

JUNE 2025

# *Project El Salvador*

## *U P D A T E*

The Mission of Project El Salvador is to support the people of El Salvador in implementing their own vision of justice. We express our solidarity and deepen our relationship with El Salvador by creating awareness in the United States of the plight of the marginalized in Central America and by supporting grassroots community development through funding of projects in El Salvador.

Visit us at [www.projectsalsvador.org](http://www.projectsalsvador.org)!

### **Honoring Fr. Dean Brackley**

*by PES Board Member Linda Gottschalk*

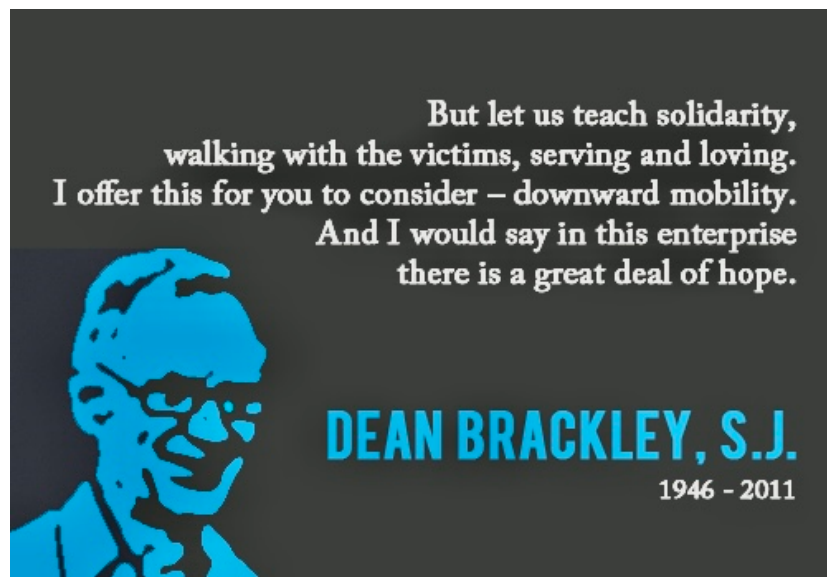
Fr. Dean Brackley, S.J., went to El Salvador to live and work in place of the Jesuits who had been murdered in 1989. He wound up spending the rest of his life there. Those who participated in Project El Salvador delegations to El Salvador over the years remember their visits with him at *la Universidad Centroamericana* (UCA) during which he recounted the story of the murder of the Jesuits, their housekeeper and her daughter. He also provided a wealth of information for us on the current political, economic, social and cultural conditions of El Salvador. More than that, Fr. Brackley bore testament to the healing power of the poor for our own lives. In his conversations with delegates and in his books he invited us to let the poor “break our hearts” in order to create in ourselves a greater capacity for understanding, empathy and service. For many those trips and conversations with him offered an immeasurably rich, transformative experience.

In his remarkable article, “Higher Standards for Higher Education: The Christian University and Solidarity”, Fr. Brackley tackled the difficult issue of educating for justice, especially international justice, in the confusing times in which we found ourselves fourteen years ago. Since then the situation has grown worse. At that time, Fr. Brackley identified grassroots movements in civil society, NGOs like Amnesty International, The United Nations, environmental groups, women’s groups, community groups, as hopeful signs. Central American countries like El Salvador, while witness to the growth of *la sociedad civil*: groups of neighbors,



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indigenous and black people, environmental groups, unions, small and medium-sized businesses, cooperatives, communal banks and consumers who are pushing for change from the bottom up and across the base of society, were then and are now up against traditional authoritarian societies and governments that oppose these efforts. To make matters worse, governments of developed countries like the U.S. are now threatening to shut down NGOs they think undermine “official U.S. government policy”. In light of

official government interference in the running of secular institutions of higher learning, it may be that it will fall even more to Christian Universities in developed countries to maintain alliances with *la sociedad civil* in poor and violent countries in order to support their efforts.

