



La Campana

WINTER/SPRING 2023 | VOL. 49, NO. 1



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La Campana is a publication of the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. Members of SBTHP receive *La Campana* as a benefit of membership.

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The sala at Casa de la Guerra. Photo by Leela Cyd.

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Filipino immigrants and other employees working in the service industry in Santa Barbara, c.1960s. Courtesy of Patria Fuentes Van Tassel. Fuentes Family Papers (MS-36). Presidio Research Center.

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OUR MISSION

The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation stewards the past and present of the Presidio Neighborhood and inspires preservation advocacy throughout the County in order to create a more vibrant community.

INQUIRIES & COMMENTS

Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation

*El Presidio de Santa Bárbara SHP • Casa de la Guerra
Santa Inés Mission Mills • Jimmy's Oriental Gardens*

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(805) 965-0093 FAX (805) 568-1999
www.sbthp.org

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El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park

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STORY IDEAS

Do you have a story idea or are you interested in writing an article for *La Campana*? Don't hesitate to let us know. For content guidelines or more information contact Kevin McGarry, kevin@sbthp.org.

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Letter from the Executive Director

Many of us think about the end of the calendar year as a time to come together with family and friends to celebrate the holidays and the wrap up of another year. At the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, we carry that atmosphere of celebration right into the new year with our annual meeting and community awards ceremony. As you will read inside this issue of *La Campana*, we had a lot to celebrate, including the election of new board members and officers, and an array of awards to express gratitude for all the good historic preservation work accomplished in our community. With all the celebration also comes remembrance, and in this issue, we honor Elvira Tafoya by recalling her many contributions to SBTHP and the community as a whole.

Also inside you will find a report on improvements to the visitor experience at Casa de la Guerra, a highlight from the Presidio Neighborhood, and an introduction to the Santa Barbara Filipino oral history project, which you will be reading more about in subsequent issues.

We hope to see you in the Presidio Neighborhood as the weather warms this spring. We have a lot of new programs to share. We are excited to host hundreds of local third grade students for our first ever Our Communities Our Stories program, and to bring them back with their families for the second annual Community History Day. We also



look forward to seeing you soon at the local artisan markets and are pleased to share a new series of free family activities, also on the weekends at El Presidio de Santa Barbara State Historic Park. Thank you again for your ongoing support.

Anne Petersen

Anne Petersen, Ph.D.
Executive Director

SBTHP Launches Filipino Oral History Project

by Dez Alaniz, Director of the Presidio Research Center

The Presidio Research Center (PRC) was initially established in 1986 as an institutional repository to support the work of staff and committees engaged in conservation and reconstructions projects within Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park. Since then, the size, range and scope of our collections have grown to support the growth of the SBTHP's operations and wider community and researcher engagement

with these collections. As a repository focused on the histories of Santa Barbara County and communities within the Presidio Neighborhood, our collections represent donations of materials from community members, former board members and organizations, ranging from historic documents, maps, architectural plans, and several collections focused on oral histories with community members past and present.

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NUMBER		DATE			
PLACE		BY			

Possibly Navy or Coast Guard document showing Alfonso Fuentes' lifeboat certification, issued in Seattle in May of 1931. Courtesy of Patti Fuentes Van Tassel. From the Fuentes Family Papers (MS-36), Presidio Research Center.



Santa Barbara's Filipino Community Association leaders and guests including: San Juan Mayor Nicanor Ibuna (third from left), John Hass (third from right), first FCA President Jose Fuentes (far right), and Santa Barbara Mayor Donald MacGillivray, c. 1960s. Courtesy of Patti Fuentes Van Tassel. From Fuentes Family Papers (MS-36), Presidio Research Center, Santa Barbara, CA.

Oral histories are a unique form of documenting history and come with their own considerations in community and relationship building, as well as preservation and archiving. The PRC contains both donated collections of oral histories, such as the Walter Douglas Portrait and Oral History Collection, and oral histories recorded with community members by SBTHP staff and volunteers.

