Dr. Susan Lynn WILLIAMS

WILLIAMS, Dr. Susan Lynn 1951 - 2018 Dr. Susan Lynn Williams, age 66, was tragically killed on April 24, 2018, in a traffic accident in California as she was driving from her home in Bodega Bay to teach at the main campus of the University of California at Davis, where she held the rank of Distinguished Professor in the Department of Evolution and Ecology. Dr. Williams earned a bachelor's of science degree from the University of Michigan, a master's degree in biological oceanography from the University of Alaska, and a Ph.D. in botany and marine biology from the University of Maryland. Dr. Williams was recognized as one of the most renowned marine ecologists in the US and globally, and she was a cherished mentor who encouraged women to pursue careers in marine science. Her many honors included the Aldo Leopard Fellowship in Environmental Leadership and fellowship in the California Academy of Science, the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. She taught and conducted research at major marine laboratories in Alaska, Hawaii, New England, Texas, Washington, California, the Caribbean, and Japan. Dr. Williams served as the science director of the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) National Undersea Research Program in the US Virgin Islands. She also was a certified aquanaut, and her research included scuba-diving, descending to 3,000 feet in a submersible vessel and, for four weeks, living and conducting research in an undersea habitat in St. Croix. In 2000, she was recruited to become the Director of UC Davis's Bodega Marine Lab, a post that she held for ten years before she returned to research and teaching. In 2009, the UC Davis Consortium for Women and Research honored her as an outstanding mentor for her championing inclusion and diversity in the sciences. In 2010, she received the UC Davis Academic Senate's Distinguished Scholarly Public Service Award for her longtime efforts to increase protection of coastal waters, an example being legislation that expanded the boundaries of two national marine sanctuaries (Gulf of the Farallones and Cordell Bank) off Northern California. She also served as president of the Coastal and Estuarine Research Federation (2009-2011) and received that organization's Outstanding Leadership Honor in 2011 and Distinguished Service Award in 2013. Dr. Williams was an innovator and advocate of international collaboration in marine education and ocean conservation. She studied the ecology of nearshore marine ecosystems, focusing on seagrass and coral reefs. Her research demonstrated how seagrass and seaweed could aid the restoration of damaged habitats and helped reveal how the strategic planting of seagrass could buffer and, over time, help offset the destructive impact of human activities. While at Bodega Marine Lab, she also conducted a multi-year study on the coral reefs of Indonesia, where she collaborated with faculty and mentored students at the Hasanuddin University in Makassar. In 2015, her collaborative research in California and Indonesia resulted in the first documentation of finding plastic debris from the ocean in fish being sold for human consumption. She was preceded in death by her parents, Plummer and Jane Williams, formerly of York, PA. She is survived by her husband, Bruce Nyden of Bodega Bay, CA; her sister and brother-in-law, Drs. Holly Williams and Art Hansen of Atlanta, GA; her uncles, Michael Rhoads of Madison, WI and John Rhoads of York, PA; and her niece Kaitlin Williams Hansen of New York City. A memorial service was held at the Bodega Marine Laboratory on May 1, 2018. To honor her lifetime love of the ocean, her cremated remains will be scattered by her family in both the Pacific and Atlantic oceans at a later date. Memorial donations may be made to the Dr. Susan Lynn Williams Memorial Fund that will fund student scholarships at the Bodega Marine Laboratory, University of California Davis (see link). https://give.ucdavis.edu/BOML/324223

Funeral Home
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