



IRA JACKNIS

1952-2021

Ira Stuart Jacknis, who died on September 29, 2021 in Oakland, California, was born on March 25, 1952 in New York City.

Ira graduated from Yale University with a B.A. in anthropology and art history, *summa cum laude*, in 1974. While an undergraduate he worked as an intern at the Smithsonian Institution under curator William C. Sturtevant, participating in several important projects, including the *Handbook of North American Indians*. It was at the Smithsonian that his interest deepened in Native American ethnology and art history as well as history of anthropology.

In 1976 he began graduate studies at the University of Chicago under the mentorship of Nancy Munn, George W. Stocking, Jr. and Raymond D. Fogelson and received his Ph.D. in 1989. His dissertation was published as the classic *The Storage Box of Tradition: Museums, Anthropologists, and Kwakiutl Art, 1881-1981* in 2002. In the 1980s Ira worked at the Brooklyn Museum as an assistant curator for research on African, Oceanic and New World art and in 1991 he began his career as research anthropologist at the Phoebe A. Hearst Museum of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley.

A quiet and unassuming man, Ira was a brilliant intellectual, passionately dedicated to the history of anthropologists and their many involvements with indigenous peoples. A prolific researcher he published often and widely on crafts, art and artists, museum anthropology, visual anthropology, early sound recordings, and California Indians. Above all he wrote about anthropologists and their relations with collaborators in the field, including Franz Boas, A. L. Kroeber, George Hunt, Edward Curtis, and many lesser-known professional and amateur ethnologists. While at Berkeley he taught a

variety of courses on these subjects and supervised doctoral students, including a number of Native Americans.

Ira's books include *Objects of Myth and Memory: American Indian Art at the Brooklyn Museum* (1991), *Getemono: Collecting the Folk Crafts of Old Japan* (1994), *Carving Traditions of Northwest California* (1995) and *Food in California Indian Culture* (2006). He had completed several book projects not long before he passed away, including one about the model dioramas at the Peabody Museum. At the time of his death, he was preparing a paper about A. L. Kroeber's research with the Zuni people and its influence on Southwestern studies. Having studied and written about Kroeber for 30 years, Ira knew more about him than anyone.

Ira Jacknis was an outstanding scholar and mentor and will be sorely missed by his many friends and colleagues.

Sergei Kan and Herbert Lewis