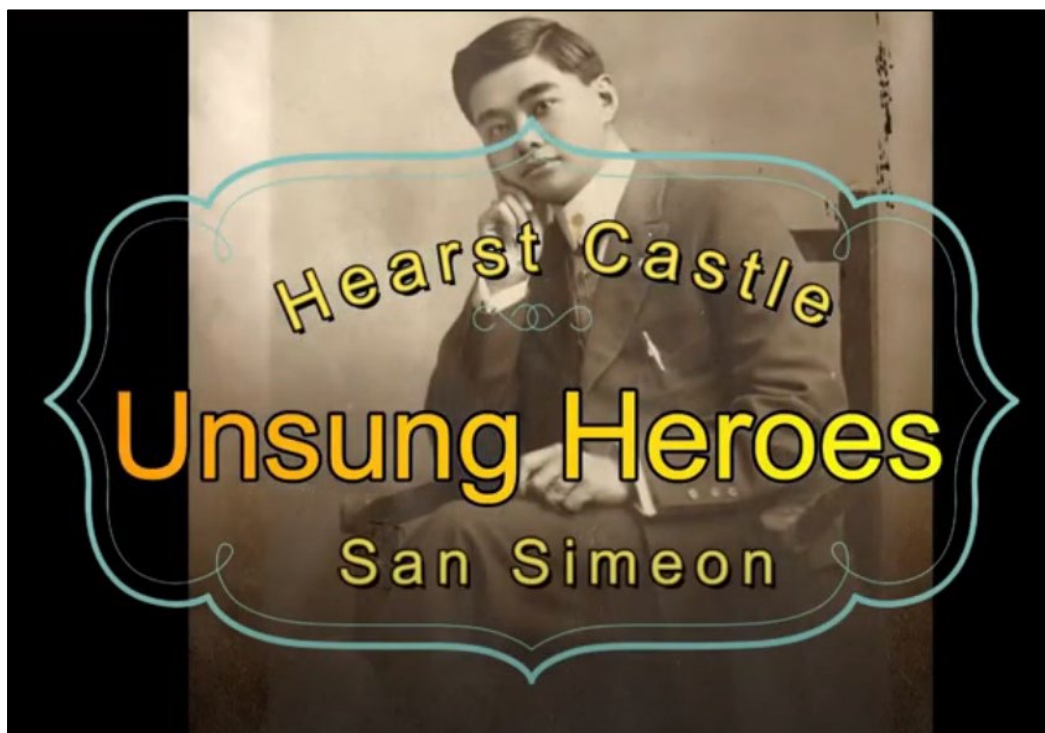


## 2021 GOVERNOR'S HISTORIC PRESERVATION AWARDS

### Unsung Heroes of Hearst Castle



In 2019, as Hearst Castle prepared to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the start of its construction and 28-year building odyssey, the seeds of the Unsung Heroes project were sown. The centenary would celebrate the vision and dedication of William Randolph Hearst and architect Julia Morgan. Additionally, it would feature individuals whose contributions were significant in ways big and small, but whose names and efforts were largely unknown to the greater population.

The Unsung Heroes project provides an opportunity to highlight the builders, designers, artisans, and craftspeople who made the Hearst Castle dream a reality. It effectively employs a three-prong approach to reach the widest audience both in-person and virtually: The Unsung Heroes video series, Today's Voice from the Past quote campaign, and the new 3-Window Exhibit in Hearst Castle's Visitor Center. It also accomplishes a major goal of park staff to improve access to California's diverse communities by making Unsung Heroes educational products free of charge to the public and relatable to students studying STEAM (science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics.).

The Today's Voice from the Past quotes project and the 3-Window Exhibit featuring the designers, builders, and craftspeople of the Castle were ideas born from the Hearst Castle centennial planning team. The Unsung Hero videos for social media and the Smithsonian Learning Lab came into being when new virtual interpretive offerings were sought to replace the Castle's live interpretations, shutdown due to

COVID-19. The videos seemed a natural addition to the project as they would expand audience outreach and accessibility even further.

The three-prong approach to exploring the same subject was unprecedented in the history of the district's interpretation. This unusual approach allowed us to explore a much wider array of Hearst Castle's cast of characters, and to do it in disparate ways. Today's Voice from the Past is drawn mainly from primary sources, usually using direct quotations taken from letters, telegrams, oral histories, autobiographies, and newspaper and magazine interviews. Unsung Hero videos allowed people to be introduced who might not have directly spoken or written about their experiences but were described and observed by others. The 3-Window Exhibit allows for a dynamic visual experience, and the chance to linger and absorb as much or as little written information as the visitor desires.

San Luis Obispo State Park District staff who often work in separate sections from each other, were able to come together collaboratively to create this project. Unsung Heroes subjects were expanded to include present-day staff who do the important work of conservation, restoration, and groundskeeping. Collections and Maintenance staffs were instrumental in contributing ideas and building portions of the vignettes in the 3-Window Exhibit.

Unsung Heroes of Hearst Castle gives voice to the people who helped transform California and adds to the documentation and public appreciation of California's rich and dynamic heritage.