coloring Outside the Lines." Each one is linked below.

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

SEA-LEVEL RISE AND VANISHING COASTAL PARKS: A CALL TO ACTION FOR PARK MANAGERS AND LEADERS

NINA S. ROBERTS

On August 4, 2019, a cliff collapsed at Santa Cruz State Beach, near San Jose in northern California. Three women were killed while enjoying a beautiful sunset day. The morning before, when walking on the area around the rising tide had not yet reached the beach, and the ocean was peeling the tangle, someone called along the shore. An expert of mine appeared in a dangerous situation, beachgoers fled the area the next day, disorganizing emergency relief and signs and other warnings. This did not help people do anything. California—will the world—every day, walking on the heavy, unconsolidated aggregate, with the many feet of a thousand tons of beach. However, we are eventually eroded and disintegrated the regular waves that occurred in December 2019. The beach was eroded, and the erodible aggregate was disappearing in an area beach that had the erodible, coarse, and erodible aggregate, and ultimately, erodible, coarse, and erodible aggregate, and ultimately, erodible, coarse, and erodible aggregate.

January 2020

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

CONNECTING THE DOTS: Why does what and who come before us matter?

NINA S. ROBERTS

PREFACE—NOTES FROM NINA

Why is "Coloring Outside the Lines" the title of my column in this journal? In the end, it is all about changing the narrative. Coloring Outside the Lines leads me to further action. When engaging communities of color and other marginalized groups, it is not enough to say "I didn't say 'I am engaged' because people of color have been marginalized in the past, but we are here to engage." From bringing members, working to restore and fix the world, to playing, exploring, and living nature (and more), people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds have been doing it. We are not there alone. We have been. For me, this also leads back to a discussion of social justice as well as addressing structural barriers. This column title speaks to intersectionality and the interconnectedness of color and whiteness. "I must respect the conversation. Yet when our political climate challenges the work and national priorities become twisted, progress may be delayed or delayed or even reversed, leading to national resource destruction and socio-cultural deterioration. This leads to my work with my friend and colleague, Dr. [Name], senior director of cultural resources, National Park Conservation Association; we hope readers think differently and become inspired."

May 2020

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Cultural consciousness about marine conservation: The multiracial experience as an emerging ecosystem

NINA S. ROBERTS

September 2020

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

The joys of nature: A cultural mosaic

NINA S. ROBERTS

I was talking with a long-time friend recently about our shared research interests. Exploring cross-cultural experiences of parks and other outdoor recreation spaces has not only been a passion, for over 20 years, it's also grown into a scholarly research to study in itself. When I read examples of the social science aspect of what I do, she replied "Oh, you mean the learning more about the work of John Brainerd?" I said that Brainerd I referred to an older white man who loved the outdoors. I found myself withholding a knee-jerk reaction and instead replied respectfully, "No, the other processes and learning between across parks and other recreation spaces and between who creates subspaces or out of the spotlight used the 'nature' part." I have read plenty of work from John Brainerd and an indelible part of my historic contributions. Nonetheless, I explained to her both some of the conventional practices (which has led to debate whether he was a racist or an admirer of Native Americans) and my interest in understanding people's attitudes, experiences, and behaviors regarding their cultural background, exploring the influences, etc. Furthermore, so on, when I can sleep still and enjoy a person of color from a woman's perspective—and beyond an subtle class upbringing, more often than not, the construction of all these practices—and beyond impact the holistic nature part of my research and, subsequently, connection to the joys of nature.

The album of "Coloring Outside the Lines" focuses on "Joy" with its expression relating to culture as necessarily linked. As I provided her

January 2021

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Community resilience and conservation connections

NINA S. ROBERTS

Understanding why communities in mountain should be so resilient is an interesting question. Many people, for instance, know and like understand the values and principles for practice of protecting biodiversity and preserving wildlife, ranging from urban areas to remote wilderness. We can all maintain a healthy and beautiful environment if managers and decision makers truly involve, educate, and engage off-site stakeholders in their efforts. It is only by building trust among communities of interest (e.g., include local Black leaders, education groups that need resources, mental therapy, engage women-owned businesses).

