



University Heights Historical Society

UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS STREET SIGN

In July of 1994, it was announced that, thanks to the efforts of City Councilmembers Ron Roberts and Christine Kehoe, community development block grant funding had been granted to the University Heights Community Development Corporation (UHCDC) for construction of a University Heights street sign. The community master plan called for the overhead street sign to be located on Park Boulevard just north of Madison Avenue, considered the early commercial district.

The UHCDC sponsored a community wide contest to find an aesthetic design to use as a concept from which the final sign design would be adapted. Over twenty contest entrants presented their designs at the September University Heights Community Association (UHCA) meeting. Each sign design entry was unique and creative and the winning design was chosen after a long and intense judging process. Kevin Whaley's winning concept drawing was unveiled at the UHCA meeting. Kevin's design contained strong symbols of University Heights' history – cobblestone pillars, ostriches and a cable car.

The City of San Diego put the sign construction project out to bid and the Young Electric Sign Company (YESCO) was awarded the contract in 1996. Although work on the overhead portion of the sign had begun at the YESCO facility in Ontario, California, University Heights locals saw the first "signs" of the new landmark in January of 1997 when holes were dug in the sidewalk for the cobblestone posts. The highlight of the construction was on Sunday, March 2, 1997, when the sign components arrived on trucks, were raised into the air by large cranes, and assembled on site. The ostriches were then lifted to their places on top of the blue pillars and the cobblestones cemented to the base of the posts.

The University Heights sign was ready to be lighted, and festivities were scheduled on April 3rd hosted by the UHCA and the UHCDC celebration. It was a glorious event! The enthusiasm of over 500 residents was electric, and undampened by the early rain shower to witness this historic event. The rain miraculously stopped when Mayor Golding pulled the switch accompanied by Supervisor Ron Roberts, and Councilmembers Christine Kehoe and Byron Wear.