President’s Message:

Dear Town and Gown of USC Members,

We are so pleased that many of you have had the opportunity to log onto our redesigned website at www.townandgownofusc.org. Our views went up 46% in July alone. We thought you might, also, enjoy reading the history of our website. A warm thank you to Past President and 2021 Nominating Committee member, Carol Fox, for writing this narrative.

This is yet another example of Town and Gown of USC's leadership at the vanguard.

Sincerely,

Hilary Crahan
CEO/President 2020-2022
president@townandgownofusc.org

CROSSING THE DIGITAL DIVIDE: THE STORY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WEB SITE FOR TOWN AND GOWN OF USC

Carol Campbell Fox
President of Town and Gown of USC – 2002-2004
Article written July 2021

Writer's comments: This story is an example of how Town and Gown of USC has evolved over the years. In recent years, our Board of Directors has become more open to new ideas, as a new generation of the Trojan Family has joined our leadership ranks, reflecting the accelerating pace of society as a whole. For as long as I can remember, Town and Gown was a leader amongst organizations at USC, and that leadership is destined to continue. We were one of the first organizations at USC to have a web site. I believe that this trailblazing is due to strong leadership by our Board over the years, and it continues our independence as an organization and as an important partner of the University.

During my first year as President of Town and Gown of USC, I heard a lot about the growth of web sites beyond just the trendy .com tech bubble. Web sites were starting to emerge for established companies and organizations, and I quickly thought that a web site was a good idea for Town and Gown as well. It seems strange in retrospect to think that although web sites were common-place in the early 2000’s, most web sites were devoted to selling something or sharing information. The idea of promoting an institution and facilitating internal activities of that institution was still a rarity.

The first step toward bringing Town and Gown into the digital age was doing research to see what types of organizations had web sites outside of the popular e-commerce arena. The USC President’s Office
confirmed that the University had a web site that was starting to evolve, but the individual schools within the University were not yet maintaining their own web sites.

Service organizations such as Rotary, Soroptimists and Lions’ Club were also not yet using web sites at the local, national or international levels. Only one out of about 15 churches surveyed was even thinking about launching a web site. Several school districts that I contacted, including Los Angeles Unified, had yet to embrace a web site.

I initially discussed the idea with a few of the Board of Directors, and received a generally positive response. At the March 2003 Town and Gown Board meeting I made the initial proposal, including a description of what a web site might include, the value for Town and Gown and some general costs associated with the development, launch and ongoing maintenance. A couple of the members who had knowledge of web sites expressed their positive experiences and supported the idea as a good one for Town and Gown. The reactions ranged from enthusiastic support to bitter opposition. Many of the Board of Directors were unconvinced of the value of having a web site, and were concerned about the ongoing expense associated with such an endeavor. There were thoughts that a web site was only for younger people. A few said that “We want to stay as we are.”

The discussion during this meeting was quite contentious, and I could tell that some of the members of the Board of Directors were lobbying other members to vote against moving forward. At this point, it was obvious to me that our Board was not yet ready to vote on the concept of establishing a web site.

I suggested that we form a committee that would meet over the summer to discuss this idea and bring back their report in the Fall. To my surprise, 15 members were interested in serving on this committee. Although I felt that 15 was too many for a committee, I decided to go forward with that group given the diversity of opinions expressed in the meeting. I appointed Judy Pohlmann to serve as Chair, as she was working at the time on a web site project for a well-known company. The committee met frequently throughout the summer of 2003. The committee members represented the range of opinions including those strongly opposed and in favor, as well as those who were interested in the idea but felt that they wanted to learn more before proceeding. The discussions were highly professional. One member was especially helpful in sharing how she communicated with her 90 year old grandfather in Florida frequently by e-mail to stress the idea that a web site could be for all ages.

By the end of the summer, the committee was fairly positive about the idea of starting a web site, and in November 2003 the web site decision was on the Board agenda. As chair of the summer committee, Judy Pohlmann made a brief report about the meetings and then made a motion to approve the establishment of a web site for Town and Gown. The motion was approved unanimously. When the motion had passed, Judy stated that there was a need for $1,500 to move forward with the development of the web site. I knew that we had the money available to pay for the web site, but before we entered into a discussion on using Town and Gown funds, a voice behind me said: “I’ll pay for it.” I turned to see Board member Jan Dyer with her checkbook out with pen in hand asking how she should make out the check.

Jeff Rector of Millennium Concepts was our initial contractor for web site development. It was announced that vice presidents and committee chairs would be responsible to submit information about their committee on the web site. Jan Dyer served as our first Webmaster. She and Judy Pohlmann worked with the contractor in helping him become acquainted with Town and Gown as an organization.
In early 2004, Jan announced that “Coming Soon” postcards would be sent to all members announcing that Town and Gown had a web site. A special commemorative announcement about the web site was shared with those who attended the Centennial Gala held at Town and Gown. The web site address was put on a white card and placed in a silver picture frame that served as a favor for the event. The debut of the web site coincided with the last Centennial event of the year, the Sunday afternoon tea for Town and Gown members at the Mudd Estate with President and Mrs. Sample. The official launch date was May 1, 2004, and photos from the tea were put on the web site.

Since Town and Gown did not have its own logo at the time, the University approved the temporary use of their logo on our web site. When we launched the web site, the address was: townandgownusc.com, a domain name that Town and Gown still owns, but now reroutes to our familiar townandgownofusc.org. Monthly web site updates included: A message from the President, History of Town and Gown written by Jo Ann Conley, photo gallery, articles, information about scholarship committee and other items as needed. Even after the initial launch there was some stagnation, redesigns and reboots in the years that followed, but the groundwork was laid for our digital future.

