Cal Poly To Host Opening Reception for Exhibition, Lecture Celebrating Architect Julia Morgan Licensing Centennial

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly will mark the centennial of Julia Morgan’s licensing as the first female architect in California on Friday, Oct. 22, with talks by two Julia Morgan lecturers and an opening reception for the exhibition “Julia Morgan: Pioneering Spirit.”

Hosted jointly by Cal Poly’s Kennedy Library and the College of Architecture and Environmental Design (CAED), both events are free and open to the public.

Morgan is also distinguished as the first woman to earn certification in architecture from the École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. She is perhaps best known for the pioneering work she did for William Randolph Hearst at San Simeon.

Featuring original Morgan sketches, architectural plans, and correspondence from the Kennedy Library’s extensive Julia Morgan collections, the Special Collections exhibition documents Morgan’s architectural schooling in Paris and her commissions on the Central Coast, including the Monday Club in San Luis Obispo, the Minerva Club in Santa Maria, and the Milpitas Hacienda in Jolon. The exhibit of rarely seen materials will open at 10 a.m. Oct. 22 in the Special Collections department, Room 409 of the Kennedy Library. The exhibit will run through March 25, 2005. Public viewing hours are 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Monday through Friday except holidays.

On Oct. 22, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., the CAED’s Fall Hearst Lecture Series will feature presentations on Morgan’s career by UC Berkeley doctoral candidate and Morgan specialist Karen McNeill and Robert Blunk, AIA, principal architect with Blunk Demattei Associates in Burlingame.

McNeill’s talk, “Women Patron, Women Architects: Julia Morgan’s Building of El Campanil at Mills College,” will focus on Morgan’s challenges as a female architect in the design and building of an important landmark for a women’s college. Morgan’s experience at Mills College -- and the importance of female patronage -- set the stage for her successful bid for licensing as the first woman architect in the state.

Blunk, a graduate of both Cornell and Stanford universities, was hired by the Hearst family to complete a
Morgan design at Wyntoon estate, a Hearst property in northern California. In his talk, “Completing Julia Morgan’s Wyntoon Legacy,” Blunk will provide a glimpse into Morgan’s design and structural approaches culled from years of firsthand knowledge of her sites. He will describe his efforts to restore and finish the largest building in a Bavarian village complex designed by Morgan, but never completed because of financial constraints at the time. He will also show rarely seen photos of the project.

The back-to-back lectures will be in the Rotunda (Room 213) of Cal Poly's Business Building. The talks are supported by a grant from the Hearst Foundation.

Following the two presentations, a reception will be held to open the Morgan exhibition. The reception will be from 5 to 7 p.m. on the fourth floor of the Kennedy Library, outside the Special Collections. Refreshments will be served.

For more information and electronic images, contact Catherine Trujillo in Cal Poly Special Collections at 805-756-2305 or at ctrujill@calpoly.edu. Please also visit the library Web site at http://www.lib.calpoly.edu. For information on the lecture series, visit the CAED Web site at http://www.caed.calpoly.edu, or call 805-756-1311.

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