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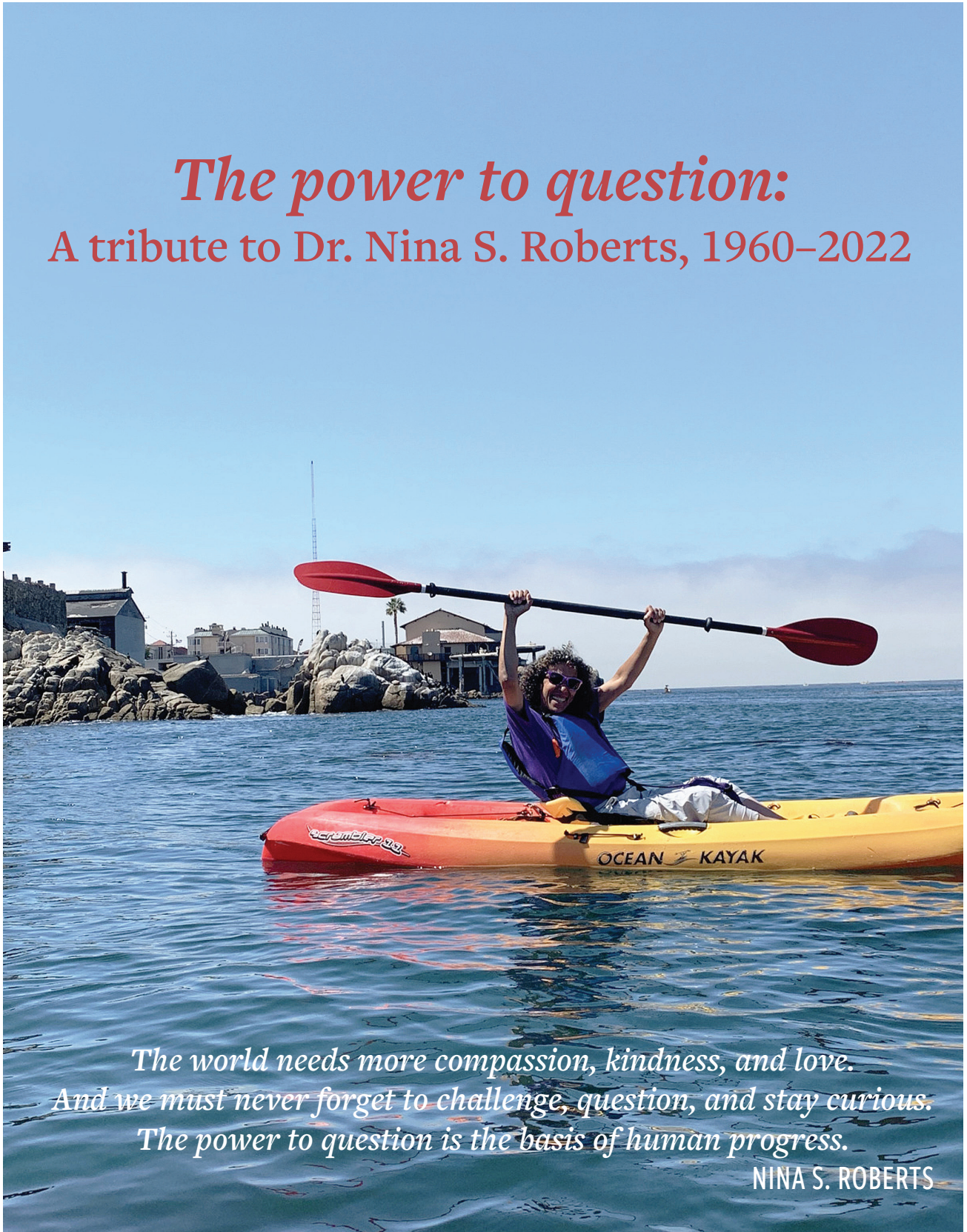
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COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

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

By Nina S. Roberts

On August 4, 2019, a cliff collapsed at Santa Cruz State Park, near San Jose in northern California. Three women were killed while enjoying a beautiful sunset day. The morning before, they were walking on the area around the rising tide had eventually eroded the sandy beach, and that the ocean was pushing the fragile, sandstone cliffs along the shore. An area of what appeared to be a dangerous situation, beachgoers fled the area the next day, disregarding warnings raised the next day, walking on the heavily eroded area. The collapse of the cliff was the result of a long-term process of sea-level rise and beach erosion, an ever-continuing cycle of erosion and deposition that has been occurring in California for over 2,000 years. The California coastline is now in a critical phase, with sea level rise increasing from what was less than 2 inches (1/2 cent) per century to a currently projected 6 feet.

