



DATE: June 24, 2019

AGENDA ITEM # 2

AGENDA REPORT

TO: Historical Commission
FROM: Sean K. Gallegos, Staff Liaison
SUBJECT: Historic Preservation Award

RECOMMENDATION:

Consider nominations for the 2019 Los Altos Historical Preservation Award

BACKGROUND

The Los Altos Historic Preservation Award was adopted by City Council Resolution on March 13, 2012. The intent of the award is to recognize exemplary rehabilitation and preservation of historic properties, and individuals, groups or organizations in the community that exemplify the spirit of historic preservation in Los Altos. Nominees should demonstrate a dedication to historic preservation within at least one of the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of pioneering or innovative efforts in historic preservation or education;
2. Conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation;
3. Public benefit received (educational, beautification, advocacy, etc.); and/or
4. Impact to the City of Los Altos.

The purpose of the award is to encourage public knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the City's past, and foster civic and neighborhood pride and sense of identity based upon the recognition and use of the City's historic resources. If the Historical Commission finds that none of the nominees meet the above criteria, the Commission is not obligated to grant the Preservation award.

DISCUSSION

Staff received one nomination for the Historic Preservation Award. A nomination was received for Nan Geschke, nominated by Gary Hedden (Attachments A).

The Commission should consider the written evidence and oral testimony from members of the public before voting on the award recipient. The award recipient or their designee will be recognized with a Mayor's Proclamation at a future City Council Meeting.

Attachments:

A. Nan Geschke, Nominations



City of Los Altos

2019 HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARD NOMINATION

I am nominating Nan Geschke for the 2019 Historic Preservation Award.

Describe the reasons why the nominee should receive the Historic Preservation Award and how the nominee meets the following criteria:

1. Demonstration of pioneering or innovative efforts in historic preservation or education.
2. Conformance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Historic Rehabilitation.
3. Public Benefit received (educational, beautification, advocacy, etc.).
4. Impact to the City of Los Altos.

Nan Geschke has contributed to historical preservation in Los Altos for over 30 years. She served on the Historical Commission, produced the acclaimed "Los Altos History Show," played a key role in creating the History Museum and more.

Attachments - nomination letter, supporting letters from Jane Reed, Marie Backs, Julie Ruse, Indra Dahl, Pinky Whelan & Elisabeth Ward.

In addition, a copy of the Town Crier's "2003 Los Altos of the Year," Nan & Chuck Geschke.

If applicable, submit copies of letters of commendation or any other supporting documentation (not required). Attach additional sheets as needed.

Nominated by: Gary Hedden Date: 12 MAY 2019

In order to officially submit a nomination for the 2019 Historic Preservation Award, please submit one copy of all necessary documentation to the Historical Commission staff liaison Sean Gallegos. Materials can be submitted at City Hall, 1 North San Antonio Road, Los Altos, CA 94022. All nominations must be submitted by **Tuesday, May 14, 2019 at 5:00 pm.**

At the May 21, 2019 meeting, the Historical Commission will hold a vote to determine the recipient of the 2019 Historic Preservation Award. The 2019 Historic Preservation Award winner is tentatively scheduled to be recognized by the City Council with a proclamation at their meeting on June 11, 2019.

4/27/19

To: Los Altos Historical Commission

We support the nomination of Nan Geschke for the Historic Preservation Award. It is our opinion that Nan exemplifies the spirit of historic preservation in the City of Los Altos.

Over the years Nan has combined her personal interest in education and research, the cultural arts, and her commitment to the Los Altos community in tireless support of the Los Altos Historical Association and Museum. She has served on both the Museum Board of Directors and as a Historical Commissioner for the City of Los Altos. From their initial inception, Nan has been an advocate and contributor to the annual 3rd and 4th grade school education visits that give students a lesson on the history of Los Altos. Recently she is serving on the Strategic Planning Committee and is keeping an active interest in promoting the future refurbishing of the Permanent Exhibits.

In 1987, Nan began a project in which she eventually produced and edited over 65 videos of interviews with many of our community leaders and community volunteers, which have aired on public access television and are available for viewing at our public library. She followed this project by chairing several changing exhibits, which have been extraordinary. These include exhibits featuring the Los Altos Hills author Wallace Stegner, residents Frank and Josephine Duveneck, the legacy of David and Lucille Packard and the Lure and the Legends featuring the early story of Silicon Valley.

