2 . . . . . Kevin Starr Will Never Be Replaced: A Remembrance of the Historian and Author By Dr. William Deverell

6 . . . . . Reminiscences, Recollections, and Remembrances of Dr. Kevin O. Starr, 15th State Librarian of California
   By Cameron Robertson

12 . . . . . “A Letter to Dr. Kevin Starr, a.k.a. Dr. Feelgood” By Andrew St. Mary
   SIDEBAR: A Letter from Dr. Starr to Taylor St. Mary

16 . . . . . A Tribute to Dr. Kevin Starr Delivered at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society of California Archivists By Mattie Taormina

17 . . . . . California: An Elegy By Arthur Imperatore III

19 . . . . . Recollections of Kevin Starr By Marianne deVere Hinckle

27 . . . . . When Kevin Starr Ran for the San Francisco Board of Supervisors: 1984 By Michael S. Bernick

29 . . . . . Celebrating Dr. Starr’s Genius, Generous Spirit and Astonishing Vision By Dr. C. L. Max Nikias

30 . . . . . Eulogy of Dr. Kevin Starr Highlighting His Ten Years as State Librarian of California, 1994—2004 By Gary F. Kurutz

34 . . . . . The Sutro Library: Mirror for Global California, March 13, 2013
   By Dr. Kevin Starr

40 . . . . . A Pictorial Devoted to the Brilliant and Varied Life of Dr. Kevin Starr and His Wonderful Family

44 . . . . . Recent Contributors

Front Cover: Dr. Kevin Starr stands in front of his beloved Doheny Library at the University of Southern California. The photograph was taken by Harry Brant Chandler in 2007 and was published in Dreamers in Dream City, 2009, Angel City Press.

Back Cover: In 2003, Dr. Starr presented the State Library’s Gold Medal for Excellence to poet Lawrence Ferlinghetti at his City Lights Book Store in San Francisco. Photograph by Phillip Adam.

Design: Angela Tannehill, Tannehill Design | www.angelatannehill.com

California State Library Foundation
1225 8th Street, Suite 345, Sacramento, CA 95814
tel: 916.447.6331 | web: www.cslfdn.org | email: info@cslfdn.org
Kevin Starr mastered the stage whisper. At a stiff faculty or committee meeting, and with a twinkle in his eye, he’d bring a hand or a book to his mouth, and, thus poorly disguised, offer a thought, a bon mot, an impertinent question, or even a joke. It was his version of sotto voce, but it came out basso profundo, since he raised, instead of lowered, his voice when he spoke in this way. He sometimes began laughing even before he’d finished speaking.

I knew Kevin Starr only as profundo. He was big, his voice was big, his persona was big, his books are big, his ideas are big, his influence is big. Some, and only some, of...
this has now been silenced by his death Saturday. Kevin’s outsized impact and his sheer significance to both our regional and our national culture will continue long hence. Death has robbed us of the most important guide we have ever had to our state’s history and culture, our ingenious interpreter of the elusive and many meanings of the California Dream over several centuries.

Half a century ago, Starr wrote a doctoral thesis in the American Civilization program at Harvard. Under the supervision of Alan Heimert, Harvard’s brilliant young scholar of 18th century American religion, Kevin set out to write on a Great Awakening of a different sort: California’s imaginative hold on the American psyche. The thesis became “Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915.” That book launched an intellectual pilgrimage based on a deceptively simple query: What is the meaning — and the condition—of the “California Dream” through time?

Each of the more than half-dozen sequels is another illumination of the history of California. The whole is more than the parts. Each book is pinned, across eras or

**EDITOR’S NOTE**

Dr. Deverell’s article first appeared in the January 17, 2017, Los Angeles Times. Dr. Deverell is director of the Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West and a professor of history at USC. He is the author of several monumental books on California history including Railroad Crossing: Californians and the Railroad, 1850-1910, Metropolis in the Making: Los Angeles in the 1920s (with Tom Sitton); Whitewashed Adobe: The Rise of Los Angeles and the Remaking of Its Mexican Past, and co-authored with Darryl Holter; Woody Guthrie L.A.: 1937 to 1941 (also co-authored with Tom Sitton); Water and Los Angeles: A Tale of Three Rivers, 1900—1941.
decades, to the California Dream at this or that moment in time. A redemptive California, a civilization made of the best hopes and dreams of the young nation, embodies the first book, and this idea animates the full series. Californians, Starr insists, can rise above the worst impulses of greed, violence or racism and, in so doing, render the state as “a city upon a hill” for the rest of the nation and the world.

Kevin loved institutions with an infectious faith. He was not naive: He knew institutions could be cold, and his commitment was not slavish. He loved them for their traditions, their histories, their devotion to mission. He delighted in studying them. First among them (“my alpha, my piety,” I can hear him say) came the Catholic Church, an institution that inspired more dreaming in him than even his beloved California. His book “Continental Ambitions: Roman Catholics in North America: The Colonial Experience,” the first of a multi-volume history, appeared a few months ago, and Kevin was hard at work on the next at the time of his death.

Others that shaped and inspired him: the Army, libraries ancient and modern, universities here and abroad, venerable publishing houses and book clubs. He spoke often and devotedly about the California State Library, an institution he ran for a decade, and about USC, where he held the distinguished title of university professor. Through his work, California itself became an institution that invited study: its rules, its leaders and its people, its institutional cultures, its historical trajectories. Kevin knew institutions, and he knew how to illuminate them by his words, how to praise them and how to insist that they could do and be better.

But he also knew individuals. Thomas Aquinas. Herodotus. The Marquis de Lafayette. John Adams. Anne Hutchinson. James Fenimore Cooper. John Foster Dulles. St. Francis. Junípero Serra. Martin Luther. The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. Lunch with Kevin could include quotations, references and clairvoyant discussions with these figures and so many others. In English, mostly, although Latin phrases rolled off his tongue effortlessly. One went away from an hour’s discussion as if exiting the confessional after a session with the monsignor. You were inspired by the majesty of it all—History with a
Because of his dynamism, eloquence, and captivating insights, Dr. Starr was in constant demand as a speaker. In addition, whenever the media wanted an opinion on a topic related to California history and literature, they always kept Dr. Starr on speed dial.

Dr. Starr and Congresswoman Jane Harmon celebrated the founding of the Academy for Polymathic Study at USC. Her husband, Sidney Harman, founded the academy. Dr. Starr was the inaugural director of the academy. Photograph courtesy of USC University Communications.

Sheila and Kevin enjoying a moment together at one of the scores of events hosted by academic and library organizations. Photograph courtesy of USC University Communications.
capital H—but you also had pangs of guilt for obviously not studying hard enough in graduate school. Kevin had a secular rosary exercise always at ready, penance offered as exhortation. “You must read Prescott,” he’d insist. Or Irving, the collected works. “What?” He would thunder in that profundo. “You have not read all of Toynbee? You must, Bill, you must.” Another day, another conversation, and it might be Tacitus, Gibbon or Carlyle. Or he’d open with “Gallia est omnis divisa in partes tres.” None of it, or at least not very much of it, was for show. It was just Kevin.

Over the last several decades, Kevin and I often appeared on the dais together. When that began, I was in an apprentice role, and that deepened into a kind of senior/junior partner arrangement. No one was better in expository speaking than Kevin, though repetition crept into his remarks in recent years. He never failed to smirk that he wanted to title his volume on 1960s California “Smoking the Dream.” But it was a good line, and it was funny.

I was there at a conference in which Kevin was the keynote speaker and others of us were minor academic accompaniment. In the green room ahead of time, the organizer graciously thanked Kevin, remarked that the event had sold out, and asked Kevin if he wanted to take questions after his address. “Address?” Kevin asked. “I was under the impression that this was a question and answer panel.” The organizer blanched. “Oh, Dr. Starr,” he said nervously. “You are our keynote speaker.”

“I was under the impression that this was a question and answer panel.”

Kevin asked. “I was under the impression that this was a question and answer panel.”

The organizer blanched. “Oh, Dr. Starr,” he said nervously. “You are our keynote speaker.”

“How long shall I speak?” Kevin asked, pulling (really) a folded envelope out of his breast pocket. It had a few notes written on it.

“We have you down for an hour,” the organizer stammered.

“No trouble, sir,” Kevin said, writing an additional two lines on his envelope. He spoke, flawlessly, for an hour.

Kevin Starr will never be replaced.

Excerpt of Dr. Kevin Starr’s retirement letter to
Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger

For the past nine and a half years, I have been privileged to serve as State Librarian for California. Appointed by Governor Pete Wilson, I was re-appointed by Governor Gray Davis, and was deeply complimented to be re-appointed by you. I cannot, however, continue to fulfill my duties as State Librarian, complete my writing assignments, and teach the courses USC wishes me to teach.

I am therefore retiring as State Librarian effective 1 April 2004 so as to be better able to focus upon my teaching and writing responsibilities. Deputy State Librarian, Cameron Robertson, a distinguished Vietnam veteran and seasoned public administrator, is fully capable of conducting affairs at the State Library until the you appoint my replacement.

The Governor’s Message

Dr. Kevin Starr
“State Librarian Emeritus”

I am delighted to convey my sincere appreciation and congratulations on your retirement as California State Librarian.

California had the great fortune to welcome you back 30 years ago when you returned to teach at the University of California, Berkeley. Over the ensuing three decades, you excelled as a historian, author, journalist and professor. Your books, columns and countless lectures have brought our state to life, giving a rich voice to our land, people, history and culture.

Most recently, under your energetic leadership, the California State Library experienced significant improvements, and it remains a vital institution and a source of great pride for all Californians because of your efforts. Your commitment to our state has earned you the respect and deep appreciation of your students, colleagues and fellow Californians. Therefore, it is my distinct honor to bestow on you the title of State Librarian Emeritus.

Thank you for your many distinguished contributions to California, and please accept my best wishes for every future happiness.

Sincerely,
Arnold Schwarzenegger
liantly educated, generous, old-school academic. Mr. Chips in Brooks Brothers seersucker, conversant in Latin and the post-Inquisition role of Catholicism in the New World. Courly manners preferred, along with cane. Mischievousness in a healthy dollop desired, alongside equal parts the more mature raconteur version of it. Applicants must evince an abiding love for California and all that it promises in myth and reality, ideally tinged by the melancholy of understanding expectations unmet and promises unfulfilled. Competitive candidates will have read everything and written nearly the same amount, thanks to ferocious discipline.”

Those who knew him well knew that, behind the manners and the kindness, a furnace burned in Kevin Starr. He was possessed of remarkable drive and energy, a work ethic that called up some of the saints he oft quoted and so revered. “Write every day,” he told me dozens of times. “Your writing, both what’s good and what’s not, will outlive you, so believe in that, believe in yourself, and write the best that you can. And, remember, write every day.” His was a gentle fury burning, but burn it did.

Kevin Starr also had Sheila Starr, his beloved partner and, as his acknowledgments always made clear, the other half to their whole and his indispensable right hand in all that he did, all that he wrote, all that he published.

The man who loved institutions became one. A human institution of tradition, of mission and of personified venerability. We have lost one of our giant trees with his passing. There is solace in yet having his work, of course, and he would appreciate and understand that. But more than that, there’s comfort in a collective dedication to affirm his clear-eyed, irrepressible faith in this place. “Old in error,” he wrote as he finished the book that launched his epic, his monument, and his legacy, “California remains an American hope.” I will miss him a great deal.

In 2009, Kevin received the Los Angeles Times Book Prize in history. He is shown proudly holding his award-winning Golden Dreams: California in an Age of Abundance, 1950—1963. It was the seventh book in his monumental California Dream series all published by the prestigious Oxford University Press.

Photograph by Jay Clendenin, courtesy of the Los Angeles Times.
These are some of the things that I remember about my former boss and great good friend Dr. Kevin Starr. He could be somewhat prickly in issues relating to personal and professional dignity and respect, kindly but firmly correcting those who referred to him as “Mr. Starr,” that it was more accurate to call him “Dr. Starr.” He was equally conscientious about extending this courtesy to others, viewing the achievement of rank, office, or title as worthy of regard. I believe this was not punctiliousness, but a recognition of how much courage, effort, and will are required for high achievement. And while I count it my great good fortune to have known Kevin as a friend, I think of him and remember him as “Dr. Starr,” the distinguished professor, the inspirational orator, and, above all, the state librarian.

