

# The Story Catcher

Mari Sandoz Heritage Society  
Celebrating 50-Years 1971-2021



## Heading Back to Sandoz Country

Looking Ahead to the 2023 Pilster Great Plains Lecture & Sandoz Symposium in September

The 2023 Pilster Great Plains Lecture & Sandoz Symposium, titled "**Mari Sandoz's Homeland: Past, Present and Future,**" are headed back to Sandoz Country at Chadron State College September 28-30, 2023.

This year's event will feature sessions in the Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center and the CSC Student Center Ballroom. Off-campus activities will take place at the Bean Broker in downtown Chadron and college Herbarium or Chadron State Park. The return ends a hiatus started by the Covid-19 Pandemic and followed by two years of livestream on the internet and in-person gatherings at the Center for Great Plains Studies on the University of Nebraska Lincoln campus.

Beloved author Mari Sandoz, 1896-1966, is celebrated for her histories of the Native Americans and homesteaders living on the High Plains. She lived and wrote in Lincoln, Denver and New York City, but the dominant subject of her work was the place and the people of the High Plains where she was born and reared, where she centered her research and gained insights into the events and personalities that populate her histories.

The focus will be on the High Plains and its natural and human history to create increased interest in looking more deeply into this history and our attendees own local or regional stories both individually and in group settings.

The annual Pilster Great Plains Lecture will be presented by Dr. Andrew Graybill, Professor and Director of the Clements Center for Southwest Studies at Southern

Methodist University in Dallas, Texas. His title, "What's So Great About the Great Plains?"

The Great Plains is a region that is difficult to define and often overlooked and misunderstood. Graybill traces one early effort to give the Great Plains its due. In his most important book, *The Great Plains* (1931), leading western historian Walter Prescott Webb (1888-1963) emphasized the significance of the environment as a historical actor in its own right. Yet the book is marred by considerable shortcomings, among them Webb's wincing racism. In his talk highlighting the recent 2022 reissue of the book (University of Nebraska Press), Graybill explores the volume's notable limitations while arguing for its enduring vitality.

Graybill is the author or editor of four books, including *The Red and the White: A Family Saga of the American West* (Norton/Liveright, 2013). He taught at the University of Nebraska from 2003-2011.

The Pilster Lecture is made possible by the 2006 gift of ranchland in northwest Nebraska near Whitney in Dawes County, by the late Esther Pilster. The gift, which established an endowment with the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, was a tribute to her late husband Raleigh, who grew up on the ranch, and his parents John and Grace Pilster. As a beloved teacher and school administrator for 44 years, Esther served 29 years as principal at Boyd Elementary School in Omaha.

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The Symposium registration form is enclosed in this newsletter or you can register online through our website at [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org)

# In Tribute...John Remley Wunder (1945-2023)

John R. Wunder died on Sunday, June 25, 2023, in Lincoln, NE at the age of 78. He was deeply involved in the teaching and study of western history which naturally led him to the Mari Sandoz Society where he served as President and a Board member for years.

Former student and colleague Elaine Nelson, Executive Director of the Western History Association Assistant Professor at the University of Kansas, and a Sandoz board member, shares some of her thoughts.

“Dr. Wunder, a legal scholar of Great Plains, Native American, and American Western histories, was active in the WHA for nearly four decades and served as the 49th President in 2010. The WHA is grateful to Andrew Graybill (Director of the SMU Clements Center for Southwest Studies) for writing the following obituary for WHA members and beyond. On a very personal note, John's death hits me hard. I think we all have stories of how we became interested in studying the American West. John ("Dr. Wunder") was my link. Had I not taken history courses taught by two of his former students during my bachelor's degree at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, my life would have veered in an entirely different direction. They pointed me toward John's advisement as I entered the History M.A. program at UNL in the fall of 2002. I learned so much from John in my two years there. My fellow Wunder students/colleagues and I quickly understood that his "suggestions" were actually pieces of life-altering advice that were not really meant for us to ponder. Two of my favorite JW suggestions were that I attend the 2003 WHA Conference and move to New Mexico for my Ph.D. I still vividly recall these specific conversations in his office.”

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John R. Wunder leaves behind a remarkable legacy of scholarly work and devoted mentorship. He is already missed.

