



## Conservancy Develops Collaborative Relationship with the SMMUSD

by Ruthann Lehrer

The Conservancy is pleased to report that a new collaborative relationship with the Santa Monica-Malibu Unified School District (SMMUSD) has emerged in recent months, leading to a series of meetings that consider the interface between identified historic resources and campus renovation/expansion plans. A team of historic preservation experts from the Conservancy has met with the project architects and SMMUSD staff to evaluate the architectural concepts for each of the campus plans that were established prior to their historic resource assessments, with the goal of reducing any compatibility conflicts and potential controversies during the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) process.

As noted in our prior newsletter, the SMMUSD adopted new historic preservation policies and procedures early in 2021, in response to discussions with the Conservancy following the controversial demolition of Samohi's History Building. Professional historic preservation consultants then identified historic districts at Grant, McKinley, Roosevelt and Will Rogers Elementary Schools and John Adams Middle School; Franklin School has just one significant resource, the



McKinley Elementary School Campus, 1953

main building. Our new working relationship has been productive in ensuring that historic resources will be recognized and integrated with future facilities changes.

When meetings between the Conservancy and project teams began for McKinley School, project plans and some approval processes were already too far advanced for a comprehensive preservation approach to be implemented. Nonetheless, we are grateful to the architects who were as responsive as possible to our suggestions by making the revisions they could to increase compatibility of the new building with the adjacent historic resources. Through this project both the architect team and the SMMUSD staff have gained an understanding of how they can work with the Conservancy to increase pro-

tection of their significant historic resources while implementing their primary goal of creating optimal educational facilities.

District staff is deferring plans for Roosevelt Elementary School for further study. Roosevelt was built in 1935 as a WPA (Works Progress Administration) project, exemplifying that style as well as innovations known as the "Santa Monica Plan," in which outdoor patio spaces are integrated with indoor classrooms. Master architects Marsh, Smith & Powell designed the school, with historic additions by Joseph Estep. We note that Conservancy Board member Carolyn Edwards, a former teacher at Roosevelt, years ago created a classroom research project with her students that delved into the history of the school.

Based upon that model and other ideas about how historic preservation can become a teaching tool for project-based-learning, we look forward to further collaboration on the CEQA process, including public meetings and community input, will continue in spring 2023. Please stay tuned for information on these public meetings, as they will be an opportunity to ensure our community's schools reflect our common goals in education.

## Shotgun House Garden Contributes (More Than Usual) to Water Conservation

by Hilda Weiss

Accident or Experiment — who knows? What we do know is that the garden at the Shotgun House survived an especially long, hot, dry summer in 2022. From January through August, the garden received no irrigation from the underground drip irrigation system. We discovered the culprits were dead batteries, and somehow the system was set to OFF. In fact, water bills showed the lack of water since January 2022.

But our California native plants proved themselves adaptable and resilient. Some, such as the sages, mallows and milkweed con-

tinued to thrive all year. Birds were active harvesting from the sage seed pods, and Monarch butterflies brought us new batches of caterpillars on the milkweed in April and October.

As Summer progressed other plants such as the yarrow and California fuchsia began to dry out and pull back by withering at the edges to trim themselves.

Still others including the redbud trees and the golden current went summer dormant, which means they dropped their leaves to protect themselves from the heat and lack of water. Summer dormancy is a natural protection among California natives, but we didn't expect it in the Shotgun House garden where

drip irrigation usually protects the plants from going dormant.

Folks on the East Coast are familiar and comfortable with leaves falling in the Autumn delivering bare trees during Winter dormancy. Everyone knows warmer weather will arrive with Spring and the trees will sprout new leaves. California native plants typically come back from Summer dormancy, sprouting new leaves with the first moisture in the Fall. In fact, Fall is the best time for planting California native plants.

With the water problem corrected, the garden quickly refreshed itself showing the hard-

SHOTGUN HOUSE *continues on page 5*

## OUR MISSION

The Santa Monica Conservancy is the leading voice for preserving our historic places. We promote understanding of the cultural, social, economic and environmental benefits of historic preservation through education, assistance and advocacy.

## JOIN US

The Santa Monica Conservancy exists because of the involvement and generosity of people like you. Become a member today and strengthen our voice for preserving Santa Monica's architectural and cultural heritage. *Membership information is available on p. 8.*

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Please consult our website, call, or email us for monthly tours and walk-in hours.

