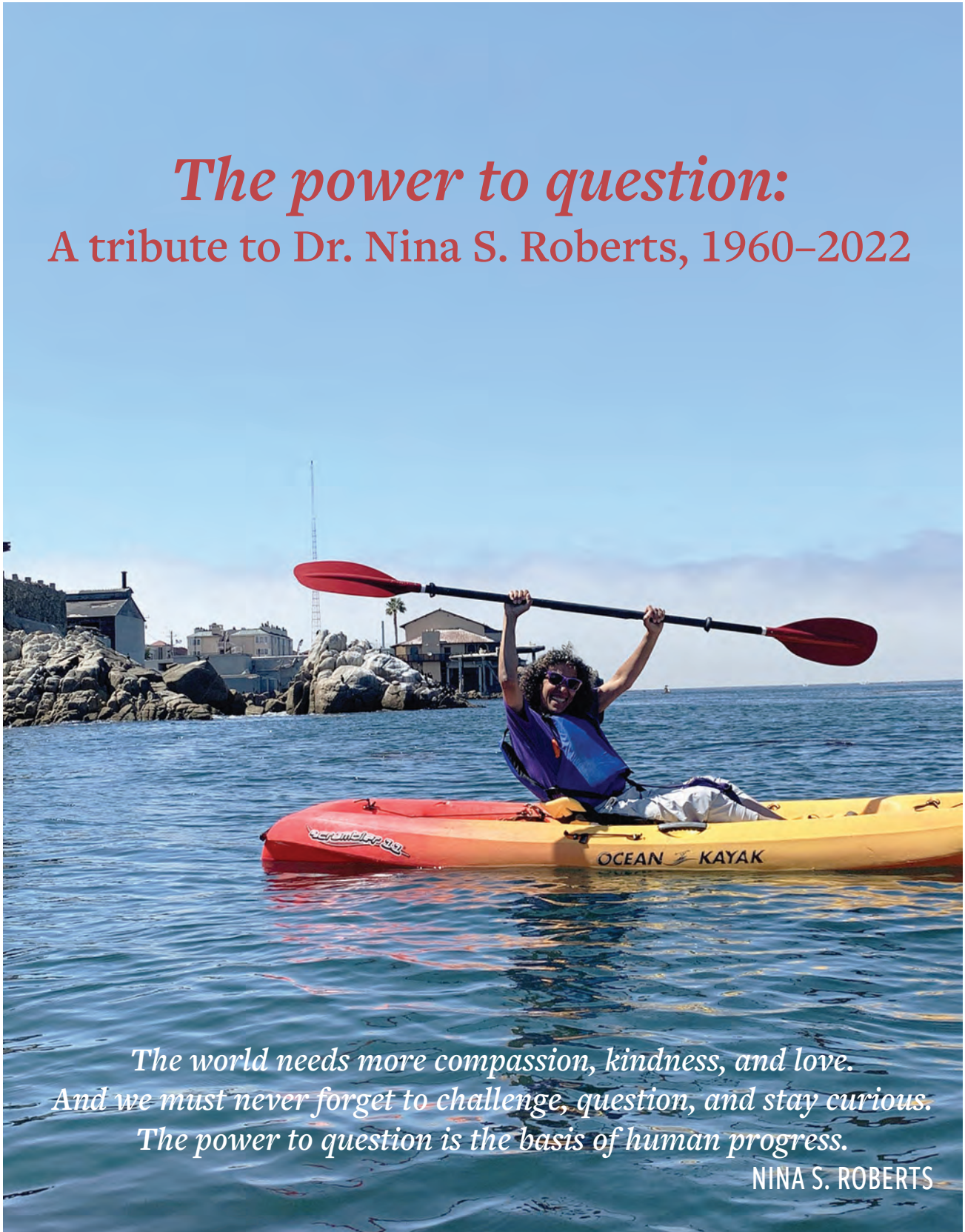




COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

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 Eureka 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 apparently diminished the sandy beach, and that the ocean was pushing the fragile, sandstone cliffs along the shore. An event of this magnitude is a dangerous situation, beachgoers find that the area the next day, disappearing sandstone reveals new signs and other warnings. They did what people do throughout California—and the world—every day, walking on the heavily recreational open spaces, with the many joys of a beautiful day at the beach. However, we are increasingly concerned and disheartened that the signs that the what occurred in California will be found more commonly, and that the enjoyable opportunities are disappearing as sea levels rise and the resulting coastal eroding, and naturally gradually eroding, and ultimately erasing public parks along our coast nationwide.

