

Eleanor Evelyn Vaughan Creekmore Dickinson
February 7, 1931 - February 25, 2017

Eleanor Creekmore Dickinson was a powerful artist, inspiring professor, and beloved friend and matriarch. For 29 years, she was also a dedicated member of the Board of Directors of California Lawyers for the Arts, where she used her voice and experience to represent the interests of artists and call attention to the underrepresentation of women artists in the world of commercial galleries and museums.

Eleanor built a successful art career on solo shows that boldly depicted those she called "unpopular and unlikely subjects." She reveled in transgressing the assumptions of media, using lucite, black velvet and sky-writing as fine art materials. For all her high-flying passions, Eleanor was deeply rooted. She returned often to her birthplace in Knoxville, Tennessee, and her decades-long work documenting Pentecostal revivals throughout the region is housed at the Smithsonian.

Eleanor's art and life were a study in chiaroscuro, of light bringing shape to the darkness. She was a former Daughter of the Confederacy who marched for civil rights. In San Francisco, she striped her hair black-and-white with an electric blue or pink streak but dyed it brown to ease her way into revivals. She used her gifts to cast light on the darkest parts of being alive, like the 40 watt light bulbs that brought light to revival tents in the Knoxville night.

Eleanor's work was shown most recently at the Smithsonian Archives in 2014, with an exhibition that same year at the Peninsula Museum. She was recognized nationally in her lifetime with public collections and archives hosted by the Smithsonian Institution, the Library of Congress's Archive of Folk Culture, the Corcoran Gallery of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, the Tennessee State Museum, the Oakland Museum, and the University of Tennessee Libraries, among many others.

She co-authored and illustrated several books, including *That Old Time Religion* (1975) and *Revival!* (1974) with Barbara Benziger. She also produced a series of radio interviews on topical arts issues on Channel 29, San Francisco's community access radio station.

Eleanor was named an Emerita Trustee of California Lawyers for the Arts, which recognized her 29 years of exemplary board service in 2016. She received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Women's Caucus for Art in 2003 and was named an Emerita Professor of Drawing by California College of the Arts after serving as a professor there for 30 years.

Eleanor was preceded in death by her husband, Ben Wade Oakes Dickinson III (1926-2011). She was survived by her sister, Louise; her three children, Peter, Katy and Mark; and six grandchildren, Daniel, Lynda, Forrest, Corey, Paul and Jessica.

A memorial service will be held at 2 pm on Sunday, May 28, 2017 at Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, 13601 Saratoga Avenue, Saratoga, CA 95070. In lieu of flowers, please consider making a donation to the Ewing Gallery at the University of Tennessee – Knoxville.