The California State Legislature has many great traditions. There is the annual budget process, more elaborate, formal, and prolonged, and considerably less graceful and productive than the mating dance of the sandhill crane. And then there is the auto da fe of the oversight hearing. Dr. Starr and I were invited to participate in one.

I recall a lovely Spring morning in May, I think, of 1999. Several weeks before, the California Sesquicentennial Commission had received some less than favorable press when they invited coverage of a celebration, complete with costumed fanfare trumpeters, in Monterey. The press accurately reported that the event was attended by the speakers, the press, the trumpeters, and scarcely anyone else. The disappointing attendance was not much of a story, so an enterprising reporter asked how much it cost for the trumpeters. Since the trumpeters were from Los Angeles and had to

**EDITOR’S NOTE**

Cameron Robertson was appointed deputy state librarian by Governor Pete Wilson in 1995 following the recommendation of Dr. Starr. He began his career at the State Library in 1976 holding positions in the Braille and Talking Book Library and in the Library Development Services Bureau. This talented library executive retired in 2007.
be flown in, along with their costumes and trumpets, which, due to their length, are checked at additional cost as oversize luggage, the total for their services was not inconsiderable. That, coupled with the scant attendance made for an interesting story that was picked up and run throughout the state as yet another example of waste in government.

That, in turn, led several members of the State Legislature to wonder how the Sesquicentennial Commission was getting along and to call a special oversight hearing so that we could bring them up to date. The State Library was the administrative agency for the Commission, and the state librarian was the commission’s chair. While Dr. Starr and I had not been responsible for the decisions or planning for the Monterey flop, we were conveniently close at hand, and so were invited to participate as the main course at a bureaucrat grilling.

As we trudged bravely towards the Capitol, across Tenth Street and Capitol Park, then up the west steps of the Capitol, I heard Kevin humming quietly beside me. I couldn’t quite make out the tune, but it seemed cheerily familiar, and I thought that the fact that he was humming meant that he was considerably less anxious about the approaching ordeal than I was. That gave me heart—if the boss wasn’t that worried, perhaps all would be well. However, as we neared the massive doors of the Capitol he added words to the tune. It was Larry Verne’s novelty song “Please Mr. Custer, I Don’t Wanna Go.” We survived the hearing without permanent scars and only a few first and second degree burns to our dignity. But to this day, whenever I face a disagreeable duty, I hear Kevin humming “Please, Mr. Custer.”

Dr. Starr’s achievements as state librarian were notable and many, but perhaps his most enduring legacy was securing a permanent home for the Sutro Library. When Dr. Starr was appointed state librarian by Governor Pete Wilson in 1994, the Sutro was housed in two tilt-up buildings on the
It is not enough to say that Dr. Starr was a gifted and inspired speaker. He was, of course, but he had a special talent for extemporaneous eloquence the like of which I had never heard before and doubt I ever will again.

campus of San Francisco State University.

The tilt-ups had first been used in Sacramento as temporary quarters for the State Legislature during the reconstruction and renovation of the State Capitol Building. The completion of that project roughly coincided with the termination of the Sutro Library’s lease on space in the Gleeson Library at the University of San Francisco. A new home for the Sutro was needed and so the tilt-ups were disassembled, transported, and reassembled on land at San Francisco State University. It was, in many ways, an elegant solution. In other ways, it was a slow moving disaster. While adequate for temporary use in the hot interior of Sacramento, the buildings were poorly suited for long-term use in the humid, salt-laden air of San Francisco. A constant battle was fought to keep mold and mildew away from the priceless treasures Sutro’s heirs had given to the state. From the moment he became aware of these dismal quarters and the sad gypsy history of the State Library’s efforts to preserve Sutro’s gift, Dr. Starr made it a personal priority to find a fitting and permanent home for the Sutro Library.

Special load-bearing, environmental, and access requirements dictate that library space is never easy to find, or cheap to build. To find or build it in San Francisco, especially at costs acceptable to the State Department of Finance and the Legislature seemed impossible. Although it would take him nearly ten years, Dr. Starr succeeded. He knew the city, both its buildings and its intricate power structure intimately. Over the next eight or so years, he would mine that knowledge to identify and pursue one target of opportunity after another—the old Mint, the Independent Order of Odd-Fellows Hall, the War Memorial, the Letterman Hospital at the Presidio, and many others. In every case, he was successful in gaining us access to look around. Some were rejected at that stage as being in one way or another unsuitable, one had an indoor swimming pool on the floor immediately above the proposed library space. Of the remaining, he was, in every case, successful in securing an audience with the appropriate decision makers, most of whom were his personal acquaintances.

While tirelessly working to find a suitable site, Dr. Starr also tilled the soil at the other end of the project in Sacramento. He knew that no solution would work without the support of state government, which would have to come up with the financing and other resources. He seized every opportunity to promote the Sutro project with legislators, gubernatorial staff, and contacts in the Departments of Finance and General Services.

The search for a home for the Sutro Library had many ups and downs and one spectacular near miss. Dr. Starr persuaded a consortium of investors to include the Sutro in one of the bids to develop the Presidio when the federal government divested its interest after the base closed. The plan was for the Sutro to occupy the building that had housed the Letterman Hospital. In the end, the project finished second—behind a proposal from a combine headed by George Lucas.

After nearly ten years, Dr. Starr’s persistence paid off. He combined the appeal and prestige of the Sutro with San Francisco State’s long standing need to seismically strengthen and expand the J. Paul Leonard Library. He managed to secure enthusiastic support from the Department of Finance for the combined project. Although it would take several more years before the Sutro moved in, the project was approved and underway by the time he retired, fulfilling at long last the state’s responsibility to provide a permanent and suitable home for Sutro’s magnificent gift.

It is not enough to say that Dr. Starr was a gifted and inspired speaker. He was, of course, but he had a special talent for extemporaneous eloquence the like of which I had never heard before and doubt I ever will again. Widely and deeply read in many subjects, he had a remarkable memory and spent countless hours practicing what he regarded as his true profession, writing, allowing him to structure complex arguments on the fly. By nature warm and sympathetic, he could “read” an audience. More than once I have seen him walk into a room full of people that were not necessarily hostile, but certainly not well disposed towards state government in general, nor the State Library in particular, and, armed with nothing but a few talking points deliver a twenty minute tour de force of a speech that converted the crowd into enthusiastic supporters of the Library, if not its policies.

The State Library benefited from his ex tempore speaking ability in smaller environments as well. As part of the state’s annual budget process, he and I would annually call on the legislators on our two budget subcommittees in the weeks prior to hearings. The purpose of these meetings was twofold. One aim was to make sure the leg-
islators on our subcommittees had a basic understanding of State Library programs and had met the state librarian. The second was to gather intelligence on potential opposition in order to coordinate with the state Department of Finance our defense of the Governor’s budget. Over the years, Dr. Starr refined these encounters into an art. Blending knowledge of an individual legislator’s background gleaned from the legislature’s public Web pages with his own knowledge of the history of the district they represented and the capitol’s current topics of interest, Dr. Starr would almost inevitably turn these routine budget overviews into friendly general conversations. More often than not we would emerge from these meetings with requests for research assistance—help with facts for the next speech in the district, assistance for a constituent or relative that was in need of our blind and physically handicapped services, finding a suitable historical photograph to decorate a legislator’s office, etc. All legitimate services of the State Library, but, in most cases, services that the legislator had never thought were available just across the street. The resultant goodwill served the State Library well in the budget process and whenever we had library-related legislation. While the strategy may seem obvious, its execution was so effortless that you knew you were in the presence of genius.

On occasion Dr. Starr, myself, and one or two others would celebrate a legislative victory or commiserate over a defeat with lunch. The Old Broiler was our favorite spot. They served a great steak sandwich and made an excellent Manhattan. The company was good, the talk lively, and we usually finished with a dessert. This last was later forgone in the interests of weight control after Kevin’s bypass operation. In those latter days, I recall walking back to the State Library along Ninth Street. At L Street, Kevin would duck into the convenience store on the corner and emerge with a Hershey bar. Carefully dividing it into the appropriate number of equal pieces, he would hand one to each of us, saying, “It’s not dessert, but it is the idea of dessert.”

During the ten years Dr. Starr served as State Librarian he visited every library jurisdiction in the state, presided over more than a hundred meetings of State Library boards and commissions, testified at dozens of legislative hearings in support of library bills, and made awards of state and federal library funds totaling several billion dollars. It doesn’t seem possible that during this same period he was a professor at the University of Southern California and published at least three books. His energy, like his love of California, seemed endless. Now, sadly, we must accept that it was not. I will miss the author, the orator, and the State Librarian Emeritus. But most of all, I will miss the friend who taught me that dread can be countered with a nonsense song and that the idea of dessert can serve when there is no dessert to be had.
A Letter to Dr. Kevin Starr
a.k.a. Dr. Feelgood

By Andrew St. Mary

EDITOR’S NOTE
Andrew St. Mary joined the staff of the State Library in 1990 and served as the State Library’s chief of the Administrative Services Bureau which included business services and human resources. He retired in 2007. Since retirement, St. Mary has been working as an expert examiner for the California Highway Patrol and Cooperative Personnel Services chairing law enforcement examinations. In addition, he has collaborated with historians Joe and Shirley Moore on historical projects chronicling contributions of African Americans in Central and Northern California. With Professor Shirley Moore and his wife, Sonya, he has authored a soon-to-be published book on the Sitka, the first steamboat on San Francisco Bay and the Sacramento River. It was built by William A. Leidesdorff, an African American. Following the inspiration of Dr. Starr, St. Mary is a member of the Knights of Malta.
Dear Dr. Feelgood,

I can still remember your arrival on the scene at the California State Library (CSL). Oh, what a buzz in the air about the governor appointing this highly acclaimed, celebrated, and I would say, lionized professor/author from the University of Southern California as the new state librarian. To be perfectly blunt, I didn’t quite know what to think. Then someone told me there was a collection of your books in the State Library and that you were considered the foremost expert on California history. I was more than impressed and worried, Kevin.

Here I was, a typical, long-term career civil servant who saw himself ultimately retiring from state government hopefully after attaining the supervisory level. A very common theme among state employees. Working in several state departments up to that point, I figured I had another ten to twelve years left before fading into the sunset of retired life. Oh sure, I’ve distinguished myself here and there on some projects and assignments, but they seemed inconsequential to what I learned about your accomplishments. While working at the State Department of Education, I was recruited by then State Librarian Gary Strong to fill an associate personnel analyst position to function as the personnel officer as the Library became organizationally autonomous. I had served with Gary on several examination panels for principal librarian previously so had some familiarity with him and the CSL.

Kevin, I had no knowledge of or familiarity with you, just what I had heard through the grapevine—that you were considered a gifted orator and writer. And so I thought, “how am I to work for such an esteemed, accomplished individual?” Intimidation does not accurately reflect my feelings at that time. How could I write a document for you, a certain eventuality, or when called upon, represent you in meetings with appointed or elected executives? Oh, the stress of it. My initial reaction was, “Andrew, find another job fast.” On the other hand, I was quite comfortable with my working relationship with Cameron Robertson, assistant state librarian, whom I continue to greatly admire.

It is amazing to me how an instant can change the course or direction of a situation, plan or circumstance. As I sat in my office mulling over my future, who should appear at my doorway? None other than Dr. Kevin Starr himself. I can still see you seating yourself in my desk side chair. I remember thinking, “Wow, look at this robust man with a bow tie, slightly crinkled white shirt with very thin stripes in a coat that I wasn’t sure matched.” You were not what I imagined at all.

You introduced yourself, and as we talked, I felt that I had found a long lost relative. We talked as if we’d known each other for years. The bonding was on as you explained that Gary Strong advised you that on your list of things to do first, was be sure to go to Andrew’s office and make sure he doesn’t leave. I was intimidated by your background and stature, but here you were honoring me. Again, so unexpected. Cameron and I would soon learn to get accustomed to the unexpected. When I got home that evening, my wife Sonya asked, “Well did you meet him? What was he like?” To which Sonya responded, “Then you guys should get along fine.” More prophetic words have never been spoken.

