

Caltech Associates Explore their History at the Huntington Library

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Pasadena, Calif.— On March 9, 1926, one hundred of southern California’s most influential men and women met in the home of railroad magnate and art collector Henry E. Huntington. This was the first meeting of the Associates of the California Institute of Technology, an organization that has helped Caltech become a scientific world leader.

Today, 2,325 men and women have joined the Associates and the group has helped pay for 37 buildings at Caltech and endowed 52 professorships. Associates have given millions to help continue the innovative research projects that make Caltech such a driving force in science. Private funds like those provided by the Associates keep Caltech’s faculty and students at the cutting edge of research.

On July 28, 2008, 92 Associates and guests met at the Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens to learn about the history of the Associates and the long-standing connection between the Huntington and Caltech.

Melinda McCurdy, associate curator of British art at the Huntington, spoke to the Associates about the \$20 million renovation of the Huntington Art Gallery, once the Huntingtons’ home. She discussed the collections in each room, and described how the rooms on the first floor still reflect the lifestyle of the Huntingtons.

The Huntington Gallery closed for renovations in 2005 making this tour the first opportunity for many new Associates to see the room where their group first assembled.

After the tour, Dr. Judy Goodstein, university archivist for Caltech and author of *Millikan’s School: A History of the California Institute of Technology*, discussed how the Associates began. She recounted how Robert A. Millikan, the first administrative head of Caltech, asked Trustee Henry Robinson if he thought “we could find a hundred men in southern California who would be both able and eager to put in a thousand dollars apiece each year for a period of ten years” to support the growing Institute. Robinson believed that it was possible. They enlisted Trustees Allan Balch, Henry O’Melveny, Norman Bridge, and Harry Chandler to help promote the idea of the Associates of the California Institute of Technology. When the goal of one hundred contributors was reached, Huntington extended the gracious invitation to hold the first meeting in his home.

“The normal thing you say now is, ‘from those humble beginnings we became what we are today,’ but I believe it’s the opposite for the Associates,” said Fred Blum, president-elect of the Caltech Associates board of directors. “I am humbled by our beginnings. This is such an auspicious founding of the Caltech Associates, and such an incredible thing that they were formed in the early stages of Caltech and have performed such an important role in bringing Caltech from a small, little-known

institute into the world-famous, top university and research institution it is today.”

To learn more about the Caltech Associates, their rich history, and how you can join the Associates today in supporting Caltech, please visit associates.caltech.edu/ or contact at 626-395-3919.

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About the Associates: Founded in 1926, the Associates is a support organization for the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) with over 2,300 members throughout the United States and abroad - a diverse cross section of members of the local & business community, Caltech alumni and faculty, and philanthropists.

[You can find this press release here](#)