

DEDICATORY LETTERS

To the editors:

When I first met Elizabeth Colson at the SSRC Summer Seminar on matrilineal kinship in 1954, our relationship was a bit scratchy. Then one day she started the seminar with the story of a ship's captain who kept a monkey and a caged parrot in his cabin. They threatened each other all the time. Once, the captain returned to the cabin to find that the monkey had opened the parrot's cage. The monkey was all scratched, the parrot not to be seen. Suddenly, however, it strolled out from under the bed, completely plucked, and said, "We've been having a high old time!" She began to laugh, and so did we all. For me, that was the beginning of a treasured friendship. I came to know her as a superb practitioner of the craft of anthropology and a moral force in time of trouble. May she enjoy continued creativity and serenity. She will never know placidity.



David F. Aberle
Professor Emeritus
Department of Anthropology and Sociology
University of British Columbia

To the editors:

I feel honored to be asked to write a letter for the festschrift dedicated to such an outstanding scholar as Elizabeth Colson. Although I more or less abandoned anthropology for psychology, we had innumerable valuable discussions over the years. Her professional knowledge and comprehension seemed to be unlimited. On our common walks during the last twenty years in the East Bay hills, I also was fortunate to get to know her compassionate human side as she spoke of her colleagues, her African friends, and especially her students, to whom she gave time and concern beyond the call of duty. She showed great interest also for the world of wildflowers and birds.

I would like to thank Elizabeth Colson for her friendship and wish her many fruitful and enjoyable years of retirement.



Lucy K. Ackerknecht
Professor
Western Institute for Research
and Training in Humanics
Berkeley, California

To the editors:

It is a distinct privilege to congratulate Elizabeth Colson on the occasion of the publication of the Kroeber Anthropological Society festschrift in her honor. I can think of no anthropologist, from among those I have known personally over the years or indirectly by means of publications, more worthy of recognition. My admiration for her as a social anthropologist is exceeded only by the pleasure deriving from friendship with her.

When I think of Elizabeth, fieldwork immediately comes to mind, and I suspect that this linkage is one she would find congenial. For one with interests in Africa, and others as well, her studies in Zambia stand as models for field researchers. Beginning with research among the Plateau Tonga and extending through the long-term, continuing project among the Gwembe Valley Tonga (in association with Thayer Scudder), she has spent more time in the field than many anthropologists care to contemplate. To these African experiences must be added her earlier, perhaps less widely known, field studies among American Indian peoples. For Elizabeth, I believe, fieldwork is not only a way to *do* social anthropology but a way of life. Repeated field visits to the Gwembe region have not dulled her capacity to find stimulation and excitement in relations with villagers and townsmen; as her knowledge of the people has increased, so has her perception of their creativeness and coping skills, especially under stress.

A rigorous, demanding, and innovative scholar, Elizabeth sets high standards for herself and others; these are evident in her extensive and influential publications, which have been acclaimed by an international readership. But Elizabeth's talents are many-faceted: she has shown administrative ability of high order, for example, as director of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute during a time of radical change and stress; she has found time in a crowded schedule to act as consultant to major national research committees; her advice has been sought on problems of national and wider scope. From a personal view, of greater moment is her warm, generous, invariably stimulating friendship, which permits one to share her penetrating perceptions and range of interests. I anticipate many years of further contributions to anthropological thought from Elizabeth, in which interaction between field research and reflection will continue, as in the past, to emerge in full measure.



Harry W. Basehart
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of New Mexico

To the editors:

I met Elizabeth Colson in 1947 when I was a brand-new graduate student at Oxford and she was what today would be called a visiting post-doc. With her doctoral work on the Makah behind her, she had just completed her first period of field research among the Tonga, the people whose vicissitudes she has followed for forty years. She, together with Clyde Mitchell and John Barnes, had accompanied Max Gluckman to Oxford; they *were* the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute. Having them there, all in residence, working together on their field reports, was, simply put, an inspiration.

