

About Michael Gregory

Michael Gregory was born in Toledo, Ohio (19 December 1940), the second son of a working class family. He was a member of the first freshman class at Mission Bay High School in Pacific Beach, California, where his parents had moved in an unsuccessful attempt to save their marriage. He returned to Toledo with his mother in 1954. In 1958, he graduated from Scott High School, where he had become active in the then-new civil rights movement. In 1962, he received an interdepartmental BA in History, English and Philosophy from Toledo University where, in addition to his course work, he was active in the civil rights and anti-war movements

After earning an MA in English at Pennsylvania State University, he studied Celtic languages and literature at the UCLA Center for Comparative Folklore and Mythology. Following two years as an instructor at Chapman College, he entered the new PhD program in English (focusing on critical theory and medieval literature) at UC Irvine. He dropped out in 1970. From 1972-1977, he worked in California and Arizona as a seasonal Fire Lookout and firefighter for the US Forest Service.

He has been married twice (Helen Byrne, 1960-1969; Nicola Zeuner, 1995-2000) and has three sons and a daughter. Since the early 70s, he has made his home off-grid on forty acres of semi-desert grassland in southeast Arizona ten miles from the US-Mexico border.

Poetry

Although his poetry had begun to appear in national venues (*Antioch Review*, *Massachusetts Quarterly Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Fiddlehead*, etc.) in the early 60s, and he was for a short time marginally involved with the southern California poetry scene around *Trace* magazine, by the end of the 60s he had stopped submitting to periodicals.

At the end of the 1973 fire season, he purchased an antique treadle-powered Chandler-Price letterpress from a warehouse in Alameda, California, and hauled it in his pickup to Tucson, where he hired an itinerant printer to teach him the rudiments while printing his first book, *The Valley Floor*, a series of vignettes in verse on contemporary homesteading in the Sulphur Springs Valley where he had recently settled.

In 1975, he moved the press to Bisbee, Arizona, set up shop as the Mother Duck Press, and started the Bisbee Press Collective, a free press cooperative in which authors helped each other print and publish their work. One of the works printed by the BPC was his *Hunger Weather 1959-1975*, a long experimental poem-song sequence based on his experiences during the extended decade of the 60s.

In 1978, he and several BPC members along with members of the related Cochise Fine Arts alternative arts space, co-founded the Bisbee Poetry Festival, which put Bisbee on the poetry map over the next few years as it showcased first- and second-generation writers of the Beat movement

and San Francisco Renaissance.

In 1981, he moved his print shop (which by then included several more presses) into the 1905 Central School building in the heart of the Bisbee historic district, and initiated formation of the Central School Project, a non-profit cooperative community arts center. He served as director of CSP for the next twenty-six years (as a volunteer for the first 13 years, semi-volunteer for the next five), during which period the organization bought and accomplished substantial restoration of the building, turning it into the principal venue for art exhibits and performances within a hundred-mile radius. From 1990-2000, he hosted the CSP Poets Voice series, featuring bimonthly readings by nationally-recognized poets, often in collaboration with the University of Arizona Poetry Center.

In the 80s, his poetry began appearing in periodicals and anthologies again (mostly ephemeral journals and webzines), and he published several chapbooks over the next thirty years or so, including *Song of the Beast* (Brushfire Books, 1983), a two-man show with Christ Dietz, and *re: Play* (Pudding House, 2008). At millennium's end, he closed down the press, selling some of the equipment, giving most of it away until finally, unable to find a taker, he dismantled the linotype machine and sold it as scrap metal. In 2013, Post-Soviet Depression Press brought out *Mr America Drives His Car*, a selection of pieces written during the previous twenty-five years, many showing the influence of his involvement in environmental politics during that *fin-de-siècle* era.

Environmental Activism

While working for the Forest Service on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, he became active in two areas of environmental concern — wildlands preservation and herbicides — which engaged him for the next quarter century. Joining the Sierra Club in 1975 to better address these issues, he soon became Conservation Chairman of the Club's Grand Canyon Chapter, which gave him a place at the table in decision-making on a range of environmental issues — including, among others, pesticide reform; protection of the endangered San Pedro River; state and federal legislation and regulations (including passage of the state's Environmental Quality Act and Omnibus Hazardous Waste Act); and a number of border-related issues (e.g., air pollution from the antiquated Phelps-Dodge copper smelter in Douglas, Arizona, and water contamination from its mine in Bisbee).

During these years, it became clear to him that environmental protection — especially protection from toxic pollution: clean air, clean water, clean food — is a basic human right, a right which can be achieved only by provision of more, and more accessible, public information about toxic pollution. As Hazardous Materials Coordinator for Cochise County with primary responsibility for writing the county's hazmat response plan under the federal Emergency Planning and Community Right to Know Act (EPCRA), he became even more convinced of the need for greater recognition and exercise of the public's right to know (RTK).