Beyond the numerous books about the Philippines and Filipino history that were donated by Jeremy D. Hass before he passed away in 2014, the Presidio Research Center has not had much to share regarding the Filipino community's history here in Santa Barbara. Beginning in the fall of 2022, the Presidio Research Center initiated the Filipino American Community History Project and Collection focused on interviews with Filipino-American community members in Santa Barbara. Supported by the Director of the Presidio Research Center, Dez Alaniz, and a UC Santa Barbara graduate student Shannon Toribio, this project is rooted in a small collection of historic photographs and materials donated by community member Patria Fuentes Van Tassel in 2014. In collaboration with this donor, the PRC has been able to speak with multiple culture-bearers whose stories and experiences underscore the ongoing vitality of Filipino American communities in Santa Barbara. As of Winter 2023, we have recorded six interviews and are working with community members to identify additional participants for this collection and project.

Continuing our institutional mission of documenting racially and ethnically

marginalized groups in Santa Barbara, the Filipino Oral History Project builds on the SBTHP's strategic goals of preserving and making accessible the overlapping and ongoing histories of the Presidio Neighborhood. With additional support from a recent City of Santa Barbara Community Arts Grant administered by the Santa Barbara Office of Arts and Culture, we are excited to continue collaborations with our community partners and steward these new resources and materials for current and future researchers and community members. ●

The Presidio Research Center is free to visit and open to the public by appointment only. Contact Director Dez Alaniz (dez@sbthp.org) to schedule an appointment.

A New Visitor Experience at Casa de la Guerra

by Anne Petersen, Ph.D.

Many of you have visited Casa de la Guerra, which Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) has operated as a house museum since 1998, but have you visited recently? We have made significant improvements to the visitor experience that may surprise you. For those of you who are new to this local treasure, Casa de la Guerra is the only house museum in downtown Santa Barbara, and the only museum in our county that interprets a Spanish-speaking Catholic family, despite the significant influence of those families on the development of our community.

The Casa is an adobe home constructed between 1818 and 1828 for José de la Guerra, the fifth *comandante* of the Santa Barbara Presidio. This grand residence was home to the large de la Guerra family, who occupied it for three generations. The Casa was the social, political, and cultural center of Santa Barbara during the Mexican period. The family occupied the building until 1943, when the Casa was fully incorporated into the 1920s El Paseo complex. SBTHP was gifted Casa de la Guerra and the attached El Paseo in 1971. SBTHP began research and restoration of the building in 1990 when Archaeologist Michael Imwalle led the extensive analysis of the adobe. Restoration

to the period of occupation by José de la Guerra continued throughout the 1990s.

