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Bettye Lane Dies at 82; Photographer of Protests and Causes

By **LESLIE KAUFMAN**

Bettye Lane, a photojournalist who gained wide recognition for her rich trove of pictures documenting the feminist movement in the 1970s and '80s, died on Wednesday in Manhattan. She was 82.

The cause was cancer, her nephew Gary O'Neil said.

Ms. Lane had an early encounter with the movement in 1970, when, while working for The National Observer, a weekly newspaper based in New York, she was assigned to cover the first Women's Strike for Equality, a march called by the National Organization for Women to demand equal treatment in the workplace. Her pictures of women pumping their fists and waving banners as thousands marched down Fifth Avenue captured the energy and passion of the moment.

From then on, as a freelance photographer, Ms. Lane made a point of lugging her equipment to every rally — whether she was paid to go or not — and getting to know the leaders of the movement, including Gloria Steinem and **Florynce Kennedy**. At the Democratic National Convention in 1976 at Madison Square Garden, she photographed another movement stalwart, Representative Bella Abzug, meeting with Elizabeth Taylor and Shirley MacLaine.

“She was like the official photographer for the women’s movement,” said Nanci Callahan, the managing director of the West Side Cultural Center, who is working on a film about Ms. Kennedy. “She was everywhere, and she leaves behind a great record.”

Ms. Lane turned her lens as well on civil rights demonstrations, war demonstrations during the Vietnam era and marches for gay rights. She was one of the few photographers to document the Stonewall protests in Greenwich Village, widely seen as starting the gay rights movement. The New York Public Library houses many of her photographs of the gay-rights struggle.

After leaving The National Observer, Ms. Lane took assignments from Time and Life magazines and The Associated Press. Her photographs have appeared in more than 70 books and 64 films, according to [her Web site](#). The Smithsonian Institution included her pictures in a group show, “For Which It Stands: The American Flag in Social Protest,” in 2002.

Her work is also in collections at the Schlesinger Library on the History of Women in America at Harvard, the Rubenstein library at Duke and the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington. Elizabeth Foti was born in Boston on Sept. 19, 1930, one of eight children of Luigi and Antonietta Foti, who had immigrated from Italy. Her father returned to Italy when she was young, leaving her mother to struggle to pay the bills. Elizabeth was forced to drop out of elementary school to work in a shoe factory, Mr. O’Neil said.

She found her vocation when she got a job at Harvard in a photography lab. After a brief marriage to a [World War II](#) veteran, she moved to New York, keeping her married name. Her survivors include a sister, Tina Caton.

From 1978 on, Ms. Lane lived in Westbeth, subsidized housing set apart for artists in the West Village in Manhattan, where she had meticulously organized her photographs so that a record of an era of upheavals could be at her fingertips.