And the magnitude of many of your achievements were astounding, like the Sesquicentennial, The Library Bond Act of 2000, the Seismic Retrofit Project, the California Gold Medal, the California quarter design, the California Cultural and Historic Endowment Program, and on and on. Particularly noteworthy to me was your meeting with the California Department of Social Services at Sonya’s request to collaborate on an effort to enable foster youth statewide to acquire library cards.
So in 1994, our remarkable professional and personal journey began there at 914 Capitol Mall on the second floor. Cameron Roberson and Paul Smith were along for an extraordinary, unpredictable ride. It was like an exquisite, exhilarating party that stretched into ten years. I did not want it to end. The time passed much too quickly. By that I mean I was amazed at the boundless energy you were able to squeeze into your ten year tenure as state librarian. The list of achievements seems endless compared to what I experienced during my first fifteen or so years in state government. And the magnitude of many of your achievements were astounding, like the Sesquicentennial, The Library Bond Act of 2000, the Seismic Retrofit Project, the California Gold Medal, the California quarter design, the California Cultural and Historic Endowment Program, and on and on. Particularly noteworthy to me was your meeting with the California Department of Social Services at Sonya’s request to collaborate on an effort to enable foster youth statewide to acquire library cards. What a powerful, enduring achievement that was to enable disadvantaged youth to check out books at their local library and experience the joy of reading. I was very proud to assist you with this endeavor.

As I reflect, Kevin, what I cherish the most was the special personal times. I loved going to Mass with you during lunch on Wednesdays. Such joyous times. What fun we had: the hilarity, the merriment, the laughter and the occasional point-counterpoint conversations over dinner about the plight of, and opportunities for, African Americans in the future. And let’s not forget the endless stream of articles and other material you’d send me evidencing your points of view. I regularly had to purchase more powerfully lensed glasses to read the boxes of books you occasionally sent me. Kevin, I’ve always appreciated your deep capacity for giving. You were definitely Dr. Feelgood because you tried to bring out the best and the good in everyone. Your hopefulness stirred us to stretch our capacity toward higher achievements. Hence the title, Dr. Feelgood. And of course, you crowned me with the title of “the Fro.” I probably should have never shown you that picture of me in Stockton during my twenties with that massive Afro. But you know, I loved that title because it was endearing and special just like Dr. Feelgood. We had lots of fun with it, didn’t we?

On a more personal level Kevin, I am indebted to you for enabling me to restore my relationship with God. For that I am eternally grateful. I joined you as a fellow Knight of Malta and travelled to Lourdes on a pilgrimage to serve our maladies (the sick and the poor). Because of you, I stood at the statue commemorating the appearance of Mother Mary to St. Bernadette and bathed in the holy and healing waters of Lourdes. This had a profound, enduring impact on me. Remember the evening I called you and Sheila from Lourdes, and you thought I was back in the states, so I held the phone out from the motel lobby so you could hear a nearby conversation in French. I could hear you shout to Sheila, “No, he’s calling from Lourdes.” Very special memories, Kevin.

Here’s one I’m sure you’ll remember. Since we’ve known each other, you’ve heard me speak of Stockton, my birthplace, in less than fond language. Even Cameron doesn’t know about the one afternoon around lunchtime you came by my office and said, “Hey Andrew, let’s go to Stockton.” Sounded impulsive to me, but why not? So off we went. We drove by the home in which I grew up. I showed you the location where my library used to be in grammar school. I remarked, “How ironic a skinny black kid from Stockton would wind up as chief of administration for the California State Library. I guess anything is possible.” We had a good chuckle at that one. But then you wanted lunch. And here we were in the “hood.” My first impulse was to drive to the other side of Stockton, to somewhere “safe to eat.” Oh, but not you. “Look Andrew there’s several places to eat right down this street there (being Main Street).” So down Main Street we drove. You picked out this not so elegant diner and we stopped to eat. I know you could feel my sense of skepticism based on the crowd we passed on our way in and the one inside wasn’t much better. But in we went. We walked up to the counter and I ordered a hamburger, fries, and a coke hoping you would do the same. I did not trust anything more exotic on that menu. You ordered likewise, thank goodness. It didn’t take long for some characters to gravitate to our table. Next thing I knew you were conversing with them like you’d known them for years. Sound familiar? So there we sat, hanging in the hood, sharing stories over lunch with folks who would repel most people. But you were just being Kevin. I loved that about you.

You were always so gracious and willing to help out, even at risk. Eventually we learned that Sheila was the same way. Over time, it became very clear that you two belonged with each other. Sonya and I could never repay the assistance and guidance you and Sheila provided to Taylor in route to her obtaining her master’s degree in public health. Sorry Kevin, but for all the help you gave to Taylor, I have to throw out major kudos to Sheila on this one. Her guidance and insights were invaluable to Taylor. There just are no words!!! Taylor still has the letter you wrote to her in 1995 thanking her for a picture she drew for you in your office while we were meeting with some state executives and representatives from the Capitol. I believe she was about five years old then. I am including a copy for your remembrance.

Our ultimate journey is inevitable with a short interruption, a detour on earth. My life is filled with beautiful sunsets anticipating each rising sun thanks to you. You are forever in my thoughts and heart.

Your brother,

The Fro
EDITOR'S NOTE
Sheila and Dr. Starr basically adopted Taylor St. Mary as an honorary niece. She has always been an avid reader and thus a beautiful bond developed that continues with Sheila Starr. They have participated in Taylor's educational journey through her recent graduation from CSU Northridge with a Master's Degree in Public Health. From hosting Taylor in his office to attending her Confirmation ceremony in her Catholic growth to attainment of her Master's degree, Dr. Starr and Sheila have been steadfast in her corner. They have helped shape her future success without being asked. She is certainly a living representative of Dr. Starr's legacy. The Starrs gave Taylor many children's books each Christmas.
A Tribute to Dr. Kevin Starr

Delivered at the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Society of California Archivists

by Mattie Taormina

This year, in January, California lost one of our greatest sons, Dr. Kevin Starr. There was no bigger supporter of California, save Huell Howser, than Dr. Starr. Author of the multi-volume *Americans and the California Dream* series, many of our archival holdings were showcased in his work. He wrote about many of our repositories both in his histories and in the press. Journalist, historian, and the two titles he loved the most—state librarian of California, and university professor at the University of Southern California—Dr. Starr held the distinction of writing more words about our beautiful state than anyone else on earth. A native San Franciscan, he became an adopted son of Los Angeles and blissfully loved his trans-state life that brought him in deep association with two of California’s vibrant urban cities.

As many of you might know, I had the extreme honor to be Dr. Starr’s assistant at the State Library for eight and a half years. There have been many tributes, newspaper summaries, magazine articles, and seminars focused on Dr. Starr’s passing and what it means to California. And I certainly cannot top them—nor do I wish to. I can only say what his passing means to me and even that I cannot do yet as I feel the loss still too acutely. Maybe in time I can accurately express how, for almost 20 years, this one person guided and changed the course of my life and career. But for now, I mourn the loss of this great man. Dr. Starr was my boss, my mentor, and my friend. I know many of you join me in paying honor to this great California Historian and Librarian.

---

EDITOR’S NOTE

Ms. Taormina is the director of the State Library’s Sutro Library branch in San Francisco. Previously, she served as special assistant to Dr. Starr until his retirement in 2004. She also served with distinction as the head of public services and manuscript processing librarian for Special Collections and University Archives at Stanford University and later as librarian for instruction and outreach. Her scholarship has focused on teaching with primary sources, including the award-winning book she co-edited in 2014, Using Primary Sources: Hands-On Instructional Exercises.
everything is great!!! How is L.A.? my grandmother Sheila texted me after I checked in to see how she was doing. Just a week earlier, at the end of June, I had taken flight from the East Coast, and now I found myself perched in the City of Angels for the summer. I went west to discover La La Land in the dark days before Ryan Gosling and Emma Stone tap-danced into our hearts. I had not parted from home without a good deal of separation anxiety. For all our purported cosmopolitanism, Princetonians are a parochial bunch. During the school year we exist within a bubble confined to the few blocks beyond FitzRandolph Gate; during the summer and after graduation, the boundaries of our province seem largely demarcated by the island of Manhattan. Missing out on a summer with my friends in the city was a bummer. The prospect of moving three thousand miles away from them after graduation was depressing. I began typing out my response: “weather is great and I like the city, can’t complain.” But this faint praise did not do justice to how I felt, even in those early July days, about being in California. I continued: “being out here makes me feel very connected to you and Kevin.” At this point I should probably explain that I’ve always called my maternal grandparents by their first names, a holdover from my mother’s bohemian upbringing in San Francisco in the early ’70s. I should also mention that my grandfather, Kevin Starr, was still alive then; that he still resided with my grandmother in SF, where his family had been for four generations; that at the age of 75, he was still flying down to Los Angeles, where he taught history at the University of Southern California. His seven-volume series Americans and the California Dream had made him the preeminent historian of his state.

Sheila, who has an endearing quality of suddenly escalating the emotional stakes of any conversation, responded with an unpunctuated text clearly dictated into her iPhone: “In the acknowledgments to his third book Material Dreams KEVIN describes us driving across Sunset Boulevard in twilight the neon lights just coming on and he says something to the effect will we ever be as happy as young as we were on that evening.” She followed this up with: “We had such a wonderful life in Los Angeles and we really loved it it’s over now we’re older and San Francisco is a good city to be old and retired in but Los Angeles was tremendously vibrant and welcoming to us.” So much for small talk.

Kevin passed away this January. To those interested in the remarkable facts of his life and career, I hope you will take the time to read one of his many obituaries on the internet. My purpose here is to celebrate him in a different way. All summer long I wanted to write a poem about California. Unfortunately, it was not until a month after Kevin’s death that the words would come. The fruits of that labor are included below. But first, I have included the passage Sheila alluded to in her text, which actually comes from the acknowledgments of the fourth book in Kevin’s series, Endangered Dreams: The Great Depression in California (1996). The deep love I have for my grandparents pales in comparison to the love they shared together over the course of a fifty-three-year marriage, a partnership devoted to the California Dream.

I am indebted to my wife of three decades, Sheila Gordon Starr, more than I can ever say. For the past ten years, in the midst of her own busy life, Sheila has found time to sack entire libraries, armed with citations I have provided her, to word process and edit endless drafts, and to offer graceful and acute criticism of points
large and small in the evolving manuscript. Together, we worked on the three volumes now complete. Our researches were centered in San Francisco, Berkeley, Los Angeles, and most recently, Sacramento. Most often, Sheila worked alone, assembling new materials as I organized and drafted one or another of the thirty-six chapters extending through these three volumes. Sometimes, when our mutual schedules allowed, we had the pleasure of working together. The times we spent on this project in Los Angeles were among the happiest hours of my life. Roaming the stacks of the Doheny Library at USC in search of titles, or sweeping westward across the City of Angels on the Santa Monica freeway on a winter afternoon en route to an eight-hour session in the libraries of UCLA, we experienced a renewed sense of companionship, of marriage as an enterprise of mutual help, that came as an unexpected and welcome gift to us both. Returning on that same freeway toward midnight, with Los Angeles everywhere around us in an infinity of light, or following neon-lit, palm-lined Sunset Boulevard as it winds from UCLA toward the downtown, or, at yet other times, lingering over a late dinner at Musso & Frank in Hollywood, our references verified, our L.L. Bean tote bags bulging with research, we experienced a sense of wonder and delight in life and work and the City of Angels which will never leave us. Could anyone be so happy as I was in those times in that city in her company?

Sacramento, San Francisco, Los Angeles
March 1995 K.S. ☞

California

My achy Dust Bowl soul withers
From heartland hardships and Atlantic anxieties.
Her voice is sonorous Santa Monica sunshine
That seems to say in soft susurrus
“Go west, young man.”
I linger in her sunset, until she,
Silver-screen sexy,
Fades into the stars.
Then I dream of California:
With Spanish eyes I read the lines of her palms
Hug the curves of her coastline,
Driving slow
As the bungalows of Malibu
Flicker in montage through the window
Melancholy receding in the rearview.
There’s no Big Sad in Big Sur, where
Mountains plunge like necklines into the Pacific.
Marin at the magic hour,
The bay bathed in Golden Gate light
All that glitters is a rush—
I shudder at her touch.
And I awake
Before the fault lines in the vision quake
Before endangered dreams piled on the pyre
Blaze forth in wildfire.
Filled with continental ambition,
I forge ahead with Irish labor
To meet her at Promontory,
Where we, in celestial splendor,
Will write a dream to fill a library.