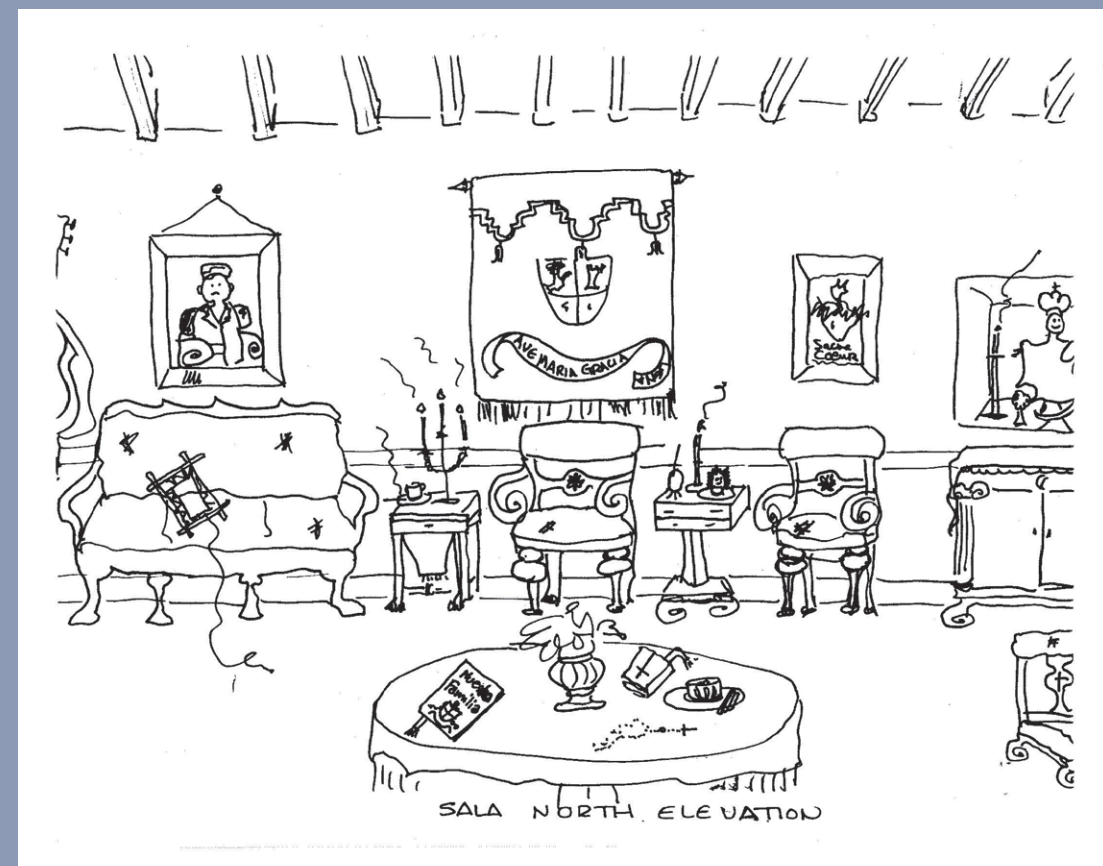
As the restoration wrapped up, SBTHP began work with Edna Kimbro to develop furnishing plans. An expert on the preservation of California's adobe buildings, and a historian for State Parks, Kimbro specialized in the historic interiors of Early California. She created three furnishing plans for SBTHP: the sala, José de la Guerra's office, and the bedroom of an adult daughter. SBTHP also completed a plan internally for the store. Kimbro's plans involved extensive archival research and took full advantage of her complete mastery not only of the history of the de la Guerra family and related archival collections (primarily the family papers held at the Santa Barbara Mission Archive-Library), but also that of the family's contemporaries throughout Alta California. Her plans include delightful sketches of the furnished rooms as they appeared in her imagination, which evoke the atmosphere and vitality which she envisioned for the furnished rooms.

SBTHP has very few artifacts from the de la Guerra family. When the organization acquired the building, it had been incorporated into El Paseo for decades. SBTHP began furnishing the sala shortly after Kimbro completed her plan, using period-appropriate antiques. Kimbro

herself sourced several unprovenanced antiques from around the state, using her knowledge and connections to find the correct pieces. The objects were placed according to the layouts Kimbro provided, and SBTHP draped rope barriers over all the seating, and installed electric track lighting so the space was bright, and the pieces could be easily admired. Although the project was never quite completed, Edna provided SBTHP with dozens of examples of appropriate new objects from decorative furnishing catalogs. By the

time we completed fundraising for the projects, however, the catalogs were out of date and the objects no longer available. Unfortunately, Edna passed away in 2004. The intervening years between Edna's passing and today involved a focus on temporary exhibits to bring the local community back for repeat visits, as well as significant interpretive planning efforts.

As house museums began to falter nationwide during the recession of 2009, SBTHP hired interpretive planning company Metaphor, based in London, to help



Sketch of the north elevation of the sala, from the Furnishing Plan for the Sala at Casa de la Guerra, by Edna Kimbro.

reimagine the potential of our historic spaces. Metaphor introduced several concepts that were to remain influential for the new work at Casa de la Guerra. Metaphor's work at some of England's most well-visited historic sites, such as Kew Palace and Hampton Court, demonstrated that historic sites can be transformed for visitors by privileging storytelling rather than decorative arts and other furnishings. Metaphor challenged SBTHP to create immersive environments where, instead of simply admiring the furnishings, visitors could uncover the story of what took place in that room. The objects, from this perspective, were the set dressing, while the visitor was the actor. Metaphor also exposed SBTHP to an English historic site called the Birmingham Back to Backs where visitors could sit on the furniture, get in the beds, and otherwise fully immerse themselves in the lives of historic residents of these working-class tenement spaces. Another influential site was the Dennis Severs House in Spitalfields, London. Although this eighteenth-century house environment is "all look, no touch," the storytelling and atmosphere of the environments are unparalleled. The visitor is assailed during their visit with decadent sites, smells, and even sounds of the house.