Elizabeth was a guiding force in my training: her demand for excellence of detail in ethnography and the sensitivity with which she interpreted ethnography were built into my own standards. Once you encounter those standards, you cannot—simply cannot—let yourself get by with lesser ones. I count myself lucky as having her—one of the half-dozen or so really great ethnographers of our time—as one of my mentors. Elizabeth has continued to be the standard by which I judge ethnographic thoroughness and quality; there are simply none better. Her ideas and practice about the study of a single people over extended periods of time make her a model in another dimension of ethnography that I myself have been unable to fulfill, but which I nonetheless admire deeply.

Elizabeth was and is a good friend—then, when I saw her every day, and now, when unfortunately I see her seldom. I have been blessed with good friends, and Elizabeth is right at the top of the list. We can all continue to look forward to the books she is still writing, and the friendship she so generously bestows.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul Bohannan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

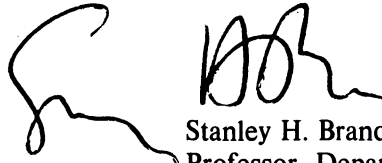
Paul Bohannan
Dean of Social Sciences and Communication
University of Southern California

To the editors:

In Spring of 1965, while still a history student, I visited a number of Berkeley anthropology classes in order to decide whether I'd want to apply to the Department of Anthropology. Among the lectures I heard were several that Elizabeth Colson delivered on the subject of religion. I was immediately impressed not only by her intellectual incisiveness but also by her ability to engage the students in fruitful discussion. She captured my interest in the material. Thus she influenced my eventual choice of field and, of course, the nature of my career.

As Elizabeth Colson's occasional student (I wrote my first Anthropology 240 paper for her), and throughout a decade as her colleague, I have continued to be impressed by her high scholarly and ethical standards. In critical discussions she unfailingly gets right to the heart of an issue. Her writing is constantly illuminating. She is also among the best read people I have ever met. Rare is the graduate seminar in which I have not included a sample of her work. I'm sure I shall continue to draw on her analyses in research and teaching for many years to come.

As a neighbor on the third floor of Kroeber Hall, Elizabeth has been available for companionship and advice. During my difficult initial years on the faculty, I found her among the most supportive of my senior colleagues. I shall always appreciate the many ways, small and large, that she went out of her way on my behalf.



Stanley H. Brandes
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

It gives me enormous pleasure to write this letter for Elizabeth Colson on her retirement from the University—though not, I am sure, from anthropology. I hope she will now have the necessary time—the lack of which she has found irksome for several years—to follow up her own special interests inside and outside anthropology. My wife and I send her our warm good wishes for the future.

For the past almost forty years I have enjoyed the great privilege of Elizabeth's friendship, even on the few occasions on which we have differed! I have always had the greatest respect for her opinion and her integrity. We first met in Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia) where I was running the Rhodes-Livingstone Museum. Elizabeth came out in 1946 as a research anthropologist at the sister institution (then directed by Max Gluckman), the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Social Research, which she later most successfully directed. About 1952 the Institute moved from Livingstone to Lusaka, and we saw Elizabeth less frequently. After she and the Institute had gone we realized how much we had benefited from the numerous informal discussions that are the foundation for developing new ideas and new methodology. There were the occasions when we used to picnic on an island in the Zambezi and watch the hippos and later the elephants or, at low water, when we climbed and waded over to Livingstone Island in the middle of the Victoria Falls. Those were carefree days mostly, when one had the opportunity of putting one's whole mind to the problems of the anthropological present. Elizabeth's very special study has been that of the Plateau and Valley Tonga in Zambia. Her continuing work with Ted Scudder on the ecology and later rehabilitation of those displaced by the construction of the Kariba Dam and formation of Lake Kariba is a unique follow-up on culture change and readaptation. This invaluable study not only tells the story of the Valley peoples and their success in rebuilding their lives and their economy, but it is a masterpiece reflecting the changing ways in which a population reacts through time as well as the changing perspectives time brings to the ways in which the anthropologist sees them.

Over the years we met on numerous occasions, both of a business and social nature, and, perhaps because of the magic of youth, the memories of that time are most vivid. Then followed a period when we met less frequently—her years at Manchester and Brandeis—until we both became members of the Berkeley faculty. Then from time to time, she would attend one or another of our archeology seminars. Her input, because of its insight into human culture, was always of great value to those of us who sometimes get too immersed in the past. As an archeologist—or paleo-anthropologist, as we now call ourselves—I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Elizabeth, who has been one of the few social anthropologists I have known who has understood how her research could help throw light on my own. There have been many occasions when her information and insight, not the least her knowledge of material culture and what it says about behavior, have been invaluable.

