

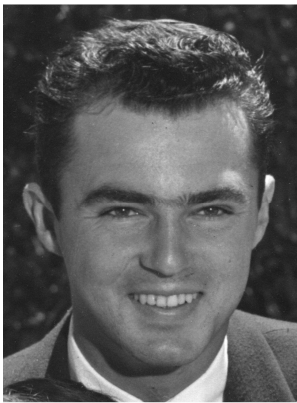
LEGENDS & LEGACIES – THE ORIGIN OF FIESTA FINALE

Henry and Mabel Profant moved from Chicago to Santa Barbara in 1922. He was one of the founding doctors of what became the S.B. Medical Foundation, but at the time was called "The Clinic". Both were pianists who participated on the Boards of CAMA and the Music Academy of the West. Henry entertained his patients by playing piano while on house calls, and it wasn't always clear which was more effective – the music or the medicine!



Their daughter Dorothy became a concert pianist (as the protégé of Florence Fernald) and performed at the Lobero Theater. Their son Bob was a Professor of Marine Biology at SBCC and helped the Museum of Natural History for decades, ultimately launching the Sea Center. His brother John was my father. After attending Santa Barbara High School, John went to UCLA and then remained in Manhattan Beach during his 35 year career in Administration at Northrop Aircraft.

While visiting his mother in 1950, John happened to go to El Paseo during Fiesta. He had been teaching ballroom dance, and performing at the County Bowl with Jose Manero's company, so when he asked my mother Lyn, a former ballerina, to dance, it was magic. A few years before she had toured the Courthouse, and from the tower overlooking the town the docent had raved about the elegance of Fiesta, the full moon, and the romantic evenings at El Paseo. Now she was experiencing the legend firsthand! Lyn, a teacher at Franklin School, went home that evening and told her girlfriend she had met THE man of her dreams. The girlfriend was so disappointed: she had wanted to introduce Lyn to someone so perfect ...and it turned out to be the same person - John Profant! Their first date included a CAMA concert, followed by a ride along Cabrillo Boulevard, while he sang "La Vie En Rose" *en francais*...their mutual love of the arts would influence their entire lives together.



Later on John and Lyn would help found a dance company that is now in its 25th year - all because they believed in the talent of one choreographer.

John's goal in retirement was to return to his family's home and in some way help the artistic community. He wasn't able to do that, as he died shortly after retiring. In January 2000 Lyn decided to fulfill that goal, and established the John E. Profant Foundation for the Arts. Her background as an educator is reflected in our **mission to help developing artists**, and her determination in persuading John - an excellent tenor - to start taking singing lessons in his 40s, is reflected in our **commitment to help artists of all ages cultivate their talents**.



This new organization needed the perfect venue to announce their scholarship program, and where else could this be but at the Courthouse - which just happened to have an empty stage on the Sunday of Fiesta. The first Fiesta Finale was held in 2000 on the 50th anniversary of John and Lyn's first dance together. Scholarship funds are raised primarily through the Finale's Gala dinner party which begins within the historic Courthouse and then moves into the beautiful Sunken Gardens. There, under the stars, the patrons enjoy a vibrant performance of professional opera singers, ballet and flamenco dance – a concert which is also free for the public.

John and Lyn's four daughters grew up in Manhattan Beach, but visited Santa Barbara every holiday, and participated in every Children's Fiesta parade. As time passed they found that raucous music and drinking in the streets had ruined the legendary ambiance and romance of the gardenia scented August nights. Little did they know that some 30 years later, they'd lead a crusade to bring back that elegant time and share **professional performances with the community - believing that exposure to just one evening of fine art can change a person's life**. Please join us! *Marie Profant*

Profant Foundation for the Arts *Helping artists on their voyage...*

(805) 682-8184 MProfant@aol.com www.Profant.org