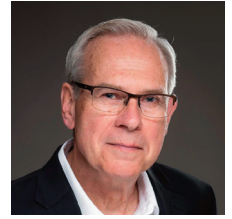
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This newsletter is supported in part by a grant from the City of Santa Monica.

## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The year 2022 has truly been a milestone for the Conservancy. We are celebrating our 20th Anniversary by reopening our signature tours, welcoming new volunteers and staff including our first ever Executive Directors, launching a major fundraising campaign, and continuing to offer deeply researched virtual programs in both our Mosaic series as well as our new Adaptive Reuse series.



Over the summer, we took time to reflect and come up with a list of our Top Twenty Achievements since our founding in 2002. This list, which is making its debut as a new e-newsletter series and brochure (available online at [www.smconservancy.org/about-us/top-twenty/](http://www.smconservancy.org/about-us/top-twenty/)), demonstrates that when we work together to advocate for preservation and stewardship of our historic environment, we meet with success more often than failure.

The current year has also presented new and urgent challenges to our goals. This a very difficult time for preservation in Santa Monica. The City is under tremendous budget challenges, and State mandates for affordable housing have made historic preservation all the more difficult. We need every available resource to help the Conservancy protect our city's character and history.

The Conservancy is moving decisively to meet the demands of today's environment. And, we are the only organization who is watching demolition permits citywide! The Conservancy is focused on being a conduit and convenor for the preservation movement in Santa Monica, and on promoting solutions wherever possible. We are fully staffed for the first time and equipped with the expertise and experience to lead our community. And, the field of preservation continues to expand to meet contemporary needs by assuming responsibility for social justice and inclusivity, by aligning with climate action and by reflecting on its role in development.

Ultimately, your collective voice, including your membership and support, is what will continue to help us strengthen our position.

We deeply appreciate your generosity and thank you for your commitment to advocating for our shared history. Special thanks to the important challenge grant from Alan Merson to stimulate business support and to our new business members, Kate Bransfield, The Georgian Hotel, TSA Housing and Worthe Real Estate. Thanks also to LA County Supervisor Sheila Kuehl and the Parsons Foundation for two new grants.

All the best to you and your families this holiday season.

## Become a Monthly Member

Did you know? The Conservancy offers monthly memberships in addition to our one-time and annual renewals. When you give monthly, you help to sustain our community programs and to protect and preserve Santa Monica's historic places.

Monthly members receive discounts to events like our virtual Mosaic Series and in-person architectural tours as well as an invitation to our annual Holiday Party. You'll

also receive both our print and e-newsletters featuring program updates, the latest on advocacy and preservation issues and more. Monthly memberships start at \$5 a month and can be cancelled at any time. Become a monthly member today at [smc.givecloud.co/individualmembership-renewing](http://smc.givecloud.co/individualmembership-renewing). You can also call or email us to sign up at 310-496-3146 or [info@smconservancy.org](mailto:info@smconservancy.org).

# Our Gratitude to Audree Fowler

by Robin Venturrelli

On September 13, the Docent Council gathered at Back on the Beach to present Docent Audree Fowler with a Certificate of Appreciation for her dedication and service to the Annenberg Community Beach House, and her extensive research about Marion Davies' medical philanthropy. Audree was one of the original docents in 2009 when the beach house opened its doors to the public, and she is retiring from service this year. Initially, she volunteered at the Santa Monica Aquarium two days a week and when she heard the Beach House was opening and looking for docents, she decided that it would be an excellent addition

to her schedule.

Audree was born in Wilmington, California, a port suburb of Los Angeles. She lived on a farm and sold her family's lettuce and corn at a farmer's market. She was educated in California and earned her Ph.D. in Biochemistry. She taught Protein Chemistry at UCLA where, coincidentally, her lab was right around the corner from the original Marion Davies Medical Clinic at Barrington and Olympic. Audree enjoyed wearing her white lab coat at the annual Happy Birthday Marion party, where she would delight guests with



Docent Council honoring Audree Fowler. Photo: Nan Friedman

her stories about Marion's clinic and her other philanthropic work.

Audree continues to enjoy her time in the UCLA Women in Philanthropy organization. She celebrated her 89th birthday on October 7th of this year.

