

Museum Renames Planned Giving Society in Honor of Edith Hobson Hoffman

Preserving Ventura County's artistic and cultural heritage for future generations



In the early 2000s, the Museum developed *The Heritage Society*, a planned giving program, designed to assist as many people as possible in remembering the Museum in their estate planning. This kind of program is common in Museums. It is a way for individuals to make special provisions in their estate planning to help assure the future of the Museum, after they have taken care of their first priority, their family and friends.

The Museum's *Heritage Society* was created to enable our supporters to utilize tax-advantageous gift planning, to give significantly to the Museum, while thinking about the things that will help sustain what they love most about the institution.

In July, the Museum held a members only luncheon for the *Heritage Society* and it was at this event that a name change was announced, honoring the long legacy of generosity and community minded spirit of Edith Hobson Hoffman. During the luncheon, Advancement Director Deya Terrafranca presented the history of Mrs. Hoffman's philanthropy and community involvement and Mrs. Hoffman's granddaughter Andrea Pfister shared personal remembrances of her grandmother's kindness, generosity, and love of family.

The Museum is honored to have been given permission from Mrs. Hoffman's family to rename the society in her honor. The legacy of planned gifts will continue to ensure the future of the Museum that Mrs. Hoffman dedicated so much time and so many resources to preserving and helping to prosper. Included below is the historical information regarding Mrs. Hoffman's contributions to the Museum.

If you are interested in remembering the Museum in your trust or estate, contact Deya Terrafranca or Scott Gordon in the Development Office at 805-653-0323 ext. 305.

Edith Hobson Hoffman

One of Ventura County's leading philanthropists of the 20th Century.

Many thanks to the Library Docents & Charles Johnson for their research and time, making this presentation possible.

- Edith May Hobson was born August 17, 1890, the only child of William Arthur and Effie Hobson
- She grew up on East Meta Street between Palm and Oak Streets
- The Hobson family as many of you can attest is a well known family in the county.

- Her grandfather, William D. Hobson, known as the “Father of Ventura County” – came to Ventura in 1857 from Illinois in search of gold. In 1872, he appeared before the state Legislature in Sacramento to successfully lobby for the separation of Ventura from Santa Barbara. He is also credited with building the first brick structure in the county, the Cohn Store on Main Street across from the Santa Clara building.
- Wanting to distract her from her desire to go to college, in 1910 Edith went on a tour of Europe and the Middle East
- Tragically in 1912, her father was killed in the first automobile accident in Ventura while driving to Fillmore
- The next year she married Walter Henry Hoffman Jr. at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Ventura
- The couple had two children Walter Hoffman and Katherine Hoffman
- They moved to a 22 room ranch house on the Casitas pathway in Ojai to raise their family and lived there until the land was purchased by the federal government to make way for Casitas Lake and the family moved to Lincoln Drive in Ventura
- They bred thoroughbred horses and at one time had over 300 on the ranch

Her generosity in the community touched many and she gave back to the community in many capacities throughout the years.

- As early as 1913, she was active in her community, serving on the Historic Landmarks Committee. Even then, she was thinking of possible sites for the collection that would become the Museum of Ventura County.
- During World War Two, Edith worked for the Red Cross at the dispensary at Port Hueneme. For this work, she was given honorable recognition for her dedication and effort
- Although not Catholic at the time, Edith helped establish St. Catherine Grammar and High School. She worked closely with Cardinal James McIntyre who later baptized her and her husband.
- Edith became fascinated with the Father Serra and she became one of the first and most ardent supporters of the campaign for his canonization.
- She commissioned Ojai artist Ruth Newman to paint all the California Missions – which now hang in a church in Petra, Mallorca – across the street from Serra’s birthplace
- Edith was so loved by the people of Petra that she was invited to visit by them – she even turned down an invitation to a private Mass with the Pope because it was the same time she had promised to visit the people of Petra.
- Edith was then honored by Pope Pius with a declaration of Pro Ecclesia Pontifice (Order of the Venerable Cross) for her dedication to the Franciscans and Serra’s cause.
- Edith had been fascinated with Ventura County – something that was no doubt passed down through the generations of Hobsons – from a young age and became a prominent figure throughout the county
- Edith was a life-long member of the Ventura Historical Society and served three terms on the Board of Directors

- She contributed articles and writings to the Ventura Historical Society, most notably, “ The Romantic History of San Buenaventura” and “The History of Two Old Houses which I helped Build”
- She also was a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution and contributed to that group many articles and maps on the history of Ventura County
- Cal Gustafson wrote in an article about Edith Hoffman in the Ventura County Star Free Press : “ It would be hard to describe Mrs. Edith Hoffman without using the worlds generosity and humility.”

Her legacy -

- In 1961, she contributed \$5000 (approx \$40,000 in 2018) to the establishment of the Walter Hoffman Junior Memorial Fund for the publishing of books pamphlets etc relating to the history of Ventura County.
- In addition to the legacy she left having served on boards and committees, being active within her community, and her work for the canonization of St. Junipero Serra, Edith secured the future of the museum in May of 1966. She purchased the land on which the Albinger Museum is housed and after several years of planning, the museum exchanged the land with the city and the new museum was built.
- Sadly she did not get to see the completion of the new museum she had so long supported. Upon her passing in May of 1970, the Board of Directors of the museum sent her children a letter acknowledging the loss of “a devoted member, a stalwart supporter for many years, and a good friend. From the time the society was organized Mrs. Hoffman took a lively interest in its welfare, devoted much of her time to it, and supported it generously”.

It is in honor of her devotion, her stalwart support, and her wish to see the museum grow and thrive that it is our honor to rename our planned giving society, formerly known as the Heritage Society, the Edith Hobson Hoffman Society.