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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 others and the natural world—their stories who have been and not yet recognized, that is, I didn't say "start engaging" because people of color have been marginalized in the past. We have to start with the people who have been marginalized for centuries. From living conditions, working in mines and facing the results, to playing, exploring, and loving nature (and more), people from diverse ethnic and cultural backgrounds have been doing it. We are not there, always 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, respect and conversation of color and other "lines." We must respect the conversation. Yet when our cultural divide challenges the work and national priorities become revised, progress made about other divide becomes to create, leading to national resource destruction and socio-cultural deterioration. This issue is written with my friend and colleague, *Dr. Nina S. Roberts*, senior director of cultural resources, National Parks Conservation Association. We hope readers think differently and become inspired.

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

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

NINA S. ROBERTS

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

The joys of nature: A cultural mosaic

NINA S. ROBERTS

I was talking with a long time friend recently about my recent research interests. Exploring cross-cultural experiences of parks and other outdoor recreational spaces has not only been fun, for over a year, it's also given me a rich example of the social science aspect of what I do. The original "Oh, you mean the learning more about the work of John Doe?" I'd add that I'd refer to an older white woman who loved the outdoors. I found myself withholding a harsh judgment and instead replied respectfully. "No, the other processes and ways between across parks and other outdoor recreation spaces who create outcomes or out of the spotlight used the "nature"?" I have had plenty of work from John Doe and an indelible gratitude for his historic contributions. Nonetheless, I explained to her both some of the conservation practices (which has led to debate whether he was a pro or an advocate of human conservation) and my interest in understanding people's attitudes, experiences, and behaviors regarding their cultural background, understanding the influences, etc. Furthermore, so on, when I can sleep still and enjoy a portion of what I do in a woman's perspective and based on subtle class upbringing, more often than not, the intersection of all these practices—and beyond—impact the holistic nature of our outdoor world, and ultimately connection to the joys of nature.

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

January 2020

May 2020

September 2020

January 2021

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Community resilience and conservation connections

NINA S. ROBERTS

Understanding why communities in mountainous areas are so resilient to adversity. Many people, for instance, know and love understanding the values and principles for practice of protecting biodiversity and preserving wildlife, engaging them into areas to ensure resilience. We can all maintain a healthy and natural environment. Managers and decision makers today involve, educate, and engage off-site leaders across cultures, which is crucial for helping about creating communities of interest (e.g., involve local Black leaders, education groups that need resources, etc.).

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

SOCIAL ACTIONS, PARKS, AND PERSISTENT INEQUITIES: DOES SYSTEMIC RACISM AND STRUCTURAL POWER ACTUALLY INCREASE ACCESS?

NINA S. ROBERTS

Introduction

Understanding who the communities are that organizations seek to engage is a vital starting point to engaging them. Who do we understand "them" means to relate to managing conservation landscapes? Engaging who means to include people, progress and contributions to further improve an essential. Building upon how we have that access to parks and public outdoor spaces is an ongoing effort. The scale of access and potential benefits and inequalities across our nation's parks and open space means a recognition of progress, resources, and opportunities. This article explores the role of social actions, parks, and persistent inequities in building and sustaining healthy and equitable communities. Includes new ways of thinking, problem solving, governance, and decision-making.

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 leaders in understanding, an explosion of interest in racial diversity? Could that be our diagnosis from our racial inequities? For example, (this can be interpreted as Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, BIPOC) being dismissed not only with the status quo, but also with leaders who claim to be allies yet turn their backs when "pulling out the covers" (e.g., being required to register and document, police changes). Specifically, we welcome our Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color, BIPOC, to bring their knowledge that the paleontologist and educator

May 2021

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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](#)