

<https://www.sfgate.com/news/article/Carol-Schuldt-a-free-spirit-dubbed-Queen-13440651.php>

Carol Schuldt, free spirit dubbed 'queen' of Ocean Beach, dies at 85

By [Steve Rubenstein](#)

Updated 5:04 pm PST, Wednesday, December 5, 2018



Photo: Courtesy Miner Low

Carol Schuldt was known as the Queen of the Beach.

For six decades, Carol Schuldt plunged barely clad into the water off Ocean Beach, befriended mixed-up youngsters and swore like a stevedore.

They called her Schultzie and also the Queen of the Beach — among other things. She was a free spirit

and proud of it.

“They called me a crazy lady,” she told an interviewer years ago. “ I would jump in the ocean and throw my clothes off. I was the first hippie. Bodysurfing, being close to nature, that was my path.”

Schuldt died Saturday in her mural-covered San Francisco home, only a short walk from the ocean. She was 85 and had been diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and heart failure.

A native of San Francisco, Schuldt attended Lowell High School, crewed on tuna fishing boats, drove a jitney, worked on an Idaho ranch, played the piano in a North Beach nightclub, bicycled the California coast and attended Beat Generation poetry readings.

In the afternoons, she began spending more and more afternoons at Kelly’s Cove, the area at the north end of Ocean Beach, below the Cliff House, known for being an early hangout for bodybuilders and surfers.

She and her friends said they were among the first

to popularize bonfires at Ocean Beach.

“We were purple and freezing. In those days the water was colder. We never brought any wood. It was all driftwood. That was part of our ritual,” Schuldt said in an oral history recorded by the Western Neighborhoods Project. “They’ve proved that water has a memory and a mojo. In those days, there was none of this science like there is now.”

If the water has a memory, it doubtless recalls the sand-covered, sandy-haired woman who would emerge from the Pacific Ocean most afternoons and chat in colorful language with other beachgoers, many of them youngsters who were between jobs, homes and schools. Many such people found a meal and a temporary home with the woman they called Schultzie.

Whether it was eating natural foods, railing against conventionality or keeping a compost pile, Schuldt in the 1960s seemed to be ahead of the curve.

“She would call things phony and a bunch of crap,” recalled her friend Miner Lowe of San Francisco, who met her in the 1960s when he was learning to surf.

“I first noticed her coming out of the water, and

she was dressed in a scarf," Lowe said. "She was unique. A rebel. A dropout. She shunned all conventionality. ... She had a vocabulary like Tugboat Annie. And she had a strong, robust sense of excitement for life."

Over the decades, San Francisco changed, but the Queen of the Beach didn't seem to. She kept bodysurfing well into her 80s, holding court in front of her beachfront house with anyone who would listen and talking fondly of how things once were.

"The '60s were so colorful, so much fun," she told a San Francisco Public Library oral historian in 2005. "Now there's technology — people into their body and looks. Things in your ears. Computers. It's not as much fun as it used to be."

Asked for advice, the Queen of the Beach would invariably reply, "Stay close to nature; stay close to the Earth."

"And don't forget this," she would add, tapping her heart.

She is survived by her longtime partner, Tamby Tavasieff of Woodacre; her son, Peter Tavasieff; and her daughters, Celeste Tavasieff and Simone Tavasieff, all of San Francisco. A graveside service will be held on Saturday at 2 p.m., at Purissima

Cemetery, 1165 Verde Road, Half Moon Bay.

Steve Rubenstein is a San Francisco Chronicle staff writer. Email: srubenstein@sfchronicle.com