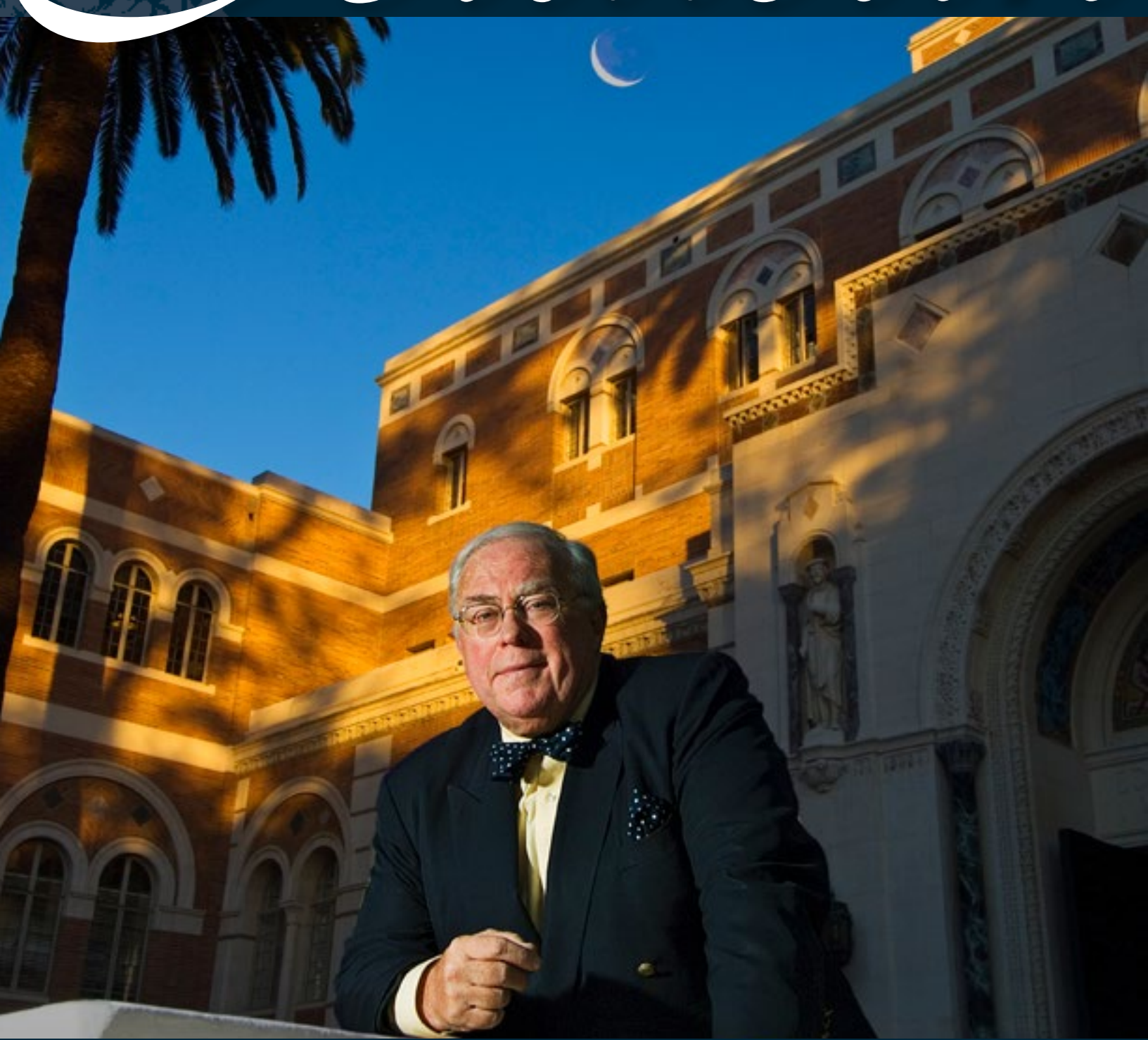


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DR. KEVIN STARR MEMORIAL ISSUE



Bulletin

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- 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.

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Dr. Kevin Starr Memorial Issue



EDITOR'S NOTE

This special memorial issue of the *Bulletin* is devoted to the considerable contributions of Dr. Kevin Starr to the California State Library when he served as State Librarian from 1994 to 2004. In addition, our generous contributing authors have also illuminated his passionate love of California's many and diverse libraries and his brilliant analysis of the history and literature of this beautiful but complex land. When Dr. Starr suddenly passed away on January 14, 2017, the library, history, and journalism world was stunned and deeply saddened. In response, newspapers, newsletters, and social media sites up and down the state carried the sad news. This native son of California touched so many lives. So many have rightly called Dr. Starr California's greatest historian, and he will be recalled as a scholar who can never be replaced.