Again, it does seem shocking, and rather quaint that there was a time, not that long ago, when Town and Gown (and many organizations) did not have a web site. In retrospect, it is a bit amusing that adding a web site was a rather controversial decision at the time. Just think about that the next time that you register for a meeting online, or conduct Board business or interact with our scholars at townandgownofusc.org.

**NEW TO THE WEBSITE**

We are pleased to share the **Oral History of Town and Gown of USC** video, expertly researched, written, and presented by our esteemed Past President, Sally Edwards, and produced by our IT expert, Ian Chestnut. We are extremely grateful to Sally for her outstanding and long-standing service to Town and Gown of USC. Her work on this video showcases and preserves the rich history of our 501(c)(3).

It may be viewed on our website, or [click here](#).

We are also pleased to showcase and introduce our **Town and Gown of USC Past Presidents & 2021-2022 Board of Directors**. It may be viewed on our website, or [click here](#).

Enjoy!

Patti Jamgotchian and Colleen Stroyke
BENEFIT COMMITTEE
Introducing the Town and Gown of USC Benefit Committee, chaired by Edie Etmekjian. The 2022 Benefit Committee is already at work planning the Benefit!

HONOREES
Watch for the big reveal of our outstanding honorees to be announced very soon!

STAY AT THE BEVERLY HILLS HOTEL
We are looking forward to our Town and Gown of USC Benefit on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at The Beverly Hills Hotel, the luxury 5-start resort, known for its "unforgettable blend of vintage glamour and modern luxury."

We have the exciting opportunity to book ten superior and/or deluxe rooms, at a special group rate, the night before the Benefit.

For more information, please contact the Benefit Hotel Room Coordinator, Valerie Gumbiner Weiss, email: valkgw@yahoo.com, cell phone: (626) 665-5553 by Monday, August 23, 2021, if you would like to reserve one of the ten rooms.

Looking forward to April 5th!
Edie Etmekjian
edieetmekjian@gmail.com
Benefit Chair 2022
2021-2022 Programs and Events

Tuesday, October 5, 2021

MIKE BOHN
USC Charles Griffin Cale Director of Athletics
General Meeting & Luncheon

“The Five A’s to Success”
Kick off the year with Trojan pride and hear an update on USC athletics.

Tuesday, November 2, 2021

KAREN NORTH, Ph.D
Clinical Professor of Communications, USC Annenberg School of Communication & Journalism
General Meeting & Luncheon

“Exploring the Digital Social Media World: The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly”
Learn about digital social media, what is really happening on the internet, and how it is a double-edged sword, offering us never before opportunities but also creating unforeseen challenges.

Holiday Boutique in the Town & Gown of USC Courtyard

Tuesday, December 7, 2021

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PROGRAM
General Meeting & Luncheon

A beloved Town & Gown of USC tradition, join friends and the USC community at this cherished holiday luncheon.

Tuesday, January 11, 2022

GRANT C. KIRKPATRICK, FAIA
Founding Partner and Principal, KAA Design
General Meeting & Luncheon

“The New Renaissance”
A USC alumnus and award-winning architect shares his passion for design and why Southern California is the worldwide epicenter of the “New Renaissance”.

Honoring Past ACC Chairs & Current Chair, and Current ACC Presidents

General Meeting and Luncheons:
11:00 a.m. Reception begins in the Courtyard.
12:00 p.m. Lunch and Program begins.
12:45 p.m. Livestream of the Keynote Speaker begins on our Town & Gown of USC website and Facebook page.
PINCHAS COHEN, M.D.
Professor of Gerontology, Medicine & Biological Sciences
Dean, USC Leonard Davis School of Gerontology
General Meeting & Luncheon

“Healthy Aging Strategies”
An award-winning researcher with expertise in Alzheimer’s and dementia, gives his approach on “personalized aging” and how a healthy lifestyle contributes to longevity.

Honoring Town & Gown of USC Scholars and Donors

WILLOW BAY
Dean, USC Annenberg School of Communication and Journalism
General Meeting & Luncheon

“A Conversation with Dean Bay”
Dean Bay shares her insights on the rapidly changing field of communications, journalism and digital media.

Members’ Annual Meeting
Honoring Town & Gown of USC Past Presidents

ANNUAL BENEFIT & LUNCHEON
Join us for the Spring Benefit & Luncheon, featuring special guests and entertainment! This year the Benefit will take place at the iconic Beverly Hills Hotel.

HEIDI SCHEID
Executive Vice President, Scheid Family Wines
General Meeting & Luncheon

“From Grapes to Glass: Evolution of a California Winery”
A USC alumna and winery executive shares her insights on the California wine industry, and her creation of a sustainable, low alcohol and low-calorie wine brand.

Installing Newly Elected and Appointed Board of Directors and Honoring Life Members

General Meeting and Luncheons:
11:00 a.m.  Reception begins in the Courtyard.
12:00 p.m.  Lunch and Program begins.
12:45 p.m.  Livestream of the Keynote Speaker begins on our Town & Gown of USC website and Facebook page.
SPECIAL CONGRATULATIONS

Congratulations to Town and Gown of USC members receiving awards at the 2021 USC Alumni Association Volunteer Recognition Dinner.

Ann Chambers Palmer ’75
Janet Harris Tonkovich ’64
Cheri Lall Wechsler ’82, MS ’86

Do you have any news to share with Town and Gown? Please email Kari May, karidmay@gmail.com.

Town and Gown of the University of Southern California is a nonprofit philanthropic organization whose purpose is to support USC through scholarships for students, building and campus enhancements, and cultural programs.

• Please remember to share your pictures on Facebook and follow us on Instagram. •