More recent scholarship about the visitor experience at historic sites in the U.S. supports Metaphor's recommendations. *The Anarchist's Guide to Historic House Museums* (Rutledge, 2016) includes the findings from surveys of visitor experiences at multiple historic house museums. The results contradict the traditional experience offered in many house museums. Visitors, for example, want to see

the spaces that are hidden behind closed doors. They despise ropes and barriers. They want to experience the house as the family would have. And, importantly, they want to be playful, and have fun during their visit.

In March 2020, SBTHP closed Casa de la Guerra indefinitely due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The extended closure provided an unexpected opportunity to reassess the interpretation. We had several options, including abandoning the furnished period rooms and reorganizing the museum with a thematic approach. We could also focus more intensely on using the spaces for programming. We revisited Edna's furnishing plans and began making lists of objects in collections storage, and acquisitions needed to complete the plans. Test searches on the internet highlighted a significant change since SBTHP developed the furnishing plans, the development of sophisticated online retail antique and reproduction sellers. We made the decision to implement Edna's plans, while incorporating some of the newer thinking about the visitor experience. The hands-on, immersive environments we would create could also support more thematic and relevant program uses as well.

These enhancements to Casa de la Guerra are timely due to the City of Santa Barbara's current efforts to revitalize De La Guerra Plaza. De La Guerra Plaza was designated a Public Square in 1853 after being donated to the new (1850) City of Santa Barbara by the de la Guerra family. The Plaza, which was historically ringed with the adobe homes of the de la Guerra and other prominent Californio families, has since served as Santa Barbara's civic center and location of City Hall. It is also

the venue for local political activism and events including Old Spanish Days. Revitalizing De La Guerra Plaza presents an opportunity for the City to re-activate its civic center. With increased visitation to the Plaza, we expect increased visitation to Casa de la Guerra.

We began the work in September 2021. First, we cleared out inappropriate objects in the museum, and combed through our storage areas, as well as websites such as eBay and Etsy looking for period appropriate antiques. We also searched websites such as Wayfair and Amazon looking for contemporary pieces that would fit the plans. This method for sourcing was intentional; the atmosphere as a whole was the priority, not the historic integrity of every object. We were able to source an amazing collection of objects to fulfill the plans, and often surprised ourselves with our findings.

We undertook an entire reconstruction of the sala altar to match Edna's specifications. We found a snapshot of the ceiling plank from Mission San Luis Obispo in our files, which Edna referenced, and scanned the pattern created by Norman Neuerburg in *Decoration of the California Missions*. After loading the template into a graphic design program, we sized the stars, printed the pattern on mylar and cut it out. We painted the back of the altar a deep Prussian blue, and then added the star pattern in white. I sewed the altar shawl from a heavy cotton with a 5" lace



The completed altar, Spring 2022. Photo by Leela Cyd.

edging sourced from deadstock from an English lace factory found on Etsy.

Acquisition highlights include a set of clay poker chips on Etsy that exactly match poker chips excavated from the Casa. We also printed an issue of the 1855 *Santa Barbara Gazette*, which had recently been digitized by University of California Santa Barbara Library. Early issues were produced in English and Spanish and frequently mention members of the de la Guerra family. We captured images of José de la Guerra's cattle brands from the brand books kept at the Santa

Barbara County Courthouse and made a print of the diseño of Rancho San Julian. At the time Edna wrote the furnishing plans, the digitization of diseños was just getting under way. We purchased an antique empire-style, lyre-based card table, and a 19th century secretary, but also a black daybed and a little girl's canopy bed, both from Wayfair. Some pieces we altered significantly, and some fit Edna's plans perfectly. Conservator Patty West helped stabilize a fragile 19th century eg-lomise of St. Anne.

We reached out to Maria Cabrera, a volunteer at Old Mission Santa Barbara originally from Colombia to assist with various textile projects. Maria, a self-taught seamstress, told us that Casa de la Guerra reminded her of her grandmother's house. She studied Edna's intricate descriptions of textiles and looked through historic images with us. We ordered fabric samples and then yardage, and from those Maria

crafted a canopy, curtains, bed skirt, and coverlet for the canopy bed, a veil and tablecloth for a small personal altar, and a thick red velvet tablecloth with gold fringe, all custom made to match furniture we had acquired.