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to his wife Sheila Starr for so graciously giving us permission to create this publication and for supplying us with many of the photographs that grace these pages. Marianne Hinckle, the designer and printer of the Bohemian Club's *Library Notes* that Dr. Starr edited, provided the Foundation with digital files of the order of service that she so touchingly designed for the Mass of the Resurrection held at St. Ignatius Church on the campus of the University of San Francisco. The Bohemian Club kindly of San Francisco gave the Foundation permission to reproduce images from its *Bohemian Club Library Notes*. In addition, Dr. C. L. Max Nikias, President of the University of Southern California; Dr. William Deverell of the Huntington-University of Southern California Institute on California and the West, and attorney and State Library donor Michael S. Bernick are to be thanked for their stirring insights. Three key State Library staff members, Cameron Robertson, Andrew St. Mary, and Mattie Taormina wrote moving and beautiful tributes to Dr. Starr. The editor wishes to thank photographer Harry Brant Chandler and Scott McAuley and his wife Paddy Calistro McAuley of the Angel City Press for providing the brilliant photograph of Dr. Starr that graces the front cover. Last, Meredith Cruse, Director of Video and Photographic Communications at the University of Southern California generously supplied several terrific photographs of Dr. Starr.



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



Kevin Starr Will Never Be Replaced

A Remembrance of the
Historian and Author

By Dr. William Deverell

Dr. Starr stands in front of the beautiful USC's Doheny Library at twilight in 2007. Photograph by Harry Chandler. It was published in Chandler's *Dreams and Dreamers*, Angel City Press, 2009.

this has now been silenced by his death Saturday. Kevin's outsize 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.

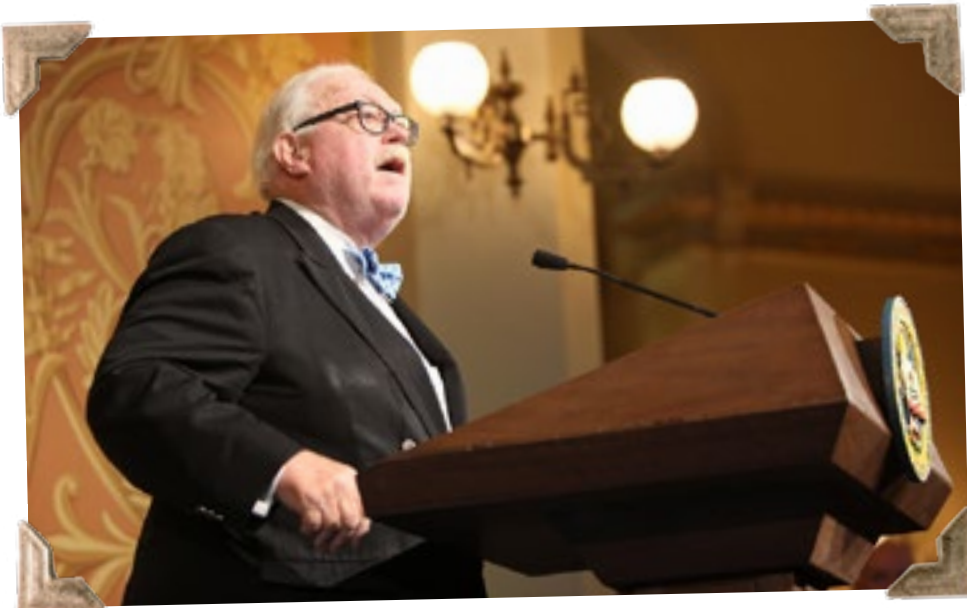
decades, to the California Dream at this or that moment in time. A redemptive California, a civilization made of the best hopes and dreams of the young nation, embodies the first book, and this idea animates the full series. Californians, Starr insists, can rise above the worst impulses of greed, violence 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



On several occasions, Dr. Starr was called upon to address key figures in state government.



A captivated audience listens to Dr. Starr as he speaks at the dedication of the Gregory Kondos painting “On the Sacramento River” that was installed in the Braille and Talking Book Library Reading Room (BTBL) in 2001. To the left is Donine Hedrick, the director of BTBL and seated next to Dr. Starr is artist Gregory Kondos.

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 Harman 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.*