# New Docents at the Beach House

by Ruthann Lehrer

When the Conservancy began to plan the resumption of docent tours at the Annenberg Community Beach House in Spring 2022, we discovered that our ranks had diminished and that we needed more volunteers. As of now, we have trained and welcomed a new group of fourteen enthusiastic and highly motivated people to join our docent group, for which we began planning in 2007. Some of the original docents who launched the opening of the Beach House in

April 2009 are still actively involved! Thanks to Naila Elfarrar, Margi Falk, Moonie Fishburn, Susan Freeman, Helly Langen, Ruthann Lehrer, Tricia Nelson, Libby Pachares, Joyce Rosenbaum, and Rita Schneir from the class of 2009 for their long and faithful service.

We welcome these new docents: Ruth Buhler, Ellen Castin, Yehudit Coutin, Patty Fiden, Sydney Landers, Geri Morguelan, Joe Nicoletti, Bonne Radford, Sharon Reyes, Pamela Rodeck, Cindy Stairs, Barbara Stinchfield, Clyde Young and Suzanne van de Velde. We hope you get to meet them when you come to

the Beach House. Free tours are offered at the Guest House Fridays through Mondays from noon to 2 p.m., no reservations necessary.

## VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Docents and volunteers needed for our tours and programs.

[www.smconservancy.org](http://www.smconservancy.org)  
[volunteer@smconservancy.org](mailto:volunteer@smconservancy.org)

# Marion Davies Biography Launched; Birthday Party Planned

by Ruthann Lehrer

Imaginary champagne corks were popping on Sunday, October 23, at the Annenberg Community Beach House for the launch of a long-awaited definitive biography of actress Marion Davies, whose estate first defined the site. Author Lara Gabrielle devoted nine years to researching and writing "Captain of Her Soul: The Life of Marion Davies," published by the University of California Press. She credited Beach House docents for support and encouragement, as she contacted them early on in thinking of writing this biography. Larry Edmunds Bookshop on Hollywood Boulevard sold books at the event, which Gabrielle inscribed for purchasers.

Gabrielle presented an illuminating powerpoint talk illustrating Marion Davies' personal story and milestones. Marion's life has long been overlooked as the longtime mistress of the titanic W.R. Hearst and conflated with the dis-

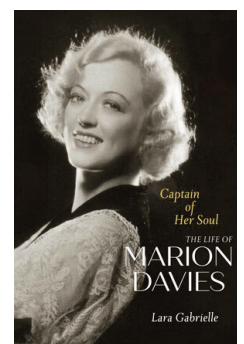


Author Lara Gabrielle (right) poses with Jeff of Larry Edmunds Bookshop on Hollywood Boulevard (left)

agreeable Susan Alexander character in the film *Citizen Kane*. In fact, she was an exuberant and generous person, a talented actress who invented screwball comedy, a celebrated party

hostess, a savvy businesswoman, and a dedicated philanthropist. The book also portrays Hollywood in its formative years of the 1920s and '30s.

The Santa Monica Conservancy partners with the City of Santa Monica to offer free docent tours of the Beach House, where visitors learn about Marion Davies as well as W.R. Hearst and the architect Julia Morgan. The first post-pandemic Happy Birthday Marion! party will take place January 29, 2023, 1-3 p.m. on the Garden Terrace, with music, games, and other entertainment. The public is invited and encouraged to wear period attire. We are grateful to Nan Friedman, ACBH manager, for her valued support and assistance.





## Year in Review: *Santa Monica Mosaic*

By Libby Motika

The Conservancy's Program Committee hosted three *Santa Monica Mosaic* virtual programs in the 2022 season, focusing on the history and culture of the various communities in Santa Monica. In January, the Conservancy presented "The City Hall Murals," as part of the *Mosaic* series, exploring the appropriateness of the murals' content in the 21st century. The panelists discussed the cultural themes of the History and Recreation murals, both in their original context as WPA artworks by Stanton Macdonald-Wright, and as viewed from contemporary perspectives.

The discussion was prompted by the controversy over the murals that adorn the walls in Santa Monica City Hall. The City proposed covering them from public view, while the Conservancy favored providing context for the murals, including their history and artistic significance.