John was born on January 7, 1945, in the small town of Vinton, Iowa, and grew up in nearby Dysart, as an only child. His mother Mary was a schoolteacher, and his father, Arnold, worked as a mechanic at a local gas station and later owned a business that supplied gas and petroleum products to farmers, small businesses, and individual consumers. John remained fiercely proud of his rural, Midwestern upbringing, which informed his personal outlook and shaped his intellectual interests. He arrived at the University of Iowa in fall 1963 to study mathematics (likely a surprise to many people reading this), switched briefly to accounting (perhaps even more surprising), and then—inspired by a two-semester Western civ survey as well as courses on the U.S. West with Malcolm Rohrbough—gravitated to history, earning his BA in 1967,

which he followed with an MA and a JD, both received in 1970.

He then set out for the University of Washington with his wife Susan (née Anderson), whom he married in 1969, “during the summer of love,” he liked to say. In Seattle he studied for his doctorate under Vernon Carstensen, a fellow Iowan and noted scholar of the American West. He was awarded the PhD in 1974.

John was a committed regionalist, which is to say that he was fascinated by every region, and it is thus fitting that he taught all over the United States (and beyond). His first appointment was at Case Western Reserve in Cleveland (1974-78), followed by stints at Texas Tech (1978-84) and Clemson (1984-88), before he settled permanently at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), which marked a homecoming of sorts, given the focus of his scholarship as well as the proximity to his home state. He held visiting positions at several institutions, including Lewis and Clark College, Columbia University, the Australian National University, and the University of New Mexico; in 1994-95 he was the Fulbright Bicentennial Chair in American Studies at the Renvall Institute at the University of Helsinki, an adventure that sparked in him an abiding interest in all things Finnish.

John was recruited to UNL in 1988 to direct the Center for Great Plains Studies, then a dozen years old; he soon made his own mark on the place, characterized by a collaborative approach and boundless enthusiasm for new projects and ideas. He served in that role for nine years. John held numerous other leadership positions throughout his career: department head at Clemson (where he swore he could hear kudzu actually growing); associate dean in the UNL College of Arts and Sciences; president of the UNL Faculty Senate; president of the Mari Sandoz Historical Society (a particular love of his); and of course president of the Western History Association in 2010-11, which was, for him, among the brightest of his many professional highlights.

In an era of increased specialization, John's scholarly range was astonishing—he was a generalist in the best sense of the word, publishing on legal history, the history of Indigenous America, the Chinese experience in the American West, Nebraska and the Great Plains, sports, politics, even historians and historiography. His publication record was vast: author or co-author of four monographs, including “Retained by the People”: A History of American Indians and the Bill of Rights (Oxford, 1994), more than fifty journal articles and book chapters, and dozens of reviews. He remained active after his retirement from UNL in 2011,

*(continued on page 6)*

# Young Lance Fellows Bring Unique Perspective to This Year's Story Catcher Workshop

The 12th year of the popular Mari Sandoz Story Catcher writer's workshop was held June 5-9 on the campus of Chadron State College and the State Game Lodge at Custer State Park in the Black Hills of South Dakota. "We Are All Related Words Inspired by People, Place and Spirit" was the theme of the workshop attended by 24 people including students from Chadron State College and Western Colorado University in Gunnison, Colorado. Ten non-students joined the group which also featured the first ever Young Lance Fellowship recipients. The four were emerging indigenous writers. The idea for the Young Lance Fellowship came from Sandoz 1963 novel *The Story Catcher*, in which she depicted the adventures, sorrows, and hardships of the protagonist "Young Lance" as he develops his talents and eventually earns his new name and honor, "Story Catcher," the recorder of the history of his people. The Young Lance Fellowship is therefore dedicated to helping underrepresented writers capture and share their stories, said Dr. Matt Evertson of CSC, the event organizer. The Young Lance Fellows received special recognition in the Story Catcher program and website, and had an opportunity to share their writing at the Story Catcher Festival. They also received up to \$200 travel reimbursement upon completion of the fellowship. The four days of sessions led by the writers-in-residence concluded with a celebration of the writers and the writing that took place during the retreat. 20 of the attendees shared their stories and poems, and nine were awarded prizes voted on by the participants.



Jake Skeets leads his session on Wednesday (Upper left photo). Young Lance Fellows (left to right) Bazhnbah Kawano, Velma Hale, Vernon Plenty Bull, Tom Swiftbird and Story Catcher Instructors Beth Piatote and Anna Lee Walters (Upper right photo). Young Lance Award Recipient/Fellow and CSC Student Vernon Plenty Bull (Lower left photo). Story Catcher Instructors Beth Piatote and Orlando White (Lower right photo).

