

UCSD marks Marine and pueblo land transfer in ceremony

March 10, 1986

As part of its yearlong 25th anniversary celebration, the University of California, San Diego will host a ceremony at noon on March 10 commemorating the transfer of a Marine Corps rifle range and city pueblo land in the early 1960s to UC for its San Diego campus.

The brief, private ceremony will take place at the flagpole on UCSD's Earl Warren campus, the original site of the Marine deed transfer.

At a ceremony on October 7, 1964, Camp Calvin B. Matthews, for 47 years the home of the Weapons Training Battalion of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot, became the site of UCSD's Matthews campus, later renamed for the Supreme Court Justice. The Marine Corps' 545-acre gift came on the heels of a 456-acre endowment from the city, more than doubling the size of the fledgling San Diego campus.

Special guests at UCSD's commemorative rites will be General Paul X. Kelley, the Marine Corps Commandant; Major General Anthony Lukeman, commander of the Marine Corps Recruit Depot in San Diego; and San Diego acting Mayor Ed Struiksma.

Chancellor Richard C. Atkinson will officiate and present commemorative gifts to the commandant and acting mayor, with the assistance of Associated Students President Mary Rose Alexander.

Community leaders and UCSD faculty who were present at the original transfer ceremony have been invited to attend the reenactment.

The events leading to UCSD's occupation of the mesa overlooking the Pacific Ocean began in November 1958, when San Diego citizens ratified action by the City Council transferring the pueblo land to the university.

The following year, California Representative Bob Wilson introduced a bill proposing the transfer of the adjoining Marine property to the university. While the Wilson measure faced resistance in the House, California Senators Thomas Kuchel and Clair Engle successfully ushered a similar bill through the Senate. The bill was signed into law by President John F. Kennedy in 1962.

In turning over Camp Matthews to UCSD, the Marine Corps unveiled a 4-1/2 ton granite marker to remind students of the area's former use. The imposing memento, which stands near the flagpole on Warren campus to this day, bears the inscription:

"The United States Marine Corps occupied this site, known as Camp Calvin B. Matthews from 1917 to 1964. Over a million Marines and other shooters received their rifle marksmanship training here. This site was deeded to the University of California at San Diego on Oct. 6, 1964 for the pursuit of higher education."

Although the marker reads Oct. 6, the actual transfer took place on Oct. 7.

The Marines moved their rifle range to a new facility at Camp Pendleton, leaving behind a large complex of single story wooden buildings plus a collection of corrugated iron quonset huts, which continue to serve as offices for UCSD administrators and classrooms for a number of disciplines.

For more information contact: Susan Pollock, 452-3120

(March 10, 1986)