

Valeen Tippetts Avery, 1936-2006

It is with enormous sadness that her family and friends notify the members of the Mormon History Association, the John Whitmer Historical Association, and the Western History Association of the sudden and unexpected death of Val Avery, a former president of MHA (1987-88). A gifted biographer, with a special interest in the lives of women, Val was the co-author with Linda King Newell of *Mormon Enigma: Emma Hale Smith, Prophet's Wife, Elect Lady, Polygamy's Foe* (1984, 2nd Ed., 1994), and author of *From Mission to Madness: The Last Son of the Mormon Prophet* (1998). Both biographies won the Evans Award for the best biography in Western history. She was also the author of many articles, reviews, and commentaries. For many years, she was Professor of History, with a specialty in women's history, at Northern Arizona University. She retired in 2005. Her beloved husband Bryan Collier Short also died unexpectedly in 2003.

Val is survived and deeply mourned by her four children, Christopher, Maureen, Nathan and Thad, and by her many friends, especially her close friends and "sidekicks" Jan Shipps of IUPUI and Liz Dulany of the University of Illinois Press. Jan said, "This is an incalculable loss of a friend and colleague who had a way of making every person she knew feel special and making people believe that they had the capacity to accomplish whatever it was they set out to do. Liz and I will never forget those legendary road trips, and her many friends will remember the late-night 'smokers' in our digs at professional meetings, and Val's irreplaceable friendship. She had the essential empathy that is key to great biography and that empathy also made her one of the world's greatest friends."

Val's family will be establishing an endowment in her name at Northern Arizona University. Contributions clearly marked as a memorial to Val may be sent to the NAU Foundation, P.O. Box 4094, Flagstaff, AZ 86011-4094.