



## AAC Publications

---

### Virginia Boucher, 1929–2025

Photo: Eric Boucher

**Virginia (Ginnie) Boucher was an unsung hero in American Alpine Club history.**

Starting in 1994, Boucher was the volunteer chair for the AAC Library Committee for a decade, introducing best practices for libraries—including bringing online catalog access and interlibrary loans to this highly niche space of mountaineering records and literature. Boucher also was instrumental in the physical move of the AAC Library from the original clubhouse in New York to its new location beside the foothills of Golden, Colorado.

Boucher received the AAC's 2005 Angelo Heilprin Citation for exemplary service, thanks to her transformational leadership at the AAC Library. Not only did she bring the full force of library science to bear on this now world-renowned library and archive, she also helped steward the acquisition of many pieces of the John M. Boyle Himalayan Collection and the Nicholas B. Clinch Collection.

Boucher was a dedicated climber, with a flair for adventure. The Heilprin Award committee noted that she and her husband, Stanley Boucher—a lifetime member of the AAC—were known for their unplanned night descents, and they had a hilarious story about fighting off porcupines in the San Juan Mountains. She climbed the Grand Teton, Mt. Rainier, and many of Colorado's mountains, after starting climbing at the Garden of the Gods in Colorado Springs, where she attended Colorado College. Then Virginia Parker, she met Stan, a fellow student, through climbing, and they married between her junior and senior years.

The Bouchers' two children carried on her love of climbing and the arts in their own ways. Their daughter, Julie, and Julie's husband, Clive Baillie, were experienced and avid climbers, but tragically the couple died in a climbing accident on Mt. Toll, in Colorado's Indian Peaks Wilderness, in October 1996. Stan, who died in 2013, and Virginia are survived by Eric Reed Boucher, who goes by the professional name Jello Biafra and is the former lead singer for the punk rock band the Dead Kennedys.

Boucher's extensive impact as a volunteer for the AAC's Library Committee was fueled by her love for the mountains. But by the time she was serving on the committee, she had left climbing behind. In her memoir, *So What Did You Do with Your Life, VB? The Autobiography of a Librarian*, she wrote: "I know a number of those who have 'summitted' Mount Everest...those who are addicted to boulders, and a few such as myself who climb [only] in our memories."

Boucher, who attained a master's degree in library science, worked many years at Boulder Public Library and then Norlin Library at the University of Colorado, becoming prominent in national and international library organizations, writing a handbook, and speaking at conferences worldwide.

She first walked into the AAC Library, her son Eric said, because Stanley wanted to see it. She immediately had ideas and suggestions, and, newly retired from CU, she took on the volunteer work as a challenge. "She was very proud of that library," he said.

In her autobiography, Boucher recalled how her involvement with the AAC Library brought her full-circle: "I have drawn upon my special library experience...to give the best advice I can to this emerging

and unique library.... And finally, I have returned to my beginnings; I shelve books once again.”

To learn more about Virginia Boucher, see this obituary in the [Boulder Daily Camera](#).

—Hannah Provost

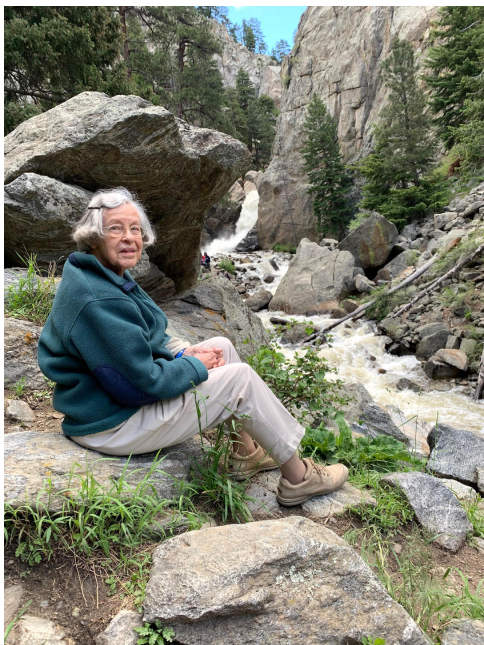
## Images



Virginia and Stanley Boucher, who met through climbing at Colorado College, stand in the center with friends, below the Minarets in the Sierra Nevada.



Sal Marino, Janet Robertson, Dave Robertson, and Virginia Boucher in the Minarets, Sierra Nevada, 1956.



Virginia Boucher at Boulder Falls, near Boulder, Colorado, in a photo taken by her son.



A smiling Virginia Boucher on her 95th with her son, Eric Boucher, professionally known as Jello Biafra, an artist and activist. He is the former lead vocalist for the seminal punk-rock band Dead Kennedys.

Article Details

|                |                |
|----------------|----------------|
| Author         | Hannah Provost |
| Publication    | AAJ            |
| Volume         | 67             |
| Issue          | 100            |
| Page           |                |
| Copyright Date | 2025           |
| Article Type   | In memoriam    |