

UC SANTA BARBARA

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[Andrea Estrada](#)

Memorial Service to Honor William Freudenburg, UCSB Professor and Renowned Environmental Scholar

A memorial service honoring William R. Freudenburg, the Dehlsen Professor of Environmental Studies at UC Santa Barbara, will take place at the UCSB Faculty Club at 1 p.m. on Saturday, January 22. Freudenburg, 59, died December 28 after a long battle with bile duct cancer, according to an announcement from the Environmental Studies Program.

A specialist in natural resource development and its associated human and environmental risks, Freudenburg was also an expert on the impact of environmental disasters. He authored or co-authored three important books on oil exploration and production, including "Blowout in the Gulf -- The BP Oil Spill Disaster and the Future of Energy in America" (The MIT Press, 2010). A Publisher's Weekly Pick of the Week when it came out in October, the book examines the Deepwater Horizon explosion and subsequent oil spill, as well as the decisions and policies that made the disaster not only possible, but also inevitable.

In addition to his position as a core faculty member in the Environmental Studies Program, Freudenburg also held affiliated positions at UCSB's Bren School of Environmental Science and Management and in the Department of Sociology.

Among Freudenburg's other works are "Catastrophe in the Making: The Engineering of Katrina and the Disasters of Tomorrow" and "Oil in Troubled Waters: Perceptions, Politics, and the Battle Over Offshore Drilling." He also wrote or co-wrote dozens of journal articles, books, and book chapters that focused on the interaction between society and the environment.

"Professor Freudenburg exemplified tremendous courage and grace in his struggle with cancer," said Chancellor Henry T. Yang. "Despite his illness, he never wavered in his passion for teaching and research, and for making a difference in our world. The many lives he touched will always be a very important and meaningful aspect of Bill's lasting legacy."

A fierce advocate for the protection of rural communities and the environment, Freudenburg served on committees and boards of directors of several professional organizations, including the Rural Sociology Society; the Association for Environmental Studies and Sciences, an organization he helped found; the American Association for the Advancement of Science; the American Sociological Association; the Council on Agricultural Science and Technology; the National Academy of Sciences/National Research Council; the Risk Analysis and Policy Association; and the U.S. Department of Energy's Environmental Management Advisory Committee.

Born in Madison, Neb., on November 2, 1951, Freudenburg earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, where he graduated Phi Beta Kappa. He completed his master's and doctoral degrees in sociology at Yale University, and began his academic career in 1978 as an assistant professor at Washington State University. In 1986, following a year as a Congressional Fellow in the U.S. House of Representatives and a year as visiting associate professor at the University of Denver, he joined the faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison as professor of rural sociology and environmental studies. He was named the Dehlsen Professor of Environmental Studies and Sociology at UCSB in 2002.

Freudenburg is survived by his wife, Sarah Stewart; their son, Maxwell Stewart Freudenburg; his mother, Betty Davis Freudenburg of Estes Park and Colorado Springs, Colo.; his brother Jim Freudenburg of Longmont, Colo.; his sister, Patti Freudenburg of Colorado Springs; and several nieces and nephews.

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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.