In Memoriam Kevin Owen Starr 1940-2017
Recollections of Kevin Starr
by Marianne deVere Hinckle

THE FOGHORN OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO—A NURTURING GROUND FOR YOUNG JOURNALISTS

The story of working with Kevin Starr for the last several decades has its origins at the Hinckle family’s dining room table. My eldest brother Warren was a year ahead of Kevin at the University of San Francisco. As editor of the USF Foghorn, 1959—1960, he often invited a stream of professors and fellow students to spaghetti and wine suppers. My parents and brother Bob retreated to other parts of the house. I stayed and enjoyed Warren’s friends. Kevin always stood out and engaged with the whole crowd. Later Kevin succeeded Warren as editor of the Foghorn.

During those days, I often skipped school (with a note from my mother) to go to USF and help get out the Foghorn, whose offices were housed in Quonset huts on the campus. Warren had turned the weekly Foghorn into a daily—a situation that attracted a lot of excitement among the staff, the campus, and the Jesuits. Warren described a bit of the mayhem in his autobiography If You Have a Lemon, Make Lemonade:

The strange thing called the Daily Foghorn was a monster frog in a small pond, causing distraction and disruption to those things the Jesuits held dear. Their nice Catholic college paper was transformed into a freak of Hearst proportions: ‘Sunday A.M.,” Extras, weekday “5 A.M.” Extras, banner headlines in type suitable for the sinking of the Titanic, vitriolic, front-page opinions, special editions, magazine supplements, exclusives in red ink, and incessant editorial crusades ... the Daily Foghorn had a short life. As soon as I left, the Jesuits busted it in rank to a weekly.

Following Warren as editor of the Foghorn gave Kevin the opportunity to hone his management skills. Once the mechanics of production were under control, he proceeded to calm down the Jesuits. Kevin’s response was always the same when we checked in to see how he was faring: “Managing with charm, Hink, managing with charm!” Kevin’s robust wit and brilliance endeared him to the Jesuits.
The Daily Foghorn had been announced with a national press release, “City’s Fourth Daily is Born.” Mementos from the Daily days were pinned to the walls of the Foghorn offices, including two telegrams of congratulations: one from then President Nixon, and the other from then Senator John F. Kennedy.

On the occasions when I joined the Daily Foghorn staff to get a day or night, special edition out, Father William Monihan, S.J., then librarian of the Gleeson Library, would drop in and say, “when you are through here, stop in the library and I will show you some treasures from the Sutro collection,” which was then housed in the basement of the Gleeson.

Warren and Kevin’s time on the USF campus made them life-long friends of Father Monihan. As I came along, Fr. Monihan brought me onto his Gleeson Library Associates’ board of directors—a decades-long involvement celebrating the treasures of the Donohue Rare Book Room. Kevin was finally able to give this pied-piper of book collectors his due in a 1988 San Francisco Examiner Image magazine cover story, “The Penniless de Medici of Frisco.”

At a USF book party in October 2016 for the first volume of Kevin’s planned series on the history of the Roman Catholics in North America, “Continental Ambitions,” he was asked by a student, “tell us what USF has meant to you?” He replied, “I graduated from the University of San Francisco with a BA in English, an Army ROTC commission, a Danforth Fellowship to graduate school, and a fiancée—USF gave me everything!”

The smell of newsprint and finely bound leather books permeates my recollections of this period. Father Monihan’s enthusiasm for his library, librarianship, book collecting and fine printing was infectious. Warren Hinckle, Kevin Starr and their crew of young Foghorn journalists operated with a glee and spark for their craft, which was also infectious. The bonds forged during those Daily Foghorn days lasted a lifetime.

Like the basset hounds that became the ‘signature’ dog for Warren, I took up their scent, pursuing training as a writer and to find a way to follow Father William Monihan’s dictum to all his young friends: “Find a way to live your life in the world of books, and you will have a happy life.”

Though taking different paths in their “Irish” storytelling—Warren as a journalist and editor of two national muckraking magazines and Kevin as professor, historian, librarian and novelist—these two men represented the very best of journalistic integrity. They were committed to being on the right side of history, which forged a bond between them. Kevin and Warren shared a love of life, work and family (they both had two daughters, whom they doted on). Most of all, they lived to tell a story, get it into print, and into the hands of readers.

We were all passengers in that dream of California—what Kevin Starr later termed, in his seventh volume of his series, Golden Dreams: California in the Age of Abundance, 1950-1963.


The last time I saw Kevin Starr he had the latest edition of The Bohemian Club Library Notes tucked under his arm and was heading into the San Francisco Olympic Club for his hour-long swim. I imagined, when he was back in his bowtie and navy blazer, he would go around the corner to
the Bohemian Club, do some Club business, and then meet up with friends in the Cartoon Room bar. There he could afford a longer look at his new edition.

Kevin had a routine for admiring the freshly printed magazine: first he held it up to his nose to get a whiff of fresh ink, then held it out, took off his glasses, surveyed the cover and said, “Beautiful. Hink, what font is this?”

**LAWTON KENNEDY PRINTERS**

In 1982, after the death of San Francisco fine printer Lawton R. Kennedy, I stepped in to manage his shop for nearly two years. The Bohemian Club and Warren Howell, the noted dean of antiquarian booksellers, had been steady clients, along with the Bancroft Library, the California Historical Society, and the Gleeson Library of the University of San Francisco. Lawton was most recognized for the series of books he designed and printed for Warren Howell on Western Americana, volumes still sought after by collectors and historians.

Warren Howell, chair of the Library Committee and editor of *Bohemian Club Library Notes*, had chosen historian Kevin Starr as his successor. Howell called one day to let me know that Kevin would stop in to discuss continuing production of *Library Notes*, “Marianne, Lawton Kennedy made us all look good for a long time. Continue to make us look good and you may have a job.”

Perhaps, because both Kevin and I had fathers who were machinists, a shop like Lawton Kennedy’s was a dream. Two large book presses dominated the press room, then located on the fourth floor of the Phillips Building on Front Street. Oak cabinets filled with tools of the trade lined the walls. Type ornaments, zinc cuts and type for hand composition sat among composing sticks, proofing presses, cans of ink, and stacks of paper. Antique book cabinets were filled with fine books produced by Kennedy, along with the history of printing and typography. Works by John Henry Nash, Adrian Wilson, the Grabhorn Press and other fine printers filled the shelves.

A press proof Lawton composed one day in his favorite Caxton Black type font was taped to the window behind his antique desk with the following admonition: “What you save is generally what is left out.” I figured it was an answer to any patron who dared to ask, “Lawton, how much is this going to cost me?”

Kevin came to survey this great laboratory of fine printing and said, “Hink, help me with *Library Notes*. Let’s have some fun.” The idea of further developing a literary magazine for an institution established in 1872 appealed to historian Kevin Starr. He had already established his plan of writing a set of volumes tracing California history. Now he could focus on one more California institution: The Bohemian Club, established just twenty-two years after statehood, and before both Stanford University and the University of California. He was excited about this adventure and seemed a bit, like Mr. Toad from *The Wind and the Willows* when he was shown the motorcar.

During my tenure at Lawton Kennedy
Printers we produced two editions of *Library Notes* on a similar design as Lawton’s. When the shop closed, the opportunity to redesign the edition arose.

In 1983 Hinckle & Sons Printing Office was established and continued the production of *Library Notes*. With my affinity for the fonts of the great English type designer William Caslon and for the woodcuts of Thomas Bewick, the new look for *Library Notes*, Number 43 for Winter 1983 appeared fresh, and traditional in a stately way, appropriate for a Club founded in San Francisco in 1872. A small collection of *Punch Magazine*, 1850s to 1870s, with their amusing line illustrations came in handy for spot illustrations and served to make the pages more pleasing to read. Kevin immediately enlisted work from Club artists to create line art to accompany lead stories. First to come aboard was Vincent Perez to be joined later by Phil Frank, Vic Marcelli, Derek Mueller and others. As the years and editions progressed, we became a truly illustrated *Bohemian Club Library Notes*.

Letterpress production continued with fine printer Wesley Tanner of Berkeley. However, it soon became apparent we needed professional copyediting. Enter Sarah M. Smith, who to this day keeps us, as Kevin Starr has said, ‘civilized!’ Our galleys became flooded with a sea of red ink. To keep up with author and editorial changes we soon committed to digital composition and offset lithography for production, which gave us agility in design. By Number 72, the long-standing contribution of co-editor Jack Bethards was acknowledged on page sixteen. Jack supplied back up for Kevin, which consisted of the invaluable task of communicating with authors. As a natural editor, Jack also took a critical eye to raw manuscripts.

considered all Bohemians equal. However, in reviewing past editions, two authors stand out as almost staff writers. They deserve to be mentioned: Andrew G. Jameson, the Byzantine and military historian contributed twenty backgrounds to the Grove Play and twenty historical essays, bringing to life stories on St. Catherine’s Monastery in the Sinai to the Battle of the Bulge. Norman M. Scott, M.D.—despite a distinguished career in the U.S. Army Medical Corps as Douglas MacArthur’s personal physician—chose, in retirement, to write on natural history and brought to the Library Notes pages five essays on aspects of Charles Darwin’s life, and brought us into the minute world of spiders, bats, aardvarks and worms. These voices have been replaced by a new flank of compelling writers including historian Ward M McAfee, and R. Owen Williams, among others.

In edition Number 100, Spring 1998, Kevin Starr summed up the literary magazine he had envisioned when we first chatted about such an adventure in the offices of Lawton Kennedy Printers in 1982:

Library Notes has evolved as a vehicle for Bohemians to share with each other and the extended Bohemian family the rich life of the mind which is ever characteristic of the good life.... Library Notes, finally, draws its basic energies not only from its excellent articles and its intriguing editorial design,
When Kevin Starr died suddenly this January 2017, I thought of how to honor his poetic nature, and lightness of being. I was only able to do it with typography. Sheila Starr—daughters Marian and Jessica, supplied the words for a memorial program for his Mass of the Resurrection, appropriately at St. Ignatius Church, on the campus of the University of San Francisco where so many ideas were born. Set in Perpetua type fonts with Eric Gill flourishes for accents, the final program seemed appropriate for a man who was, indeed, a man for all seasons.

Marianne deVere Hinckle designed this magnificent Order of the Mass of the Resurrection held at St. Ignatius Church on the campus of the University of San Francisco.
On California

The unfolding of California as a regional culture in the nineteenth century is a rich and colorful chapter in American history. This book attempts to deal with the imaginative aspects of California’s journey to identity. It is also an elegy to its struggle and hope. From the beginning, California promised much. While yet barely a name on the map, it entered American awareness as a symbol of renewal. It was the frontier: of geography and of expectation.

Endangered Dreams has as its key assumption the relevance of the story of California in the 1930s to the present era, which is likewise a time of economic restructuring and recovery, dashed personal hopes, and the struggle to renew confidence, not just in California, but in the entire American experiment….Faced with a ruinous depression, Californians of the 1930s managed, amidst some social misbehavior, to accomplish one of the most creative decades in the history of any American state.

Across the long years of California’s existence in modern times – under the jurisdictions of Spain, of Mexico, and of the United States – there have been cruelties, injustices, and mistakes aplenty. The record shows this to be the case. But there has also been an equally sustained persistence of what Josiah Royce called “the Hope of the Great Community”: a place, a society, in which the best possibilities of the American experiment can be struggled for and sometimes achieved.
Yes. We certainly do.

INTEGRITY. COMPASSION. EXCELLENCE.

We who live in San Francisco know how seldom a truly remarkable leader steps forward, a person of such integrity, compassion and commitment to excellence it gives one pause for thought. Kevin Starr is such a leader.

A native San Franciscan, Kevin knows the City as few have or can. As a businessman, journalist, university professor head of a major City department and adviser to former mayor Joseph Alioto, Kevin has not just observed how San Francisco works, he has helped make it work.

