

IN MEMORIAM
BARBARA R. MACROBERTS (30 JUNE 1942–10 APRIL 2026)

Lynn Jackson

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Barbara Richey MacRoberts, age 83, passed away peacefully at her residence in Shreveport, Louisiana, on April 10, 2026. Barbara was born June 30, 1942, in Tucson, Arizona. She lived a long, full life in which she pursued many interests. She was surrounded by her friends in her final months.

Barbara received a Bachelor of Arts in Anthropology from the University of Arizona where she met her future husband, Michael H. MacRoberts. She later earned a Master of Arts in Biological Anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley. Barbara and Michael married on May 16, 1964, in London. In 1964, they conducted a six-month study of Barbary apes in Gibraltar. In 1968, 1971–1974, they conducted a three-year study of the social organization of Acorn Woodpeckers in California. From 1969–1971, they studied gulls in Cumbria, England, and titmice in Oxford, England. They conducted research and published articles on animal behavior and communication, sociology and philosophy in science, and especially botany and ecology. Barbara made every step Michael did as she partnered with him throughout their academic and professional careers.



FIG. 1. Barbara MacRoberts during field research on Walney Island, England, with her husband Michael H. MacRoberts.

Barbara and Michael returned to Louisiana in the 1980s where they started their own consulting business, BogResearch. They began researching natural plant communities in Louisiana and East Texas and conducted field work on the Kisatchie National Forest and the National Forests and Grasslands in Texas. They also worked on the Big Thicket in Texas and Eddie D. Jones Park, Walter B. Jacobs Memorial Nature Park, and Columbia Park in Caddo Parish. They also had a partnership with Louisiana State University, Shreveport as associates of the LSUS Red River Watershed Management Institute and the Museum of Life Sciences until Michael's death in 2021. Together, they published over 150 publications. Their botanical publications can be found at <https://www.biodiversitylibrary.org>. The MacRoberts' publications contributed to scientific knowledge within the disciplines they studied. Studies on prairies, bogs, and Sandylands on National Forest lands gave forest managers in Texas, Louisiana, and Arkansas insight into best practices for managing plant communities.

Barbara was a gifted artist who documented her field work in picture journals, including pen and ink drawings of the native plants of Louisiana and East Texas. She loved caring for her home, plants, and her cat, and remained a generous mentor and friend to many young botanists throughout her life.

Barbara is preceded in death by her husband Dr. Michael H. MacRoberts and her parents. She is survived by brothers John Richey (Fran) of Sierra Vista, Arizona; James Richey of Portland, Oregon; and numerous nieces and nephews, many friends, and her beloved cat, Doggie.