

Founder and Husband of the Santa Monica Historical Society Donates \$100,000 to the New Museum

SANTA MONICA – (February 8, 2007) – The Santa Monica Historical Society Museum (SMHSM) announced today that it recently received a donation of \$100,000 from long-time Santa Monica residents, city historians and benefactors Ron and Ann Funk.

The SMHSM \$5 million capital campaign for the build-out of the new museum was launched in late 2006, and to-date has raised \$600,000.

“The Funks have been personal friends for many years, as well as friends of the museum since the Historical Society’s founding in 1975,” said Louise Gabriel, president/CEO of the museum. “Their continuous support throughout the years has helped us tremendously, and it will forever be remembered and appreciated.”

Ron Funk began his career in the newspaper business working for the Associated Press. In 1956, after having served for five years in the AP’s Hawaii, San Francisco and Los Angeles bureaus, he joined United Western Newspapers, a family-owned company which at that time published the daily *Evening Outlook* and the weekly *West Los Angeles Independent*.

After writing and serving in management positions for both papers, he was named managing editor of the *Evening Outlook* and, 10 years later, was appointed editor/managing editor of the paper in 1970. After a new managing editor was hired 1977, he stayed on as editor until 1980, at which time he retired.

During Funk’s tenure with the *Evening Outlook*, he oversaw the publication of a special centennial edition celebrating Santa Monica’s 100th anniversary. The special 128-page edition, published in 1975, reinforced his love for and pride in Santa Monica. As the paper itself heralded, it was the single largest and most complete history of the Santa Monica Bay area ever compiled, including over 100 staff-written articles and 200 rare and unpublished photographs.

Ann Funk, born and raised in Santa Monica, a history major in college and a local history buff, assisted her husband in gathering historical documents and images for the paper’s special centennial edition, and orchestrated many of the festivities that were held in honor of the city’s anniversary. In September, 1975, as founding chairperson, she called the first meeting of what soon became officially known as the Santa Monica Historical Society and continued on to play a key role in its early development.

“Of all the various public-service organizations in the Santa Monica area, I would count as one of the most important the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum,” said Ron Funk. “My wife, Ann, and those who helped her found the Santa Monica Historical Society and who helped nurture its growth, notably Louise and Bob Gabriel, Clo Hoover, Ernest Marquez, Victor Plukas, Dolores Crawford, Norton Stern, Marjorie Vawter and June Bohn, can all be very proud of their efforts to preserve the city’s colorful history, culture and countless attractions,” he added.



“I believe that the only way to know the heart and soul of a town or city is through its history -- without which it cannot be understood and appreciated,” Ron Funk noted. “The only way its history can be known is to gather and preserve the records of how its people lived, of who contributed significantly and of what they accomplished, of realized and unrealized goals, and of the external forces that helped shape it. The Santa Monica Historical Society Museum is doing an extraordinary job of compiling and preserving the history of the Santa Monica Bay area,” he said.

Prior to founding the Santa Monica Historical Society, Ann served as board member and Historical Activities Committee chairman of the Santa Monica Centennial, president of the Santa Monica Westside Volunteer Bureau Voluntary Action Center, president of the Santa Monica Westside Junior Philharmonic Committee, and founded the Santa Monica Westside Volunteer Bureau Auxiliary. Ron was an active member of the Santa Monica City Club, the Pacific Palisades Rotary Club, California Freedom of Information Committee, The California Editors’ Conference, the Los Angeles County Bench, the Southern California United Press Editors’ Conference, the Society of Professional Journalists (Sigma Delta Chi), and the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

Monies being raised by SMSHM will allow the museum to be relocated to a new 5,000-square-foot facility situated on the Santa Monica Main Public Library campus (located on 7th Street in Santa Monica) in late 2007. SMHSM is appealing to the city’s residents and business owners for support, as well as others who at one time may have lived and/or worked in Santa Monica. Leading the museum’s fund-raising efforts are Jean McNeil Wyner, chair person of the SMHSM Board of Directors, and Bob Gabriel, chairman of the museum’s Permanent Home Committee.

The museum’s Board of Directors also has established a Donor’s Circle honoring contributors who will receive special recognition on the Wall of Legacy, a permanent fixture in the new museum. To contribute, or for more information, the public should call 310-395-2290 or visit www.santamonicahistory.org.

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About the Santa Monica Historical Society Museum:

The Santa Monica Historical Society Museum is a non-profit organization whose mission is to collect, preserve and make accessible the rich history, art and culture of the Santa Monica Bay Area. Through the advancement of historical information, educational programming and the preservation of its archival collections and historical objects, the museum aims to give residents a sense of roots, belonging and an appreciation for the unique qualities of their city, and to instill a sense of pride in the diverse, multi-cultural past of Santa Monica. The museum’s goal is to provide public access to its extensive collections through interpretive exhibitions, on- and off-site programs, and through archival research services for youths and adults. To learn more about SMHSM, please call 310 395-2290 or visit www.santamonicahistory.org.

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