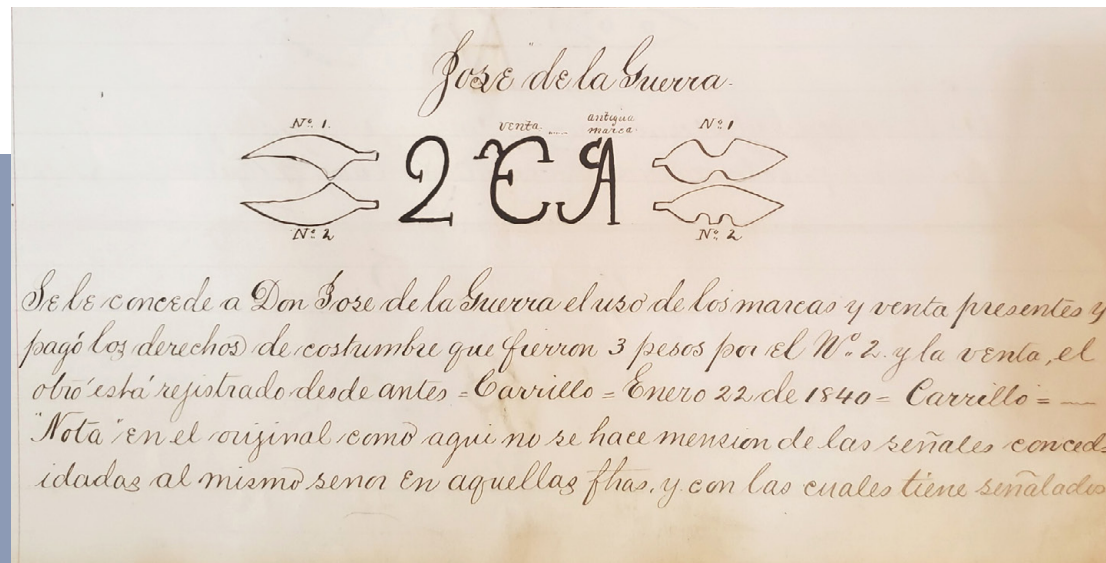
In April 2022 we set the finishing touches to the rooms, including additional period light fixtures, a poker game in-process, and vignettes to convey both the presence of the family's children and the many, mostly Chumash, servants who labored for the household. We cleaned and set the grandfather clock and added a few other surprises around the rooms. We debuted the new Casa de la Guerra experience with a candlelight tour. We prepared our guests to use their powers of observation, and all of their senses, including touch, to quietly experience the house in a new way, and explore the story of each room. We set out food, flowers, dozens of candles, and a couple of hidden audio ef-

fects to help guests imagine that the family had just left the room. The results were magical. Most of our visitors experience the Casa during the day, and with battery-powered candles instead of real ones for safety. However, they are able to sit, touch, explore and imagine in the rooms in a playful way that bring to life Edna's charming illustrations. We hope that the results would make her proud of our work.

To update the orientation areas of the museums, we completed nine new bilingual interpretive panels that include information about the women of the family and also the mostly Chumash servants. Panels also document the role the house has played in community events and some of the significant findings during restoration. We rebuilt an external interpretive sign

and have developed a new brochure in English and Spanish. We have also been able to adapt the new visitor experience to support many large school group visits. In June 2022 we reopened the Casa for regular visitation.

At their best, historic house museums are responsive to their community's needs and evolve in order to continue to remain engaging environments for learning and enjoyment. We believe this version of the Casa de la Guerra museum suits the needs of visitors today, while also building on Edna Kimbro's extensive research as well as new strategies in visitor engagement. If you have not visited Casa de la Guerra recently, we encourage you to stop by! ●



José de la Guerra's cattle brands and ear marks, Santa Barbara County Courthouse Hall of Records.



Above Left: The bedroom at Casa de la Guerra, April 2022. **Above Right:** The card table in Jose de la Guerra's office, April 2022. Photos by Leela Cyd.



60th Annual Meeting

by Tim Aceves, Associate Director for Advancement

The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) hosted the 60th Annual Meeting on January 21, 2023, in the Chapel at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park. Meeting for the first time in-person since 2019, SBTHP members voted to elect new members Shelley Bookspan, Mia Lopez, and Lena Morán-Acereto to the board for a three-year term.

