



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation Concludes 63rd Annual Meeting

SANTA BARBARA, CA – The Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) hosted the 63rd Annual Meeting on January 24, 2026, in the Chapel at El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park. SBTHP members voted to elect new members Andrew Le and Qing Xue to the board for a three-year term.

Following the election, SBTHP presented annual community awards and certificates of appreciation. William B. Dewey received the Pearl Chase Historic Preservation and Conservation Award for his decades of service to the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, volunteering for many years on the Trust's Artifacts & Exhibit Committee; The City of Santa Barbara Parks & Recreation Department received the George and Vivian Obern Preservation Stewardship Award for demonstrating outstanding preservation work in connection with the Carrillo Recreation Center Gym restoration; John Doordan received the President's Award for his extraordinary contributions to SBTHP; Sally Foxen McNeill received the Sue Higman Volunteer of the Year Award for her numerous contributions to SBTHP events and the *Once a Don Always a Don* exhibit in the prior year.

The SPACE, MariaElena Lopez, received the Partnership Award for their numerous contributions to the organization's education programs and visitor experience; Debby Aceves

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received the Life Honorary Director Award for her significant contributions to the organization's mission through countless hours of volunteer service and offering her expertise and trusted perspective as a ninth-generation Presidio family descendant, nonprofit leader and cultural educator; Ron Nye was chosen as a Life Honorary Member for his sustained efforts supporting SBTHP's historic preservation and conservation projects.

A Certificate of Appreciation was awarded to EQ25 for their partnership and collaborative work with the new exhibit at Casa de la Guerra, *Santa Barbara 1925 – 2025: A Portrait in Maps* and their larger community-wide commemoration of the 1925 earthquake that shook Santa Barbara.

2026 AWARDEES

WILLIAM B. DEWEY

Pearl Chase Historic Preservation and Conservation Award

CITY OF SANTA BARBARA PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT

George and Vivian Obern Preservation Stewardship Award

JOHN DOORDAN

President's Award

SUE HIGMAN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

Sally Foxen McNeill

THE SPACE, MARIAELENA LOPEZ

Partnership Award

DEBBY ACEVES

Life Honorary Director

RON NYE

Life Honorary Member

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EQ25

Certificate of Appreciation

BOARD MEMBERS ELECTED



ANDREW LE

Andrew Le is the CEO and Cofounder of Cleverific, a Santa Barbara-based company helping e-commerce merchants unlock hidden revenue through post-purchase optimization and order management solutions. A chemist-turned-software engineer-turned-entrepreneur, Andrew has spent over 10 years building Cleverific into a leading platform for online retailers. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from UC Santa Barbara and brings both technical expertise and entrepreneurial vision to his leadership role.



QING XUE

Qing Xue is an architect specializing in classical and traditional design, with experience in both the U.S. and the U.K. Her work includes residential, institutional, and historic restoration projects, and she combines her background in engineering with an artistic sensibility and creative problem-solving. In Santa Barbara, she has been active in historic preservation and community planning, contributing to efforts such as the State Street master plan. She also pursues her passion for the arts through drawing, watercolor, and pottery, which deepen her appreciation for craftsmanship. Born in China, Qing earned a Master of Architecture from the University of Notre Dame and also holds master's and bachelor's degrees in electrical engineering.

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BOARD MEMBERS RE-ELECTED TO A NEW THREE-YEAR TERM

Shelley Bookspan
Joe Handerhan
Jessica Haro
MariaElena Lopez

THE BOARD ELECTED THE FOLLOWING OFFICERS FOR A ONE-YEAR TERM

Cody A. Makela, President
Michael Neal Arnold, Immediate Past President
Shelley Bookspan, Treasurer
James Krautmann, First Vice President
Kyle Slattery, Second Vice President
John Majewski, Secretary

To view the entire Board of Directors, please visit sbthp.org/staff-board

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ABOUT THE PEARL CHASE HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND CONSERVATION AWARD

Each year the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation seeks to present the Pearl Chase Historic Preservation and Conservation Award to a deserving community member or organization dedicated to the values that Dr. Chase stood for in the fields of historic preservation and conservation. This annual lifetime achievement award serves as a tribute to the life and work of Pearl Chase, the famous leader of community activism and preservation in Santa Barbara, and to the work that continues today as a result of the inspiration she provided.

ABOUT THE GEORGE AND VIVIAN OBERN PRESERVATION STEWARDSHIP AWARD

The George and Vivian Obern Preservation Stewardship Award recognizes individuals or organizations that demonstrate outstanding preservation work in connection with a specific project in and around Santa Barbara County. This prestigious award was named in honor of George and Vivian Obern in 2006 for their lifelong preservation work, including their successful efforts to save the Thomas Hope House (built 1875, added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978), condemned by the county of Santa Barbara but saved by the Oberns.

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ABOUT THE SUE HIGMAN VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD

This award is given to an individual or individuals who have made outstanding contributions of their time to SBTHP over the course of a year. Established in 2010, the award is named in honor of longtime SBTHP supporter and friend, Sue Higman.

ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Created in 2019, this award recognizes the value of partnership as adopted by SBTHP in 2018. The Partnership Award celebrates individuals or organizations who have participated in collaborative efforts that support SBTHP's mission and made a significant impact toward that end.

ABOUT LIFE HONORARY MEMBERS

Life Honorary Members are selected by the Board of Directors in honor of their distinguished service to SBTHP.

ABOUT CERTIFICATES OF APPRECIATION

Certificates of Appreciation are awarded in recognition for a variety of acts of service towards the mission of the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation.

ABOUT THE SANTA BARBARA TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Founded in 1963 by Dr. Pearl Chase, the Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation (SBTHP) stewards the past and present of the Presidio Neighborhood and inspires preservation advocacy throughout the County in order to create a more vibrant community. SBTHP operates El Presidio de Santa Bárbara State Historic Park, Santa Barbara's 18th century birthplace, under an agreement with California State Parks. In addition to portions of the Spanish fort, El Presidio SHP includes the Alhecama Theatre (1925) and the campus of the Santa Barbara School of the Arts, and Jimmy's Oriental Gardens (1947) the last visible connection to Santa Barbara's Chinatown. The organization also operates Casa de la Guerra, the 1820's adobe home of Presidio Comandante José de la Guerra, and the Santa Inés Mission Mills near Solvang, CA. SBTHP produces dozens of community and school programs throughout the year to provide access to these special historic places. SBTHP is 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; learn more at sbthp.org.

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