The speakers included: Art historian Will South, the foremost authority on Macdonald-Wright; Sharon Reyes, Conservancy Board member and a descendant of Francisca Marquez and Maria Roque Valenzuela of the 1839 Mexican land grant, Rancho Boca de Santa Monica; and Kim Morales Johnson, vice pres-



ident of the Gabrielino-Tongva Springs Foundation, representing the Gabrielino (Tongva) Band of Mission Indians.

In April, featured author and historian Donna Rifkind offered an illustrated presentation on the exiled Jewish artists who settled in and around Santa Monica Canyon during World War II. In "Safe Haven," Rifkind approached the topic by focusing on screenwriter Salka Viertel, who hosted numerous Sunday afternoon salons at her home on Mabery Road, creating a refuge for Hollywood figures who fled the Third Reich.

*Mosaic* continued in August with "An Enduring Spirit," a program highlighting the story of the Church in Ocean Park. Committed to the welfare of the surrounding neighborhood, the church has been a hub for numerous pro-

grams that address the needs of those who are often overlooked by traditional agencies. Historian and Conservancy Board member Nina Fresco began the program with an illustrated history of the church from its founding in the 1900s to its transition to community activism in the 1950s to the early 2000s. The current minister, Rev. Janet McKeithen discussed the church's contemporary programs, with continued focus on advocacy and social justice. Julie Ginsberg, who launched Rock Star Kids for youth with special needs, and Roger Gawne, who organized Queer Prom activities celebrating LGBTQ teens, joined Rev. McKeithen for a panel discussion and question and answer session. *Mosaic* will continue in 2023 with more stories about the diverse cultures and communities of Santa Monica.

## *Mosaic* Archive Available Online

Born of the nation's racial reckoning in 2020 and inspired by the 1930s mosaic tiles at the entrance of Santa Monica City Hall, our *Mosaic* series is dedicated to the preservation of the city's diverse historic cultures. Guest speakers have included representatives of the Tongva, African American, Rancho, Japanese American and Jewish communities. All *Mosaic* program recordings are available to watch for free online. To explore the archive, go to [smconservancy.org/events-programs/santa-monica-mosaic](https://smconservancy.org/events-programs/santa-monica-mosaic).

## Donate Your Used Car

We make donating your car easy! Our donation partner, CARS, will handle everything from the free pick-up and donation receipt to answering all of your questions. Call 855-500-7433 or visit [careasy.org/nonprofit/Santa-Monica-Conservancy](https://careasy.org/nonprofit/Santa-Monica-Conservancy) to fill out an online donation form. Your donation will support the Santa Monica Conservancy's advocacy and public programs. Thank you!



Surfers and youth from around LA pay tribute to Nick Gabaldón. Photo: Santa Monica Conservancy

## Nick Gabaldón Day and Coastal Cleanup 2022

The Conservancy partnered with historian Alison Rose Jefferson, PhD, for two events adjacent to the Bay Street Beach monument in 2022. During Heal the Bay's Coastal Cleanup Day on September 17, the Conservancy and Dr. Jefferson set up an exhibit near the monument to help promote stewardship of our coastal watershed cultural history. In particular, the event helped to

share the stories of those who challenged racism and class structures in an effort to keep public beach spaces available to everyone.

Earlier in the year in celebration of Nick Gabaldón Day on June 19, the Conservancy again supported Dr. Jefferson in her work to ensure that Nick's story, and the history of African American leisure site Bay Street Beach live in public memory.

SHOTGUN HOUSE *continued from page 1*  
 diness of California native plants and how well suited they are to our Southern California climate.

Even though we're back to a regular watering schedule, the Shotgun House garden still contributes to saving water all year long. We've selected California native plants that are drought tolerant, we have an underground irrigation system designed to release water in small portions right to the roots, and we fill in with mulch to preserve the water and maintain cool soil for the plants. New plants? Oh yes! We add them during the Fall and Winter planting season.

Please come by and see the garden, savor



Monarch caterpillars crawl on the California native milkweed this past October

the aromas of sage and mint, and notice how the birds and bees and butterflies are enjoying their native habitat.

