

## Tribute to Dolores LaChapelle

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We recently lost an extraordinary teacher and pathfinder. Dolores LaChapelle, Colorado native and renowned eco-philosopher, wilderness guide, and writer, died on January 21 in her beloved San Juan Mountains.

Dolores' life was marked by an insatiable appetite for unitive experience *and* for analytical wisdom. What she learned she vigorously shared through writings and workshops and friendships, affirmed from her alpine home of Silverton, Colorado. At the intersection of psyche and spirit and Earth and sky, she asked the ancient questions: "Who am I?" and "How can I find meaning in this alienating culture?" Trained as a historian and with a staggering breadth, she migrated among depth psychology, physiology, economics, ecology, Chinese science, ethology, ritual, linguistics, bioregionalism, Taoism, the evolution of technology—and more.

And she lived this relational philosophy of co-creation (though I don't believe she used that term), a world view with a more dissolved ego and forged connections to place. Dolores walked as lightly upon the land as possible in this industrial growth society. I should also mention that she shared her adventures, for many years, as the wife of Ed and the mother of David.

Early on, from a childhood, nature-mystical experience, she learned the practical benefit of living from the entirety of her being—and thus, living in the flow. She refused to be confined to the rigidities of the neocortex (and all the institutions flowing there from). She *remembered* through powder skiing of course, but also through advanced Tai Chian, rock climbing, long dance and chant, and through rhythm and rituals of place and of time: always going deeper and always teaching and sharing.

Dolores was one of the first writers in deep ecology. She taught the need to move beyond mere concepts when discussing issues of environment and culture. One needs to develop an ecological identity,

an ecological self. Tapping into the older levels of ourselves allows emergence of feelings of reverence for all of life. "Tuning" she called it. This is the life of a deeper realism and of nurturing the Soul. Deep self respect for living in this manner equates, in turn, to profound respect for the gift of this Earth. Her landmark book, *Sacred Land, Sacred Sex, Rapture of the Deep: Concerning Deep Ecology and Celebrating Life*, encapsulates her life's work. In it she demonstrates how a generation of children raised in a natural, place-based manner, can effect profound change. She wrote other books on ritual, skiing, Tai Chi and one concerning the life of her literary guiding light, D. H. Lawrence.

When I last saw her in late September she had slowed perceptibly, but every morning she would join her neighbours in a simple and most meaningful ritual: sitting on the porch and warming her body naturally in the Sun. Scarf wrapped tightly over her head, sweet grin on her face, she knew life was good.

Rest well, fair mountain wizard. You will be dearly missed.

Stephen G. Cook  
Denver

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## Call for Papers

*The Trumpeter is planning a special issue (or issues) to celebrate the life and work of Delores LaChapelle. The deadline for submissions is November 30, 2007. The special issue(s) will appear early in 2008.*

*Michael T. Caley, Associate Editor*