There have been several people who were instrumental in the Museum's development and Nan has been one who stands out. She and her husband, Chuck, partnered with Bob and Marion Grimm to ensure the Museum building was constructed to a high standard. In the three years prior to the 2001 opening, Nan served as chair of a committee that planned what would become the permanent exhibit area of the museum.

In addition, the Geschkes often opened their historic home and grounds for many fundraising events. They recognized the importance of preserving Los Altos history by seeking and receiving the California Register of Historic Resources (CRHR) designation for their former home in 2017.

We believe Nan Geschke is an excellent choice for this award.

Sincerely,

Marie Backs



Jane Reed



JULIE ROSE

938 CLARK AVENUE #31, MOUNTAIN VIEW, CA 94040

April 20, 2019

Los Altos Historical Commission
City of Los Altos
1 North San Antonio Road
Los Altos, CA 94022

Dear Commissioners:

I enthusiastically support the nomination of Nan Geschke for the 2019 Los Altos Historical Preservation Award. Over the past three decades she has clearly demonstrated a significant dedication to historic preservation in the City of Los Altos through her time, talent and financial support.

Beginning in the early 1990's, Nan produced and/or hosted as many as 35 productions of the *Los Altos History Show*, a program that began as a project of the Los Altos Historical Commission. Nan served as a commissioner during the 1990's and has continued to be involved in Los Altos history in a wide variety of capacities.

The Geschkes donated nearly 1/3 of the \$3.5 million needed to build the new museum that opened in 2001. In addition to the funding, Nan took a major role in its creation, with hands-on involvement in the building design, construction, exhibits and programs—all based on best practices. She chaired the interpretive committee responsible for the museum's permanent exhibit, as well as several other changing exhibits in the museum's early days. She continues to fund the annual third and fourth grade student education tours.

I had the privilege and pleasure of co-chairing four home and garden tours (2002-2005) with Nan and Pinky Whelan. These were highly successful fundraising events for the Los Altos History Museum, primarily due to Nan's exemplary leadership. Also, I was recruited by Nan to plan and manage the programs associated with three of the four of the major exhibitions she chaired for the museum (Lucile & David Packard 2008, Frank & Josephine Duvenceck 2011 and Lure & Legends 2015). In all instances, it was Nan's organizational and management skills that resulted in great successes.

Nan Geschke is a quintessential leader, motivator and role model and she has a unique ability to encourage the active participation of others. She has been steadfast in her commitment to the history of City of Los Altos and the surrounding region. We have realized substantial benefit from her dedication to preserving our past and planning for our future.

Sincerely,



Julie Rose

To: Honored Historical Commissioners
Re: Recommendation for Nan Geschke
From: Judy Dahl
April 27, 2019

My nomination for Nan for this honor is related to working with her on four History Museum exhibits. She has been involved with many projects for the museum and city. These exhibits were primarily her idea for highlighting outstanding residents of our community and their contributions, not only to our city, but the world - memorializing them for generations to come.

We live in a very creative and innovative area, and the story of the people involved in the birth and growth of Silicon Valley was another idea of hers. Recounting the history of Los Altos and how it fit in the transformation from the agricultural Valley of the Heart's Delight to Silicon Valley was her final exhibit.

I met Nan for the first time when I was invited to join the team for the Wallace Stegner exhibit at LAHM. I had just retired from Stanford University and was open to a literary project. Nan welcomed me and in no time we became very good friends with a terrific working relationship. I respected her vision for this exhibit and was excited about the topic of recognizing locale "heroes".

Her organizational skills are amazing, and there isn't anyone I know who can conduct such an efficient meeting like her. Start on-time, allot minutes to each contributor and end with "what are our next steps?"

Her insight and people skills are also a gift. She can intuit individuals' strengths and find the right slot on a committee – where they would thrive, have a high interest level and contribute. This is commonly known as "finding the right people for the bus, and more importantly, finding the right seats for the people on the bus." Her committee members are extremely loyal. Once you worked with, and for, Nan – you can never say no to her requests! Plus she's fun to work with!

