

A FATHER AND SON'S ENVIRONMENTAL RECORD

The political careers of Fred and Sam Farr, both of Carmel, have focused on preserving the natural resources of our area. As Sam is well known for carrying on his father's pioneering work in protecting the scenic beauty of our coastline, it's important to examine his roots locally.

Frederick Sharon Farr was awarded his unusual name on August 2 1910. Born in Piedmont California into the pioneering Sharon family (his grand uncle was Senator Sharon) he became a "California Brahmin", steeped in local culture and politics. As a teenager he enjoyed the majestic beauty of the Sierras on summer break, and visited the forested areas along our coast.

In 1932 Fred entered the University Of California at Berkeley, majoring in Political Science, entering Bolt Hall in 1935. "Back then," Fred tells us "I enjoyed the summers here, either with my ROTC unit at the Presidio or exploring on my own. As my family had a house in Carmel I'd often come over here and see old friends." Those friends included Glen Leidig and Gordon Campbell who he first met when he attended Sunset School around 1920.

The Farrs were related to Carmel's Florence Sharon Brown and her daughter Mrs. James Doud. After Carol Steinbeck's divorce from John in 1940 Carol married Florence's son Bill Brown. These and other family members were active throughout Carmel in the Thirties and Forties and were a great source of information about the community. One of their top regional concerns involved Carmel's role as a model village, demonstrating how air, water, flora and fauna could be preserved.

In 1938 Fred married Janet (UC 1936 and the president of Delta Gamma Sorority). They chose Monterey County's coast for their honeymoon, visiting Big Sur's eccentric sage Jaime De Angulo, who Fred had met earlier in San Francisco. Sharing Jaime's interest in Chinese culture, Janet became active with the "American Friends of The Chinese People" advocating an embargo against that Japanese who had invaded the China coast. She picketed a Greek ship on its way to deliver materials to Japan, urging Californians not to ignore Japanese aggression.

Throughout the late Thirties Fred worked with a San Francisco law firm while Janet (the daughter of a prominent Los Angeles attorney) was active with women's Democratic groups on the coast. Their son Sam was born on the Fourth Of July 1941, followed in 1942 by daughter

Francesca (now a psychologist at UC Hospital in SF).

During World War II Fred moved his family to Washington where he served his country's war effort by working as an administrative assistant to a Maritime Commissioner who helped direct the building of America's ships. Fred also served as a labor relations director for the Wartime Shipping Administration and the Port Authority of New York, supervising the goods that were being loaded in supply ships for the European Theater. Also involved with the Farm Security Administration he saw first hand how the agricultural property of interned Japanese Americans was often taken advantage of while their owners sat out the war in drab relocation camps.

Towards the end of the war the Farr family spent nine months in Puerto Rico. Sent there as a labor relations specialist, Fred introduced his two children to their life long interest in Hispanic culture.

Back in San Francisco after the war Fred worked for a law firm and began his association with a pioneering planning effort that shaped the history of the coast: SPUR, San Francisco Planning and Urban Association.

As Mrs. Farr's family had a home on Carmelo between Ninth and Tenth, and it wasn't being used here, Fred moved his family to the Monterey Peninsula in 1947. Guthrie Courvoisier and his artist wife Moira Wallace (said to be the first white child actually born within Carmel's city limits) started Curoc Industries, inviting Fred's participation in all areas of the business. He helped out at the Curoc shop in Seaside then later opened the only lawyer's office in that small town, listening to clients from a small space on Del Monte Avenue.

Sam and Francesca attended Sunset School, joined by their new little sister Nancy. After running unsuccessfully for Carmel City Council Fred's political popularity grew and in 1955 he was elected to the California State Senate. For eleven and a half years he then represented our area in Sacramento and was involved in some of the leading ecological efforts of the day. A SPUR inspired conference at the Monterey Fair Grounds brought leading voices in the County together to begin a new era of planning policies that protected scenic beauty.

Sam's experience as a Peace Corps teacher, and later as a recruiter, gave him a strong foundation for understanding Latino culture. Working along side his father and other pioneering environmentalists like Ansel Adams gave him an equally strong background on preserving and protecting our area's natural beauty and dwindling resources. Helping to set up a committee that co-ordinated the efforts of the ten marine laboratories on Monterey Bay, Sam championed legislation that would protect the Bay from off shore drilling.

With Fred on the State Coastal Commission and Sam on the Regional Coastal Commission new protection measures were introduced to protect the ambiance of our world famous shores.

Both father and son continue to work together, and separately, to represent a constituency that has led the state in serving as a role model for ecologically sound projects. In doing so they are carrying on a crucial part of the Central Coast's dynamic heritage, and preserving the areas for generations to come.