

Memorial Minute for Sandra Sturdevant

Sandra Sturdevant, a long-time attender of the Visalia Friends Meeting, died on June 27, 2013 of leukemia. She was an Asian scholar, photojournalist, and lifelong activist for poor and oppressed peoples, especially focusing on the issue of women's labor. While teaching at the University of Hawaii, she lived and worked with the most impoverished people on Oahu, those, mostly native Hawaiians, who live on homestead land on the Waianae Coast. For a number of years she was the AFSC representative for Asia. She co-authored the book, "Let The Good Times Roll," which documented prostitution associated with US military bases in Asia and the Pacific and its devastating effect on women in traditional societies. In the California Central Valley she founded the Migrant Photography Project, which taught migrant women to document their living and working conditions through photography. Her work documenting the abuses of migrant labor in California also took her to Mexico, where the same corporations that act as magnets for migrant labor here are pushing farmers off their land there. She was in Oaxaca at the time of the 2006 insurrection, so she documented that as well. Another US journalist doing similar work at the same time and place was killed by Mexican security forces. Sandra's photography remains on the website, SSturdevantPhotography.com, where we hope to archive it. Sandra is one of the special people who spent time among us. She will be missed, but her legacy continues.