Photo credits: Tena L. Cook/Chadron State College

## The Story Catcher

The "Story Catcher" is the title of a book by Mari Sandoz and it is the title of Helen Winter Stauffer's biography of Mari, *Mari Sandoz: The Story Catcher of the Plains*. The Story Catcher is published four times a year by the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, a 501©(3) non-profit organization. The vision of the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is to perpetuate and foster an understanding of the literary and historical works of Mari Sandoz and to honor the land and the people about which she wrote; Native Americans, ranchers, farmers, and the people who settled the High Plains country. The Society hosts an annual conference, the Pilster Great Plains Lecture Series, and a writer's workshop. Additionally, the Society provides collections on loan to the Mari Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center at Chadron State College in Chadron, Nebraska.

## Address Changes

Address changes should be mailed to:  
**P.O. Box 6808, Lincoln, NE 68506**

Contributions to the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society are tax-deductible. To join the Society contact visit our website at [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org)



## Mari Sandoz

The feats, the passions, and the distinctive speech of the West come alive in the writings of Mari Sandoz (1896-1966). As the author of 23 books, including *Old Jules*, *Cheyenne Autumn*, and *Crazy Horse*, the *Strange Man of the Oglalas*, Sandoz was a tireless researcher, a true storyteller and artist passionately dedicated to the land. With her vivid stories of the last days of the American frontier, Mari Sandoz has achieved a secure place as one of the finest authors in American literature and one of Nebraska's most important writers. As a historian and as a novelist, Sandoz was inducted into the Nebraska Hall of Fame in 1976 and posthumously received the coveted Wrangler Award from the Hall of Great Westerners.

# Digitization Project for Sandoz Archives Enters Initial Planning Stage

A Request for Funding a Mari Sandoz Digital Archive at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries has been prepared by Nicole Gray, Assistant Professor, and Associate Professor Mary Ellen Ducey to help support a one-year planning phase. “The long-term focus of this project is the creation of a freely available web resource based on scans and descriptions of primary sources related to Sandoz,” wrote Gray who is also a Sandoz Board member. “This project will raise awareness of Sandoz’s work and dramatically expand access to archival materials with unparalleled richness in information related to the history of Nebraska and the Great Plains.” To date most of the documents produced by and related to Sandoz exist only in analog form in archival collections. Though some of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Libraries’s large Mari Sandoz Collection was microfilmed as part of a National Endowment for the Humanities-funded grant project, the microfilm does not represent the entire collection and requires specialized equipment to access. Although important work has been done to process and describe materials in this and other Sandoz collections, no current resource exists to search the text of the documents beyond basic metadata and brief descriptive notes. Printed editions of subsets of Sandoz’s letters have been published, but these are not yet available as part of a searchable online collection. A Sandoz digital project will create the potential to search, browse, and link together documents of different genres, as well as primary sources and contextual commentary. This project will be developed in regular consultation with community partners, including the Mari Sandoz Society, and will draw on the expertise of researchers, scholars, librarians, editors, and archivists to develop a plan for metadata and editorial context that will help to make these materials discoverable and usable. In time, we hope to provide online access to several thousand outgoing letters, maps, manuscripts, notes, interviews, photographs, and original research materials. The project will bring together scans of Sandoz materials from a range of repositories, including the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the Mari Sandoz High Plains Center at Chadron State College, Syracuse University, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, the Denver Public Library, and others. In Spring 2023, the Mari Sandoz Digital Archive received approval as a pilot project by UNL’s Center for Digital Research in the Humanities (CDRH), which has successfully supported the development and maintenance of high-profile digital humanities projects like the Willa Cather Archive and the Walt Whitman Archive. As a pilot project, the Mari Sandoz Digital Archive and its faculty and staff will have the Center’s support to create a prototype website and to develop metadata, policies, and other core elements of the project infrastructure. Gray envisions the project hiring student workers and convening project representatives to plan a grant application in consultation with the CDRH. At least two UNL students would work on collecting metrics about the collection at UNL digitizing a small number of materials for the prototype website and testing them and other tasks designed to further the project’s goals.

## Sandoz and Cather in New York

Mari Sandoz Heritage Society President Shannon Smith and Board Member Matt Evertson attended the 18th International Willa Cather Seminar in New York City this summer to compare and contrast the two authors as “The Other Nebraska New Yorker: Mari Sandoz and Her Urban ‘Outpost’ Compared to Willa Cather’s Metropolitan Scene.

