



SCHOLARS
STRATEGY NETWORK

A Tribute To Greg Prieto

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Dear SSN community,

It is with great sadness that we inform you that one of our members Dr. Greg Prieto passed away on Monday, October 13, 2025. Dr. Prieto, a Professor in the Department of Sociology at the University of San Diego, was an active former Chapter Leader for the San Diego Chapter of SSN. Throughout his work, Dr. Prieto's commitment to merging academic and community-engaged scholarship shone brightly. Not only did Dr. Prieto publish widely, including two books, *Myth and Reality in the U.S. Immigration Debate* (2020) and *Immigrants Under Threat: Risk and Resistance in Deportation Nation* (2018), but he worked hard to build and support a local group of immigration scholars in San Diego as well as teach the next generation of researchers how to authentically collaborate with community partners to conduct better, more just, and policy-focused research.



Beyond being an exceptional researcher, Greg will also be remembered as a friendly colleague and a pleasure to work with. As [John Skrentny](#) told us, “Whenever I saw Greg, he was smiling or focusing on what ‘you’ had to say. Just a wonderful guy.”

We would like to specifically share a few words from his colleague and good friend [Abigail Andrews](#):

Greg Prieto, PRESENTE!

It is hard to write about the death of someone so alive. For me, what characterizes Greg is his immense, embracing smile, his capacity to shine his light on those in his presence, and his commitment to lift others up. [This brief video](#) really captures his vivacious warmth – as Greg says in there of himself: “he had a lot of courage and love.”

Greg Prieto moved to San Diego the year before I did to take a sociology job at the University of San Diego, and in 2018, we both published books exploring what resistance could look like among undocumented communities. True to form, when I asked Greg if I might come speak at USD, he invited me to collaborate. At that event and always when we spoke, he made me feel like a superstar, heaping praise on my work while making self-deprecating remarks about his own. Yet his research was so brilliant, so clear and accessible, so honest. He grounded his scholarship in a commitment to be guided by the organizations with whom he had been working for many years in struggle. And I believe he also brought these commitments – and his incredible presence – to teaching, to which he was deeply devoted.

After 2018, we started to meet up for meals. Greg would take me out to his favorite spots for food, or coffee, or beer, and I got time off from the grind of early motherhood. We spoke about sociology and our work, but mostly - I realize now - we talked about love. For a while, we’d meet up and share wild ideas about what it would take to get scholars out of our comfort zone to do meaningful work. We would also share intimate secrets. Greg invited this by being vulnerable himself, reflecting on therapy, or the ways he used CrossFit to build a community and kill time before his long-working partner came home. We talked about Pride (Greg ADORED Pride!), and how – during covid – gay friends around him rallied around a legacy of mutual care that their predecessors had built in the face of AIDS. We talked about what it took to transform monogamy and marriage and build space for abundant love(s). And so much, we laughed.

Greg was profoundly generous. He was able to be critical and funny without throwing others under the bus. Though most academics specialize in judgment, Greg almost never complained or criticized others. Rather, he loved on people abundantly and genuinely found them worthy of admiration and praise. Greg was surrounded by friends and effusive in his adoration for them. He thrived in a party but also, clearly, had deep and intimate relationships with a wide range of people. I cannot count the number of times he exclaimed (earnestly) “I love that!” I always left our hangouts feeling a little bit brighter. That’s what he did for folks: lift them up, encourage their inner knowing and their wild dreams.

As Greg learned he was dying, he grew so lucid what it meant to live. Greg had extraordinary courage and clarity in the face of his death. He was utterly honest about his sickness, his sadness, his pain. He shared his sense that in this context, the whole world shone a bit brighter – and he, who always wanted to BE IN THE MIX – felt crushed to have been robbed the chance to be part of it. He also shared his realization that even though he felt he never quite fit as a kid (and long after), the love he had been looking for (even through all of kinds of striving) was right there in front of him all along.

The last time we were together, we sat at a tiny table for lunch, and I looked into his bright, brown eyes. He was still so beautiful and perfectly coiffed. But he was also very thin. In a turn I found both painful and touching, his skin had thinned, too, and it was as if you could see his emotions right through. He who had always been buoyant now also put his entire self on the table. I could see that he was in pain. He shifted in his chair. He ordered a meal that he barely ate. And we cried together as he talked about how much he loved his friends, how he'd forgiven his family, and how hard it was to face the idea of goodbye. He talked about what it felt like to be a proud person who now walked around wearing emotion. At the same time, he was so grateful – for how his department had held him up, for how friends had stood by him. He wept with gratitude for the everyday dinners he got to share with his love, afternoon light pouring into the room – dinners he'd have skipped or rushed in the past but was now fully here for. In the end, we went out to stand on the cliffs by the sea, to feel the spray on our faces. "I needed this," he said softly, "Thank you." And I could feel it calling him home.

Greg concluded one of his beautiful, heartbreaking final blog posts, "As my loved ones get on with it, I hope that they will stumble on my memory, pause, scrape a knee, fall to the earth, and remember that I was here."

Dear Greg, thank you for gifting me a little bit of your light. I carry you with me in the spray of the sea, the afternoon sun in the kitchen, and the reminder to lift others up, to laugh, and to treat a meal with our loves as a precious gift that always could be the last.

Dr. Greg Prieto Memorial Scholarship

To honor Greg, his family kindly requests that memorial gifts be made to the University of San Diego College of Arts and Sciences in support of the Dr. Greg Prieto Memorial Scholarship. Gifts can be made online at [Give to USD](#) or by mail to College of Arts and Sciences Development, University of San Diego, 5998 Alcalá Park, San Diego, California 92110.