

## In Memoriam

**Van Larsen Perkins**  
**Professor of History Emeritus**  
**UC Riverside**  
**May 22, 1930 – February 18, 2019**



Dr. Van Larsen Perkins, Professor of History Emeritus at UC Riverside (UCR), died of heart failure on February 18, 2019, at age 88.

Dr. Perkins was born on May 22, 1930, in Standardville, Utah. He grew up in a coal mining town where he delivered groceries for his dad, who ran the company store. After completing high school, he became a shipping and receiving agent for the Bechtel Corporation. He was drafted into the U.S. Army during the Korean War and served as a medic in Germany. He married Colleen Campbell in 1950, started a family, and entered the University of Utah while continuing his employment at Bechtel.

In 1956, Perkins received a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Utah. He then began graduate studies at Harvard, where he received a Master of Arts in 1958 and a Ph.D. in 1966. During this time (1960 to 1964), he was a faculty member at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah.

Dr. Perkins joined the faculty at UCR in 1964 where he taught courses in 20th Century American History, the U.S. Constitution, and the Supreme Court. He also served as the Associate Dean of the Graduate Division, Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs, and Acting Executive Vice Chancellor. While he was Vice Chancellor in the 1970s, he was a key figure in helping the university navigate a financial crisis so severe that there was even talk of shuttering UCR entirely.

Dr. Perkins was the author of *Crisis in Agriculture: The Agricultural Adjustment Administration and the New Deal, 1933*, published in 1969. The book served as a model for others writing about programs initiated during the New Deal.

Dr. Perkins married Katherine Bennet McGuire in 1986. They became frequent visitors to Santa Fe. When UCR offered Dr. Perkins early retirement in 1991, the couple happily relocated to Santa Fe, where they lived for the remainder of his life. In retirement, Dr. Perkins became very involved in conservation issues

and worked for various organizations lobbying for environmental causes. Along the way, he met a white water rafting crowd, and found his new passion: navigating the wild rivers of the West. He enjoyed camping, rafting and being in the natural world.

Dr. Perkins was the last survivor of his nine siblings. He is survived by his wife, Kathy; his daughters, Cheryl Perkins Scarano and Regan Perkins (Alan) of Los Angeles; sons Mark of Denver, Scott (Diane) of Moreno Valley, CA and Brett (Linda) of Riverside, CA; his granddaughters, Dominique Perkins of Tempe, Valerie Perkins Bartlett (Cade) of Chicago, Geneil Perkins of Bloomington, IN and Leslie Perkins of Northridge, CA; and his great-granddaughter, Alice Bartlett of Chicago.

Adapted and edited by Paul Nabity and Katja M. Guenther from sources available at

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