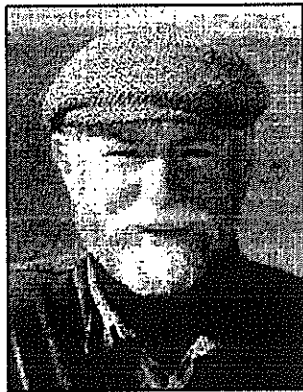


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## Robert MacLaury

Robert Ethan MacLaury, a noted cultural anthropologist who grew up in Belvedere, died February 18, 2004 in Beverly Hills of cancer. He was 59.

Mr. MacLaury was the son of Margaret MacLaury, a longtime former Belvedere resident, and the late Richard J. MacLaury. The young MacLaury attended both the old Tiburon School and newer Reed School and he graduated from Redwood High School.



His interest in anthropology started early. As a boy, he scouted and dug Indian mounds, hiked and camped in the hills, and collected and assembled animal skeletons. He dug a whale vertebra out of the black mud of Belvedere Cove, left from the old whaling days. A self-taught taxidermist, his collection of specimens later became the basis of the collection for naturalist Elizabeth Terwilliger's classes.

He also unearthed a whiffle tree, a double-arc'd piece identified as the part of the bridle that hitched the wagon to the team of horses that pulled the stage from the old railroad up to Belvedere Island.

A Boy Scout in Troop Nine, he flew homemade kites, beachcombed and collected butterflies, becoming enough of an expert to be treated like a colleague by the head of the entomology department when he visited the California Academy of Sciences.

As a teenager, he loved to surf. His picture appeared on the front of the *San Francisco Chronicle* when he and his pals took their boards out into the breakers at Ocean Beach on the coldest day of winter.

His interest in anthropology persisted. He received his bachelor's degree in anthropology and Spanish at the University of the Americas in 1967, according to a biography of him posted at the website of the American Philosophical Society in Philadelphia.

The same biographical piece noted that he spent two years in Santa Mara Ayoquesco de Aldama in Oaxaca, Mexico, studying the language and ethnography of the Zapotec people. He received his master's degree from the University of the Americas in 1970. His master's thesis was entitled, "Ayoquesco Zapotec: Ethnography, Phonology and Lexicon."

Beginning in the late 1970s, according to the APS, he embarked on a long-term study, partly funded by a Fulbright scholarship, of color categorization in Mesoamerica. He went on to receive his doctorate in Cognitive Anthropology from UC Berkeley in 1989 and published the findings of the Mesoamerican Color Survey in the 600-page text, *Color and Cognition in Mesoamerica*. It is in the collections of libraries around the world. He also published many scholarly articles.

His travels and lectures took him to New Zealand, Russia, Alaska, Panama, Scotland, Sweden, Europe, South Africa and many places in between. He taught graduate studies at the University of Arizona in Tucson and at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.

Mr. MacLaury never sought material success and was often poor, said his family, but they added, "he always did what he most loved and he treasured every minute."

He is survived by his wife Maria Vivanco MacLaury of Beverly Hills, whom he met in Arizona, where she studied architecture; his mother, Margaret MacLaury, who moved from Belvedere to Santa Rosa about five years ago; two sisters, Margerie MacLaury of Mill Valley and Joyce MacLaury of Santa Rosa; and a brother, Richard MacLaury of San Leandro.

Services will be private.