

CATHERINE M. FREER
1949-1987

“What do you mean?” I imagine Catherine saying, looking over my shoulder while I struggle with writing this. Well, I reply, I want to remind others of our memory of you. It is a fearsome responsibility. “Why do you feel that way about it?” I want to captivate them with your form of life so that they will remember. I don’t know if I can do that. Also, you are intimidating subject matter. “Really. That’s very interesting. I wonder why you think I am intimidating subject matter. Or even why you think of me as ‘subject matter.’” You made a powerful statement, I think, disappearing in the snow and ice on a climb known for its cornices, horizontality and lack of a repeat ascent. We know that you and Dave Cheesmond chose the Hummingbird Ridge on Mount Logan in part out of dismay at the glamour antics associated with expeditions these days. It speaks of a determination, choosing climbs for the inherent difficulties rather than the popularity or public visibility. Such choices illustrate a thoroughness of yours that would seek in all corners, trying everything. It was not the sort of climb that seems real fun. “I went because I was asked to join the team. (Originally we were three.) It was important to be regarded as an equal.”

“I like to think I’ve gone into things with my eyes open. And so, this time, as so many times before, I was afraid of dying.” There are so few who could so honestly admit that fear. That admission was not a casual agreement. It was a clear view of the possibilities and, thereby, a rigorous look at and questioning of desires and actions. That questioning of yours illuminates a concern with looking at everything that comes to bear on a choice. “Well, really lighten up a little. You know, once I am there, packing loads, leading, skiing around with my camera, I am involved with what I’m doing and not fearful.” But wasn’t it all of a piece for you: difficult choices, possible outcomes, the attendant feelings, the joys of the activity and landscape? “You could put it that way. Those are your words, not mine. I did speak publicly about climbing being all-encompassing in its requirements; that it focuses all of one’s resources. But so do many other activities. Conversation can be a complete experience, just as important as climbing.

What will make *this* conversation complete. How can the words round out the missing speaker? It’s just memory filling in the loss. Memory of a living passion is what we have left.

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Catherine was one of the best women alpinists in the States. She was also one of the best all-around climbers in the States.

She began climbing at nineteen in the Pacific Northwest. In 1982, she was chosen to represent the United States in the first women’s rock-climbing meet held in Britain. For many years she did rock climbing at a high standard, leading many difficult climbs throughout the western United States. She did various difficult alpine routes in North America. She climbed Zenyatta



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Mendata on El Capitan in 1983, alternating leads on one of the most difficult aid climbs in Yosemite. In 1984, she climbed the north face of Cholatse in Nepal with a team of three others, a new and difficult alpine-style ascent. She participated in attempts on K2 and Everest in 1986.

Catherine loved rock climbing more than anything. She also loved being on a river. She worked as a climbing guide for the University of Washington and for Lute Jerstad. She also guided river expeditions for Jerstad and Oregon River Expeditions.

Catherine's schooling and an abiding interest was in psychology. She wrote volumes of a personal journal which was not so much a diary as a dissertation on her ideas, observations, interpersonal relationships, emotional life. Her letters and conversations reflected her passion for poetry and interest in a variety of authors. She loved the arts. Photography and bird-watching were other facets to her involvement with and observation of landscape. She loved cookies.

Catherine will be remembered by those who knew her as deeply engaging and caring. Her concerns about the human condition will not be forgotten soon.

CARLA FIREY

DAVID CHEESMOND

1952-1987

David Cheesmond was so well described by Michael Kennedy in *Climbing* of October 1987 that I quote extensively from that issue. "By the time we met on the Kahiltna Glacier below Mount McKinley on a May afternoon in 1981, David had already traveled all over the world, almost always accompanied by his wife Gillian. Born in South Africa, he had been a driving force in the climbing scene there, doing numerous new rock climbs, as well as an early ascent of Mount Kenya's Diamond Couloir and a new route on Kilimanjaro's Breach Wall. Not content with distinguishing himself solely in the climbing world, he had excelled academically, graduating at age 19 from Durban University with an honors degree in engineering. Difficult classics in the Alps and an extended honeymoon—which included an ascent of FitzRoy—rounded out his early climbing experience.

"Weary of the political climate in their homeland, David and Gillian decided to move and western Canada seemed a logical choice. David rapidly established himself as one of Canada's leading lights, starting with the second ascent of the Emperor Face on Mount Robson (by a new line, no less). He also made ascents of several big Yosemite routes that fall, including the Shield on El Cap, but, in retrospect, 1981 seemed merely a warmup for climbs to come.

"Just a few hours from home in Calgary, the Canadian Rockies provided a fertile crucible for David's energetic approach and he managed rapid ascents of notable routes. In the fall of 1982, he climbed a new route on the east face of Mount Assiniboine with Tony Dick; it was a jump ahead in Canadian technical