

Laurel Burch

Laurel Burch was a keynote speaker at the CAEA conference in Irvine and gave everyone who attended a signed poster. She also opened her shop, studio, and home to CAEA when the organization had a conference in the Bay Area. She continued being supportive of CAEA projects and donated, every year, items for the silent auction



Lifetime Accomplishments

Laurel, who as a 20-year-old single parent found metal in junkyards to hammer into jewelry to support her two children. She went on to win distinction as a designer and successful businesswoman.

Laurel translated her images of fantastic felines, mythical animals, colorful blossoms, butterflies, moons, hearts and imagined people into colorful jewelry, T-shirts, scarves, ceramics and tote bags, which were sold by the thousands of stores. However, her passion was art, and even as she churned out hundreds of products, those who knew her said that most of her designs derived from her original paintings.

Laurel Burch suffered from osteopetrosis (a rare and painful bone disease) most of her life. In 2005, the disease worsened and she had to learn to paint left-handed after breaking her right arm. Still, she stated in an interview that if she had to choose between good health and her artistic gifts, she would choose her art “in a heartbeat.” In her last artworks, she sometimes included words. One quoted an American Indian proverb: *The soul would have no rainbow if the eyes had no tears.*

Laurel Burch died in 2007, aged 61, at her home in Novato, California; her family donated the funds to start the scholarship in her name.