



## AAC Publications

---

### **Linda Chaplinsky McMillan, 1949–2023**

**Linda McMillan, loving wife and mother, and advocate for mountain preservation and primitive mountain recreation, passed away peacefully on May 14.** Her last days were in Moab, Utah, surrounded by family, after a decade-long courageous battle against Alzheimer's disease. Throughout those challenging years, Linda maintained her cheerful, generous nature.

Linda was born and raised in Houston and graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1972 with a B.A. in Latin American studies. She received an MBA from San Francisco State University in 1988. Linda loved adventure and was a gifted athlete. She was a surfer, sailor, and horseback rider during her youth, and in her mid-30s she became interested in rock climbing. The simple act of learning to climb in Yosemite Valley led her to devote the rest of her life to advocating for preserving the beauty of the mountains. She had a lasting impact on organizations and places she served, including the American Alpine Club (AAC), the International Mountaineering and Climbing Federation (UIAA), the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) WCPA Mountains Biome, the California Recreation Resource Advisory Committee, and various communities in the Sierra Nevada, Nepal, and elsewhere.

In her advocacy role, Linda worked to bring land managers, local communities, and climbers together to promote mountain stewardship. She was an internationally respected speaker on sustainable mountain practices and public partnerships. Her lifetime commitment to mountain advocacy was recognized with honors from the U.S. National Park Service, the National Parks Conservation Association, and the AAC, from which she received an Angelo Heilprin Citation for exemplary service in March 2003.

In 1997, when disastrous Yosemite floods prompted National Park officials to consider relocating employee and visitor housing in a plan that would dramatically impact Camp 4, Linda was vice president of the AAC, and she played a pivotal role among a coalition of mountaineering and environmental groups that filed suit in federal court. Climbers rallied around their scruffy but historic patch of earth, and under Linda's wise leadership, "contention gave way to collaboration," as she later noted. In 2003, Camp 4 was placed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Linda was president of the Mountain Protection Commission of the UIAA from 2008 to 2016 (only the third woman to be president of a UIAA commission). She was instrumental in the creation of the Mountain Protection Award, which has become the UIAA's lighthouse project in sustainability and has made a significant difference in supporting climate- and conservation-led initiatives worldwide. Linda's work with the UIAA came with the additional benefit of allowing her to climb with international friends in Japan, Sweden, and South Africa.

Linda is survived by her loving husband of 35 years, Thomas Ian McMillan, who accompanied her on climbs in the U.S., the European Alps, northern Wales, Asia, and South America, as well as her son and daughter and two grandchildren.

— **Thomas I. McMillan**

## Images



Article Details

Author	Thomas I. McMillan
Publication	AAJ
Volume	65
Issue	98
Page	344
Copyright Date	2024
Article Type	In memoriam