In 1990, he formed the non-profit Arizona Toxics Information to concentrate on pursuit of those

goals: first, by producing a number of technical and policy papers on toxics issues, in particular pollution issues in the US-Mexico border region, which in the early 90s was drawing an unprecedented degree of attention due to the ongoing NAFTA process; second, by serving on a series of governmental, inter-governmental, non-governmental and corporate boards, steering committees, task forces, etc., addressing toxics policy at local to national and international levels.

ATI was funded by grants and contracts for research projects from foundations, state and federal government agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Its program, he said, was to institute “the 4 PP’s”: Pollution Prevention, Public Participation, Polluter Pays, and the Precautionary Principle.

His ATI work culminated in participation in two parallel processes: development of the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (the POPS Convention); and development of inter-related international RTK programs by the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) and NACEC (North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation).

The OECD/NACEC process (1993-2000) entailed development of a guidance manual for nations to institute RTK programs, modeled largely on the US-EPA Toxics Release Inventory (TRI) which had been established under EPCRA; and the development of such a program for the trilateral NAFTA region, with particular attention to Mexico which, unlike Canada and the US, had no national program.

In the final three years of the decade, as an active participant in IPEN (the International POPS Elimination Network, comprised of 300+ NGOs), he was closely involved in the construction of the POPS Convention and instrumental in the inclusion of RTK provisions modeled on those of EPCRA. After the Convention was signed in December 2000, he dis-incorporated ATI and over the next few years went into retirement.

Selected Positions

- Arizona Wilderness Coalition Steering Committee (1982-1984)
- Central School Project, Director (1982-2008)
- Cochise College, Associate Faculty in English and History (1983-1988;1998)
- US Forest Service Region 3 Integrated Pest Management Working Group (1984-1985)
- Sierra Club Grand Canyon Chapter, Conservation Chairman (1985-1990)
- Arizona Governor's Advisory Committee on the San Pedro River (1985-1986)
- San Pedro Water Resources Association, Board of Directors (1985-1987)
- USDI-BLM Advisory Committee on San Pedro River Recreation Planning (1986-1988)
- Border Ecology Project, Board of Directors (1986-1989)
- Arizona Commission on Agriculture and Horticulture Pesticides Rulemaking Work Group (1987)
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality Aquifer Protection Permit Rulemaking Work Group (1987-1988)

- Cochise County Hazardous Materials Emergency Planning Committee (1987-1993)
- County of Cochise, Arizona, Hazardous Materials Coordinator (1987-1989), Department of Emergency Services Emergency Acting Director (1988-1989)
- National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, Board of Directors (1988-1989)
- Environmental Mining Network, Coordinating Committee (1988-1991)
- Arizona Toxics Information, Director (1990-2010)
- Arizona Governor's Hazardous Waste Technical Advisory Committee (1990)
- Pesticide Action Network, North American Regional Center, Steering Committee (1990-1994)
- County of Cochise Upper San Pedro Water Management Council (1990-1993)
- US-EPA Minewaste Policy Dialogue Committee (1991-1993)
- Arizona Special Waste Best Management Practices Advisory Committee (1991-1993)
- Clean Air Network, Steering Committee (1991-1994)
- Border Health and Environment Network, Steering Committee (1991-1996)
- Northeast Sonora-Cochise County Health Council, Environment Committee (1991-1997)
- US-EPA Advisory Committee on Hazardous Waste Manifests (1992-1993)
- Federal Interagency Committee on Demonstration of Innovative On-Site Technology, Mine Waste Working Group (1992-1996)
- Science and Environmental Health Network, Steering Committee, (1993-2001)
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, Working Group for *Guidance Manual for Governments on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers* (1994-1996)
- Chemical Manufacturers Association, Responsible Care Public Advisory Committee (1994-2001)
- North American Commission for Environmental Cooperation, Advisory Committee on North American Pollutant Release and Transfer Registry (1995-2000)
- US-EPA Industrial D Non-Hazardous Waste Focus Group (1996-1997)
- US-EPA Common Sense Initiative, Metal Finishing Sector Subcommittee, Regulatory Information Inventory and Team Evaluation (RIITE) Working Group (1996-1997)
- US-EPA Common Sense Initiative, Computers and Electronics Sector Subcommittee, Working Group on Reporting and Information Access (1996-1998)
- Arizona Division of Emergency Services Management and City of Phoenix, Basic On-Line Disaster Emergency Response (BOLDER) Project, Arizona Oversight Committee (1996-1999)
- International POPs Elimination Network (IPEN), Steering Committee (1998-1999)
- City of Bisbee, Vegetation Management Committee (1999-2000)
- Sierra Club, National Conservation Governance Committee (2001-2007)

Awards

- 1964 Honorable Mention, Greensboro Poetry Awards (selected by Robert Lowell)
- 1975 Guest Lecturer on Poetry and the Sense of Place, Department of Art, University of California, Santa Cruz
- 1982 Resident Poet, Arcosanti Conference on "The Food Chain and Metamorphosis"
- 1990 Guest Lecturer, Rim Institute, Conference "On Knowing: A Cross-cultural Perspective"