Kevin Starr knows the downsides of city life, too, from the perspective of a kid growing up in near poverty on Potrero Hill. These issues are those which relate to the quality of life in our city — a city of breathtaking beauty, a city of tolerance for different lifestyles and different peoples, and a city steeped in tradition and culture.

Kevin Starr believes that by achieving a working consensus on the Board of Supervisors, now often characterized by petty squabbling and wasteful infighting, we can meet the challenge of effectively addressing issues that are of vital concern to all San Franciscans — affordable housing, public safety, the Muni, providing a dignified and productive life for our seniors, making our cultural resources available to all, parks and playgrounds.

Tough decisions must be made soon, decisions that will determine the very core and character of our city’s future.

Kevin’s experience over the past two decades have uniquely prepared him to make these decisions.

As Director of the San Francisco Library System, he took a major city department which had lapsed into neglect and built it into a showcase community and educational resource. As a top level advisor to former Mayor Joseph Alioto, he took part in the daily decisions of city government.

But his experience is not limited to city government. As a career journalist, he wrote about the human side of living in San Francisco. Through his column neighborhood arts, kids, seniors, minorities, all found an articulate voice and an advocate of tolerance and opportunity in the city.

A communications expert who heads his own firm in the city’s financial district, Kevin will bring a businessr’s practical know-how to solving such major city problems as the lack of affordable housing and overburdened public transportation. Integrity. Compassion. Excellence.

We deserve these qualities in our leaders, but all too rarely do we find them. In Kevin Starr we have the opportunity to bring these qualities to the Board of Supervisors.
One episode in Kevin Starr’s life that is not widely known is his race for supervisor in San Francisco in 1984. Yet, it was this campaign and the aftermath that would significantly influence Starr’s career.

Starr came to the 1984 race with a decade-long involvement in city government and journalism. He was born in San Francisco and spent a part of his early life in a Catholic orphanage in Ukiah, after his parents divorced and his mother had a nervous breakdown. He served in the United States Army after graduating from the University of San Francisco in 1962, and then received a doctorate in American Literature from Harvard in 1969. He became an aide to Mayor Joseph Alioto in 1973, and over the next ten years advanced rapidly, first as the appointed city librarian, and later as a popular columnist with the San Francisco Examiner, and university faculty member. The initial volume of his envisioned multi-volume history of California, Americans and the California Dream, 1850-1915, was published in 1973, followed by his only novel, Land’s End, in 1979.

In 1983, he was approached by people active in the city’s business community, Catholic community, and neighborhood organizations to run for supervisor. It was not a tough sell. As his wife Sheila has noted, “He had thought about running for office for some time, and all that he could accomplish as an elected official.”

He got off to a fast start. Within a few months he received the endorsements of former mayors Alioto and George Christopher, and state legislative leaders Leo McCarthy and Lou Papan, and raised $40,000. On January 4, 1984 Examiner columnist Bruce Pettit published a positive column, “Why Starr seeks S.F. seat,” in which Starr’s role as a centrist was emphasized. “People do not want to live in a city where there is constant conflict,” Starr explained. “Elected officials have the duty to harmonize, but lately they have pitted left against right, the neighborhoods against downtown, and labor against management.”

Starr also opposed the proposal to make the supervisor payment (at present a $23,924 annual salary) into a full time position and stated: “There should be no full-time living out of what should be a deed of public service.”

The official campaign kick-off was held at the Gift Center Pavilion at 8th and Brannan streets on March 15, 1984 to an overflow crowd of over 250 people paying $150 per ticket. Starr followed this up with an immersion into the retail politics of the city, enthusiastically passing out leaflets on street corners and Muni bus stops, attending the nightly bingo games, appearing at neighborhood “meet and greets” hosted in the homes of supporters. Readers of the Jewish Bulletin were greeted by an ad at the Passover holiday, “Passover Greetings from Kevin Starr,” in which Kevin was identified as an “Honorary member of Congregation Magain David Sephardim,” a synagogue in the Richmond district.

But as the campaign progressed into the summer, it slowly became clear the City was rapidly shifting from the familiar one that Starr grew up in, and even from the one he returned to in 1973. Identity politics had long been part of San Francisco, as with other major cities. By 1984, identity politics had come to assume a central role. The City had over twenty different Democratic clubs largely based on ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. Starr had no natural politically-active base. Only the Wallenberg Jewish Democratic Club, among the major clubs, endorsed his candidacy.

Far more than identity politics, though, Starr’s campaign came up against a shifting local political culture. Despite the city’s longtime active and influential bohemia,
local politics had been rooted in a middle-class, centrist orientation. The emerging political culture was one increasingly unmoored from the middle class or taxpayers or private businesses. No one embraced this new culture more cleverly than a young assemblyman, Art Agnos, who was elected to the Assembly in 1976, defeating Harvey Milk. Agnos went around the city denouncing amorphous “downtown interests” or “the wealthy,” and promising new government programs and spending for each group.

Throughout his campaign, Starr was both mystified and angered by what he considered this pandering and attempts to divide the city by race, gender, or economic status. When the various Democratic clubs sent out questionnaires asking support for their advocacy or projects, campaign volunteers would urge Starr to go along. But Starr always refused to tell these groups what they wanted to hear. He saw San Francisco through the lens of a “civic culture,” by which race, gender, and economic status were secondary to San Francisco as a larger entity.

In the fall, after the Democratic Club endorsement season, Starr’s campaign seemed to regain its balance with endorsements from the city’s two largest newspapers, and an active street presence with volunteers. On election day, Starr and his advisors thought he had a good chance to finish in the top six; six of the eleven Supervisor seats were up for election in 1984. But it was not to be. By the time that most of the votes were counted the following morning, Starr had finished in seventh place, just out of the running. He would eventually receive over 90,000 votes, but fell well behind the sixth place finisher, Carole Ruth Silver who had over 125,000 votes.

In a letter to supporters following the election, Starr noted that, “I worked hard, raised sufficient funds, attracted a large group of committed volunteers...The voters, however, had other ideas.”

Starr did not immediately withdraw from local politics and government. In 1989 he became active in a campaign to oppose a new city-funded ballpark, being pushed by Agnos, who in 1987 was elected Mayor. Starr believed that city funds should not be used for sports facilities. He authored a pamphlet arguing that city funds could be put to better uses. On November 6, 1989, the day before the election (which saw the ballpark proposal defeated), Agnos and his campaign operatives struck back. The San Francisco Chronicle carried a front page story in which Starr was accused of taking funds from a Sacramento developer for the pamphlet, without proper disclosure. The District Attorney became involved. The grand jury found no basis for indictment. But the incident ended Starr’s local political participation.

What it did launch him into was a different city and different career. He no longer was tied to San Francisco, and in 1989 became Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Southern California (USC). He and Sheila kept their condominium in San Francisco, but increasingly spent time in Los Angeles, and later in Sacramento, when Starr was appointed California State Librarian in 1994.

Starr served as State Librarian through 2004. For a decade in this position he traveled throughout the state lecturing and holding town meetings at public libraries, small and large. He would go to small branch libraries in Shasta, Merced, Oceanside, and Glendale. At each he would greet patrons, extol the role of the public library in a democracy, and urge local investment and support for library upkeep and development. In the end, as State Librarian, he did assume a political leadership role far more effective than if he had succeeded in his 1984 race.
Kevin Starr is a historian who truly made history. Today we mourn the loss of his warm and wise presence. But we celebrate the impact of his genius, his generous spirit, and his astonishing vision.

With the fullness of his being, Kevin Starr:
- loved his nation and his Church;
- loved the Academy;
- loved the fellowship of the Bohemian Grove;
- loved his native California;
- and, yes, he loved the University of Southern California.

When Professor Starr began shining his scholarly light on the Golden State of California, he would illuminate forever one of the most pivotal eras in recent human history. Yet he remained ever faithful and active in his academic service, his public service and his teaching.

For him, the teacher-student relationship was paramount. For him, the protocols and rituals of the Academy were sacred traditions—to elevate the human spirit and to awaken the intellect and conscience of a community. He took immense pride in his service as an ROTC student. And for decades he served as a champion and supporter of USC’s ROTC and veteran students.

For generations, the California Dream had been a vague, enchanting notion. Yet it took Professor Starr to capture that dream—to explore it, to define it and to articulate it. And he did this, so meaningfully, so memorably, that he will forever be associated with that dream.

He described early generations of Californians as a “people alive to the full play of sense and spirit.” And fittingly, Kevin painted California’s vistas and its developments in the grandest Biblical terms, certain of their lasting influence.

He also celebrated USC’s academic community as the essence of the California ideal—open, dynamic, forward-thinking, resilient and forever optimistic.

I will forever remember a moment in 2006, when he invited me to join him, Sheila and Marian at the White House. There, proudly, he received the National Medal for the Humanities from President George W. Bush. That honor, and all the others, could not have been more deserved. Kevin has made us all richer, by helping us, by supporting us and by sharing freely the incomparable wealth of his insight and his forever optimism.

Our success is his legacy. He helped us understand who we are and where we can still go. And just as he brought past events freshly alive, his example and his achievements will remain powerfully alive. Kevin, our friend and our teacher: We will miss you!

---

**EDITOR’S NOTE**

*Dr. C. L. Max Nikias is the President of the University of Southern California and delivered this remembrance of Dr. Starr at St. Ignatius Church on the campus of the University of San Francisco on January 27, 2017.*
Eulogy of Dr. Kevin Starr

Highlighting His Ten Years as State Librarian of California, 1994—2004

By Gary F. Kurutz, California State Library Foundation


On behalf of the California State Library and its staff and indeed all librarians of California, I extend my heartfelt condolences to Sheila Starr, her daughters Jessica and Marian, and all members of the Starr family.

I first met Dr. Kevin Starr in 1975 having been introduced to him by another great figure in California history, Dr. J. S. Holliday. In my mind, these were the two most electric figures I had ever met and I felt like I was “book-ended” between two titans of California history. Immediately, I could sense the dynamism of Dr. Starr and marveled at his extraordinary command of the language. At the time, I was serving as the library director of the California Historical Society in San Francisco and specializing in California and Western history, I followed his career. His account of discovering the California history books in the stacks at Harvard’s Widener Library always stayed with me as a fabulous example of the power of books and how it inspired Dr. Starr to write his doctoral dissertation on the California dream, which in turn, led to his monumental series of books interpreting the history and culture of the Golden State.

This in my mind was the most powerful story about the value of books that I had ever encountered. Just like Harvard professor Josiah Royce, that noted nineteenth century interpreter of California’s past, Kevin was thousands of miles from his native land. Fortunately, for us, the Golden State and not the East Coast or Europe became the subject of his doctoral dissertation and his life’s inspiration.

When State Librarian Gary Strong resigned to accept a position in New York, I immediately thought of Kevin and called him to encourage him to put in for the position of state librarian. Just as the noted historian Dr. Daniel J. Boorstin so well represented the Library of Congress, Kevin could do the same for the State Library. Besides, both loved bowties! Fortunately, he responded with enthusiasm. I thought no one could better represent California and the importance of libraries as lifelong learning centers. I was hoping he would increase the visibility of the State Library itself with the governor and legislature who occupied the State Capitol Building across the street. Dr. Starr connected with everyone, be it a teenager looking for a job or a veteran historian looking for...
new insights into the history and present condition of our Golden State.

Fortunately, Governor Pete Wilson did have the good sense to appoint him State Librarian of California on September 3, 1994, and made possible a fantastically vigorous ten years in the history of California libraries. Dr. Starr was reappointed by Governor Gray Davis in January 1999, and his successor Arnold Schwarzenegger appointed him as the first State Librarian Emeritus in 2004.

I have enjoyed this job the most.

No one loved California more than Dr. Starr and as its chief spokesperson for culture and learning, he visited libraries and library systems in all fifty-eight counties of California ranging from the magisterial San Francisco Public Library at the Civic Center to the relatively modest Ukiah branch of the Mendocino County Library. This Northern California visit was very personal for him. As a child he lived at the Albertinum, a Roman Catholic orphanage in Ukiah, following his parent’s divorce and mother’s nervous breakdown. He mentioned during his emotional presentation in Ukiah that the Dominican sisters guided his reading and love of books and he became a prodigious reader thereafter. “Libraries,” he said, “serve as repositories of local identity because they promote heritage projects and they embody that sense of community identity.” After taking the job, the State Library's budget grew from $52 million to $115 million with the vast majority of the new money going for library projects up and down the state.