## Conservancy Debuts New Adaptive Reuse Program Series

On November 6th, the Conservancy presented a live virtual event in a new program series focused on the practice of adaptive reuse. "Everything Old is New Again: Adaptive Reuse in Santa Monica" explored how several high-profile local development projects have successfully repurposed older buildings to meet the community's changing needs. The program also explored how these projects conserve resources, help the environment, save the city's historic heritage, and preserve a sense of place and identity. Featured projects included the Proper Hotel, Pono Burger, the Preservation Resource Center and highly-anticipated Ocean Avenue Project designed by Frank Gehry and developed by Worthe Real Estate.

Visit [www.smconservancy.org/about-us/top-twenty/](http://www.smconservancy.org/about-us/top-twenty/)

to download a copy of our new

### TOP TWENTY ACHIEVEMENTS

brochure and to read about each achievement in detail.

## Search Our Map of Historic Places

Santa Monica is one of California's most architecturally, culturally, and historically significant communities with over 100 landmarks and structures of merit and five historic districts. Using our interactive map, you can search by the name of a building or architect, address, neighborhood, or date of construction. Our map also populates lists by historic resource type, such as landmarks, structures of merit and places listed in the California and National Registers among others.

Discover places like the Santa Monica Professional Building, built in 1928 in the Plateresque variant of the Spanish Colonial Revival style and now rehabilitated and adaptively reused as part of the award-winning

Proper Hotel. Or learn the story of Nikkei Hall which reminds us of how important it is to protect our historic places. When Japanese Americans were released from internment camps after World War II, fewer than 200 returned to Santa Monica where they faced a housing shortage. Nikkei Hall, which is being adaptively reused as the centerpiece of the Laurel affordable housing project, was built in 1957 as a gathering place where Japanese American families enjoyed picnics, potlucks, Christmas and Bonen Kai (end-of-year) parties and dancing.

Dive into our city's rich architecture and history at [www.smconservancy.org/historic-places](http://www.smconservancy.org/historic-places).

## Preservation Next Recap

Preservation Next hosted three in-person events celebrating historic preservation projects in the Santa Monica area in 2022. In January, members of the Preservation Next group joined the Leadership Circle for a tour and reception of the landmark Old Post Office building on 5th Street, following its adaptive reuse renovation. Over the summer, the group hosted Conservancy members and guests on a private exterior tour of the Eames House, also known as Case Study House No. 8, in Pacific Palisades. Then in November, members visited the Gehry Partners' studio for a viewing of the Ocean Avenue Project model with architect and partner Tensho Takemori.

Now in its fourth year, Preservation next

produces activities for the 21-45 age group that showcase and promote the cultural heritage of the community.

### Do Good When You Shop!

Did you know that you can support the Santa Monica Conservancy whenever you shop on Amazon? Simply visit [Smile.Amazon.com](http://Smile.Amazon.com) and select the Santa Monica Conservancy as your nonprofit of choice and we'll receive 0.5% of your eligible purchases. You can give back each time you shop!



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@smconservancy

Stay updated on advocacy, events and the latest news in architecture and preservation!



# Landmarks Commission Report

by Ruthann Lehrer and Carol Lemlein,  
Advocacy Co-Chairs

The Landmarks Commission continues to meet online every other month. Its responsibilities have been limited by staff reductions, the elimination of review of demolition permits for properties more than 40 years old, and the high fees for designation, putting it out of reach for many property owners.

Five properties were recommended for Historic Property Preservation Agreements (Mills Act Contracts) at the September Commission meeting and approved by the City Council in October, bringing the number of such contracts to 95. These contracts can provide owners of designated properties with property tax abatements in return for their commitment to maintain and in some cases rehabilitate their properties. Notably, they were all multifamily or commercial properties:

- 818 Grant Street, a 1929 Spanish Colonial Revival courtyard apartment which was significant for conveying early multifamily residential development in the neighborhood later named Sunset Park.

- 2602 Third Street, a contributing property to the Third Street Neighborhood Historic District with three residential structures.

- 227 Beach Street, a 1924 bungalow court contributor to the Third Street Neighborhood Historic District and winner of a 2022 Conservancy Preservation Award.

- 227 Broadway on the Third Street Promenade, featured prominently on the Downtown Walking Tour.

- 174 Abbot Kinney Boulevard, the former Enterprise Fish Company, designated in 2015.