All this is to say that the formation of youthful scholars dedicated to peace and justice remains an imperative.

Fr. Brackley not only taught at the university in San Salvador, he worked in a parish about 50 miles outside of the city. He was dedicated to helping young people get an education that would not only prepare them to find work, but would inspire and empower them to work for justice in their own communities and the world. He was greatly concerned that his work securing scholarships for young people not end with his death. Project El Salvador is committed to supporting his vision.

You can find updates on the scholarship program, which is called *Programa de Becas Martires de la UCA* (UCA Martyrs Scholarship Program), on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pbecasmartiresuca>

To commemorate Fr. Brackley's life and work, Project El Salvador established the Fr. Dean Brackley Scholarship Fund in his name. October 2025, will be the fourteenth anniversary of his death. We invite you to join us in supporting young people in their education. We will be sending donations received to the Jesuits coordinating the fund by mid-November. Please see donation information on the back page



# Dotty Nittler



*by Mary Alice Bramming, PES Board President*

Project El Salvador lost one of its loyal, generous founding members on May 1, 2025.

Dotty Nittler, nee Fox, was born on a dairy farm in rural Wisconsin and died in Denver, CO. After graduating from high school at 16, she earned a BA degree from Whitewater State Teachers College. She moved to Denver to teach.

Dotty was an organizer, a life-long learner, and most of all a devout Catholic who believed that the social justice teachings of the Church needed to be taught and most of all lived.

Dotty supported Project Salvador (Project El Salvador) from the beginning in countless ways—not only financially, but also by participating in numerous marches protesting the US government's involvement in the violence against the poor of El Salvador. Early in Project Salvador's history Dotty became an active Board member who wrote thank notes to donors—always grammatically correct and beautifully written. She sold many, many Salvadoran crafts at churches all over the metro Denver area. She was an active Board member who opened her home for many meetings. She and Roger even bought a pick-up truck that was driven down to El Salvador by Project Coordinator, Patty Lawless, and her two children. It was used for many years by the artisan groups to transport raw materials, crafts and artisans!

Together with her kind, generous husband, Roger, they volunteered in prison ministry, helped families in transition settle into permanent housing, and protested for a better, nonviolent world. They won KUSA's 9 Who Care Award in 1980 for starting and running the Downtown Sunday Lunch Program. At first it was just the Nittler family taking brown bag lunches and coffee to share, setting up where the homeless gathered on a Sunday when no soup kitchens were open. Dotty gradually organized other Catholic and Protestant churches to take on the making of the lunches and Catholic Community Services took over the distribution. For almost 50 years brown bag lunches have been passed out to the downtown homeless. Now Volunteers of America is responsible for distribution but the 250-300 lunches are still made weekly by metro Denver area churches.

Dotty was the mother of 5 children, and grandmother of six. She is predeceased by her husband, Roger, her son, Bill, 2 grandchildren, and five siblings.

Dotty was a light to all who had the privilege of meeting her. And all who knew her will miss her wisdom, wit, and passion for others.

**Dotty Nittler PRESENTE!**



## **\*\*PROJECTS FUNDED APRIL 2025\*\***

At our Annual Meeting in April 2025, the Project El Salvador Board decided to continue funding for 2025-2026 to the following projects (in addition to the **Fr. Dean Brackley Scholarship Fund**):



~**COFOA** - Community Organizing



~**Radio Victoria** - Community Radio



~**ABESUCHI** - Scholarships and Vocational Exploration and Training for HS & College Students

~**Women's Committee of Suchitoto** - Microlending Fund, Domestic Violence, Agricultural Training



We are grateful for their tireless work and for the opportunity to once again, through your generous donations, empower each organization to continue shaping a new, more just future for the people of El Salvador. ADELANTE!



**DONATIONS WELCOME by check to:**

**Project El Salvador**

P.O. Box 300105

Denver, CO 80203-0105

Or donate on-line at: [www.projectsalsvador.org](http://www.projectsalsvador.org)

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