Nan is also a project manager extraordinaire. How she can keep a multitude of tasks and projects in her head is remarkable.

With husband Chuck, they are generous, supportive and creative for all exhibits.

I was very lucky to participate as a member and eventually co-chair on four exhibits of local distinguished residents (Wallace Stegner, the Packards, and the Duvenecks) including the last great one on Silicon Valley. Our swan song was to produce and print a book, "Silicon Valley – the Lure and the Legends", which is available at all local libraries. It is currently used as a gift to large museum donors.

I highly recommend Nan for this special historical honor. She is certainly deserving.



Judy Dahl
2060 Madelaine Ct
Los Altos CA 94024



51 South San Antonio Road
Los Altos, California 94022
www.LosAltosHistory.org
650.948.9427

The Los Altos History Museum gathers and presents compelling stories and artifacts that bridge the past and the present by fostering the creative energy of volunteers, challenging established narratives, and producing stimulating educational programs and exhibits.

Board of Directors

Eleanor Watanabe, Co-President
Linda Eckols, Co-President
Julia Lovin, 2nd Vice President
John Beman, Treasurer
Gary Hedden, Secretary
Marcia Adams Robin Chapman
Carole Flores Gunilla Follett
Janet Klinke Larry Lang
Dwight Matthews John Ralston
Julie Rose Brandon Smith

Staff

Dr. Elisabeth Ward, Executive Director
Heather Farquhar, Deputy Director
Dr. Amy Ellison, Exhibition Curator
Diane Holcomb, Outreach Coordinator
Deepti Devanagondi, Bookkeeper

The Los Altos History Museum's legal name is the Association of the Los Altos Historical Museum; tax i.d. number 94-2542813. We are a 501(c)(3) organization and your gifts are tax deductible.

Historical Commission
City of Los Altos

May 12, 2019

Dear Commissioners,

I am writing in support of the nomination of Nan Geschke for the Historic Preservation Award. Although known for her philanthropic work through the Geschke Family Foundation, Nan Geschke is in my mind first and foremost a dedicated educator and historic advocate. A librarian by training, Nan has a deep love of learning and a passion for the past.

Nan volunteers not only for the Los Altos History Museum in various capacities, including as past Chair of our Changing Exhibition Committee and our Strategic Planning Committee, but also for a museum in Nantucket dedicated to preserving its history. Her commitment to local history, and to residents knowing the history of the town they live in is heartfelt, sincere, and has guided much of her life work.

Before the Los Altos museum was built, Nan started the Los Altos History Show in order to appeal to residents of the area through the best means available at the time: local access cable television. She was a consummate hostess, often researching subjects for months before undertaking the interviews. And her preparation shows in careful, enlightening programs that we still publicize on the Los Altos History Museum's website.

As the Curator of the "Crown of the Peninsula" permanent exhibition on the 2nd floor of the Los Altos History Museum, Nan ensured that a comprehensive, historically accurate presentation of the settlement phases of this area were presented. That exhibition has stood the test of time, and still serves our 3rd and 4th Grade tours wonderfully.

Once the Museum was operational, Nan assembled a team to create a series of changing exhibitions. For each exhibition, Nan understood the most important component was the historic research behind the story, and would pour resources into ensuring the accuracy of what was presented in the exhibitions. The research alone was incredibly valuable.

Recently, she has continued her commitment to educating residents about local history through her sponsorship of our 3rd and 4th grade educational tours. This signature program of the Museum, and one that educates over 1300 students every year, is completely funded by a personal grant from the Geschkes.

It is no overstatement to say that the Museum would not have the historic integrity and education value it currently has for the local residents of this area were it not for the intelligence, dedication, and vision of Nan Geschke.

Changing the world through innovation, excellence and ethics

Published: 06 January 2004 Written by Bruce Barton - Town Crier Staff

Nan and Chuck Geschke are Town Crier's 2003 Los Altos of the Year.

Nan and Chuck Geschke don't like to draw attention to themselves. But they can't help it. Together, this quiet couple from Ohio have made Los Altos and the world a better place through their innovation, intelligence, ethics and drive for excellence.

