

UC San Diego Receives Big Donation from Daughter of “Dogs Playing Poker” Painter C.M. Coolidge

Bequest to Benefit Lifelong Learning Program at UC San Diego Extension

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The trust of Marcella B. Coolidge, the daughter of artist C.M. Coolidge who painted the famous dogs playing poker scenes, has awarded UC San Diego a bequest gift in excess of \$500,000 to support lifelong learning for mature adults. The endowed earnings will support lecture programs and capital improvements at UC San Diego Extension's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, a continuing education program with a curriculum designed for those who are at least 50 years of age and enjoy thought-provoking learning opportunities in a university setting.

Marcella Coolidge, a former member of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, died in San Diego on November 27, 2007 at the age of 97. Her father, best known for his humorous portrayals of dogs in human-like situations, also founded a bank, a newspaper and drug stores.

Cassius Marcellus Coolidge was born in upstate New York in 1844 to abolitionist Quaker farmers who named him after statesman Henry Clay's brother, Cassius Marcellus Clay. An accomplished cartoonist, he is also credited with creating the familiar life-size Boardwalk cutouts, which he called Comic Foregrounds, into which one's head was placed so as to be photographed as an amusing character.

Coinciding each year with the Westminster Kennel Club Dog Show, Doyle New York's annual Dogs in Art auction showcases canine paintings. Highlighting the February 2008 sale were two paintings in the auction by C.M. Coolidge, both from the estate of Marcella Coolidge. Only a Pair of Deuces, depicting a group of dogs around a poker table, sold for \$193,000. The other painting, entitled A Breach of Promise Suit, which illustrated a canine court proceeding set in a barn, sold for \$32,200. At the 2005 auction a pair of the dogs playing poker paintings, A Bold Bluff and Waterloo, sold to a private collector from New York City for a staggering \$590,400, setting the world auction record for the artist.

"This bequest demonstrates the late Marcella Coolidge's appreciation of the wide array of intellectually stimulating, learning opportunities that we offer for mature learners," said Mary Walshok, associate vice chancellor for public programs and dean of Extension.

Stanley Faer, president of The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC San Diego, says the group's executive committee and council plan to use the funds to broaden membership and expand program activities of the learning-in-retirement program.

Programming includes the group's Distinguished Lecturer Series, which features prominent speakers from government, academia, the lively arts, journalism, religion, medicine and other disciplines.

Many of the Osher lectures are broadcast on UCSD-TV, which began 15 years ago and is available to 1 million homes. Over half a million viewers in San Diego tune in to UCSD-TV and another 200,000 visit the Web site at

least once a month. Programs are broadcast live and on-demand 24 hours a day, seven days a week on the Internet using the latest in Web-delivery technology, including YouTube and podcasting.

UC San Diego Extension was an early pioneer in the national movement of learning in retirement. Originally named the Institute for Continued Learning, the program began in 1974 in response to ideas offered by a group of retirees from New York who wished to replicate the learning in retirement program they had participated in at the New School for Social Research.

Through grants totaling more than \$1 million from the Bernard Osher Foundation beginning in 2004, the program was renamed the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at UC San Diego. California businessman Bernard Osher created The Bernard Osher Foundation in 1977 to support university programs nationwide that offer intellectually stimulating learning for seasoned adults.

The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute offers a broad range of education opportunities offered year round which includes over 120 academic courses, tours and social events for an annual membership fee of \$215. There are no educational requirements - just the desire to learn for the sake of learning.

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