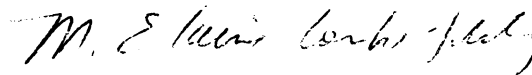
She has my sincere good wishes, and I hope that her retirement, and my own in 1986, will see the beginning of a new phase in our association.



J. Desmond Clark
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

It is with pleasure and respect that my paper in this collection is dedicated to Elizabeth Colson. I have yet to come across a more gifted intellect. I have yet to meet a scholar more open to the ideas of others. I have yet to encounter a teacher more adept at enabling students to realize what is best in their own work. It was my very great and good fortune to have been her advisee during the last years of her professorship at Berkeley. I thank her for all past and present help, for knowing when intellectual prodding was needed, for sensing when a good mystery novel was more appropriate. My admiration is immense, and is matched only by my affection. I wish her more than the best in the coming decades.



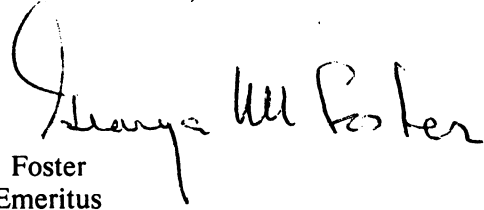
M. Elaine Combs-Schilling
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
Columbia University

To the editors:

Serendipitous happenings can lead to some of life's most satisfying experiences. For me, Elizabeth Colson's arrival in Berkeley in 1964 was one such experience. Although before that time we had known each other slightly, our paths had rarely crossed. Subsequently, and continuously during the past twenty years, we have worked closely together, as professional colleagues and as good friends. We have shared common anthropological interests: the processes of modernization in traditional societies, the strategies of guided development, long-range studies, and the like. We have also "shared" graduate students. In seminars, as members of Ph.D. orals committees, and especially as dissertation committee members, we have worked with many of the same students. And together we have taken pride in how well these students—now professional colleagues—have done after leaving Berkeley.

Among anthropologists, there is no colleague for whom I have higher professional and personal regard than for Elizabeth. Her field research has been a model for all ethnologists, combining rich data with a sharp sense of problem. Her teaching has been meticulous, of the highest quality. And her public lectures hit just the right note, whatever the audience. I remember particularly her University of California Moses Lecture, in which she so gracefully expressed not only some of her theoretical interests but also the profound respect and friendship she felt toward her Berkeley colleagues. We will always remember this moving occasion.

All of us who have known Elizabeth feel that our lives have been greatly enriched by our association with her. On the occasion of her retirement we wish her well, and we look forward to many more years of friendship and shared experiences.

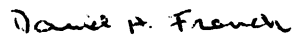


George M. Foster
Professor Emeritus
Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

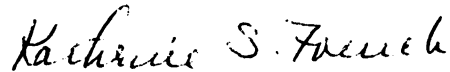
To the editors:

We are writing in appreciation of a great anthropologist, Elizabeth Colson. Although we have usually not been associated with the same institutions at the same time, we have had a number of common experiences; we know her well and like to think of Elizabeth as an old friend. The common experiences are mentioned to call attention to lesser known, as well as better known, aspects of her life: early work on folk science; research in the Pacific Northwest; and research in the Colorado River Relocation Center (for Japanese-Americans). Happily, we saw her often when we also lived in Cambridge, Mass., and during a year at the Behavioral Sciences Center at Stanford.

Her Makah publication is a Northwest classic (she also made her Pomo data available), and her continuing African work is too well known to require further discussion. Few anthropologists are as highly regarded for both North American and African publications. She is among those rare Americans who rather early made use of British approaches to anthropology; most such Americans were influenced by Radcliffe-Brown or his students at Chicago, but she arrived at her theoretical synthesis by other routes. She has chosen her paths wisely, or has cleared them herself, many times. Wisdom is a quality that aptly characterizes her.



David H. French
Professor, Anthropology Department
Reed College
Portland, Oregon



Katherine S. French
Research Anthropologist
Anthropology Department, Reed College
Portland, Oregon

To the editors:

I am glad of this chance to thank Elizabeth Colson for her work and friendship.