- 2002 First Prize, Tucson Poetry Festival (selected by Gary Snyder)
2002 Creative Writing Fellowship in Poetry, Arizona Commission on the Arts
2005 First Prize, Ink Poetry Awards (Las Cruces, New Mexico)
2011 Raymond J. Sherwin International Award, Sierra Club

Publications, Poetry

2019. *Mr America Drives His Car* (audio version, read by the author:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL2UTnnOsMpNfZtYqeHopQvNKN8dieMI_S)
2013. *Mr America Drives His Car* (Bisbee, Arizona: Post-Soviet Depression Press)
2008. *re: Play* (Columbus, Ohio: Pudding House)
1983. *Song of the Beast*. With Chris Dietz (Phoenix, Arizona: Brushfire Books)
- 1979, 1982. *Hunger Weather, 1959-1975*, 2 vols (Just Deserts, Arizona: Mother Duck Press)
1975. *The Valley Floor* (Just Deserts, Arizona: Mother Duck Press)

Publications, Environment

- Looking at the Planet: Selected Papers, Talks and Testimony, 1978-2007* (2017)
<http://www.michaelgregory.org>.
2000. *UNEP Global POPs Treaty (INC5/Johannesburg, December 2000): POPs and Right to Know, IPEN Briefing Paper*, co-author with Mariann Lloyd-Smith and Carl Smith. (Washington, DC: International POPs Elimination Network, 2000).
1997. *Integrated Hazardous Materials Data Management for Land-Use/Emergency Planning, A Curriculum*, including Hazardous Materials Orientation for Land-Use Planners and Bilingual Facility Reporting Form. Prepared for the Arizona Emergency Response Commission, US-EPA and Cochise County Planning Department.
1997. *A Bilingual Hazardous Materials Reference List for the US-Mexico Border*. Software, hardcopy and Internet editions. Co-author with Michael Dearing. Prepared for the Cochise County (Arizona) Planning Department, Arizona Emergency Response Commission and US-EPA.
1996. *Binational Land-Use Planning for Pollution Prevention: Final Report of the Cochise County-Northeast Sonora Border XXI Planning Project/Planeación Binacional del Uso del Suelo para la Prevención de Contaminación: Reporte Final del Proyecto de Planeación del Condado de Cochise - Noreste de Sonora*. Co-author with Nicola Zeuner. (Bisbee, Arizona: Arizona Toxics Information).

1996. *A Vocabulary for Environmental Planning in the US-Mexico Border Region/Un Vocabulario para la Planeación Ambiental de la Región Fronteriza de EU-México*. English-Spanish/Spanish-English. Co-author with Nicola Zeuner, Clark Feaster and Bruce Carey. (Bisbee, Arizona: Arizona Toxics Information).

1996. *A US-Mexico Border Toxics Reference List/Lista de Referencia de Substancias Peligrosas en la Frontera México-EU*, with Bruce G. Carey. (Bisbee, Arizona: Arizona Toxics Information).

1996. *A Toxics Data Dictionary for the Tijuana River Watershed GIS/Un Diccionario de Datos sobre Tóxicos para el Sistema de Información Geográfica de la Cuenca del Río Tijuana*. Co-author with Laura Durazo. (Bisbee, Arizona: Arizona Toxics Information).

1996. *Tijuana River Watershed Toxics Data Project Final Report/Proyecto de Datos sobre Tóxicos para la Cuenca del Río Tijuana: Reporte Final*. Co-author with Laura Durazo and Bruce G. Carey. (Bisbee, Arizona: Arizona Toxics Information).

1994. Public Access to Environmental Information in Mexico and the United States: Issues and Policy Options. Draft for Discussion. Co-author with Gildardo Acosta-Ruíz and Laurie Silvan Durazo. Presented to the North American Commission on Environmental Cooperation (Montreal, Quebec, 16 December).

1994. *The Border Environmental Project: The 1993 Northeastern Sonora Pilot Inventories*. Co-author with Gildardo Acosta-Ruíz. Bruce G. Carey, et al. (Agua Prieta, Sonora and Bisbee, Arizona: Enlace Ecológico, A.C. and Arizona Toxics Information).

1986. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) and Forest Service Policy 1979-1985. In, Dave Brown, Samuel M. Hitt and William H. Moir, eds, *The Path from Here: Integrated Forest Management for the Future* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: USDA Forest Service).

1982. *What's in the Smoke: A Breather's Guide to Douglas Smelter Pollution*. Co-author with Dick Kamp and Priscilla Robinson (Bisbee, Arizona: Cochise County Smelter Study Group).

See Also

University of California Bancroft Library, Arizona Toxics Information Records:
<https://oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/c8qr53pq/?query=Michael+Gregory>

Susan Wille, ed., *A People's History of Bisbee* (2014), URL: <http://www.talkingstick.biz>