



A tribute to Jane Knowles Lindsey Extraordinary Service Award

The following remarks were delivered Sunday, October 8, by Linda Harms Okazaki at the occasion of CGS's 125th anniversary celebration.

Happy Birthday, California Genealogical Society! How lucky are we to be able to celebrate this momentous occasion?

We have such a hard-working and dynamic board of directors and they wanted to honor one of our own with a special award for unparalleled dedication and enthusiasm: the "Extraordinary Service Award."

Most of you in the audience have been or are currently volunteers at CGS. But we all know there is one person who has gone above and beyond. In fact, many of us joined and became involved because of her. She joined 23 years ago, yet continues to amaze us with her energy, and her genuine love of this organization.

When she gets excited about something, she giggles, grabs you by the elbow, and whispers, "I have an idea," and you either think "Uh-oh," or "This is going to be good."

She's led more than 20 research trips over the years, to Salt Lake City, Boston, Fort Wayne and maybe you had the opportunity to participate in one or more of those trips. She is everyone's biggest cheerleader. Maybe she encouraged you to dig deeper in your research when you hit that brick wall. Maybe she was just as excited as you when you find out your second great-grandfather was a scoundrel.

She always is thinking about US, about CGS, how to increase our membership, how to grow our pool of volunteers, how to ensure our financial security, and how to guarantee our society will not only survive but thrive for another 125 years. CGS is well known and highly regarded in the genealogy community in large part because she has vision.

Genealogy is a bit like gardening. We grow our family trees, adding ancestors, and pruning those branches when we add an incorrect line. A genealogical society is more of an orchard. And our recipient is the master gardener. She knows the value of cultivating our membership. But also, of planting the seeds of new relationships with other people and other organizations.

She has done so much for CGS. Research trips, field trips, chairing all-day seminars with NEHGS, the Ulster Historical Foundation, Maureen Taylor, and Ancestry Days. Did you know she started the original eNews, spearheaded the capital campaign, participated in three separate strategic plans, hosted fabulous parties at her home. She's served on nearly every committee, coordinated volunteers, facilitated development, organized countless talks, been interviewed by local TV stations: BayNet, Lisa Louise Cook. She led the production of several of our books, took CGS "on the road" again and again, promoting our classes, our library, our membership, collaborating with colleagues at the Oakland Public Library, San Francisco Public Library, the California Historical Society, the Mayflower Society, Family Search, and more. Even through the pandemic, she led CGS as the local host society for the National Genealogical Society Conference in Sacramento. And that is just the tip of the iceberg.

A tireless team player, generous with her time and her kindness, masterful at managing, facilitating, guiding, encouraging, and ... at times orchestrating and persuading. Jane Knowles Lindsey, you are a friend, a mentor, an inspiration. Your dedication helps the rest of us to be better, better society members, better volunteers, better directors, and better researchers.

You are the key not just to our past achievements, but also to the promises of the future. Won't you all please give a warm round of applause to the woman who served as our 34th president, and so much more, Jane Knowles Lindsey.