My first memories are of a quiet person who knitted in seminars at the University of Manchester and enlivened then with pithy, often witty, comments. Elizabeth's early essay on the Plateau Tonga in *Seven Tribes of British Central Africa* helped me to analyze my material on the matrilineal Nayars, and her *Makah Indians* provided a model of clarity of method and exposition when I wrestled with field notes from southeast India.

During the SSRC Summer Seminar on matrilineal kinship at Harvard in 1954, Elizabeth and I shared a flat and developed a friendship I have deeply valued. There were late nights of drinking, comparing British and American customs, and exploring work and friends, and sleepy breakfasts over very strong coffee and Elizabeth's favorite sticky buns. Our arguments bore fruit in *Matrilineal Kinship*.

Brandeis University in 1961-63 brought more somber days. Elizabeth, always mindful of academic opportunities for women, helped me to obtain an assistant professorship and encouraged my husband, David Aberle, to succeed her as chairman of anthropology. Not long after, a dispute with the university president over a speech I made on the Cuban missile crisis led to my being refused tenure and to David's resignation. Elizabeth, who was on leave in Africa and at that time had no other job to go to, resigned in protest against what she saw as a breach of academic freedom. Her principled action moved us and heartened me in a time of self-doubt and pain.

The excellence of Elizabeth's research, her extraordinary erudition, her diligence on behalf of younger scholars, and her ability to penetrate equally the lives of both men and women, have continued to inspire me. May her future be rich in achievement and in friendship.

Kathleen Gough,

Kathleen Gough
Research Associate
Department of Anthropology and Sociology
University of British Columbia

To the editors:

My association over the past twenty-five years with Elizabeth Colson has been as a friend rather than as a colleague. As a friend, that is, as a person, she has always displayed a directness, honesty, and, yes, even humor that one comes to appreciate more as one grows older and learns that these characteristics are not inevitably associated with scholarship.

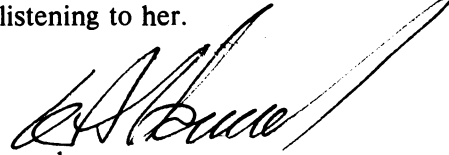
I am honored to have been given the opportunity of making a public statement about my friendship with Elizabeth.

Adelaide Cromwell Gulliver

Adelaide Cromwell Gulliver
Afro-American Studies Center
Boston University

To the editors:

I am pleased and honored to have the opportunity to express publicly what I have long felt about Liz Colson's presence as a colleague. We have co-taught for a long time, cooperated in some endeavors, disputed in others. I have found her insights in seminars to be both quick and solid, and her control of a vast literature an example to all of us. In the administration of the department she has been unusually responsible and virtually indefatigable. Her judgments of persons and of issues have been sound, unprejudiced, and cogently argued regardless of the particular position taken. She has shown a critical concern for the discipline, her department, her colleagues, and our students. I have learned a lot from listening to her.



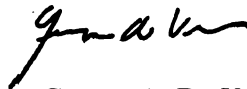
Eugene Hammel
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

For my wife Suzanne and myself, Elizabeth Colson has not been simply a distinguished scholar in social anthropology and a colleague at Berkeley; she represents to us an individual who has acted as an exemplar for professional women. Elizabeth in her own quiet way has been an instrument of change. It was after my marriage to Suzanne some ten years past that this meaning of Elizabeth as colleague came to the fore. Suzanne, as a singer, a woman professional in the music industry, came into quick rapport with Elizabeth Colson, an anthropologist, on the problems women continue to face even in this supposedly enlightened era. Anthropology, or social science, in this respect at least, is no different from the world of art and entertainment. The ethos of a modern society is pervasive. We developed a sincere admiration for Elizabeth as a survivor and a pioneer. Women today are having an easier time of it because Elizabeth persisted during a more difficult time of slow change. We need add nothing to the praise and admiration felt for Elizabeth as a scholar. May we add this brief note of appreciation for Elizabeth the person.



