

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Historian Wilbur Jacobs Dead at 79

Wilbur R. Jacobs, a founding member of the UC Santa Barbara History Department and a nationally recognized scholar of Native American and U.S. colonial history, was killed in a car accident in Pasadena on June 15. He was 79.

A native of Chicago, Illinois, Jacobs earned his Ph.D. from UCLA and joined the UCSB faculty in 1949 after teaching at Johns Hopkins and Stanford universities. He authored numerous reviews, essays, and articles in addition to six books, the most recent being "The Fatal Confrontation: Historical Studies of American Indians, Environment, and Historians" (University of New Mexico Press, 1996). Jacobs co-authored or edited six other books, including the two-volume "Letters of Francis Parkman," (University of Oklahoma Press, 1960), a Pulitzer Prize finalist in history.

The UCSB History Department established the Wilbur Jacobs Award for outstanding graduate students in colonial or Native American history at the time of Jacobs' retirement in 1988. His other honors included the Western History Association's Award of Merit, which he recently received for a "lifetime of revisionism." Jacobs served as the president of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association in 1976-77.

"He was instrumental in developing the quality history department that UCSB enjoys today. But he was perhaps most proud of his pioneering work in the study of Western history, particularly as it involved Native Americans. Prior to his time most

historians focused on developments in the West from an Anglo perspective. He wasn't the first to branch out but he was certainly among the best to do so," said Alexander DeConde, a professor emeritus who succeeded Jacobs as the chair of the UCSB History Department in 1964.

Jacobs is survived by his wife, Priscilla, and their children, William and Emily, of San Gabriel; daughters Betsy Hayden of Goleta and Cathy Homer of Santa Barbara from a previous marriage; and a sister, Shirley Parker of Santa Maria.

Services will take place at 11 a.m. Saturday, June 20, at Mountain View Mortuary, 2400 North Fair Oaks Avenue in Altadena

About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.