Chuck, the son of a photo engraver, revolutionized the printing and publishing business by co-founding Adobe Systems in 1982 with kindred spirit John Warnock. Millions around the world benefit from their transformation of the personal computer from a calculating to a publishing machine.

Locally, Nan has played a major role in the creation of the Los Altos History Museum through philanthropy and volunteering. In large part due to her efforts, residents benefit from a first-class museum they can attend free of charge to learn how Los Altos and Silicon Valley came to be.

Together, the Geschkes are solid role models, living their lives with integrity and continued community involvement. Nan and Chuck, whose actions speak far louder than their words, are the Town Crier's 2003 Los Altos of the Year. It is the 10th year the paper has bestowed the honor on a person or couple who have created goodwill for the community.

Said former Los Altos mayor Bob Grimm, who worked with the Geschkes on building the Los Altos History Museum, "They're a class act. I have tremendous respect for them."

Roots in the Midwest

The two former teachers, who moved to Los Altos in the early 1970s, celebrated 39 years of marriage the day after Christmas. They met while Chuck was in college at Cincinnati. It turns out, they grew up in Cleveland a mere three blocks apart.

"We had the same outlook on life," Nan recalled of their compatibility. "We were studying to be teachers, and we wanted to get advanced degrees."

"She was drop-dead gorgeous," Chuck added.

The Geschkes married in Cleveland in 1964. Their first son, Peter, was born in 1965, followed by Kathy in 1968. Their third child, John, was born in 1970.

Chuck earned a doctorate in mathematics and was teaching math at John Carroll University in Cleveland when he received a life-changing visit from a former student who thanked him for his teaching. The student went on to tell Chuck about how he had created a computer program and he was making a lot of money in the field.

"Nan said, 'Maybe we ought to change (careers),' " Chuck recalled.

From teaching to technology

In 1968, Chuck went back to school at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh for a doctorate in computer science. After graduating in 1972, he accepted a job at the Xerox Palo Alto Research Center. During his 10 years at PARC, Geschke worked on the design and development of the Mesa programming language and machine architecture.

"The technology became the basis for the Xerox Star workstation which, in 1981, was the first commercially available product embodying the graphical user interface designs that were subsequently emulated by the Macintosh and Windows operating systems later in the 1980s," Chuck said.

In 1978, Chuck formed the Imaging Sciences Laboratory at PARC to focus research on computer graphics and electronic printing systems. He hired John Warnock, whom he had heard give a technical presentation, to help design a device-independent printing protocol named Interpress. Xerox executives' indecision about the protocol's public release led Chuck and Warnock to leave the company. The two formed Adobe Systems in 1982 to design PostScript, a programming language for describing the appearance of a printed page.

PostScript, introduced in 1985, "transformed the worldwide printing and publishing industry from a manual and mechanical process to a fully automated, electronic workflow," Chuck said.

Apple co-founder (and Los Altos native) Steve Jobs was a fan from the beginning. "I was simply blown away by what I saw," he said of PostScript.

Adobe, named after the Los Altos creek that flows by Chuck's and Warnock's homes, has since become the world's second largest provider of personal computer software with more than half its revenue earned outside the United States.

With its emphasis on ethical practices and respect for employees and customers, Adobe consistently is ranked among the best companies nationwide in which to work. Last week, Adobe ranked sixth in Fortune magazine's annual list of the 100 best companies for which to work.

Despite numerous accolades, including Geschke and Warnock's being ranked seventh as the most influential graphics persons of the last millennium (by Graphic Exchange magazine), modesty still overwhelms Chuck when asked to speak about his place in history.

"I consider myself the luckiest man on Earth," he said, borrowing a line from Lou Gehrig's famous 1939 speech at Yankee Stadium. "An engineer lives to have his idea embodied in a product that impacts the world."

Business partners, friends

The partnership with Warnock cannot be overestimated as a key to Chuck and Adobe's success. Both Renaissance men with similar philosophies, the two proved ideal business partners and great friends. "Adobe is an extension of our own set of values," Chuck said. Both employ the golden rule: "Treat others the way you would want to be treated."

"We pretty much built the company around this from the beginning," said Warnock, also a Los Altos resident.