Suzanne Lake, chanteuse



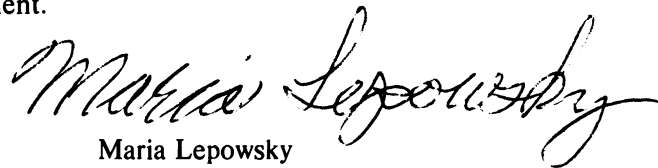
George A. De Vos
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

The retirement of Dr. Elizabeth Colson leaves a great gap in the Department of Anthropology at UC Berkeley which will never be filled, for she is irreplaceable. The breadth, time-depth and quality of her work is an invaluable example of what anthropological research and writing should be for her students and colleagues, particularly those in the early stages of their professional careers. She is especially inspiring as a role-model to women entering the discipline.

More than any other single person, Dr. Colson taught me how to be an anthropologist. I was first intellectually stimulated by her as an undergraduate, when I was fascinated by her lectures on North American Indians. A pioneer in anthropological studies of women's lives, Dr. Colson agreed to supervise my field statement and examine me during my Ph.D. orals on age and sex roles in the study of social organization. This was the first time that a field statement pertaining to gender or the role of women in society had been approved in the UC Berkeley Department of Anthropology. Dr. Colson encouraged my plan to conduct fieldwork on the roles of women and men in traditional exchange on an island in Papua New Guinea which had never been studied and about which virtually nothing was known. Her support was crucial to my obtaining funding to carry out this project. When I was temporarily overcome by the psychological and physical difficulties of being a lone fieldworker on a remote island, I encouraged myself with the thought that Dr. Colson had successfully surmounted similar problems in her own fieldwork and that she expected me to meet the challenge of my own research and bring back data which made a significant contribution to anthropology. Upon my return to Berkeley, she patiently read and criticized drafts of thesis chapters, asking me key questions and helping me avoid getting lost in endless ethnographic detail. I am grateful to her for her insistence that my work meet the most rigorous professional standards.

I will always take great pride in telling people that I was a student of Dr. Elizabeth Colson. I join with her other students and colleagues in thanking her for her generosity in giving her time and energy unhesitatingly to so many of us for so many years. I extend my best wishes to her for an enjoyable and fruitful retirement.



Maria Lepowsky
Research Fellow, School of Public Health
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

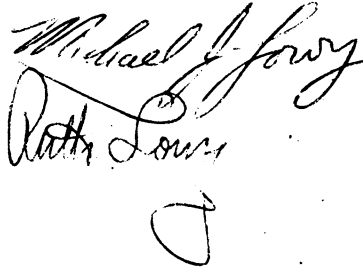
My wife Ruth and I are proud to be part of this expression of respect and affection for Elizabeth Colson. Her dedication to excellence as a teacher and sincere concern for the well-being of her students and their spouses has had a positive impact on our lives.

In Dr. Colson's lecture classes and seminars, I learned how to read an ethnography and develop a course outline. I suspect I am not the only student whose first lectures as a professor relied heavily on her comments. Professor Colson's commitment to the importance of scholarship in the midst of political and social upheaval provided a much needed anchor for her students.

It was Elizabeth Colson who helped us select a field site, by using her extensive networks. When we returned to Berkeley from West Africa suffering from "culture shock," she graciously shared her home with us, providing the calm and patience we needed to readjust.

Dr. Colson has been a role model for us both. We have been enriched by her dedication, brilliance, and kindness. This collection of essays in her honor is a symbol of a much deserved thank-you from her former students.

It is with affection that we wish Elizabeth Colson a happy and productive retirement.

The image shows two handwritten signatures in cursive. The top signature is "Michael J. Lowy" and the bottom signature is "Ruth Lowy".

Michael J. Lowy
Attorney at Law
Hayward, Calif.

Ruth Lowy

To the editors:

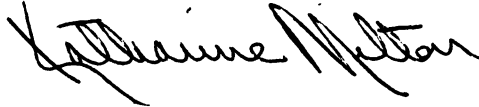
When I arrived at the University of Minnesota in September 1938 to take up my first teaching post, I was delighted to find that there were five or six first-rate graduate students in anthropology. Elizabeth Colson was one of them. They were a fine group and I learned much in their company. I probably learned most from Elizabeth. In her quiet manner, she would ask questions and make comments that were intellectually revealing and stimulating. Revealing in that a mildly expressed question could make me suddenly aware of how much I had yet to learn about a subject on which I had been holding forth. Stimulating in that her comments could suggest new aspects of a problem we were discussing. It was good to discuss matters anthropological with Elizabeth Colson then; it has been so over the years; and, all the more, it is good to be her colleague still.