Following the election, SBTHP presented annual community awards and certificates of appreciation. Elvira Tafoya received the Pearl Chase Historic Preservation and Conservation Award posthumously for her years of dedication leading and directing La Pastorela and for her many years of volunteering with SBTHP; the Main-Begg Farmhouse received the George and Vivian Obern Preservation Stewardship Award for their work to restore the historic home in Goleta; Dr. Paul Mori received the Sue Higman Volunteer of the Year Award for his years of volunteer service on the Asian American Affinity Group; Salvador Güereña received the President's Award for his years of service to the SBTHP board and extensive committee-work; and Healing Justice Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara Architectural Historian Nicole Hernandez, and Page & Turnbull received certificates of appreciation for their work in completing the Santa Barbara African American and Black Context Statement.

Immediately following, members and guests enjoyed food from Rudy's Presidio Restaurant in the Presidio Orchard. ●



Left: Elvira Tafoya was posthumously awarded the Pearl Chase Preservation & Conservation Award. Her award was accepted by her two daughters, Gabriela Dodson and Xóchitl Tafoya.



Above: Salvador Güereña received SBTHP's President's Award, which his was accepted by his son Alex on his behalf.



Left: Dr. Paul Mori received the Sue Higman Volunteer of the Year Award.



Top: Healing Justice Santa Barbara, City of Santa Barbara Architectural Historian Nicole Hernandez, and Page & Turnbull received certificates of appreciation for their work in completing the Santa Barbara African American and Black Context Statement.

Bottom: The George & Vivian Obern Preservation award was awarded to the Board of Directors of the Main-Begg Farmhouse.

New SBTHP Board Members

The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) is pleased to announce the election of three new community leaders to our Board of Directors for a three-year term. At the 60th Annual Meeting in January 2023, SBTHP members voted to elect and welcomed new members: Shelley Bookspan, Mia Lopez and Lena Morán-Acereto.



SHELLY BOOKSPAN

Dr. Shelley Bookspan, a graduate of one of the first classes of UCSB's pioneering Public Historical Studies program, has had a multi-decade career as a professional consulting historian, based in Santa Barbara. In addition to having served as editor of *The Public Historian* and having developed the first undergraduate class in public history at UCSB, Dr. Bookspan founded one of the country's first history-based companies, PHR Associates. PHR Associates, later called PHR Environmental Consultants, served clients in matters ranging from cultural resource studies to Superfund investigations, from offices throughout California and Washington, D.C. Considered an expert in historical methodology, Dr. Bookspan has published numerous essays on research and analysis techniques. Dr. Bookspan also founded the video production company, LifeStory Productions, Inc., which combined oral history interviewing with archival research and emergent digital production technology. For SBTHP, Dr. Bookspan and her LifeStory colleagues, wrote, produced, and directed a "biopic" of founder Pearl Chase, entitled, "My Friends Call Me Miss Chase." For the last three years, Dr. Bookspan has served on SBTHP's Development Committee.



MIA LOPEZ

Mrs. Maria Elena or “Mia” Lopez is the Tribal Chair, Former Vice Chair; member and Tribal Representative of the Coastal Band of the Chumash Nation. Administrative Assistant at Wishtoyo Chumash Foundation, a Native-led nonprofit organization. Liaison for the Tribe and the Cities of Santa Barbara & Goleta, the Counties of Santa Barbara and Ventura, NOAA and many Schools, Universities, State and Federal Organizations, she maintains relationships wherever she goes. Mrs. Lopez has lectured on contemporary and historical Chumash life, bringing people together, from Kinder to Graduate Students and professionals, to acknowledge the land and Original People throughout Chumash territory. Maintaining these connections is very important to her and being able to share gives her the opportunity to talk a little about native plant history, and the many village sites our cities are built upon. Her goal is to help her community heal themselves. By being a part of all these things, she can assure her community’s cultural, and spiritual wellness. Mrs. Lopez, also the Board Chairwoman of the local American Indian Health & Services clinic, helps complete the circle of care for her community by bringing awareness to services that provide physical and mental wellness.