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Why does what and who come before us matter?

By Nina S. Roberts and Alex Spier

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. Those engaging communities of color and other marginalized groups, that is, I didn't say "start engaging" because people of color have been marginalized in the environmental movement for centuries. From being excluded, working to restore and manage 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. There have been, for me, the same struggles to be heard. 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 a commitment to color and whiteness "lines." We must expand the conversation. Yet when our political climate challenges the work and national priorities become twisted, progress made difficult, and the world is in a state of crisis, leading to natural resource destruction and socio-cultural deterioration. This issue is written with my friend and colleague, Alex Spier, senior director of cultural resources, National Park 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

By Nina S. Roberts

This column title speaks to intersectionality and a commitment to color and whiteness "lines." We must expand the conversation. Yet when our political climate challenges the work and national priorities become twisted, progress made difficult, and the world is in a state of crisis, leading to natural resource destruction and socio-cultural deterioration. This issue is written with my friend and colleague, Alex Spier, senior director of cultural resources, National Park Conservation Association. We hope readers think differently and become inspired.

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

The joys of nature: A cultural mosaic

By Nina S. Roberts

I was talking with a long-time friend recently about our shared 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 detail. When I read a quote from the social science journal of *Human Geography* about the work of John Bruneau, I added this thread I referred to as an "ethnic mosaic" to my list of interests. I found myself withholding a beautiful mosaic and instead of a mosaic, I found a mosaic of people and places. I found myself withholding a beautiful mosaic and instead of a mosaic, I found a mosaic of people and places. I found myself withholding a beautiful mosaic and instead of a mosaic, I found a mosaic of people and places.

January 2020

May 2020

September 2020

January 2021

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Community resilience and conservation connections

By Nina S. Roberts

Understanding why communities in mountainous areas are so resilient to natural disasters is a complex task. Many people, but few have been able to understand the values and principles for preserving biodiversity and protecting wildlife, ranging from urban areas to remote wilderness. We can all maintain a healthy and resilient environment if managers and decision-makers today involve, educate, and engage all stakeholders in the process. We can all maintain a healthy and resilient environment if managers and decision-makers today involve, educate, and engage all stakeholders in the process. We can all maintain a healthy and resilient environment if managers and decision-makers today involve, educate, and engage all stakeholders in the process.

May 2021

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

SOCIAL ACTIONS, PARKS, AND PERSISTENT INEQUITIES:

Does systemic racism and structural power equitable increases access?

By Nina S. Roberts

Introduction

Understanding why communities are that organization seeks to engage in a vital starting point for recognizing progress. The environmental "line" means to relate to managing conservation landscapes, creating city centers, reducing impact, progress and contributions to further investigate a world. Building more inclusive that address access to parks and public landscape spaces is an ongoing effort. The scale of conservation and protection and inequalities across our nation's parks and open spaces means a reevaluation of progress, conservation, and management. The ability to recognize the (not we all experience the same) in building and managing healthy and equitable communities matters more ways of thinking, problem solving, governance, and decision-making.

September 2021

COLORING OUTSIDE THE LINES

Dr. Lisa White, Geology Guru:

A conversation about JEDI

By Nina S. Roberts, PhD

MEMORANDA

As we build a new generation of leaders in conservation, an explosion of interest in racial diversity. Could that be more important than racial equity? For example, this can be interpreted as Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (BIPOC) being identified not only with the status quo, but also with leaders who claim to be able to get them back where "they were before" (i.e., with respect to organizational decisions, policy changes, etc.).

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](#)