Nunis Retires As Quarterly Editor After Completing 43 Years

A milestone has been reached. With the Winter 2004 issue of the Southern California Quarterly Doyce Nunis is stepping down as pro bono editor, a position he has held since the March 1962 issue.

Plain and simple, this total of 43 years amounts to a million-dollar labor of love on his part—a monumental gift to history, to Los Angeles, to HSSC and to hundreds of scholars who saw their work improved by his keen editorial eye.

Doyce was at UCLA when he took over as editor with the March 1962 issue. His first issue contained articles on Bret Harte, the Eucalyptus Crusade, and Saint Vibiana’s Cathedral, plus his own announcement of “A New Dress Under a New Plan.”

Doyce did more than change the title of the Quarterly, he kept it from drifting toward antiquarianism, made it fiscally responsible in terms of printing costs, and took it to the top level nationally as a regional journal of history.

Forty-three years later, Doyce is responsible for the editing of more than 685 articles and some 1,235 book reviews, surely making him the doyen of journal editors. Actually, there is no way to calculate the number of hours Doyce has spent reading and revising manuscripts (some up to three or four times) before accepting them for publication.

Think about it this way: because of Doyce’s dedication to the scholarship of history, some 600 scholars have published articles in the
Continued from page 1

Southern California Quarterly and more than 1,000 authors have had their books reviewed.

These are amazing totals, reflecting one person’s commitment, outreach, and influence on the scholarship of history in our region. Think for a moment what impact the absence of those articles and book reviews would have on the scholarship of southern California history had Doycz not decided 43 years ago to edit the Quarterly without salary.

During his time as editor several special issues of the Quarterly have appeared, including the following: “Mission San Gabriel Arcangel” (1971); “Centennial Salute to Hollywood” (1987); “History of Philanthropy in Southern California” (1989); “Land Policy and Land Use in Southern California” (1993); “St. Francis Dam Disaster Revisited” (1995), and “Mission San Fernando Rey de España” (1997).

And during his time as editor, the design and size of the Quarterly was changed in 1998 to make it more attractive and engaging to the reader. Color covers were added, many selected personally by Doycz. He was involved in every aspect of the journal’s production.

All in all it’s been quite a journey for the editor, the Quarterly, and the Historical Society. Doycz became editor during unsure times for the Quarterly; he leaves his post with the Quarterly on more secure ground, with one issue endowed and other support pledged.

The Historical Society of Southern California wishes to acknowledge with sincere thanks and deepest gratitude Doycz Blackman Nunnis Jr.’s more than four decades of selfless service as pro bono editor of the Southern California Quarterly. Well done, indeed!

Thomas F. Andrews
Executive Director, HSSC

PHOTO: Michele Clark

HSSC Welcomes
Merry Ovnick
As New Editor of
the SCQ

Beginning with the Spring 2005 issue, Dr. Merry Ovnick, assistant professor in history, California State University, Northridge (CSUN), assumes the post of editor of the Southern California Quarterly.

Professor Ovnick has served as book review editor of the SCQ since April 2003, and brings a long-standing commitment to Los Angeles history, architectural history and preservation. She actively participates in two local history colloquia: The Huntington Library’s Los Angeles History Research Group and the UCLA-Autry Western History Workshop.

Recipient of a number of grants and fellowships, Dr. Ovnick’s 1994 publication, Los Angeles: The End of the Rainbow, received HSSC’s Donald H. Pflueger Local History Award. In addition to her publications, conference presentations, and community activities, Merry Ovnick is a dedicated and engaging classroom teacher, introducing new and interdisciplinary courses at CSUN. She also serves as History Department Internship Coordinator, a program she created in 1994.

HSSC is pleased to begin this relationship with Dr. Ovnick and with CSUN for the editing of the Southern California Quarterly.}

PHOTO: Michele Clark
Board Members Laud Doyce's Editorship

MY TIME ON THE BOARD OF HSSC, including the past two years as president, is only half of Doyce B. Nunis’ commitment of 43 years as Quarterly editor. His dedicated, professional, and selfless gift of free personal service has kept the Quarterly in the forefront of regional historical journals. His record is unmatched in its generosity, faithfulness, and historical dedication. Upon his legacy, HSSC and its leadership has been able to build new initiatives assuring its future as part of southern California’s premier historical journal.

Larry E. Burgess, Ph.D.
President, HSSC

DURING MANY OF DOYCE’S FORTY-THREE years as the editor of the Quarterly, that publication alone has represented the principal endeavor of the Historical Society of Southern California. Through lean years and fair it has served as a lifeline of continuity for the Historical Society. To this day the scholarly articles in this distinguished publication, which line the shelves in scores of academic institutions, are the first avenues of research for scholars writing on any subject pertaining to the varied history of southern California.

Powell Greenland
a past president of HSSC

DOYCE HAS GIVEN UNSELFISHLY of his time and energies without remuneration or compensated leave, for over forty-three years to make the Southern California Quarterly the journal it is today. His endeavors have been heroic, his intentions noble, and his work an example for scholars now and of future generations.

James A. Sandos, Ph.D.
Farquhar Professor of the Southwest, University of Redlands

DOYCE NUNIS’ EXTRAORDINARY 43-year editorship of the Southern California Quarterly merits deep respect. The heart of a successful historical society is its quarterly journal. For almost half a century Doyce’s editorial talents have sustained HSSC as the foremost advocate of southern California’s past....His remarkable tenure as editor of the SCQ is a milestone in the history of editing. His footprints are everywhere in the historical scholarship on southern California.

Gerald Prescott, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus of History, CSUN

Doyce and his mother, Winnie, at his 70th birthday celebration.

The late Martin Ridge, right, former president of the Historical Society, congratulates Doyce Nunis on giving the inaugural George A.V. Dunning lecture on Los Angeles at The Getty Center in West Los Angeles.

The fall covers of the 1999 and 2001 Quarterly
HSSC IS UNIQUE AMONG HISTORICAL ORGANIZATIONS in having had the services of a single editor of its academic journal for forty-three years. In this time period, a scholarly quarterly has emerged as one of the most respected publications on our region’s history.

Doyce Nunis, renowned historian of California, with an equally long and distinguished career as a published scholar, has raised the level of scholarship published in the Quarterly, introduced readers to the work of a large number of young academics and distinguished historians alike, and widened the understanding of the diversity of our local history through the countless articles published in the SCQ in his forty-three years as editor.

Doyce has worked tirelessly and selflessly on behalf of HSSC and the SCQ. He will truly be missed by all of us who have worked alongside or under his mentorship. His forty-three year legacy will endure for many years to come.

Gloria E. Miranda, Ph.D.
Dean, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences
El Camino Community College

THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA has benefitted beyond all measure of our gratitude from the volunteer service of Dr. Doyce Nunis. Great teacher that he is, he held in clear focus the purpose of the Society to foster research and writing of southern California history to make it available through the Quarterly and to act as keeper of the corporate memory of the Society. His brilliant editorship of the Quarterly through 43 years sustained a reputation of the Society and the integrity of history writing in California.

Patricia Adler-Ingram, Ph.D.
Vice President, HSSC