During these long road trips to small rural communities with modest libraries, he realized how disadvantaged they were in keeping up with changes in technology and the blossoming of the internet. These backroad areas did not have the infrastructure to support the internet and he became a powerful voice for bringing this vital learning tool to all California public libraries. How could both children and adults be competitive and informed without access to the Internet?

He had always been a powerful advocate for literacy and used his position to promote literacy programs throughout the state. In going through the State Library’s gigantic clipping file on Dr. Starr, one article especially caught my attention: it centered on the dedication of the California Conservation Corps’ new Anacapa Library, funded by a State Library grant. Most of the corps users, who were in the eighteen to twenty-three age group, had not finished high school, and desperately needed reading material. “Corps members,” stated Dr. Starr, “are at the age when life is full of drama, confusion and exhilaration and the Anacapa Library will help them turn their aspirations into reality.” As one young library user put it, “I think this is the greatest thing the corps has done.”

Sharon Davis, the wife of Governor Gray Davis, established the “Governor’s Book Fund” to encourage literacy and reading in public libraries. Dr. Starr and California’s First Lady celebrated the publication of her children’s book The Adventures of Capitol Kitty, published in 2002. Artist Daniel San Souci illustrated the popular story.
such a big heart and because of his challenging childhood, I sincerely believe he could identify with these young men.

He was most proud of an act to improve library systems for blind and disabled patrons. “Lack of direct and prompt access to these materials, such as newspapers, magazines, newsletters, broadcast media schedules, and other time-sensitive materials,” he said, “has a detrimental effect on the educational opportunities, literacy, and opportunity for full participation in governmental and community forums by people with print disabilities.” In 2001, the California State Library, through the leadership of Dr. Starr, “has caused to be established in five locations throughout California high technology systems that provide access to previously inaccessible material by use of a standard telephone.” Appropriately, the legislature named this the Kevin Starr Access to Information Act.

Another program among many was the California Civil Liberties Education Program which called attention not only to California’s remarkable diversity but also to social justice issues. It resulted in extensive documentation and the development of educational programs centered at libraries telling the story of the unjust internment of Japanese Americans during World War II. The year 2017 marks the 75th anniversary of the Executive Order 9066 and the removal of people of Japanese descent from their homes, farms, schools, and businesses into camps in the interior of the country to places like Manzanar in the parched Owens Valley.

Dr. Starr directed the Library during another very important but happier anniversary time. The year 1998 was the 150th anniversary of the discovery of gold at Sutter’s Mill, and the year 2000 marked the 150th anniversary or sesquicentennial of statehood and the founding of the State Library. Who better to head up the remembrance and celebration of these key events and chair the California Sesquicentennial Commission? Just as an aside, the erudite Dr. Starr made sure we all knew how to pronounce the word “sesquicentennial.”

More seriously, he spoke with such eloquence and evenhandedness concerning the run for instant riches. In other words, he covered the good and bad of this monumental event and that the influx of gold seekers from around the world established “the DNA code of American California.” In recognizing its downside, he wrote of the risks of deconstructing history for whatever motivation:

In absolute moral terms, the loss of one single Indian child, much less the near-total destruction of an entire people, is not worth an affirming view of the Gold Rush. In absolute terms, the destruction of the environment was not worth the gold taken from it. And yet, what are we to do? Are we to say that the Gold Rush was nothing because of its devastating impact on Native Americans? Are we to say that the Gold Rush was nothing because it treated California, as Bayard Taylor put it, like a princess whom bandits had captured, cutting off her hands merely to take the rings from her fingers?

The problem with deconstructing history is the difficulty in reconstructing it: in finding a totality, including its tragic dimensions, and affirming it as the founding time.

Would it have been better had there been no Gold Rush, no California, no Mexico, and no Spain in California? Yet to contemplate such possibilities—and they are implicit when we judge history from the perspective of moral absolutes—is to force ourselves to roll back the carpet of history.

Related to this, it was also the time of the state quarter series, and California being the 31st state admitted into the union, it became our turn to come up with a design, and again, who better to direct this process than Dr. Starr? In the State Library, there

“Of all things I have been in my life—Army officer, college professor, public relations man, journalist and newspaper columnist, writer of history, City Librarian of San Francisco—I have enjoyed this job the most.”

— DR. KEVIN STARR
are boxes of proposed designs, but facing this near impossible task, the committee succeeded. The final design selected by Governor Schwarzenegger celebrated California’s commitment to conservation and featured a likeness of John Muir, Yosemite, and the California condor.

In collaboration with First Lady Maria Shiver, the California Hall of Fame was established at the California Museum in 2006, and Dr. Starr himself was inducted in 2010. While state librarian, he brought recognition to California’s exceptional literary landscape with the creation of the California State Library Gold Medal for Excellence in the Humanities and Science. It was such a memorable event when he presented the medal to Lawrence Ferlinghetti right in front of City Lights Bookstore in San Francisco. He attracted much attention when the celebrated poet Gary Snyder received the accolade at the University of California, Davis. Related to this, Dr. Starr also founded the Haiku Society of America Archive at the State Library. Today, there are hundreds of well-designed Haiku publications on our shelves and scores of archival boxes documenting the Society’s activities.

Directing the State Library is a challenge, as it offers both a fabulous collection and provides state government and the general public with excellent service, and it is also designed to promote and assist all libraries in California. As mentioned earlier, Dr. Starr successfully expanded the size and scope of public libraries throughout California. However, another stiff challenge he faced was finding a permanent home for the State Library’s only branch, the Sutro Library in San Francisco. During Dr. Starr’s tenure, he led the campaign to find a new and permanent home for this outstanding but misunderstood library. Because of Dr. Starr, the Sutro Library is now located in its first permanent home on the campus of San Francisco State University. I will always fondly recall that when Dr. Starr was walking with University President Dr. Leslie Wong to the dedication ceremony of the

Sutro Library, awed students would point and say “is that Kevin Starr?” or “I saw Kevin Starr on our campus.”

In Sacramento, the State Library’s main building constructed in the 1920s was showing its age, especially in this electronic age, and Dr. Starr led a successful effort to secure the political commitment to have the building fully restored. That goal was realized in 2013.

Dr. Starr, as we know, was constantly on the road giving speeches on behalf of libraries or on the subject of California history and its rich literature. In addition, it seems that every important new book on California history featured a foreword or dust jacket blurb by him. Along those lines, he was a true bibliophile, loving fine books and elegant design. Along with his many duties as state librarian, university professor at the University of Southern California, and newspaper columnist, he actively participated in the programs of such distinguished organizations as the Book Club of California, the Zamorano Club in Los Angeles, and the Roxburgh Club here in San Francisco. One of my favorite Kevin Starr books is his Clio on the Coast: The Writing of California History from 1845 to 1945 which serves as a wonderful guide to the sources that inspired his majestic Californians and the American Dream series. It was elegantly printed on handmade paper by the Artichoke Press and published by the Book Club of California in 2010.

As I got to know Dr. Starr, more and more I learned how devoted he was to the culture of California clubs. He was an active member of the California Club in Los Angeles and the Olympic Club here in the City. However, the one that he seemed to enjoy the most was the Bohemian Club, that exclusive and joyful men’s organization not far from here. When he was state librarian he said to me, “Gary, you have to join the Bohemian Club. I will make it possible for you to become an associate member.” This sounded so fabulous to me. I had been to several dinners at its City Club on Taylor Street and loved its history that stretched back to 1872 with its membership of famous writers like Jack London and artists like William Keith and Thomas Hill. Its bar decorated with fabulous posters created by Bohemians and its meeting rooms graced with fabulous paintings and sculptures by famous artists made me feel like I was in heaven. Through Kevin, I was introduced to its wonderful library and archive that preserved the history of its many cultural activities and its annual encampments at its Bohemian Grove on the Russian River.

However, I had to earn my associate membership as I was not in a financial position to simply join. Because of my work as head of publications for the Book Club of California and my knowledge of books about the West, I was tasked with producing two volumes of the annals of the Bohemian Club. In particular, one would be devoted to the art of Bohemia. Here again, I was awestruck by Kevin. I learned that he served as the chair of the Library Committee and editor of the Club’s Library Notes, With the Art of Bohemia Kevin demonstrated his mastery of California art history by writing five of the chapters.

One more story concerning Dr. Starr.

Early this year, I gave a presentation and tour to a group of thirty-five history students from Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. They were on a three-week long tour of the Golden State and their assigned reading was Kevin’s masterful one-volume California: A History published in 2005 by Random House. Simply put: They loved it!

Last, I want to mention that Dr. Starr donated his papers to the State Library, all 225 record cartons. This rich archive will no doubt lead to the writing of many biographies, scholarly articles, dissertations, and educational programs. He was such an inspiration. Never has the California library community basked in the light of such a towering figure. He was a giant among librarians and the greatest, bar none, historian ever to grace Queen Calafia’s realm.
The Sutro Library} Mirror for Global California
Good afternoon. What a pleasure—as a fourth-generation San Franciscan, as California State Librarian Emeritus, and as an historian of California who has never missed an opportunity to chronicle the importance of San Francisco State University in the civic, educational, and literary development of San Francisco and California—to be chosen as speaker this afternoon. What a pleasure it is to be with you celebrating the inauguration of the University’s thirteenth president, Dr. Leslie E. Wong. And what more appropriate way to celebrate Dr. Wong’s appointment than in the context of also celebrating the equal partnership between the J. Paul Leonard Library and the Sutro Library. This partnership has in our own time provided the Sutro Library with its first permanent quarters since its establishment in 1913. It has brought the J. Paul Leonard Library triumphantly into the 21st century. The partnership between these two libraries has created the finest library in the California State University system as well as one of the most notable university libraries in the nation.

This afternoon I would like to suggest the development of the Sutro Library by its founder—now so suitably established at the heart of this great university—within the context of Adolph Sutro’s hope for the development of San Francisco as a city unto itself and a model for further California development. As a number of prominent scholars of librarianship have pointed out—Gary Kurutz, for example, the longtime curator of the California Collection at the California State Library, and most recently the newly minted librarian Jonathan Ritter who interned at the Sutro while taking his library degree from San Jose State University—Adolph Sutro loved...
books from his boyhood to the final year of his life. He loved reading them. He loved collecting them. But as a permanent resident of San Francisco from 1880 onwards, having amassed a fortune in the creation of the Sutro Tunnel at the Comstock Lode, Adolph Sutro read books and collected books with a purpose in mind. He envisioned that his collection would eventually be organized as a research collection of permanent use to San Francisco and California as city and state were developed physically, socially, culturally, and in terms of moral meaning. He envisioned, in fact, his collection at the heart of a great university, which happened on a temporary basis in the 1980s and now, thanks to the J. Paul Leonard/Sutro partnership, will last through the tenure of President Wong and all those who pass through this great institution in the 21st century that lies ahead.

Let’s first take a look at cities. Cities don’t just happen. They have to be founded, and directed in their growth. Sometimes those foundations were obscure, like the way that Athens grew up around the shrine to Pallas Athene some seven to eight hundred years before the common era. Around the same time as Athens was developing, a number of tribes descended from their hilltop settlements to cooperate with each other in draining the marshland below, and from this cooperation arose the city of Rome, which gave to itself a mythic birth with the brothers Romulus and Remus being nurtured their on the marshlands by a she-wolf. This transition to mythic foundation was common in the ancient world. At other times in the ancient world, foundings were more deliberate such as the way in which the Emperor Constantine deliberately established Constantinople in the early 300s as the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Few of our North American cities have had such choreographed foundations as Constantinople, although in many cases history reveals the exact time and place and attendant ceremonies of the foundation. I have always found it interesting to
look at maps of the Atlantic Coast from the late 18th century and see the many, many settlements scattered up and down the shore—most of them in one way or another connected to water—and to then consider just how few of them rose to major municipal status. On the other hand, Philadelphia, with its documented foundation as a Quaker City, was by the 1790s the second largest city in the English-speaking world after London: and this when dozens and dozens of other Atlantic Coast settlements, equally promising in their beginnings, remained villages and townships or even disappeared.