The image shows a handwritten signature in cursive that reads "David G. Mandelbaum".

David G. Mandelbaum
Professor Emeritus
Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

Certainly it was my good fortune to come to Berkeley and have Elizabeth Colson as my colleague in my first years on the faculty. She set a continuous example of dedication and scholarly excellence that was hard to emulate though always inspiring. I know that I could have had no finer colleague and friend than Elizabeth, and I will miss her company and welcome advice, as well as her crisp remarks in faculty meetings—sessions that seem to have grown much longer since she began to absent herself from them!



Katharine Milton
Assistant Professor
Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

In our Ibo culture in Nigeria it is customary to show appreciation of someone important and loved by naming one's child after that person. That is what my wife, Ada, and I have done with regard to Elizabeth Colson: we named our first daughter Elizabeth, in gratitude for all that Professor Colson has done for us.

As one of Elizabeth's graduate students and later a junior colleague, I have benefited greatly from her generous intellectual, professional, and personal guidance and support, perhaps much more than others because I have had to make the transition from being a member of a population studied by anthropologists to that of being an anthropologist myself. After Elizabeth became my advisor during my second semester of graduate training, I realized how lucky I was. I soon learned that she had very high standards, and what pleased me very much was that she had the same expectations of me as she had of her American students.

That I did my doctoral work in Stockton, California, instead of Mombasa, Kenya, was an accident. But that I did it successfully was due to Elizabeth's guidance and support. From her I learned that the craft of ethnography which the anthropologist uses with advantage in studying African villages can also be used successfully in studying urban neighborhoods in the United States. From her advice and support I gained the confidence to study Americans in the same way that anthropologists study other peoples outside of Western societies. I recall that at one informal seminar (at which Elizabeth was not present) an American student told me that I might not be able to do my fieldwork successfully in the United States, especially among white middle-class Americans. I asked my fellow student, who was at that time planning to do his fieldwork in Nigeria, why he thought he could do his own fieldwork successfully in Nigeria. He seemed to imply that just because I was an African I could not study Americans, although as an American he would have no trouble studying Nigerians. This incident was enough reason for my eagerness to do my fieldwork in Stockton when the opportunity came unexpectedly. And in that research I made some deliberate effort to include white middle-class Americans. As in any fieldwork there were rough times, but Elizabeth was always available to advise and support me when I wrote or visited Berkeley for consultation.

Elizabeth has also been a friend indeed in other ways. During the years of the civil war in Nigeria, when I was cut off from my family and lost my Nigerian government scholarship, she gave me much needed social and material support. And she has continued these supports since my young family arrived after the war.

We are very happy to join Elizabeth's many friends, colleagues, and former students to congratulate her for all her admirable professional accomplishments and to wish her well on her retirement. We love her and appreciate her and always will.



John U. Ogbu
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley



Marcellina A. Ogbu

To the editors:

It was a special privilege to have been one of Elizabeth Colson's students. I variously appreciated her, feared her, held my breath when she read something I wrote, resented her, admired her, and knew I was lucky to have her in my camp. What I have realized most of all over the years is that I benefited greatly from her support and her counsel. I recall that ominous letter I received in the field saying it was time to return to Berkeley or else! I did, and I have never regretted doing so. She guided me through the dissertation process and she helped me obtain academic employment.

Elizabeth Colson was never easy, and she was uncompromising in her expectations. Much of the value of what I learned from her I only realized later. On more than a few occasions I have asked myself, "What would Professor Colson have done under such circumstances?" When she wrote that I had completed the necessary revisions for the dissertation she signed her letter Elizabeth (for the first time). I tried to write a letter to Elizabeth, but it was impossible. The respect and admiration I had for her was such that she would always be Professor Colson.