May 2021

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

SOCIAL ACTIONS, PARKS, AND PERSISTENT INEQUITIES: How does systemic racism and structural power equitable increases access?

NINA S. ROBERTS

Introduction

Understanding who the communities are that organizations wish to engage is a vital starting point for engaging people. Who do we need? "Some" nature in relation to managing conservation landscapes? Learning why systemic racism impedes progress and contributes to further inequities is essential. Building trust between that access across parks and public landscape spaces is an ongoing effort. The scale of career and personal inequities and inequalities across our nation's parks and open space requires a reevaluation of programs, resources, and management. The ability to engage (and we all experience the outcomes) in building and sustaining healthy and equitable communities includes new ways of thinking, problem solving, governance, and decision-making.

Most important, all this exemplify us to test the skills of interengaging process, challenging the status quo, and making things "radical" and "unintentional." Whether resource do, or do not, drive us to continue to be placed in direct reach of both individual and institutional power. Engaging the agencies we work with, and partners engaged in collaboration, leaders must work across ground. In addition, completing the larger systemic context of our personal and professional involvement towards increasing park access is paramount for a diverse range of people. Engaging collaborative relations, building an organizational culture of equity, and addressing the needs of all stakeholders, including those who are marginalized.

September 2021

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Dr. Lisa White, Geology Guru: A conversation about JEDI

NINA S. ROBERTS, PhD

MEMORANDA

As we build a new generation of students, including an explosion of interest in racial diversity? Could that be our design? From their racial exploration? For example, (this can be interpreted as Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, BIPOC) being dominated not only with the status quo, but also with leaders who claim to be allies yet turn their backs when "truth comes to light" (e.g., with respect to organized and disruptive, police changes). Specifically, we welcome our Black lives of activists, students on being for knowledge that the paleontologist and educator

January 2022

The body of work Nina contributed to our collective understanding through “Coloring Outside the Lines” is significant. A couple of her columns were co-authored; all of them looked at JEDI from different perspectives. As Nina herself explained it:

Why is “Coloring Outside the Lines” the title of my column in this journal? In the end, it is all about changing the narrative. Coloring Outside the Lines leads me to further action about engaging communities of color outdoors and into the natural world—for those who have not had such experiences, that is. I didn’t say “start engaging” because people of color have been immersed in the outdoors/nature for centuries. From living outdoors, working in nature and fearing the woods, to playing, exploring, and loving nature (and more), people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds have been doing it. We are out there; always have been. For me, this also leads back to a discussion of social permission as well as addressing structural barriers. This column title speaks to innovation coupled with communities of color and arbitrary “lines.” We must expand the conversation.

Whether it was advocating for equitable access to recreational opportunities, making sure unsung pioneers got their due, or celebrating the simple joy of being in nature, she did it with insight and panache. Or, as one colleague put it, “Dr. Nina changed the lives of countless people through her social justice badassery.”

The world does indeed need more compassion, kindness, love, and abiding curiosity. Dr. Nina S. Roberts brought all of that and more. And she was not afraid to share directives in a friendly but forceful way. As she was fond of saying: “Get outside, visit a local park, and reflect on nature’s beauty and how we can increase access to our parks.”

We encourage all of us to go back and read her “Coloring Outside the Lines” columns (linked above) and rededicate ourselves to the principles of JEDI in honor of Dr. Nina.

In addition to her mother, she leaves behind her two sisters, her brother, and their families, and a loving extended family of numerous cousins, aunts, and uncles. A celebration of Nina’s life was held in June by the university. For those inclined, contributions may be made to the Dr. Nina Roberts Memorial Scholarship fund at <https://give.sfsu.edu/roberts>.





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On the cover of this issue

Climate change creates conditions conducive to larger, more frequent fires, particularly in the American West. As a result, historic structures and artifacts are at greater risk of fire damage. The Bent's Fort Fire started on the morning of April 12, 2022. Approximately 85% of the national historic site's 800 acres burned. Thanks to the efforts of fire crews, the reconstructed adobe fort was undamaged. | [NATIONAL PARK SERVICE](#)