

## IN MEMORIAM: BRUCE MITCHELL



Bruce Allen Mitchell passed away at his home in Lincoln, California, on October 2, 2021. Bruce was born to Don and Bernice (Bee) Mitchell in Stockton, California. He is survived by his sons, Chris Mitchell (Janette) and Sean Mitchell (Eddie). He is also survived by a granddaughter, grandson, and great-granddaughter, his sister, Cookie Brakebill, and a niece and nephew. Bruce was

preceded in death by his wife Virginia (Ginny) Mitchell of nine years, mother of his sons, on January 5, 1970, and his wife of 33 years, Leanne A. (McComas) Mitchell, on October 11, 2020.

Bruce worked for 38 years as an educator and principal in the Rio Linda Union School District. Leanne was also an educator and principal at RLUSD, where they met and eventually married in August of 1982. Bruce and Leanne were both highly respected in their work community, and generous and loving individuals who placed education and students as top priority.

Bruce was well known for his love of folk dancing. He began dancing at the young age of 16, and the dance world took him to many locations throughout the U.S. and other countries. For 50 years he directed a recreational folk dance and the performing group Camtia. They performed at Sacramento Camellia Festivals, and at Oktoberfest celebrations throughout California. He served as Director of the Stockton Folk Dance Camp at the University of the Pacific for 25 years and continued as a dance instructor and mentor for the folk dance community up until his passing.

Dance brought Bruce much joy and fulfillment in his life, but he was also an avid fisherman; fan of the Giants, 49ers, and Sacramento Kings; enjoyed collecting stamps; and loved making sausage soup for the family at Christmas.

The family will be organizing a Celebration of Life for both Bruce and Leanne in the spring of 2022. Family and friends look forward to acknowledging and remembering the many connections they made and the lives that the Mitchell family touched.

This obituary appears online at <https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/sacbee/name/bruce-mitchell-obituary?id=31175429>. You can leave a message for the family on that website, if you wish.



## BRUCE MITCHELL 2011 SIFDAC HONOR ROLL

From the website of the Sacramento International Folk Dance and Arts Council (SIFDAC), <https://folkdancesac.org/bruce-mitchell.html>. Used with permission.

Our 2011 Honor Roll recipient is Bruce Mitchell. Sacramento has been extremely blessed to have him here. We, of course, take him for granted, and he has to go elsewhere to get the respect he deserves. He is known worldwide as the director of the Stockton Folk Dance Camp, and his name is spoken with reverence, often in many different languages. But here in Sacramento, we have the great luxury of his presence and influence all the time.



He has taught recreational folk dance classes of all sorts for over 50 years. He was a mere boy when he taught his first-ever folk dance class to 150 junior high school students in Lodi! Talk about trial by fire! Then he started the Country Cousins in Stockton.

When he moved to Sacramento, Bruce founded the Twilight Twirlers. The group later changed its name to Camtia Dance Ensemble, and this group danced continuously for 50 years, doing all kinds of ethnic dancing. The group ended as a German performing dance group in

the greater Sacramento area. Some of you may remember Bruce's spectacular Balkan performing group, Seljan, that danced during the 1980s. Then there was the Thursday Dancers, a recreational, non-partner, Balkan-type group, which was quite a new concept at the time, in the 1980s. This group stayed together many years but had to switch dance halls so many times that the group took on the name The Nomads. Currently, The Nomads live on as the more senior group, The Tuesday Dancers. Bruce additionally created the Sacramento Vintage Dancers, a name that refers to the type of dancing as well as the average age of the dancers.

Bruce has held every office and position there is, in all of the folk organizations there are. He is responsible, in many ways, for the legendary strength of our folk dance community here in Sacramento. Bruce also worked as a public elementary school teacher and principal during a long and fruitful career. During these years, he taught many, many children their first folk dances. He always had a clear mission: to spread joy and fun. He knew that was what would keep the movement alive, and that, after all, is what dancing is all about. Bruce made sure that every dancer in every class has at least one good laugh and preferably lots of them. Thank you, Bruce, for bringing so much joy and so much great dancing to us and to the Sacramento community!

## MASTER TEACHER BRUCE MITCHELL

From the website of the Folk Dance Federation of California, South: [https://socalfolkdance.org/master\\_teachers/mitchell\\_b.htm](https://socalfolkdance.org/master_teachers/mitchell_b.htm)

Bruce Mitchell started folk dancing in 1951 as part of a folk dancing family in Stockton. He first attended the Stockton Folk Dance Camp in 1952 and attended every camp session since that time.

In July of 1955, as a teenager, Bruce was one of the first youngsters to win a scholarship to the California Stockton Folk Dance Camp as a representative of the Stockton Council of the Folk Dance Federation of California. The scholarship was presented by Millie von Konsky, who was chairing the junior scholarship committee that year. Bruce had already been teaching folk dancing and exhibited a keen interest in the folk dance movement.

Bruce was the director of the Camtia Dance Ensemble of Sacramento since 1960 and was the director of the Seljan Dance Ensemble for three years. Extending his folk experience, Bruce made three trips at the invitation of Chang Ching-shan to Taiwan and Hong Kong as a guest instructor of international dance.

Bruce continued to be active in the Folk Dance Federation of California, and in 1968, he became its president, serving for two years.

In 1955, Bruce became a member of the Stockton Camp Committee. He took over as its director from Jack McKay in 1967. Bruce was on the Board of Trustees and was president of the National Folk Organization (NFO), 2007–2009.

Bruce passed away on October 2, 2021.

Dances Bruce has taught include Alunelul ca la Gorj, Amos Moses, Arap, Bossa Nova Mixer, Bučimiš, Četvorka, Čiro, Continental Hustle, Cotton-Eyed Joe, Cumberland Square, Dînga, Dobre Stara Dni (Good Old Days), El Carnavalito, Gustav's Skoal, Hitch Hiker, Hustle, Iu Hu, Ivanice, Jianul, Lipa ma Marýca, Maple Leaf Rag, Mayim, New York Hustle, Pata Pata, Popcorn, Prigorska Polka, Ruby Baby, Sedi Donka, Seven Jumps, Širba Dogarilor, Slap Slap, Snoopy, Strumička Petorka, Twelve Step, Ţupa, and Yenka.

