

2017 Governor's Historic Preservation Awards

Carmen Lucas



Carmen Lucas is a Kwaaymii Laguna Indian from San Diego County and has been a student of her Indian heritage throughout her life. She learned about cultural landscapes and ancestral human remains from her father, the late Tom Lucas, a well-known San Diego Indian, and has learned about essence of place and intangible cultural resources from working on her homeland and burial grounds at the former Laguna Indian Reservation, now Lucas Ranch, as the caretaker for over the last forty years.

She has worked in the field of Cultural Resource Management (CRM) as a Native American Monitor, Consultant, and Educator for nearly thirty years, bringing a tribal perspective to cultural resource surveys and other efforts. Carmen has helped archaeologists in sifting dirt and identifying fragmented human remains as well as archaeological deposits. She is a strong advocate for the increased use of

noninvasive technology in identifying resources, including the use of historic human remains detection canines.

Carmen helped to write and successfully nominate at least four historic properties to the National Register of Historic Places, based on their tribal cultural values: Ah-ha Kwe-ah-mac' (Cuyamaca Village), Wiipuk uun' yaw Trail (Cottonwood Trail), The Kwaaymii Homeland, and University House at the University of California, San Diego, the rehabilitation of which won the 2015 Governor's Historic Preservation Award. Her comments and participation in consultation, at both the planning and individual project levels, has led to the protection of tribally-significant properties, such as the Padre Dam property in San Diego County which has been protected from development and repatriated to the Kumeyaay Diegueño Land Conservancy for protection in perpetuity. Carmen's efforts also helped result in the adoption of innovative mitigation measures which have served as constructive precedent elsewhere in the state.

She provides Cultural Resources Sensitivity Training on utility and other projects for all workers who will be in the field to help them identify resources of concern, and is a frequent presenter at local reservations to train new classes of tribal monitors. She served two terms on the Board of the San Diego Archaeological Center, and was appointed to San Diego County Historic Sites Board.

One of Carmen's greatest joys is walking the land with tribal youth from local reservations, sharing her passion for the ancestors and their lifestyles. At 81 years of age, she continues to be an inspiration to all who work to preserve California's treasured heritage.