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Pride and Preservation

Letters, photos, reports and other written and visual materials document the Pacific Pride Foundation's long history of being in the forefront of the LGBTQ+ movement in Santa Barbara County and serving as a critical resource for historically marginalized people seeking to make their voices heard.

Now, by donating its entire historical archive to UC Santa Barbara Library's Special Research Collections, the foundation is giving a big boost to a new effort to document and share the history of the LGBTQ+ movement locally.

"UCSB is thrilled to serve as the archival home for the Pacific Pride Foundation, and it is our hope that this new collaboration will uncover materials that will provide a greater understanding of the Santa Barbara LGBTQ+ community and their important contributions to this region," said Danelle Moon, director of Special Research Collections at the UCSB Library. "I'm really pleased we were able to connect with the Pacific Pride Foundation and that we can collaborate together to document the history of the community."

Several collections and historical societies nationwide document the LGBTQ+ experience in America, but they don't focus on the Santa Barbara area, Moon said. UCSB Library is seeking to widen the scope of its LGBTQ+ collections. "We are trying to round out our collections to be more representative of our community and to provide resources for scholarly research," said Moon. "It's widening the swath of what's out there for our state in terms of the history of the social movement of this group. This is a great opportunity to understand what was happening in Santa

Barbara County and compare that to what was happening elsewhere.”

The archives — which include board minutes, correspondence, photos, scrapbooks, posters, reports and materials about community events like the Aids Walk, Pride at the Beach, Safe Saturday Night and Waiters Dinner — will be preserved and made available to the public for research in UCSB Library’s Special Research Collections, a state-of-the-art facility for the preservation and digitization of rare and unique historical collections.

Since its founding in 1976, the Pacific Pride Foundation has played an integral role for the LGBTQ+ community, both in Santa Barbara County and the coastal communities between Los Angeles and San Francisco. With offices in Santa Barbara and Santa Maria, the foundation offers health and social service programs not available through other local organizations and assists people with HIV/AIDS.

The foundation’s executive director, Colette Schabram, said the Santa Barbara County LGBTQ+ movement has a rich history that is important to share.

“The Pacific Pride Foundation has been instrumental in the fight against HIV/AIDS, in the struggle for marriage equality and a leader in dignity and equality for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer people in our community for over 40 years,” Schabram said. “This partnership helps preserve the work of so many who have come before and will help tell future stories of what is yet to come.” With the foundation’s relocation to new offices the organization decided the time was right to ensure its archives were preserved and made more accessible to the general public.

To further boost their collection, the UCSB Library staff and Pacific Pride Foundation are seeking additional materials related to the history of the local LGBTQ+ community that the public may have in their homes or workplaces. Assisting in this effort is Mashey Bernstein, who recently retired as a lecturer in the UCSB Creative Writing Center. He established the Gay Student Union at UCSB and is well known for his work on behalf of the local LGBTQ+ community.

Anyone with Pacific Pride Foundation materials to contribute is asked to email UCSB Library Archiving Processing Specialist Zak Liebhaber at zdlieb@ucsb.edu. Materials being sought include press clippings, newsletters, scrapbooks, board minutes, administrative files, correspondence, files, audiovisual material and photographs. The archives can be found in the library’s Santa Barbara History Collection or by visiting www.library.ucsb.edu/pacificpridefoundation.

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