Memorial to Marjorie K. Korringa 1943-1974

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The death of Marjorie K. Korringa at age 31 took from the geological profession a most extraordinary and creative person. She was aboard TWA Flight 841 that crashed into the Ionian Sea between Athens and Rome on the morning of September 8, 1974. International investigators have evidence that the crash was due to an explosion on board shortly after leaving Athens. The body was not recovered. Just a few days before, Marjorie presented a paper in Zurich at the International Symposium on Recent Crustal Movements. She took the opportunity to spend part of a week with her parents in Greece and was on her way to Rome. There she was scheduled to participate in a study of nuclear-reactor siting for the Italian government.

Born in 1943, Marjorie graduated from high school in Averill Park, New York, in 1960 and from Radcliffe College in 1964 with a B.A. in geology. She was an avid researcher, and she mastered many of the key tools for petrologic research while working as a laboratory analyst in the geology department at Harvard University. She received her Ph.D. in geology from Stanford University in 1972 in the field of volcanic petrology. Marjorie's dissertation dealt with the geologic history and volcanic phenomena at the linear vent area of the Soldier Meadow Tuff, an ash-flow sheet in northwestern Nevada.

After graduation from Stanford, Marjorie worked as a geological consultant to David B. Slemmons at the University of Nevada. She also worked closely with Donald C. Noble at the University of Nevada on various problems of volcanic petrology in western North America and Peru. During this time, her interest expanded to include problems of active faulting and landslides.

She later joined Woodward-Clyde Consultants, where her work included the study and evaluation of active faults. Her thorough approach encompassed development of theory for the analysis of active faulting. Marjorie played a leading role in all aspects of the Alyeska fault study for the Trans-Alaska pipeline. At the time of her death she was a key individual in a study of nuclear-reactor siting in California, in a study of the Managua earthquake and related faults for the Nicaraguan government, and on a nuclear-reactor project in Italy. For these projects, Marjorie was instrumental in designing the scope of each study, as well as in the photogeologic interpretation of all types of imagery.

Although Marjorie had worked with Woodward-Clyde Consultants for only two years, she had influenced almost every phase of their geologic practice. At the time of her death, she was chairman of the Geology-Seismology-Geophysics Planning Committee at Woodward-Clyde Consultants and was assuming increasingly responsible levels of project management. Marjorie's talents in writing and editing enabled her to coauthor many Woodward-Clyde reports, most notably the "Basis for Pipeline Design for Active-Fault Crossings for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline."

Those close to Marjorie remember her especially for three quite different facets of her personality. First, she had an intellect of startling brilliance; this capacity, coupled with a true devotion to the integrity and success of her scientific work, enabled her to produce results of surprising rigor and scope within inordinately brief spans of time. Second, she had a true love for the western outdoors; she became an enthusiastic back-packer and through her membership in the Sierra Club she worked diligently to help preserve several natural areas. Finally, she had a remarkable talent for nurturing friendship. She did not make friends quickly, but her warmth and sympathy outshone all her other fine qualities in the minds of those fortunate enough to have been her friends.

Marjorie is survived by her parents who live on Crete and by her brother who is a professor of archaeology at the University of Michigan. Although twice married, she was single at the time of her death. Her death came before she had achieved the renown that we believe would have been hers, and the world of geology can ill afford the loss. There are few, indeed, who can match her remarkable combination of ability and humanity.

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