The more west we move into the frontier in the 19th century, the more deliberate become the founding of cities and the more rapid becomes their development. Thus we can trace Chicago, as William Cronin does in his brilliant book *Nature's Metropolis*, to the grain trade, or Salt Lake City to Mormonism, or Denver to railroad traffic. Here in California, some cities were inaugurated as ethnic colonies with utopian overtones: the Mormon colony at San Bernardino, for example, the German colony at Anaheim, the Italian-Swiss colony at Asti, the Russian-Jewish socialist colony at Petaluma. Some cities were speculations and sur

vived: Stockton, for example, so deliberately developed by Captain Weber. Others disappeared or experienced only partial growth: New York of the Pacific, for example, a grand metropolis announced in the early 1850s, but resulting only in the charming but minor city of Benicia.

In the case of San Francisco, we have a maritime colony imposed on a peninsula sketchily developed by Spain and Mexico with a mission, a presidio, and a small, very small civilian settlement. Because of the gold rush, that city was accelerated into what the historian Hubert Howe Bancroft called “a rapid, monstrous maturity.” In a few short years, by 1870, San Francisco, with a population of 149,473 had become the tenth largest city in the United States.

I have always been fascinated by the instant urbanism of San Francisco. Here is a city, after all, that didn’t exist in 1846 as an American entity that is, a mere nine years later, issuing a 800-page history of itself, *The Annals of San Francisco* (1855). The more San Francisco history in the 1850s is researched, the more we learn of this instant urbanism: the rapid appearance, that is, of synagogues, churches, schools, a science academy, a performance theater, and so forth: each of them signs of a maritime colony that did not have to go through the patient development of an agricultural frontier city but was, almost instantly, capable of a high degree of urbanism. In city planning terms, the grid—which is to say, the city plan—laid out by Jasper O’Farrell in 1847—accounts for such an orderly progression. Take a look at photographs from the early 1850s and you can see the city advancing along the streets that O’Farrell laid out: streets and a grid plan—a line from what is now the Ferry Building to Twin Peaks, intersected north and south by angled streets—that has lasted to this day.

At the same time, however, the overnight success of San Francisco—its rapid, monstrous maturity, in Bancroft’s phrase—was by the 1880s begun to be considered as a liability. Visitors to San Francisco such as the novelist Anthony Trollope or the historian James Anthony Froude noted that a certain ramshackle frontier-like quality still characterized San Francisco, despite its undisputed situation as Imperial City of the Far West. True, there were architectural monuments of distinction—the First Unitarian Church on Franklin, Temple Emanuel on Union Square, the spectacular mansions atop Nob Hill, the Palace Hotel, the largest hostelry in the western hemisphere. Still, visitors and an increasing number of San Franciscans were forming a coalescence of sentiment in the immediate post-frontier period—the High Provincial period, as the California-born Harvard philosopher Josiah Royce would put it—revolving around the notion that while it did not exactly need to be re-founded, San Francisco did need to be brought deliberately to the next stage of its development.

Enter Adolph Sutro, who returned to the city in 1879 after raising some $3 million in venture capital, organizing a construction company, and building the air-and-drainage tunnel—working side by side with his men when necessary—that made the Comstock Lode mine-able and, once brought into operation, was earning Sutro and his fellow investors some $10,000 a day in revenues.

There is a popular song entitled, “What Are You Doing With the Rest of Your Life?” I think it is sung by Dionne Warwick. We can sing it now, in retrospect, for Adolph Sutro, age 49, in the best of health, with decades of life, it could be presumed, before him.

Adolph Sutro decided to devote himself to the development of San Francisco and, equally, the development of his collection. He invested in real estate; indeed, at one point, he owned twelve percent of the San Francisco peninsula. He watched over and developed his financial assets. He even served a term as mayor of the City of San Francisco. But his fundamental commitment, I believe, as far as his public and private life was concerned, in the twenty-one years of life granted to him after he sold the Comstock Lode mine-able, was the social and cultural up-grading of San Francisco as a city through a variety of cultural institutions, including a library/research institute that he would create as collector and philanthropist.

What kind of city did Sutro have in mind—and, by implication—what kind of California did he have in mind, for as late as 1909 sixty percent of the total population of California lived around San Francisco Bay?

In my opinion, Sutro had a model city in mind, and in that model city was embedded and encoded a philosophy of useful culture. Adolph Sutro was a product of German-Jewish civilization: born in Aachen—known also by its French name Aix-la-Chapelle—an ancient and impe-
rial city in Rhenisch, Prussia, skirted by the historic Rhine River, lying in a fertile valley and girded by mountains dense in forests. Aachen could trace its origins as a city to 125 in the common era, when it began to be developed as a Roman resort, because of its natural sulphur springs. In 800 of the common era Charlemagne had made Aachen the capital of the newly established Holy Roman Empire. There was not a time over the next 1,000 years that Aachen was not in one way or another thriving as an urban center or resort. Although he was forced to leave school at the age of sixteen to supervise one of his father’s factories, Adolph Sutro knew by instinct urbanism: knew it on a scale small enough to be assimilated by him as a non-threatening model. Had Sutro been raised in Paris or London or the Berlin of a later era, he would have experienced a metropolis: a city bigger than he could absorb as a unity; but in Aachen he grew up in High Provincial circumstances. He absorbed the DNA code of a city that was a Roman capital, a resort, an imperial capital in the early Middle Ages and, while yielding to the greater cities that later developed, a place that was integrated and self-sufficient in its cultural frame of reference.

After the death of his father in 1847, Adolph Sutro and his brother managed the family’s cloth-weaving company; but the Revolution of 1848 destroyed their business. Sutro’s parents had had eleven children, and it was Mrs. Sutro who, taking counsel with her children, decided to bring the entire family to the United States, landing in New York in the autumn of 1850 and subsequently settling in Baltimore. A year later, Adolph Sutro, seeking further opportunities, moved to San Francisco at the age of twenty.

Thus Adolph Sutro experienced in November 1851 and thereafter the instant and developing urbanism of San Francisco. Adolph Sutro knew what a city was. He had been raised in a city and perhaps this urbanism—and here I’m only speculating—was intensified by his Jewishness; for the Jews of Germany and Mitteleuropa were by and large an urban people, business and professional people, thriving—despite outbreaks of discrimination—in the urban matrix. Coming into San Francisco in its take-off year of 1851, the 20-year-old Adolph Sutro—I can speculate—experienced San Francisco through the prism of Aachen. Here was a city, like Aachen, founded precipitously, emerging into urban form.

In any event, returning to San Francisco in 1879—after a super-successful career as a self-taught mining engineer of genius, Adolph Sutro inserted himself into this process of urbanization which in the 1880s and 1890s assumed a renewed intensity. He would function, in fact, through the 1880s and 1890s as the leader of this movement, both in terms of what he stood for and spoke on behalf of—and what he did.

As a native San Franciscan, I grew up aware of Adolph Sutro via a fragmentary legacy. I knew that he developed the great Cliff House. I knew that he built an estate overlooking the Cliff House. As a boy, I swam in the Sutro Baths he created, and browsed in the museum and skated in the rink he had put there. When I attended the University of San Francisco, I knew that the Sutro Library was in the first floor of the Gleeson Library on campus. As State Librarian for California, I would later be privileged to be responsible to the people of California for this bibliographical treasure. But I never connected the dots until I began to delve into the question of this re-founding of the city of San Francisco in the late 19th century.

Now the dots are connected in my mind. Adolph Sutro was setting in motion a pattern, a paradigm, for the next stage of San Francisco’s development. Was so much of the land of the San Francisco peninsula barren and sandy hills, then he would plant those acres with great groves of eucalyptus, reminiscent of the mountaintop forests outside his beloved Aachen. He would also collect the best books available on forest science and forestry management, books that are today in the Sutro Library.

Did San Francisco need cultural institutions? Then he would, in one prong of his attack, assemble what was by the time of his death the finest private library in North America and one of the finest private libraries in the English-speaking world.

Library experts have frequently marveled at the diversity of Sutro’s collection. This diversity of title was not haphazard, I now understand. Sutro was assembling the library, the information base, that San Francisco needed.
The attractive entrance to the new facility is graced by windows looking out to the Quad. Students and visitors enjoy comfortable seating and tables for books and a variety of electronic devices. Courtesy HMC Architects.

Was San Francisco a product of colonial Spain and Mexico, then Sutro would collect in this area, acquiring, among other things, the first library of the University of Mexico City.

Was San Francisco part of the Asia-Pacific Basin? Then Sutro would collect in this area as well, acquiring an astonishing array of Japanese classics along with the papers of Sir Joseph Banks, the famed explorer and scientist of the South Pacific.

Was San Francisco an English-speaking city, then Adolph Sutro would acquire the English classics as well, to include a precious First Folio of the plays of William Shakespeare.

Was San Francisco a city with a flourishing Jewish among its founders, then Sutro would acquire what is today ranked as the fourth-most significant collection of Judaica in the United States, including manuscripts from the hand of the great Maimonides himself.

Did San Francisco need parks, gardens, and forests to anchor its sandy tundra, then Sutro collected a world-class series of book, pamphlets and other materials in this field. Would it be a good thing for San Francisco to emerge as a center of humanistic scholarship? Then Sutro would acquire the single largest collection of incunables—more than 3,000 books published before 1501—the largest such collection in private hands.

Private? But not for long. Sutro planned to put this library in a grand building near the Music Concourse in Golden Gate Park, and to make it available to the public as a center of scholarship and applied knowledge.

And the same thing was true of the Sutro Baths he developed in the mid-1890s. Roger Ritter tells us that Sutro loved to
Adolph Sutro left his name on a mountain in the center of the San Francisco peninsula. But his legacy can be seen as well—in architectural terms—in those splendid survivors, those great buildings constructed before the Earthquake and Fire of April 1906 that made it through the conflagration: buildings that vividly expressed the upgrading of the city Sutro helped launch: the Ferry Building, for example, or the Emporium on Market Street, or the St. Francis Hotel on Union Square, or the Fairmont Hotel atop Nob Hill. Sutro did not live to witness the full architectural upgrading of San Francisco in the pre-Earthquake era, but he helped launch the movement.

So, too, does the flourishing museum culture of San Francisco, and its performing arts culture, have symbolic origins in his plans for Sutro Baths. John McLaren deserves the credit for the upgrading of Golden Gate Park; but Adolph Sutro provided a model of what that park could be. Nor is it far-fetched to link the flourishing restaurant culture of the city with the Cliff House Restaurant/Resort he built on this site, which remained a favorite venue for café society and the sporting set until it burned down in 1907.

As a San Franciscan, I like to see Sutro as well in terms of the European-Jewish civilization he absorbed and acquired as a young man in Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle and brought to his adopted city. Adolph Sutro and the other Jewish founders of San Francisco knew what a city was all about: knew what a city was in terms of culture and cultural institutions, but also knew what a city was about in terms of responsibility to the community. In the winter of 1893, for example, when a Depression spread throughout the country, Adolph Sutro purchased a block of tickets from the Salvation Army and distributed them to the needy, redeemable for food, clothing, and shelter.

So absorbed did Adolph Sutro become in his later years in his many civic and philanthropic projects, he is said to have neglected his business interests, which is saying a lot, for he was one sharp businessman. But he was a dreamer as well, a German-Jewish-American dreamer, dreaming of a city called San Francisco, rising like Rome on its seven hills, but resembling Aachen/Aix-la-Chapelle as well, a smaller city, true, but a city touched by the world; a resort and pleasure-loving city, but a city loving the life of the mind and appreciating culture. A politically reformed city, democratic and efficient. Adolph Sutro dreamed these dreams of San Francisco, and some of them came true; and others await us and later generations to realize.