Wade C. Pendleton
Professor, Department of Anthropology
San Diego State University

To the editors:

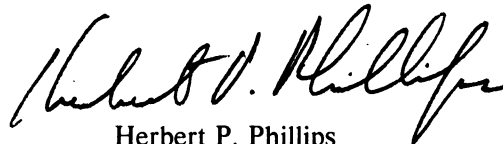
Personal relationships have their own peculiar chemistry, and one of my regrets over the years is that I have been unable to get closer to Elizabeth. Perhaps it was due to my awkwardness or her shyness, but I have come to accept my knowing her primarily in the role of colleague. I write of her in these terms.

In many respects, she is the embodiment of the perfect colleague. She has a clarity of thought and fluency of exposition that has never failed to demand our attention at faculty meetings. In fact, when Elizabeth spoke, all the background murmuring would stop—out of simple anticipation that what was now being said was judicious, important, and to the point. She had a way of cutting through our pap to get to the heart of an issue, and did so without

offense and with total intellectual honesty. One knew that when Elizabeth spoke the issue was not being ducked.

Perhaps even more to the point was Elizabeth's extraordinary capacity to serve as the principal intellectual "mediator" or "linker" of our department. For years, Glynn Isaac spoke of the necessity for the various parts of the department to have scholarly ties to one another. But, in fact, a lot of this was going on—spontaneously and naturally—under the aegis of Elizabeth's intellectual interests and interpersonal skills. That she worked easily with Benedict and Shack was obvious. But there were equally close links between such varying persons as Desmond Clark, George DeVos, Laura Nader, Sherry Washburn, Dorothy Koenig, Jim Anderson, and Jack Potter, to name but a few. Only someone like Elizabeth could create such a series of odd couples.

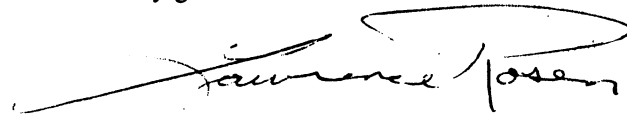
These and some of her other salient qualities—her curiosity; her magnanimity toward those who are different and more vulnerable; her sense of history and her superb sense of excellence—will of course be shared with others in her years of retirement. But they will also be a part of the cultural heritage that she will have left in Berkeley. And for these we will always be in her debt.



Herbert P. Phillips
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

One of my most vivid memories of undergraduate years at Brandeis is of Elizabeth Colson talking about her fieldwork in Africa. Nothing, she said, was more exciting than to see new data coming into your hands and being forced to comprehend it all in some orderly way. In her courses and her encouragement, in her personal and scholarly example, Elizabeth Colson's mind and sensibility had a profound impact on me as I'm sure they did on other undergraduates. Whether it be in leafing through the notes of her lectures I have kept and consulted ever since, or in straying from some of the approaches she taught me, I have remained, and always will remain, deeply appreciative and sincerely grateful.



Lawrence Rosen
Professor, Department of Anthropology
Princeton University

To the editors:

I was chairman of the department when Elizabeth Colson came to Berkeley, and I put through the paper for her appointment. I thought then that it was a particularly distinguished appointment. My admiration for her scholarship, her teaching, and her sound judgement is even greater in this year of her retirement.

She has played a major role in convincing social anthropologists that they can and should study change as well as function, and the discipline has benefited greatly in consequence.

John Rowe

John Rowe
Professor, Department of Anthropology
University of California at Berkeley

To the editors:

It is an honor to be among those asked to contribute to Elizabeth Colson's festschrift. I first met Elizabeth when she came to Northwestern for a year on a visiting appointment following her resignation at Brandeis. As a graduate student intensely interested in Africa I already admired Elizabeth for her thorough research on the Tonga and culture change in Central Africa. During the year Elizabeth was at Northwestern I came to admire her in ways that are more personal.

Certainly the most memorable course I took at Northwestern was an independent study on social organization that I took with Elizabeth. It is difficult to describe the intellectual interchange that took place during our weekly discussions of classical and recent works on social organization. It was from these sessions with Elizabeth, more than from any other aspect of my anthropological training, that I learned about the relationship between fieldwork experiences and written reports and theories based on them. Through our intensive discussions I was disabused of my naïve conception of anthropology based on the literature I had read, and began to learn how to evaluate anthropological data. The focus of my professional activities as an anthropologist has been on data evaluation and owes much to the "lessons" I first learned from Elizabeth.

