



President's Message February / March 2020

It is with great sorrow that I must begin this message by announcing the passing of a man who can only be described as an icon of the Native Sons of the Golden West, Past Grand President Harly M. Harty. Harly was born in Bakersfield in 1936 and he attended Kern County High School, where he graduated in 1954. He later earned his degree in Engineering at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. Harly joined the Native Sons on November 3, 1976. He was first elected Grand Trustee in 1986 and ultimately served as Grand President in 1992-1993. He held his Grand Parlor in San Luis Obispo.

With his collar length gray hair and gray beard, Harly always reminded me of an old Southern senator and he seemed imposing but was actually always quite approachable and a good friend to me and many, many others. We did not always see eye to eye, but we could disagree agreeably, a skill that seems to be lost in today's world.

The day before Harly passed away, he contacted Julia Hull to make his reservation for Dominica Lau's retirement party. Julia texted me that Harly was going to come and quickly added; "Nice man." Indeed, he was. Adios Worthy Past Grand President Harty and Godspeed, we will miss you greatly.

In a few days from the time of this writing, we will be saying farewell to Dominica Lau, our beloved Administrative Assistant. Dominica has been with us for well over 30 years and has been integral to the smooth operation of our headquarters office and our Order. Long suffering with hapless Grand Officers yet always adorably cheerful, Dominica's departure will leave an empty place in our hearts.

Our new Administrative Assistant, Caitlin Murray, started with us on January 2nd and has spent the last several weeks training with Dominica. Please take a moment to welcome Caitlin to our family and give her the opportunity to get to know you. I trust that, soon, she will become an integral part of our Order, just as Dominica has been.

Do you remember your initiation? Do you remember the final instructions that the President gave you? In part, they were "See to it that no act of yours should mar the fair name of our beloved Order but so conduct yourself that nothing but good may come to it and to you."

Whenever we are representing the Native Sons of the Golden West, we should remember that people are watching, and they are associating us and the things we do and say with our beloved Order. None of us is perfect, but we should take pains to see to it that we do not bring disrepute to our Order. It should go without saying that there is no place for racism, or other forms of discrimination within the Native Sons. There should be no place for quarrelsomeness and dishonesty. It may be less apparent that associating the name of the Native Sons with a controversial political position can be

equally damaging.

There is a very good reason that we were founded to unite in “one harmonious body...by the ties of a friendship unalloyed by the bitterness of religious or political differences.” That is not to say that our religious and political beliefs are inherently wrong, but they are both prone to separate mankind rather than unite them. Fortunately, our tendency to split over religious differences has ebbed in modern days, but that is more than made up for now by our political differences.

For the good of the Native Sons of the Golden West, we must leave those differences at the door and unite as the family that we are (no, not the kind of family that fights at Thanksgiving). If a person wants to take a stand for one position or another, that is his right, but he must refrain from anything that would imply that the Native Sons is endorsing that position, for that will instantly alienate fully half of the Order and, indeed, half of the population.

If you read my last message, you know that a reputation is a hard thing to shake.

In friendship, loyalty and charity,

James King

Grand President

143rd Grand Parlor Native Sons of the Golden West