

A Tribute from Natalie Adams Pope

I moved to Columbia to start graduate school at USC the fall of 1987 and met Mona in the summer of 1988 when I did my first CRM project in South Carolina. It was the Broom Hall Plantation data recovery in Goose Creek with Chicora Foundation. She was my hotel room mate on that project, and off the bat, I guess she liked me okay after I told her it was fine if she smoked in the room. After Broom Hall, I became a regular Chicora fixture and worked on projects during school breaks and then full time after I graduated. The crew was always me, Mona, Liz Pinckney, and often Karrie Joseph aka the “Chicora Chicks”. Over the years Mona and I became great friends, but particularly after she moved from Beaufort to Columbia to work at SCIAA. She had a

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great depth of knowledge about the archaeology and history of South Carolina and was one of the small handful of people I’d contact if I had a question about something. She was a draw to the professional community and her own family including her brother Bill who followed her to Columbia from Hilton Head Island, and brother Allen and his family who moved from eastern North Carolina to Gilbert. She was pretty good at analyzing people and her observations were often enlightening, sometimes perplexing, and sometimes humorous! Occasionally I thought she was a little hard on people and I’d let her know about it, but she’d just roll her eyes at me. Her daughter Joan told me that Mona changed over the years, particularly after moving to Columbia. She became a softer and happier person, surrounded by a gaggle of loyal friends



Chicora Chicks.jpg: The Chicora Chicks at the Goose Creek Econolodge: Mona Grunden, Liz Pinckney, Natalie Adams

who truly cared about her and her about them.

Mona was always there for me during tough times and celebrated my successes. She was a good listener and provided advice when I asked for it. She was also someone I'd text with random thoughts or interesting tidbits of information. I still have the urge to text her and it's frustrating to realize she's not here anymore. Reliably, she was also someone I could call if I needed to go get a beer or two, or to see if she wanted to come over to my house to "porch sit" on a weekend afternoon. I still keep her ash tray out there! I remember once she abandoned her shopping cart at Walmart, because I was on my way to WECO and called to see if she would join me. I'll

also miss our pottery trips together at either Seagrove or the Catawba Valley Pottery festival . . . or both. We enjoyed revisiting potteries we'd found in the past and we thrilled to find a new potter to add to the list.

It blows my mind that the world has changed so much in the little amount of time since she passed away and I sometimes think "What Would Mona Do"? Actually, I know what she'd do and so do the rest of her friends. I don't think she would have had any idea what a hole she has left for all of us. She is greatly missed.

By Natalie Adams Pope



L to R: Mona Grunden, Natalie Adams Pope, Carl Steen, and Karrie Josep at Henry's of Cayce.