

## Bloomington Rock

Mary Manning is an artist and a long-time student of archeology, focusing on the study of petroglyphs and pictographs all over the Southwest. She did PhD work in environmental sciences at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, focusing on prehistorical sites in Tule Springs in the Upper Las Vegas Wash, Sloan Canyon, Spirit Mountain, Grape Vine, and Red Rock Canyon.

As a graduate student, she visited sites from Southern Nevada to Zion Canyon and the Big Island of Hawaii.

A 34-year veteran journalist at the Las Vegas Sun newspaper, she wrote about The Big Dig at Tule Springs in 1962-63 and began graduate research. She has studied with Steve Rowland, Josh Bonde, and Kristina Stave at UNLV.

Back in 2016, Mary Manning visited Bloomington Rock every day. She may not explore the rock every day now, but she is still passionate about this iconic feature in Bloomington Park. One of the many times she was exploring with the late archeologist, Boma Johnson, he said to her, "Look at where the light hits." She understood what he was saying as she knew the Ancients who wrote on the rocks used the sun and patterns to help tell their story. She has seen different patterns in the rocks because she has an artist's eye and explores at various times throughout the day.

Some of Mary's discoveries are ascending and descending snakes. There are spirals that can only be seen at sunrise but disappear as the sun grows brighter. She discovered "T" symbols and human symbols. An interesting discovery was a snake in a box; however, the box had been pecked out before the snake was made.

Technology has helped her understand some of the mystery of the rock better. For instance, Greg Lynott used his drone to take aerial photography of the rocks, enabling Mary to see petroglyphs and graffiti she had never before seen. She was able to use a "D" Stretch program to see the older petroglyphs more clearly.

Some of the petroglyphs are ancient. The rocks themselves are one million to three million-years-old. To say that Bloomington Rock is a fascinating study for Mary to delve into, is an understatement. With enthusiasm she emphasizes that the abstract art started 1000's of years ago. "It is a record of our humanity." In fact Mary is spearheading a project that she hopes will get it into the national registry.