Evertson shared what little is known about Mari in New York City and Smith explained that it’s because we don’t have Sandoz’ vast collection in easily researched (digital) format, yet. But, she said, we are eager to join both Cather and (John) Neihardt followers with digital collections at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Like the older, more accomplished, and much more famous Willa Cather, Nebraska’s other prominent pioneer author, Mari Sandoz, became a reluctant New Yorker when she moved to 23 Barrow Street, Greenwich Village in 1943 and then to 422 Hudson in 1959. That’s where she lived the final seven years of her life before succumbing to cancer.

In a 1960 Nebraska Public Television interview, Sandoz described this home as her “office in New York City that I consider an outpost among the aborigines.” This metaphor must have been much on her mind near the end of her life and her time in the city, for she published a piece entitled “Outpost in New York” in the 1963 Summer issue of the *Prairie Schooner*. This was her only overt depiction and exploration of her time in New York City that appeared in print, Evertson said. However, she always considered Nebraska home, and in a later Nebraska Public Television interview, she reminisced about the “Old Jules Place” in the Sandhills of Nebraska as her only true “home,” and spoke fondly of her own “Greenwich Village time” in Lincoln, Nebraska, in the 1920s, when she was making her way as a starving university student and struggling writer. Her 23 years in the real Greenwich Village may be therefore seen as a penance she paid to support her work, and while she maintained a fairly busy social calendar in the village, for the most part she felt isolated in her “outpost,”

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# 2023 Mari Sandoz Symposium REGISTRATION FORM

Please use a separate registration form for each person. Make a photocopy of this blank form if necessary.  
You can also download additional forms or register online with a credit card on the  
Mari Sandoz Heritage Society website [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org)

PLEASE REGISTER NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 15, 2023

You may direct any questions about the symposium or registration to [info@marisandoz.org](mailto:info@marisandoz.org) or 402-499-3703.

FIRST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ LAST NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ORGANIZATION OR INSTITUTION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

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## Membership Category (select one)

- Mari Sandoz Heritage Society Member
- Non-Member
- Student

## Symposium Registration:

- I will be attending the **FREE Pilster Great Plains Lecture** on Thursday, Sept., 28, 2023 at 7:30pm MDT in the Ballroom of the Chadron State College Student Center on campus
  
- I will be attending the **Mari Sandoz Symposium** on Friday, September 29, 2023
  - Cost \$40 per person (includes refreshments and the luncheon) please enclose a check made out to the *Mari Sandoz Heritage Society*.
  - Please select your meal choice for the luncheon:
    - Meat
    - Vegetarian

## Additional Friday Afternoon Events (select one):

- 3:00pm FREE Sandoz Archive Tour at the Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center
- 3:00pm FREE Tour of the Chadron State College Herbarium
- 3:00pm FREE hike at Chadron State Park

Please use this space to list any special accommodations, dietary requests, or questions:

Please return the completed form and payment (if applicable) to:

Mari Sandoz Heritage Society, P.O. Box 6808, Lincoln, NE 68506

For more detailed event information and to register online, visit [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org)

## Sandoz and Cather in New York continued...

with a sense that she had to bring “the west with her,” since Easterners to her mind had no comprehension of the lands beyond the Missouri, he said.

In her final years, Sandoz grew more and more weary of city life--and the city’s publishing industry, promising in several of her late letters to eventually write what she called her “I HATE NEW YORK BOOK.” In fact, as early as 1956, in a letter to Jesse Stuart (a novelist and poet-laurate in Kentucky), she proclaimed “No, I don’t live in New York. I’m out all summer and most of the springs and falls too. I moved some of my files here during the war, when I put in time in home-front propaganda work, and somehow Denver never got uncrowded enough for me to return there. You are wise to stay right down in Kentucky, where you can feel that you are living as time passes, as well as writing. I count the time spent in New York as just so much lost from life”. That Sandoz would describe her long residency sequestered in an “outpost” is a rather ironic reversal given that she famously chronicled the forts and forces of resettlement in her home state and even spoke of the dispossession of the indigenous population in much of her published work of the contested plains. She wryly turned the tables by suggesting she was the outsider among the “hostiles” of the city. Consider her enthusiastic association (at least in her first years) with the New York Posse of Westerners, and the opening section of her “Outpost” essay in *Prairie Schooner*: “The first thing I hung on my wall in Greenwich Village was my cowboy hat. It had been a cheap one in the first place and now it was old and burn-stained from the time it helped save me and my horse from a prairie fire, years ago, but hanging it seemed a sort of commitment to stay in New York for a few months, and a reminder, in moments of anger and disgust with the east, that there was another country and another people.”

