

Community Gathers to Celebrate 100 Years of Pacific Palisades

By **Magnolia Lafleur** - May 12, 2022



Randy Young
Rich Schmitt/Staff Photographer

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Community members gathered to celebrate 100 years of Pacific Palisades at a centennial event hosted by Pacific Palisades Historical Society on May 7 at Simon Meadow in Temescal Gateway Park.

Originally slated for January 15, the centennial anniversary

event was postponed due to COVID-19.

The program, emceed by Honorary Mayor Eugene Levy, featured speakers and performances, starting with an introduction from Donna Vaccarino, a member of the historical society's board of directors.

"Today we celebrate like the Chautauqua, a celebration of life and investigation of history, philosophy, the pursuit of learning," Vaccarino read at the event. "Pre-video games, remember. Chautauqua is ... an Iroquois word ... meaning the gathering of a bag, a pair of moccasins, the idea that something is brought together of value ... The mission of the Chautauqua was this: We are dedicated to exploring the best in humanity, being open to forever learning and listening with open hearts."

After the introduction, Alan Salazar delivered a Chumash/Tataviam/Tongva blessing, followed by a presentation of the flag and Palisades Pride Processional, led by drummer Greg Victoroff.

As the event continued, families and friends gathered inside and outside the tent—including generational Palisadians Will Adams and his mother, Sarah, who spent some time chatting with his long-time friend Jill Ennis Lipsky.

“My parents moved here in January of 1969 from Virginia,” Will told the *Palisadian-Post*. “Sarah has been around St. Matthew’s Church and [has sang] in the choir her whole time in the Palisades, and she started the mommy and me program with her friend Connie ... back then, it was a pretty modest community and it was more accessible to live here.”

“My grandparents, Elaine and John Oliver Sannis, moved here in 1950 from Chicago,” Lipsky shared. “My grandfather was a builder here in the Palisades and built many of the homes here. A lot of us go back generations, and we still run into each other at the supermarket. We all went to school out here, we all hung out as kids and now we all have kids. It’s such a wonderful place to raise your kids.”

The celebration was commemorated with a Methodist prayer read by Pastor Wayne Walters, along with a lecture of the history of Pacific Palisades by long-time Palisadian and local historian Randy Young.

“This is a part of America’s past, where you’d have these tent gatherings,” Young shared with the *Post*. “To kind of recreate it, you see the value in the community. You can only do Zoom communicating for so long where you don’t have the human touch, and this is all about the human touch. The big problem was the pandemic interceded, but we’ve had an incredible group and some lucky things that fell into place that helped this all work out.”

A performance by La FAZ Quartet serenaded the audience with the Shaker song, “Simple Gifts,” with Layla Adeli and Sophie Zhu on violin, Vera Fang on viola, and Iman Morlot on cello.

Closing speakers included the descendants of the Marquez and Reyes families, Sharon Kilbride and Ernest Marquez.

“The Pacific Palisades Historical Society and speakers gave a deep look inside how the town was shaped and the people that made the town what it is today,” Kilbride said. “I love that my family’s roots began in this magical place where the mountains meet the sea.”

The event closed with the Theatre Palisades Youth choir singing a handful of numbers, including a Methodist hymn, “Rocking on the Waves,” and “Singin’ in the Rain,” complete with yellow umbrellas.

Barbara Kohn, PPHS president, shared she was pleased with the way the celebration turned out.

“The day brought the community together, and all expressed their admiration and love for the community with the desire to protect it,” Kohn shared with the *Post*. “To continue protecting the open space, the mountains. It was fascinating to hear similar comments from so many.”

After the event, historical photos were on display at open houses at Seven Arrows/Aldersgate, Buerge Chapel, Founders Oak Island and Pacific Palisades Woman’s Club.

“I was hearing information that I didn’t know,” Levy shared with the *Post* at the end of the celebration.

“Hopefully everyone was listening, because there was a lot of history coming out and that was great. And there’s a lot of people here in the Palisades that really contribute to this and to the community in a major way, so it was a great day for them and it was a great day for the town.”