

A Tribute to Ann Kantor as Administrator of the Villa Montezuma, 1973-1983

Jim Moss

When members of the Board of Directors of the San Diego Historical Society provided funding for the purchase of the Villa Montezuma, subsequently giving it to the City of San Diego, the Historical Society then assumed responsibility



Klone Kunzel with Ann Kantor at the Villa Montezuma, ca. 1980. Photo courtesy of Jim Moss.

for developing the Victorian structure as a historic house museum and cultural center for the Sherman Heights/Golden Hill area of San Diego. A member of the Society's administrative staff, Ann Kantor, was named deputy administrator.

Kantor began immediately to organize a volunteer docent group composed mainly of members of the Junior League of San Diego, many of whom had for several years been active with the Historical Society giving

tours of the Serra Museum and the Presidio excavation site in Presidio Park for fifth grade students in the San Diego Unified School District. She expanded the volunteer group to include residents of the Sherman Heights/Golden Hill area and invited Lane Valentine, wife of Federal District Court judge Napoleon Jones, to join the Villa staff as community liaison. Kantor also enlisted the assistance of Clare Crane as a volunteer staff member to enhance the educational program and provide curatorial duties for the Villa.



A tour group at the Villa Montezuma ca. 1980. Photo by Todd McKerrow.

In addition to developing a strong volunteer program, Kantor worked to provide financial support for the Villa operation and its programs. She coordinated the efforts of the Historical Society in cooperation with the American Association of Interior Designers to produce an annual “Designers Showcase” to raise funds for the benefit of the Villa. She brought together volunteers of the Historical Society and members of the Association of Interior Designers in a collaboration that for seven years successfully raised funds for the Villa’s programs and for its physical preservation and interpretation as a historical site.

Kantor’s talent and leadership, along with her energy, vitality, dedication, and persuasiveness, gave to the Villa Montezuma and Historical Society in general great success in increasing awareness and appreciation of the residents of the Sherman Heights/Golden Hill community for the value of the Villa as an historical and cultural resource for all of San Diego.

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