ACKNOWLEDGEMENT SPEECH

FOR

SUSAN POTTER

Hello everyone and welcome to the 2015 Annual Gala Tribute Dinner benefitting the Santa Monica History Museum. This year marks a considerable milestone in the history of our city and of this organization. We have a veritable **trifecta** of benchmarks for our wonderful city and for the organizations that so proudly celebrate its heritage and support its future. This year marks the **140th** Anniversary of the City of Santa Monica, and as we know, each year that passes sees greater emphasis on this place we call home, more visitors coming to sample the special flavor and fun Santa Monica offers, and increased opportunity to acknowledge our unique history. 2015 also marks the **110th** Anniversary of the Santa Monica Bay Women’s Club. And even though this museum might be considered “The New Kid on the Block” by comparison, it is astounding to think that the Santa Monica History Museum has been sharing its archives and rich culture for **FORTY YEARS**!! That’s quite an accomplishment!! Imagine that for **FOUR** decades visitors have had the opportunity and pleasure to have their spirits awakened by our rich story. What a void there would have been if this museum weren’t here to educate, inspire and evoke our history. Thanks to our supporters we have more than our glorious weather to shine a light on the events and milestones that make this city so wonderful. We have our history to spark our imaginations and light our souls.

It’s been said that “The past is not the property of historians; it is a public possession. It belongs to anyone who is aware of it and it grows by being shared. It sustains the whole society which needs the identity that only the past can give.” I really believe that truer words have not been spoken. The organization’s mission is …”to collect and preserve the history of art and culture of Santa Monica.” It is thanks to our dedicated and generous sponsors and our interesting, interested and magnanimous patrons that our organization can continue to inspire current and future generations to appreciate this rich and ongoing legacy.

The theme of tonight’s event is “A Time to Celebrate” and personally I intend to do just that as soon as possible (**Say that with emphasis and wait for the laugh**), but to me, particularly tonight, celebration goes hand in hand with acknowledgement. Our honorees, Eddie and Evelyn Guerboian have done so much to support the growth of Santa Monica. Their generosity and enthusiasm is immeasurable! (**Please add anything further- just a sentence… that you might want to say to acknowledge the honorees**). And pardon the pun, but these two really are **GEMS**!! (**Wait for the laugh**). To our incredibly considerate sponsors, (**Name them**) \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, your generosity of spirit and community are what makes this city so great. We thank you for your dedication to preserving the past while engaging our visitors and patrons in the present. To the Casa Del Mar Hotel, you are definitely a jewel in Santa Monica’s crown and we are happy and thankful for these very beautiful surroundings in which to express our appreciation and enthusiasm for the city we all love.

To all of the guests here tonight, I want to thank you in advance for demonstrating your interest and support. We all know that there are many incredibly worthy causes in need of support and we do not take for granted that you’ve chosen to be here to celebrate with us.

The opportunity to look back through generations in order to honor those that paved the way for us is not something to be taken lightly. I am reminded of the word, “Pentimento” which by definition refers to the traces of earlier layers of paint that peek through as an artist completes a canvas. Most master works betray the process and this layering can bee seen if the observer looks closely. Having the opportunity to observe layers of history creates its own pentimento as we have witnessed, by walking through the museum’s exhibits, exploring its archives, and learning of our past.

Thank you all for your support in making Santa Monica’s rich and diverse layers of history available for all to enjoy. Now **let’s celebrate**!