



UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS

September 26, 2014

Sheila Levine

Sheila Levine, Associate Director and Editorial Director of the University of California Press until her retirement in 2011, died on September 21 after a long struggle with ovarian cancer. During her forty-year career at UC Press, Sheila was instrumental in developing distinguished programs in several fields, notably Asian studies, European history, and food studies, working with such renowned authors as Marion Nestle, Melvyn Goldstein, Morris Rossabi, Lila Abu-Lughod, and Paul Freedman. She fostered partnerships with a wide range of international publishers, including the BBC, the British Museum, the British Library, Thames & Hudson, Orion Publishing Group, Editori Laterza, and Douglas & McIntyre. She also served as the US editor for the best-selling *Planet Earth*, published in collaboration with the BBC, and the multivolume Historical Atlas series with Derek Hayes.

In the early years of her career, Sheila developed lists in history and Asian studies, which continue to be among UC Press's preeminent editorial programs. She launched the influential series *Studies on the History of Society and Culture*, edited by Lynn Hunt and Victoria Bonnell, publishing books by Leora Auslander, Sarah Maza, and Debora Silverman, among many others. With UC Press's former director James Clark, she created the Philip E. Lilienthal imprint in Asian studies, publishing works by such leading scholars as Frederic Wakeman, Gail Hershatter, Theodore Bestor, Dorothy Ko, Susan Naquin, Joseph Esherick, Andrew Gordon, Kären Wigen, and Gail Lee Bernstein.

In 2001, Sheila launched the first formal food studies program at a university press, working with series editor Darra Goldstein on *California Studies in Food and Culture*. This field-defining series included many of the most important figures in food studies and such high-profile titles as the *Encyclopedia of Pasta* by Oretta Zanini De Vita, *Dangerous Tastes* by Andrew Dalby, *Inside the California Food Revolution* by Joyce Goldstein, and *Cuisine and Empire* by Rachel Laudan. One of the last books Sheila sponsored, *The Cookbook Library* by Anne Willan, was a finalist for the James Beard Foundation Award and winner of the Jane Grigson Award from the International Association of Culinary Professionals. Sheila also helped Darra Goldstein publish the

groundbreaking *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*.

As editorial director, Sheila hired and mentored a team of editors over nearly two decades. “She had a rare talent for recruiting, directing, and supporting editorial staff, in addition to being a brilliant editor herself,” observes former UC Press Director Lynne Withey. “Under her leadership, UC Press had—and continues to have—the strongest editorial team in its long history. I believe Sheila herself considered her staff to be her single greatest accomplishment.” According to Executive Editor Naomi Schneider, “Sheila had uncommon wisdom as editorial director, judiciously knowing when to push us forward, when to rein us in, and when to give us the freedom to take necessary risks.” The current editorial director, Kim Robinson, adds, “I am guided by Sheila’s legacy as a strong yet sensitive leader.”

Sheila Levine was born February 1, 1949, in Plainfield, New Jersey. She received a BA in history from Northwestern University in 1970 and soon after began her publishing career at UC Press as assistant to three editors before becoming an acquisitions editor, the first of several promotions during her career. She also had a life as a bookseller. In 1974, she cofounded University Press Books, a Berkeley bookstore devoted to scholarly titles, which she managed for ten years.

Sheila’s boundless curiosity and passion for travel led her around the world, from Beijing to Buenos Aires. In recent years, she spent a year with her family in Argentina, where her brother Roberto lives. In her last months, she took a road trip through the Southwest with her daughter, Rebecca, visited France with her husband, Martin, and regularly shared talks, hikes, and meals with family and friends. Many of her friends and colleagues were lucky enough to spend time with her in recent weeks, sharing stories, enjoying her wit, and, as always, talking about books.

Sheila leaves behind her husband, Martin Kupferman, and two children, Jonah Kupferman and Rebecca Kupferman, as well as two brothers, Roberto Levine and Alan Levine.

Condolences may be sent to:

Martin Kupferman, Rebecca Kupferman, and Jonah Kupferman
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