Evertson said though Her career thrived in the East, when faced with a terminal diagnosis of cancer in 1966, she made clear that she wished to be buried at the old homestead in the Sandhills of Western Nebraska, her grave to this day overlooking her father’s famous orchard. She may have died in the city, but she lived to explore the plains and the histories of the people, from triumph to tragedy, including her own time growing up in the midst of what we would now call “settler colonialism” (and her published and unpublished writing puts her squarely in sympathy with this contemporary view)--and that sweeping and obsessive goal nourished her in this “outpost.”

In contrast, Cather was born in Virginia in 1873 and moved to Nebraska at age 9. She is buried in New Hampshire, though her life is memorialized in Red Cloud, Nebraska, and the university town of Lincoln, where she

spent her formative years. Much of her most famous writing about the state certainly valorizes the homesteading efforts, but also describes an isolated yet suffocating and small-minded rural setting in which many of her protagonists feel trapped. After she graduated from the University of Nebraska in 1895, she returned to Red Cloud and her correspondence from the time refers to her location variously as “Siberia” or “The Province,” and complains of her depression, loneliness, and boredom. Like so many of her characters that then flee to the big city, when she moved to Pittsburgh that year, and eventually on to New York City, you find in her correspondence (and much of her fiction) a sense of liberation, of being “bright and beautiful and alive” like the artist Don Hedger in one of her first successful stories focusing on an urban landscape--with its energizing prospects of crowded streets, amusement parks, and thriving artistic and social scenes.

Since Cather and Sandoz were not contemporaries, and their time in New York only briefly overlapped (as Sandoz acknowledges in several of her letters), there is no literal “intersection” of their lives in Greenwich Village. There is no indication that Cather ever met Sandoz, either in the city or elsewhere. Moreover, their publishing and literary circles would have been quite different. Sandoz did speak at the Nebraska Writer’s Guild meeting in Red Cloud, Nebraska, in 1959, and acknowledged Cather’s shadow. As described in her biography of Sandoz by Helen Winter Stauffer:

“When confronted with the inevitable comparisons between the two women writing about the same state, Mari pointed out that they wrote of different times and different locales. Willa Cather’s Red Cloud was quite different from the sandhills; it was more settled, closer to the railroads, and more populous in the 1880s than the western part of the state was when Mari’s father arrived there in 1884. But the true difference, Mari said, lay much deeper than the material: it was the difference between an artist of Willa Cather’s caliber and an ordinary frontier historian with a desire to write.” Evertson said that on Christmas 1931, Cather attended a family reunion in Red Cloud, which was the last time she visited Nebraska. She moved into her final apartment at 570 Park Avenue two years later. By then, she had grown unhappy with New York City life, and spent more and more time, as her health would allow, traveling abroad and to Canada, New Brunswick, Maine, New Hampshire, California and the Southwest as often as she could.

*(continued on page 7)*

## 2023 Sandoz Country continued...

Esther wanted her gift to honor the courage and tenacity shown by Raleigh's parents and others who lived on the Great Plains.

The Mari Sandoz Symposium will include presentations and panel discussions as well as a luncheon, Friday afternoon activities and a coffee and conversation send-off on Saturday morning in downtown Chadron at the Bean Broker.

This year's Symposium schedule includes:

- Preservation of Native American Culture and History Today with Donovin Sprague of Sheridan, WY
- Panel discussion: Preserving Local History in Sandoz Country moderated by Broc Anderson of the Buffalo County Historical Society/Trails & Rails Museum in Kearney, with Christine Ambrose of Chadron, NE, Phyllis Krotz of Rushville, NE, and Harlen Wheeler of Gordon, NE
- Panel discussion: High Plains Writers/Writing moderated by Renee Laegreid, Ph.D. from the University of Wyoming, with faculty from the Chadron State College English Department including Dr. Mary Clai Jones, Markus Jones, and Dr. Matt Evertson
- The Symposium Luncheon will feature Tony Malmberg of Union, OR, author of the book *Green Grass in the Spring: A Cowboy's Guide to Saving the World*

## In Tribute continued...

but furrowed new rows, as with a collection of prose poems about the Great Plains that he published earlier this year. And he had a splendid editorial touch, which he brought to the numerous volumes he helped to publish in a pair of book series he helmed at the University of Nebraska Press and Texas Tech University Press. But above all, and without a doubt, John would want to be most remembered as a teacher and mentor, work that he loved and at which he excelled, suggested by the roughly 30 PhD dissertations and 70 MA theses he advised over the course of his career, on subjects in—and sometimes well outside of—his wheelhouse.

