

November 05, 2014 | By John Freeman

UC San Diego Extension to Present California Historian Kevin Starr

Eminent California historian Kevin Starr, long an expert on the state's growth and influence, will explore how San Diego has expressed its civic ambitions for more than a century through the development of the city's iconic Balboa Park.

Presented by UC San Diego Extension as part of the Helen Edison Lecture Series, Starr's talk will be held Tuesday, December 2, at 7 pm, at UC San Diego's Price Center East Ballroom.

The author, journalist, and librarian will provide his perspective on Balboa Park's founding in 1870 and how the subsequent Panama-California Exposition of 1915 led to what he terms San Diego's "self-creation as the Gibraltar of the Pacific."



Kevin Starr: "The Search for Civic Identity"

Free and open to the public, the event will serve as a prelude to the 100-year anniversary of Balboa Park's Panama California Exposition of 1915, scheduled to begin in January.

A distinguished historian, author, journalist, and librarian, Starr was educated at Harvard University, where he became enamored with studying California history. His doctoral dissertation was devoted to California's turn-of-the-century regional culture.

"California is everything and nothing at all," Starr once wrote. "It is the cutting edge of the American dream – a utopia. But it could also become the paradigm of the dream lost – a nightmare dystopia."

A professor of history at the University of Southern California since 1998, Starr served as the state's official librarian from 1994 to 2004, when Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger named him State Librarian Emeritus upon his retirement from the position.

Starr's legacy was shaped by his award-winning book series that chronicled the state's cultural history as well as his numerous other writings about California, through periods of prosperity and crisis.

Presented by UC San Diego Extension, the Helen Edison Lecture Series is funded by a major gift from the late Helen Edison, a San Diego philanthropist. The ongoing series annually presents free public lectures by distinguished speakers from a wide range of disciplines, including the arts, humanities, and science.

The next speaker for the 2014-15 Helen Edison Lecture Series is scheduled to be philosopher Rebecca Goldstein, author of "Plato at the Googleplex," which imagines Plato coming to life in the 21st century. The event will be held Tuesday, Jan. 27, at 7pm, in UC San Diego's Price Center East Ballroom.

MEDIA CONTACT

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