During her year at Northwestern Elizabeth demonstrated her integrity as a concerned human being following the series of "political" events that led to her departure from Brandeis. I came to admire Elizabeth's courage in standing up for principles of human justice as much as I admired her as an anthropologist. Little did I realize at the time that I one day would find my own career disrupted by the "politics" of academic life. However, when the time came, I had no difficulty following Elizabeth's example.

Elizabeth's career as an anthropologist has been exceedingly productive and stimulating in diverse ways. I am sure that her retirement will be the same and that her colleagues and students will continue to share and benefit from those intellectual and personal qualities for which she is so well known and greatly admired.

Nancy J. Schmidt

Nancy Schmidt
African Studies Program
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To the editors:

Perhaps a few comments about some of my experiences with Elizabeth Colson during the first year that I knew her will convey, in small part, some insight into why she has had such a major impact on the social sciences and on the lives of her students and colleagues.

As a second-year graduate student at Harvard I sought out Elizabeth Colson while she was teaching at BU because I had been told she was the leading Africanist teaching on the East Coast. And so she was. At the end of her seminar on Central Africa, she asked me to help her find a colleague for a forthcoming study of a Central African people soon to be displaced because of dam construction. Failing to find anyone, I asked three months before her departure date if I might be suitable. Snorting that she hadn't thought I was interested, she then swept aside all objections from others, including my Harvard professors, about taking an untested graduate student to the field who hadn't completed his coursework, let alone his language requirements and general examinations.

During our first six weeks in Lusaka and in the field (we shared a camp for the first fortnight), Elizabeth did three things for me for which I will forever be grateful. First, she protected me from those who attempted to exploit my inexperience. Second, she insisted that I be her colleague, not her research assistant or student. And third, a magnificent fieldworker, she provided me with an electrifying example which I still attempt to follow today—the twenty-eighth year of what may well be the longest ongoing partnership in social anthropology. Thank you, Elizabeth, for inviting me to join you and for providing me with the inspiration not to quit during those first difficult weeks in the field.

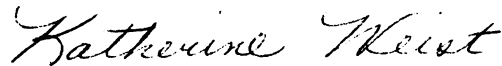


Thayer Scudder
Professor, California Institute of Technology
Pasadena, Calif.

To the editors:

It is a privilege to be able to extend my profound gratitude to Elizabeth Colson for the encouragement, consideration, thoughtfulness, and openness she showed me and my fellow students. Dr. Colson will always represent for me the highest example of a scholar, a teacher, and a human being. Her breadth and depth of knowledge of many different fields of study has always been a source of amazement and one of inspiration. As a teacher, she gave freely of her time, knowledge, and understanding. She patiently helped me through the intricacies of Levi-Strauss, seriously discussed my tentative efforts at theory formation, opened her house for evening seminars, and kept me informed of the latest publications. And she listened.

My years at Berkeley during the mid-'60s were invigorating, challenging, and frequently chaotic. Although I was caught up in the free-speech and anti-Vietnam movements, Dr. Colson, in her quiet and insightful way, was able to keep me on track and forced me to look at what was happening as an anthropologist. At a time when my friends were planning fieldwork in distant countries, she supported my interest in Indian reservation life, and guided me through the travails of a novice fieldworker. Having now experienced academia for a few years now myself, I can appreciate better the enormous dedication she brought to the classroom and to each individual student, not to mention a staggering workload. Frankly I feel sorry for all those future Berkeley students who will not experience the firmness, intelligence, honesty, and care which it was my good fortune to encounter.

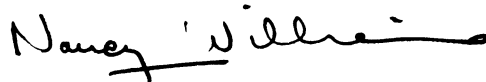


Katherine Weist
Associate Professor
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University of Montana

To the editors:

It is an honor for me to have an opportunity to write of my admiration and offer my appreciation for Elizabeth Colson as she retires from her active academic career (which is not, of course, the same thing as retiring from scholarship).

Elizabeth Colson was for me a model, as I am sure she was for her many other graduate students. She will remain for me that model of the conscientious yet compassionate scholar. I hope she enjoys many years of the rewards of scholarship, free from the more onerous chores of Academe and full of the pleasures that good friendships will bestow.



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