



David S. Bisol

August 21, 1951 - April 21, 2012

Growing up in Goleta in the days when lemon orchards outnumbered businesses and paved streets were the exception, David Bisol roamed the Valley's historic sites on his bicycle inspired by the books of Walker Tompkins, and the realization that his own community possessed a rich history. He was too young to drive, but at age sixteen he was old enough to be one of the founding members of the Goleta Valley Historical Society, whose Board of Directors he joined two years later as one of the youngest Board members in the country.

David graduated from Dos Pueblos High School where he gained experience in set design and lighting while working on numerous school productions. Studies at City College and UCSB fed his passion for history, and he became a connoisseur of local history, getting to know the Valley's pioneer families and gathering their stories, piecing together an understanding of the past that helped form his future.

In 1969 David began working for the Metropolitan Theatres Corporation and, over the course of the next seventeen years, managed several theaters, including the Isla Vista Theater on the night that the Bank of America was burned across the street. As manager of the Arlington Theatre David played a vital role in the restoration of the theatre and its transformation into a performing arts center, solidifying its position as a historic icon of downtown Santa Barbara. During this time he also served as Chair of the Santa Barbara County Courthouse Docent Council and helped coordinate activities

surrounding the Santa Barbara visit of Queen Elizabeth I in 1983.

David joined the staff of the Santa Barbara Historical Museum in August of 1989 as acting curator and a year later was named Curator of Collections, employing his early experience in set design, color, and lighting as he began the transformation of gallery spaces. His first major exhibition was "Carl Oscar Borg: A Niche in Time," which began the Museum's emphasis on California and Santa Barbara artists including Clarence Mattei and John Edward Borein. Under David's leadership a major restoration of the Museum's historic homes, the Charles Fernald Mansion and the Trussell-Winchester Adobe, began in 1990. Scouring the collections and scrutinizing photographs, studying the estate inventory, searching online and haunting local antique stores, David was able to recreate Judge Fernald's home in intimate detail.

As Acting Director of the Museum David was liaison with Southern California Edison during their removal of toxic soil, the buried leftovers from a former gas production facility, and the remediation of the museum site. The project resulted in a total landscape redesign, an expanded parking lot, and advanced air filtration and climate control systems for the Museum. Guided by David's vision, history was able to support the Museum's goal of building a future worth remembering upon the foundations of the past.

David was named the Executive Director of the Santa Barbara Historical Museum in 2007, in time for the Museum's 75th anniversary. That year's Diamond Jubilee Ball sparkled with millions of dollars of Tiffany & Co. diamonds on three elegant models. It was the kind of event that displayed David's many talents, and followed in the tradition of fund-raising activities, Fiesta celebrations, and the annual Holiday Party with a Dentzel Carousel as the centerpiece, and Father Christmas as the Special Guest.

Numerous elements of the Museum were modernized under David's direction: high tech compact shelving systems were installed in the library and the underground vaults; the size and professionalism of Museum staff were increased; the Education Program was expanded; the History Hands-On Interactive Project was initiated, and the front balcony was installed.

Family and friends complimented David's professional life, filling his time with trips to the theater, thrift stores, Easter baskets, and the highly-anticipated Christmas gift boxes. Traditions initiated and sustained by David now become cornerstones of a shared history with his untimely passing.

David was predeceased by his mother, Janice Bisol, and is survived by his father, Antonio Bisol Jr., sister Diane Bisol-Kalstrom and husband John, sister Darla Maciel and husband Marty, nephew Christopher Maciel, and nieces Carly Maciel and Tatum Maciel.

A memorial service celebrating David's life will be held by the Santa Barbara Historical Museum and his family in the courtyard of the Museum, 136 East De la Guerra Street, on Sunday, May 6, at 1 pm. The David S. Bisol Memorial Fund has been established by the Museum to receive donations on his behalf to continue his legacy of "building a future worth remembering."

Contributions in memory of David may be made to the Goleta Valley Historical Society's Stow House Restoration Project, in honor of David's love of Rancho La Patera and Stow House. Goleta Valley Historical Society, 304 North Los Carneros, Road, Goleta, CA 93117.

Cemetery Details

Goleta Cemetery

44 South San Antonio Road
SANTA BARBARA, CA 93110
(805) 967-3608

Previous Events

Memorial Service

MAY 6. 1:00 PM (PT)

Santa Barbara Historical Museum
136 E. De La Guerra
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Tribute Wall

PH

“ *Peter Hedlin lit a candle in memory of David S. Bisol*



Peter Hedlin - June 09, 2012 at 11:52 AM

PH

My sincere sympathy to Antonio, Janice and Diane. David was a friend and person who I shared a lot of good times with while living in Santa Barbara. He opened up his home and family to me to make Santa Barbara a second home. I was happy David persued an achieved working in the passion he has for Santa Barbara History

Peter Hedlin - June 09, 2012 at 11:57 AM

LR

“ *I had the pleasure to work for David at the Arlington Theatre when I was a UCSB student. I have many fond memories of my time there working with a great team put together by David. I'm sure he will be missed. My thoughts are with his family during this difficult time.*
Laura Romano

Laura Romano - May 23, 2012 at 05:50 PM



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John Kalstrom - May 09, 2012 at 04:30 AM