"Chuck and I have very complementary talents and have respect and empathy for each other's opinions," Warnock said. "In our 20-year partnership, we have always been close friends. We have never had a major disagreement."

While Warnock and Chuck were changing the world, Nan made and continues to make a strong impact locally. In fact, those around Los Altos know much more of Nan's work, principally through the Los Altos History Museum.

History interests benefit all

Nan's interest in history had early roots, graduating from Marygrove College in Detroit with a bachelor's degree in history and political science in 1964. She taught social studies in junior high school before putting career aspirations on hold to raise a family. She continued her education out West in the 1970s, receiving her master's degree in library science in 1977 from San Jose State University.

"I received my degree right at the cusp of Proposition 13 (the Jarvis-Gann Initiative, which slashed schools funding). I had planned to be a school librarian," Nan said.

Undaunted, Nan applied her degree to business libraries. She worked as a librarian at OceanRoutes in Palo Alto and as a consulting director with Advanced Information Management in Mountain View, and established the engineering library at Westinghouse in Sunnyvale.

She also served as president of the Silicon Valley Special Libraries Association (1986-87) and served on the Silicon Valley Information Center's board. Nan showed her commitment to libraries locally, serving on the task force for Vision 21, a 1996 fund-raising initiative that raised more than \$200,000 for Los Altos library science and technology materials.

At the dawn of the 1990s, Nan joined the Los Altos Historical Commission. It is no coincidence that the current state-of-the-art history museum, the envy of cities twice the size of Los Altos, has come about since Nan's involvement.

She also made a visual impact, producing a monthly cable access TV show on local history. Nan produced more than 50 shows, often as the host, during her 10 years on the historical commission.

In 1992, Nan began working on the realization of a dream held by a group of Los Altos history buffs: a new museum. She was among the principals who oversaw the museum's creation from planning and fund raising to design.

Hands on efforts

Besides providing considerable financial resources toward the effort, Nan also employed the services of her husband in the construction of the permanent exhibit.

"When I retired (from Adobe) in 2000, Nan said, 'I don't want you to get lazy - I've got a job for you,'" Chuck recalled.

"It's important for us to give back," Nan said, recalling as a student, hearing her teacher talking about Andrew Carnegie building libraries all over the United States. "I thought, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to have enough money to give away?'"

"We tend to focus a lot of our giving around education and for the disadvantaged," Chuck said. "You want to do the right thing for something that's going to have an impact."

The Geschkes have been matching grant donors for the Town Crier Holiday Fund each year since its inception four years ago.

Bounce back from near tragedy

The one shadow cast on their otherwise shining, unbelievably successful lives came in May 1992 when Chuck was kidnapped for four days, the details relived in a 1997 three-part Town Crier series. Lifelong Roman Catholics, the Geschkes used their faith in God and in each other to get through the ordeal. Chuck was rescued and the kidnappers prosecuted.

People of lesser character might have succumbed to paranoia after the experience. But for Nan and Chuck, the impact, if any, is in counting their blessings.

"I really cherish the ordinary day," Nan said. "We went through an incredible experience together."

Focus on family and church were always priorities, but perhaps even stronger now, according to Nan. Chuck himself seems nearly unfazed by the incident 11 years later. "I don't think it's changed our lives all that much," he said.

Despite their financial and professional success, the Geschkes seem free of the pretense and arrogance that have befallen so many wealthy Silicon Valley executives. They have no personal assistants. They laugh when told that one museum employee marveled over how they answer their own phone.

McCreight, taking note of Chuck's modesty, used the familiar line: "There's no limit to what a man can do if he doesn't get the credit. That seems to be Chuck's motto."

"We're from blue-collar families," Chuck said. "As residents, we're not all walled off. We're very approachable."

Historic home tours
fund raisers and
Speaker series.

nan is smart,
professional, thoughtful
and good natured.

(a few things to
remember.)

Thank you for
your attention and
I await your
decision.

Best regards
Puky Whelan

Honorable Commissioners

I would encourage
the Los Altos Historical
Commission to
consider the nomination
of nan
Geschke as the
2019 recipient of
the Los Altos Historic
Preservation award

By now you are
aware of nan's many
accomplishments -
curating of several
important exhibitions
at the museum.

Honorable Commissioners

May 2019