In the short time since word of his passing has circulated, former students have shared tributes via email and social media. It is worth quoting from a few of them:

“The word in my mind is generosity—I remember the day I asked John to be my advisor for my MA thesis. As a new and bewildered graduate student at that meeting (and many others), he offered the advice and guidance and ideas I needed -- ideas and interests that still sit with me to this day and are guiding the next phase of the work I hope to do. He was such a force for good in the world.”

- Panel Discussion: The High Plains: Climate, Flora and Fauna, Past, Present, Future with faculty from Chadron State College including Dr. Michael Leite who will talk about the High Plains Climate, Land and Water; Steve Rolfsmeier who will talk about High Plains Flora; and Dr. Teresa Frink who will talk about High Plains Mammals
- Friday afternoon's activities conclude with optional tours of Chadron State College Herbarium with Steve Rolfsmeier, a tour of the Sandoz archives at the Sandoz High Plains Heritage Center, or hiking at Chadron State Park
- Send-off conversation on Saturday morning at the Bean Broker in downtown Chadron with discussion led by Tony Malmberg of Union, OR.

Registration deadline for the Symposium is September 15, 2023. Cost is \$40 per person and includes the luncheon and other refreshments on Friday. The Symposium registration form is enclosed in this newsletter or you can register online through our website at [www.marisandoz.org](http://www.marisandoz.org)



HUMANITIES  
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CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

Mari Sandoz's Homeland Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow: A High Plains Symposium is funded in part by Humanities Nebraska and the Nebraska Cultural Endowment. For more information, visit [HumanitiesNebraska.org](http://HumanitiesNebraska.org)

“His impact on Western History, Native American History, and the history of the Great Plains is beyond description. His incredible legacy will live on in the vast diaspora of Wunder students who continue teaching, researching, writing, and shaping our knowledge of the American West. Indeed, a big chunk of you out there are fellow Wunder-kinds.”

“I'm processing John's passing very slowly. My life would be completely different if two of his former students hadn't directed me on the path toward John at UNL. I don't even like to think about the alternatives of the ‘what if I hadn't met John?’ question.”

Let me add just a few words of my own. I owe my career to John. Having rolled snake eyes (again) in my job search during the 2002-03 job cycle, John invited me to apply for a late-breaking visiting assistant professorship at UNL, which I was fortunate to land. During that year, he showed me the ropes—a whole bundle of them, in fact—so that when the position was later advertised as a tenure stream appointment, I was a plausible applicant.

(continued on page 7)

## In Tribute continued...

All the while he and Susan showed me and my family incredible kindness. I loved Lincoln and UNL, and still do, and I'm grateful for my career. John made all that possible, and I've never forgotten it.

John is survived by his wife of nearly 54 years, Dr. Susan Wunder, their daughters Nell and Amanda (herself a history professor), as well as Amanda's husband Shamus and their son Anders. A memorial service and a celebration of John's life and work, open to all, will be held in Lincoln early in the fall. For those wishing to honor John, his family suggests contributions to the Chief Standing Bear Scholarship Fund:



John Wunder and Mari Sandoz Heritage Society President Shannon Smith. (Photo courtesy of Shannon Smith)

<https://www.nebcommfound.org/give/standingbear/>

*Dr. Andrew Graybill, Director of the Clements Center for Southwest Studies, Southern Methodist University*

## Sandoz and Cather in New York continued...

Sandoz moved to New York City in 1943, just a few blocks from where Cather had spent her first 26 years in the city--but by that time, Cather was living up-town, frequently away from New York, often in poor health, and infrequently socializing. She died of a cerebral hemorrhage in her upper east side apartment four years after Sandoz arrived in Manhattan.

Although Cather and Sandoz experienced the city at different times and with different sensibilities, we must assume that their time in the city impacted the way both Cather and Sandoz considered and wrote about the rural West and the "pioneer perspectives" of these writers who achieved their major literary success chronicling the resettlement of the West, and who became closely associated with the imagery of homesteading, but who then spent the majority of their careers in the largest urban corridor in the United States.

## Support the Mari Sandoz Heritage Society By Joining or Renewing Your Membership!

Thank you for your support! Your membership is important to the Society's programs and activities. Each dollar helps us preserve and share the important work of Mari Sandoz.

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The Mari Sandoz Heritage Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization. All contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. Membership is annual.

MAIL THIS COMPLETED FORM WITH  
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