Several actions of the Commission have gone to Council on appeal. Council upheld the appeal on **1665 Appian Way**, finding the association of the original building owner with policies of racial exclusion in Santa Monica real estate so offensive that they could not justify designation on any basis, although the ownership was not a reason for designation. The appeal of the Conservancy's nomination of **631 Colorado Avenue**, a brick commercial vernacular building with a Streamline Moderne façade and successive uses reflecting downtown's patterns of economic development, was also upheld by Council, paving the way for the site's redevelopment.

The Conservancy's landmark application for **2408 2nd Street**, a circa 1905 cottage exhibiting a transitional style from Victorian to Craftsman with a high level of original archi-

2408 2nd Street



227 Broadway

tectural integrity, has yet to be heard by the Commission, despite supportive reports by the City's consultant and staff. The owner has requested delay of the Commission's hearing for over a year.

## New Landmarks Commissioner and Chair Appointed

Jonathan Kaplan, recipient of a Master of Heritage Conservation degree from the USC School of Architecture, was appointed to the Architectural Historian role when Commissioner Ken Breisch declined to seek reappointment. Jonathan's day job is staff to five Historic Preservation Overlay Zones for the Los Angeles Office of Historic Resources.

Roger Genser, Local Historian on the Commission, and Dolly Sloan were appointed to 2nd and 3rd terms respectively. At their September meeting, Commission members appointed Richard Brand, the Commission's Licensed Architect, as Chair.

### A WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Paul Akilah	Judith Keyes
Chriss Bruss	Michael Kirby
Susan Clark	Robert Smith
George Geary	Robin Tung
Rose-Marie Glen	Brian Varnum
Daniel Haarmann	and Shannon Daley
Kathy Haines Janik	

## UPCOMING PRESERVATION EVENTS

### EXHIBITION

I Wanted To Do Something Big

**GALLERY HOURS WED-FRI, 10- 4 PM.**

A retrospective on the conservation of the Watts Towers; curated by Mark Gilberg, Rosie Lee Hooks, and Rebeca Guerrero. Since 1961, the Watts Towers Arts Center, located in the heart of Watts on a campus that includes Simon Rodia's landmark Watts Towers, has served as a beacon of light for arts education and a conduit for social change. Public guided tours of the Watts Towers are conducted Thursday, Friday and Saturday from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. and Sunday from 12:30 p.m. to 3 p.m.

*Watts Towers Arts Center*

(213) 847-4646

[wattstowers.org/home](http://wattstowers.org/home)

### AWARDS

2023 California Preservation Foundation Awards

**NOMINATIONS DUE FRIDAY, JANUARY 27, 2023**

The public is invited to submit applications for the Preservation Design Awards, which recognize projects ranging from the smallest infill to large restorations; sustainable efforts; cultural heritage and intangible heritage efforts; and more! The nomination process consists of seven steps that can be completed online. The awards ceremony will take place in April of 2023.

*California Preservation Foundation*

(415) 495-0349

[californiapreservation.org/awards/](http://californiapreservation.org/awards/)

### CELEBRATION

The Avalon Ball 2023

**SATURDAY, MAY 13, 6-10 PM**

Celebrate the 20th anniversary of the Avalon Ball, a fantastic journey into the past when Big Bands played for huge audiences via nationwide broadcasts from the 1929 Art Deco Casino Ballroom in the City of Avalon on Catalina Island. Come for the evening or spend the weekend. The Catalina Island Museum generally offers their Silent Film Benefit on the same weekend and ADSLA hosts Cocktail Crawls and other social events on the island.

*Art Deco Society of Los Angeles*

(310) 659-3326

[artdecola.org](http://artdecola.org)

### CLASS

Pollinator Gardens with California Native Plants

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 13 10:00 - 11:30 AM**

How do you invite butterflies, birds and other important pollinators into your space, mindfully considering their environment and water needs? This class will help you to create a rich, habitat garden that will attract a range of important California wildlife.

(818) 768-1802

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in honor of our 20th Anniversary  
Celebration and Campaign:

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in Santa Monica.

<https://smc.givecloud.co/give>



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and cultural heritage.

<https://smc.givecloud.co/individualmembership>

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY, MARION!

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 29, 2023**  
**1 - 3 PM**

on the Garden Terrace at the  
Annenberg Community Beach House



The first post-pandemic Happy Birthday Marion!  
party promises a fabulous afternoon with music,  
games, refreshments and entertainment; the pub-  
lic is invited and encouraged to wear period attire.