In the last years of his life, Adolph Sutro began to connect his dream of a useful research library with hopes for an equally useful urban institution, the university. As of that time, the 1890s, San Francisco did not have a university, although Sutro donated property atop Parnassus Heights to establish a medical campus of the University of California in San Francisco, which eventually happened. He also considered donating his collection to the University of California. Interestingly enough, there were two great research libraries in San Francisco at that time—the Bancroft Library, founded by bookseller and historian Hubert Howe Bancroft, and the Sutro Library, which by the 1890s was beginning to attract attention from discriminating collectors and librarians in the eastern United States and Europe. Within a year of each other, in fact, 1912 and 1913, the dreams of at least one of these great library builders, Hubert Howe Bancroft, were fulfilled when the Bancroft Library went to UC Berkeley, but the dreams of the other great collector, Adolph Sutro, were only partially realized when the Sutro Library became part of the California State Library, although required to remain in San Francisco by its deed of trust. Adolph Sutro died in 1898 at the age of sixty-eight, worn out, in part, by his reform efforts as mayor of San Francisco. Fortunately, he did not live to witness the great Earthquake and Fire of April 1906 that destroyed nearly a third of the 300,000-title Sutro Library, the largest such library in private hands in the world. Some ninety percent of its collection of incunabula were lost.

Following Sutro’s death, it took another fifteen years for his heirs to agree among themselves as to what exactly should hap-
pen to the collection. Some of the Sutro heirs wanted the collection sold and the money distributed. During these years, the Library was warehoused but ceased operation as a living entity. Fortunately, the executor of Sutro's estate, his favorite daughter, Emma Sutro Merritt, doctor of medicine—prevailed in the controversy and the Library was kept intact and transferred to the state. Truth to tell, the state of California did not do the right thing via this bequest, starting with Governor Hiram Johnson who vetoed appropriations for a permanent facility for the Library in San Francisco. In the years to come, the Sutro enjoyed the services of a number of talented and committed librarians—Sutro Librarian Richard Dillon, the noted historian, most conspicuously—but the collection languished in the unimproved basement of the Main Library on Civic Center until it was rescued by the distinguished Jesuit Librarian William J. Monihan and housed for a quarter of a century in cramped but safe quarters in the lower floor of the Gleeson Library of the University of San Francisco.

In the mid-1980s, my immediate predecessor as State Librarian, Gary Strong, and two of Dr. Wong’s predecessors as president of San Francisco State University, at long last set in motion the process through which the Sutro Library would find the place where it belonged and San Francisco State University would acquire a distinguished collection. The temporary buildings in use by the California State Legislature during the restoration of the State Capitol were disassembled and trucked down to Winston Drive on the San Francisco State University campus and reassembled as a site for the Sutro Library and the Labor Archives.

What sort of institution was this University where the Sutro Library was now finding its destined home? Like the Sutro, it had been at two other places until coming in 1945 into its magnificent campus on a gentle slope rolling into Lake Merced. And there, it soon developed—to paraphrase Joan Didion on UC Berke-

ley—it soon developed into one of San Francisco’s best ideas of itself and the very essence of a modern urban university. By the late 1950s, for example, thanks to its poetry center it had become an epicenter of a literary movement. It cultivated an early interest in classics and art history and acquired notable collections in this area. In time it would become an epicenter of astronomy, a university whose faculty gazed out into the heavens and discovered new planets. It distinguished itself in business, accounting, biology, theater, music, history, literature. Its faculty began to include some of the best literary critics and writers of fiction in the nation, some of the most noted musicians and composers of music, some of the most innovative teachers and theoreticians of theater. Above all else, as part of its total identity, it rose alongside of its host city, San Francisco, as a paradigm of the ecumenical nature, the global future, not only of San Francisco and the San Francisco Bay Area, but the entire state. While remaining part of the CSU system, it acquired its own distinctive personality and reputation: a mood, an ethos, similar to the mood and ethos of City College of New York, or Hunter College of New York, or Brooklyn College of New York from the 1930s onward: something connected to an energetic transforming hope for education, for expanded capacities and opportunities, for a better life, that was at the core of the American Dream itself, increasingly connected to a distinctively global population.

Like cities and universities across the nation, it had more than its fair share of troubles in the late 1960s, and the troubles of 1968-1969—considered in retrospect by its now very senior survivors—will suggest to future historians along with universities such as UC Berkeley and Kent State of just how deeply troubled our country was in those years.

But it survived and became, as I have pointed out, one of San Francisco’s best ideas of itself. In 1988, one of the most notable university presidents of recent decades, Robert Corrigan, arrived on campus, and the momentum of this university doubled, tripled, quadrupled itself, as evidenced from the academic development and campus construction of the recent past.

It was a university that had friends in high places, especially among alumni who had become elected officials. As State Librarian for California, I was approached by the Department of Finance in the mid-1990s at a time when the coffers were not so woefully depleted as they recently became. The Department of Finance wanted to do something for the Sutro Library and for the J. Paul Leonard Library at San Francisco State. And so the Department of Finance proposed a partnership, as well as funding, and this proposal came under the jurisdiction of State Senator John Burton, President Pro Tem of the California State Senate, an alumnus of this University, who shepherded it through the proper channels until it arrived on the desk of Governor Gray Davis who also approved the proposal and the rest, as they say, is history.

For nearly 150 years, if we go back to the first teacher training programs in the frontier city of San Francisco, predecessor versions of San Francisco State University have been serving that dream of a better life that increasingly became connected to this city. For a hundred years, despite difficulties of location, the Sutro Library has been serving those same ambitions. The history of higher education teaches us that there is no such thing as a great university without a great library at its center. San Francisco State University more than fulfills this mandate. It enjoys a great central Library, as well as a number of other notable collections. And now, in a splendid new facility, the Library of Adolph Sutro finds its permanent home in a University of scholarship, teaching, and service that, were Adolph Sutro with us this afternoon, he would recognize to his delight and say, “This is exactly what I had in mind!”
A Pictorial Devoted to the Life of Dr. Kevin Starr and His Wonderful Family.

Following graduation from the University of San Francisco in 1962, Kevin served for two years in the U.S. Army as a lieutenant in the 4th Medium Tank Battalion, 68th Armor Regiment in West Germany. Here he proudly poses on top of one of the battalion tanks.

Kevin standing with two fellow officers in front of “The Cobra” Company headquarters of the 68th Armor Tank Battalion in Germany, 1963.

Kevin in front of Eliot House courtyard, Harvard University. Eliot House is a student residence and, while working on advance degrees, and while an assistant professor, Kevin served as the Allston Burr Senior Tutor.

Kevin at age six sporting an argyle sweater.

Kevin at age six sporting an argyle sweater.
Sheila and Kevin Starr posed for this charming photograph on their wedding day in 1963. They were married at the Army Chapel at Coleman Barracks, Sandhofen, Germany, south of Mannheim.

The Starr family enjoys a happy moment at home. Standing in front of one of their many bookcases are Sheila and Marian, while Kevin sits on the sofa with daughter Jessica and the family pet, Theresa, 1974.

Sheila and Kevin pose with their very happy puppy, Theresa, at Eliot House, Harvard University, 1971.

Brilliant and Varied Life
His Wonderful Family.
In 1969, Kevin received his doctorate in English and American Literature from Harvard. He is shown with his wife Sheila and members of the Starr family.

In 1984, the Starr family happily stood for this photograph.

In 2003, Dr. Starr proudly presented the California State Library’s Gold Medal for Excellence to celebrated poet and activist Lawrence Ferlinghetti at his City Lights Books Store in San Francisco. Photograph by Phillip Adam.
A pleased Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and Dr. Starr announce the winning design for the California state quarter. The actual quarter was released on January 31, 2005.
Recent Contributors

DR. KEVIN STARR
CALIFORNIA
LITERACY FUND
(In Memoriam)
Quita and Marc Cruciger, San Francisco
Nancy Miller, New York, NY
James Moore, Alamo
Martin Nolan, San Francisco
Wendy Nowak, Costa Mesa
Mr. Sean O’Keefe, Ashburn, VA
Charlene Simmons, Davis
Eugene Valla, San Francisco

ASSOCIATE
Louise and David Beesley, Nevada City
F.V. Briones, Jr.
Barbara Cady, Sacramento
California Judicial Center Library, San Francisco
EBSCO, Birmingham, AL
Lesley S. Farmer, Los Alamitos
Erik and Anne Fay, Sacramento
Bill George / Nimbus Films, Granite Bay
Eileen Heaser, Sacramento
Charlene Hirst
Jennifer J. Kosunplik
Carolyn Martin, Sacramento
M. Kay Mowery, Clio, MI
C.M. Murch
Ms. Laura Murra, Berkeley
Carol Roland Nawi, Sacramento
Antoinette Romero
Sandy Schuckett, Los Angeles
Nicole Weaver, Sacramento
Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison, WI
Earl Withycombe, Sacramento

CONTRIBUTOR
Mr. Forrest Boomer, Carmichael
Barry Cassidy Rare Books, Sacramento
Collective Goods, Louisville, CO
Ms. Charlotte Harriss, Danville
William A. Karges Fine Art, Carmel
Mr. Leland E. Leisz, Piedmont
Ms. Joyelene M. Lyons, Rohnert Park
Ms. Suzanne Royce, Piedmont
Michael R. Smith, Elk Grove
United Way California Capitol Region, Sacramento
Mr. David Von Aspren, Sacramento
A.J. and Susanna Watson, Rancho Murieta
Zazzle.com, Redwood City
In Memory of Don Solem
Hon. Quenton L. Kopp, San Francisco

SPONSOR
Mr. John B. Dykstra, Oakland
Mr. Roy Dean Hardy, Sacramento
Gary F. Kurutz, Sacramento
Gregory M. Lucas, Sacramento
M.C. Mortenson
Mrs. Sandra Swafford, Sacramento

PATRON
Diane M. Fishburn, Meadow Vista
Nancy S. Young, Orangevale

LIFETIME
Ms. Roslyn Bell, Sacramento
George W. Davis Fund

BRaille & TALKING
BOOK LIBRARY
Nancy J. Broderick, Santa Rosa
Paul and Edith Castro, Citrus Heights
Mary Ann Fleming, Sacramento
Alice T. Grayewski, Napa
Mr. Carson B. Haines, Oakland
Ms. Dorothy Hurkett, Lakeport
Carol J. Kilby, Napa
Bing Provance, Chico
Evelyn Reis, Los Gatos
Ms. Betty Riess, Santa Rosa
Nancy Selfridge, Monterey
Marilyn Sherrard, Clio
Cheri Sintay, Sacramento
Ms. Carolyn L. Stratton, Walnut Creek
Mrs. Sandra Swafford, Sacramento
In Memory of Ruth Champagne
Bonnie Cratch-Lindauer, Daly City
In Memory of Monte Anthony Peter Hall, III
Jane Burnson, Walnut Creek
In Memory of John Roberts
Mary Roberts-Bailey, East Syracuse, NY
In Honor of Mildred Whitt
Nancy Selfridge, Monterey

Continued on next page
Recent Contributors

**CALIFORNIA HISTORY**
John E. Allen, Sacramento
Nick Aretakis Rare Books, Manteca
David Ballard, Carmichael
Sharon and Robert Balmain, Woodland
Barry Cassidy Rare Books, Sacramento
Robert J. Chandler, Lafayette
The Ina Coolbrith Circle, Concord
John Crichton/The Brick Row Book Shop, San Francisco
Mr. David Dawson, Carmichael
Michael Dawson/Dawson’s Book Shop, Los Angeles
Joel Fox, Granada Hills
Mr. Warren Heckrotte, Oakland
Michael J. Kowalewski, Northfield, MN
Kenneth Knott and Catherine Hanson, Sacramento
Glenn Mason/Cultural Images, Portland, OR
Mr. Russell H. Pearce, III, Orinda
Kelley Woodward, Sacramento
_In Memory of Doreen Sinclair_
Gary & KD Kurutz, Sacramento
_In Memory of Val Zemitis_
Sibylle Zemitis, Davis
Michael Bernick Archive
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Bernick, San Francisco

**OREGON-CALIFORNIA TRAILS ASSOCIATION**
Hugh and Carol March, Los Altos Hills
Joe Nardone Memorial
Pony Express Research Library
David and Andrea Burns, Sacramento

**SUTRO LIBRARY**
Mrs. Louise Bea, San Francisco
Mr. John Cormode, Mountain View
Marin County Genealogical Society, Novato
Dr. Julia Norton, Hayward
John D. Warren/John’s Genealogy, Fremont
Martha E. Whittaker, Concord