

My Friend Yvonne Mozee

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By Rudy Owens

Yvonne Mozee, one of my absolute favorite persons, passed away recently in her long-time home of Sitka, Alaska. She died following a stroke. Of all the people I have known, Yvonne was among the few with whom I have felt a special kindred spirit. Now, her soul has passed on, and I feel a loss knowing she is not here among us.

Born in Anchorage when Alaska was still a rough and undeveloped territory, she lived in the Portland, Oregon area and in Nome, Alaska growing up. [According to the Daily Sitka Sentinel newspaper](#), following her graduation from Willamette University, she worked for an international peace organization called Moral Rearmament. Later, she traveled widely in the United States, working as a photographer and writer. She eventually settled by the sea in beautiful Sitka, in Southeast Alaska.

She was among the finest photographers I knew. She had a rare ability to see things others could not. Her photos expressed a sense of wonder and peace with the world, which to me reflected a quiet calm that you could feel in her presence, always. Her photographs of Alaska and its people always captured the bright side, when she had to have known how tough, brutal, and ugly this state could be, particularly in rural communities. Living in Nome as a younger person could not, and all but certainly was not, easy. It still is hard, out in the remote Arctic.

I first met Yvonne in May 1992, when I worked for a summer with the Daily Sitka Sentinel newspaper, where she also worked part time. Despite our large age difference, Yvonne treated me as an equal and peer. She always listened. There are few people with whom I have felt so instantly connected. We stayed in touch afterward. I saw her again in 1999 and last in 2004. The last time we spoke was by phone as she was passing through Anchorage about two years ago. I regret I never said a final goodbye.



Yvonne never married, and I never asked her about her private life. It was an unwritten understanding, and I always respected that. She always looked good. I can only imagine the figure she cut when she was 20, in her youth. I remember her beautiful blue eyes, high cheek bones, soothing voice, and a wit as sharp as a samurai's blade. She used that wit too. She also had these remarkable long, thin hands too and a vitality that glowed.

The finest compliment I ever received as a writer was when she told me how moved she was when I described my feelings about missing seeing the mist fall on Sitka sound just as the rain began to fall and the color was sapped and everything turned to a misty gray. She said I captured it just right. Coming from an artist such as herself, and it was a great gesture.

I will meet very few more Yvonnas on this planet. She was one of a kind. She left this world a little richer and I was damn lucky to have known her.