LENA MORÁN-ACERETO

Lena Morán-Acereto is a native of Mexico City, Mexico, and is currently a resident of Ventura County, California where she lives with her husband, son and two dogs. Lena is the CEO and founder of Bridging Voices-Uniendo Voces, LLC, a consulting firm that focuses on language justice consulting interpretation and translation. Lena holds a Master’s Degree in Education with an emphasis on Social Justice and Leadership from Antioch University Santa Barbara. As an educator, activist and advocate, Lena’s expertise has led her to facilitate workshops and training on topics of diversity, equity, inclusion and justice across California and provide language justice consultation to organizations, school districts and government agencies as well as present and speak at conferences throughout the United States. In addition to her work with Bridging Voices-Uniendo Voces, Lena is a Senior Consultant at JONES Inclusive, Adjunct Faculty at Santa Barbara City College, as well as a member of the Equity Advisory Roundtable for the California Transportation Commission. In 2018, Lena received Congressional recognition for her work in coordinating and providing language access services during and after the Thomas Fire and Montecito Mudslide disasters.



Elvira Tafoya. Photo courtesy.

In Memoriam: Elvira Tafoya

by Kevin McGarry, Associate Director for Public Engagement

Elvira Gomez de Tafoya passed away on Sunday, November 6, 2022, in her Santa Barbara home at the age of 87. Elvira was a longtime volunteer, supporter, and friend of the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP). She exemplified a true life of service and selflessness; constantly giving back to her beloved Santa Barbara community in countless unprecedented, and unparalleled, ways. Elvira's desire to keep alive and pass down cultural traditions to the next generations led her to produce and direct "La Pastorela," one of Santa Barbara's oldest Hispanic Christmas theatrical traditions about a shepherd's journey interrupted by an epic battle between good and evil. For thirty-five years, Elvira brought this beauti-

ful tradition to Santa Barbarans. In doing so, she also brought a diverse community together and preserved and elevated the voices and customs of Santa Barbara's Latinx community. Many of Elvira's amazing Pastorela productions were performed in the Presidio Chapel and were co-sponsored by SBTHP.

Born on September 2, 1935, in Texas, Elvira Tafoya attended and graduated from El Paso High, then attended Texas Western University where she studied Spanish Language & Literature. Elvira later became a talented career educator here in California. Elvira taught at SBCC, Oxnard City College, Laguna Blanca School, Santa Barbara High School, and completed her teaching career as a Spanish teacher at Dos Pueblos High

School. Elvira believed deeply in community service. She was an active member of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and the Old Mission Santa Barbara Parish.

I had the pleasure of meeting Elvira shortly after I started working at SBTHP in September 2016. At our first meeting, I immediately experienced Elvira's fierce kindness, as well as her famous earnestness and tenacity. Elvira and I got to know one another as Elvira continued to volunteer at many of SBTHP's school programs and public events over the next few years. Although already in her 80s, Elvira always responded warmly and graciously to my (sometimes last minute) phone calls and requests for help. Each time I called, Elvira's husband, Edward, answered the phone. He would shout to her, "It's Kevin from the Presidio again, I think he needs your help."

A few seconds later, Elvira would pick up the phone, slightly out of breath, and say, "Yes Kevin, what can I do for you? Tell me the day and time, I am sure I can be there." Elvira's kindness and commitment to community service and educating Santa Barbara's youth was inspiring, and it was a privilege to get to know and work alongside her at SBTHP.

Elvira Tafoya was posthumously awarded SBTHP's distinguished Pearl Chase Historic Preservation and Conservation Award at our 60th Annual Meeting held in the Presidio Chapel on January 21, 2023. Elvira is survived by her two daughters; Gabriela Dodson and Xóchitl Tafoya, and their spouses; Steve Dodson & Nicole Koger as well as her beloved grandchildren Ysabella and Eddie Dodson. ●



Elvira Tafoya (front right) with her 2011 La Pastorela cast in the Presidio Chapel. Photo by Noah Tucker.



Memberships and Donations

JULY 1 - DECEMBER 31, 2022

As a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation counts on the support of its members and donors. SBTHP gratefully acknowledges the membership gifts and donations received between July 1 - December 31, 2022. Every effort has been made to ensure accuracy; please contact SBTHP at (805) 966-5378 to report an error or omission.

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INAUGURAL GOLF TOURNAMENT APRIL 14, 2023

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