The first major Centennial Celebration event was held on Thursday, March 8, 2001, marking the 100th anniversary of the signing of Cal Poly's founding legislation. On this day, Cal Poly's 100 years—the years of the 20th century—were relived in both words and images.

Kennedy Library Reception

The day began with a presentation and reception at the Robert E. Kennedy Library. President Warren J. Baker and Provost Paul J. Zingg each spoke, setting the tone for the day and noting the many university accomplishments of the past century. More than 100 people attended this event, which included the release of the retrospective book, *Cal Poly: The First Hundred Years*.

Assistant Library Dean Nancy Loe gave an overview of the new publication, noting the more than 300 photographs and other images illustrating Cal Poly's rich history. In text and pictures, Cal Poly's first booklength history captures the full span of campus life and academic progress over the century.

Architecture Professor Tom Fowler followed Loe with remarks on the Time Capsule Project developed by College of Architecture and Environmental Design students who created a range of innovative ideas as a class project for a time capsule. The Time Capsule Project, displayed in the lobby of the University Union, featured the works of five students, with votes invited on the form, contents, and location of these envisioned Centennial capsules.

"Celebrating the Century" Colloquium

The development of a polytechnic institution from a high school to a nationally respected university was traced by people who lived through many of those years in the "Celebrating the Century" Colloquium at the Cal Poly Theatre. President Warren J. Baker, former President Robert E. Kennedy, and Carol McPhee Norton, daughter of...
Cal Poly's Centennial Celebration reached the place where it all began with a 100th-anniversary exhibit opening March 12 in the state Capitol Building.

On March 8, 1901, Gov. Henry Gage signed the bill founding the California Polytechnic School, which grew over the century from a technical high school into California Polytechnic State University, a campus of The California State University and one of the most highly respected public undergraduate universities in the nation.

The multimedia exhibit chronicling Cal Poly's past and present was housed in the San Luis Obispo County display case on the first floor of the Capitol Building. It was dedicated at a ceremony attended by Central Coast legislators and Cal Poly and CSU officials.

At San Luis Obispo, History Day 2001 included the opening of several exhibits of historical photographs and memorabilia, an array of imaginative time-capsule proposals by architecture students, and a colloquium panel (see main story on page 14). Other major events marking Cal Poly's year-long Centennial Celebration included a special rendition of the university's annual Open House April 20-22 (see story on page 26) and—the main event—a Founders Convocation and Centennial Celebration planned for Sept. 27-28.

More information about Cal Poly's Centennial Celebration, including statewide alumni events, can be found on the Web at www.centennial.calpoly.edu.

former President Julian A. McPhee, recounted aspects of Cal Poly history witnessed firsthand. Three Cal Poly graduates, Robin Baldwin (ASCI '54), John Sweeney (CE '89), and the late Rita Hill (SOC '71) (see sidebar on page 16), joined in the discussion with their insights. History Professor Daniel E. Krieger served as moderator and summarized Cal Poly history. Krieger is an expert on Central Coast history and writes a weekly column for San Luis Obispo County's Tribune titled "Times Past."

Following the colloquium, Cal Poly opened a major exhibit of historical photographs and memorabilia depicting the last century of university achievements. This exhibit, presented in the Rossi Grand Lobby of the Christopher Cohan Center, traces the emergence of Cal Poly's defining features across three broad periods in the institution's history:

continued on page 17
EXCERPTS FROM EULOGY PRESENTED BY
WILLIAM G. BOLDT
Vice President for Advancement
May 11, 2001, Memorial Service
Visalia, California

One of the greatest gifts of life is being enriched by a person who through his or her kindness, humanitarianism, and enthusiasm forever changes our lives. For me and for Cal Poly, Rita Hill was that very special person.

Rita wasn’t just a gifted leader. She was an institution and a true legend. The blood that ran through her veins was not red—never red. It was green alternating appropriately with gold. She loved Cal Poly, where she met her husband, Jim, and made hundreds of lifelong friends, and Cal Poly loved her. She never missed an opportunity to promote Cal Poly’s unique learn-by-doing educational advantage.

Rita was a gifted fund-raiser who helped strengthen Cal Poly’s educational programs and ensure that qualified Visalia-area students could receive the benefits of a Cal Poly education regardless of their economic circumstances. She was a tireless alumni leader who encouraged hundreds of alumni to join the Cal Poly Alumni Association, and worked for years as an alumni chapter leader, most recently as president-elect of the alumni association. Rita’s home office became Cal Poly’s branch campus in Visalia.

We have lost one of our most dynamic visionary leaders, mentors, and friends. But as usual, Rita has left a wonderful legacy and a very clear road map for all of us to follow. Her love of people, passion for education, and inspirational enthusiasm are guiding lights for all of us to follow and share with everyone that we touch.

Editor’s Note: Rita Hill was a member of the “Celebrating the Century” Colloquium panel during Cal Poly’s March 8 History Day. She died in a car accident on May 4.
The "School Years" (1901-1940), when Cal Poly emerged from the progressive dreams of a handful of San Luis Obispo educational visionaries to become a comprehensive secondary technical school and later a two-year technical and vocational school serving students from across California.

The "College Years" (1940-1972), when Cal Poly rallied to support the war effort, serving as a training site for naval cadets and California farmers; when the campus grew to meet the needs of returning World War II veterans; and when the college expanded in size and program scope to provide access to its polytechnic programs for a tidal wave of students born after the war.

The "University Years" (1972-present), when Cal Poly developed a full university polytechnic educational program, earned national recognition for excellence, and emerged as one of the most selective public universities in the United States.

(Photos by Patrick Swadener)