

## University City-Then and Now

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All of us are proud to be residents of University City for differing reasons but in the end, we all seem to appreciate the city we call home.

University City is proudly surrounded by Rose and San Clemente Canyons and was originally subdivided in June of 1960 by developers Carlos Tavares, Irving Kahn, C.W. Carlson and Lou Lesser, who were leaders of The University Corporation with 2500 acres. They acquired the land from Sawday-Sexton in 1959. Originally, it was intended to serve as a residential haven for UCSD where both college presidents, employees, students and staff could live in the same community. Instead, University City became more of a middle class group celebrating children, a neighborhood supportive of schools, sports, and houses of worship.

Its fine location is bordered by Interstate 5 on the West, Interstate 805 on the East and Highway 52 on the South forming a Golden Triangle, a 5,000 acre island of sorts, comprising North and South University City to serve as a companion community to UCSD. The population in 2008 was 36,300 and today it's estimated to be closer to 45,000.

South UC looks more like a 'Leave it to Beaver' neighborhood and the area varies in the quality of homes, style and price range. Typically, the further West you go, the higher the pricing even though the homes are older than on the East end. More mature landscaping enhances the look on the West End where residents have customized or torn down an existing home and rebuilt it for added character or to personalize it.

The first lots available were located on Pennant Way, Soderblom, Stresemann and Honors Dr with model homes on Award Row, appropriately named. Each developer chose 2-3 floor plans to show off. The sales office was located on the corner of Pennant and Honors with a parking lot next door. Eventually, these lots were built on for the developers.

It appears many of the same goals beginning in the late 60's were the same as we share today, saving the coveted Rose Canyon Open Space Park Preserve and San Clemente Canyons. Rose Canyon has been threatened more by road and/or bridge building and most lately by the high speed rail system intended as a State project to connect N. CA to San Diego.

Rose Canyon is like a ribbon where one can escape for running or a quiet respite for exploring nature. It was named by Louis Rose in 1850. He operated a 1900 acre ranch originally called Las Vegras Canyon. Its original cost was \$8 an acre. Rose ran a 4 acre garden, vineyard, grew tobacco, and had a pasture for his cattle, horses and mules, a tannery, brickyard and he even

mined for coal. Sycamore trees, native grasses, poison oak, coyote, rabbits, rattlesnakes, spiders, birds of prey are all wonderful sights to see and are still present today.

On a regular basis, the Friends of Rose Canyon offer exciting day and night tours headed by local advocates and residents, Debby Knight and Kevin Wirsing, with a variety of other volunteers who graciously give of their time and knowledge educating the community of the wonders we have around us. It's certainly a place to explore for those in both the North and South ends of UC and should be protected. Once lost, it is lost forever. Kevin Wirsing and Debby Knight believe that preserving Rose Canyon is up to us. They are among the founders of Friends of Rose Canyon.

According to Debby Knight, "University City has the great good fortune to contain the City of San Diego's 'Rose Canyon Open Space Park Preserve'. Open space parks are for the preservation of natural resources, passive outdoor recreation and scenic and visual enjoyment. As a greenbelt that stretches from MCAS Miramar (east of I-805) to the I-5/52 interchange. Rose Canyon provides a wonderful urban oasis for nature - and a place for people to enjoy and learn about nature without driving long distances. And yet, precisely because it is an *urban* nature preserve, Rose Canyon seems always threatened. Instead of looking at it as something irreplaceable and priceless, the mindset seems to be, hey, let's build this or that massive project there. Imagine if previous generations had not preserved the natural areas we all enjoy today. Preserving Rose Canyon is up to us. Friends of Rose Canyon offers guided walks and nature events for kids and adults-joining is free at [www.rosecanyon.org](http://www.rosecanyon.org)."

Projects that are currently threatening us the most, according to Debby is the high speed rail system. However, the State is now looking at alternative routes other than going through the canyon due to the pressure they have received from residents and groups. The calling of Rose Canyon a 'Park', has helped us tremendously since the State's master plan said it would not venture into parks to build the rail system. Of course, they conveniently left off the word 'Park' in their presentation to the UCPG.

North University City was officially developed by Ernest Hahn in 1977, when UTC opened as a regional shopping center, now the core of the Golden Triangle. Along with open air shopping there is an enclosed ice skating rink. Along La Jolla Village Dr. are sophisticated office parks. The area provides a vitality combining residential, commercial, fine dining, and retail along with the newly opened Farmer's Market held every Thurs from 3-7PM in front of Macy's. They offer everything from soup to nuts, Italian sandwiches, delicious and healthy treats, flowers, fresh fruits and vegetables with samples being offered to test their sweetness and

flavor. The area is mainly comprised of condos, townhomes & high rises of varying price ranges.

Costa Verde, across the street, boasts a newly opened Wells Fargo Bank with a friendly group of tellers; upscale Bristol Farms with its delicious offerings of daily soups, fresh cooked turkey's and beef selections, and an array of entries to take out or eat-in. They offer a fresh sushi bar, organic juices, fruits, vegetables, and a host of vitamins. A nice alternative to Whole Foods in La Jolla and much less crowded. It took Costa Verde a few years to get going but now it is vibrant with the addition of other stores and restaurants within the complex. Roy's Restaurant, is also located there and is known for their excellent Asian-Fusion choices and their great Happy Hour. The Kahn's recently opened The La Jolla Strip Club across the street where Trophy's used to be. It's really a double entendre, and not a 'girly-girl' club but a restaurant and bar where one can cook their own steak on one of their many open grills, which is surely a unique dining experience.

Along Interstate 5 at Nobel is the glistening white Mormon Temple with its twin 190' steeples and 72,000 square feet of floor space. It's a beautiful site day or night. Other notable churches are Our Mother of Confidence with a friendly staff and a Monsignor who recently celebrated his 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a priest; a Chabad at Radcliffe and Governor, plus the University City Unified Church at Stresemann and Governor with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints across the street.

In 1976, The University City High School was approved after much hard work and lengthy court battles opposed by a minority of residents who didn't want the school near Miramar Naval Air Station and their homes but finally opened in 1981.

The main thoroughfare in University City is on Governor Drive where you'll find The San Diego Public Library, Vons, Lorna's Italian Restaurant, Rite-Aid Drug Store, Starbucks, Henry's, The U.S. Post Office, Beauty Klienik, various banks, McElroy Field, and Standley Park with a heated Olympic Pool, gymnasium, lighted baseball diamonds, playground, horseshoe pit, outdoor basketball courts, racquetball courts, tennis courts, soccer fields, picnic shelter and tables, two tot lots, BBQ grills, plus offering many classes and activities. In 1976, each home was assessed a \$300 tax to make Standley Park a reality. Many events are planned every year on the park's 21.75 acre site, the 4<sup>th</sup> of July Celebration, Oktoberfest, Halloween Carnival, and the many Summer Concerts held every year. On the SE end of University City are a group of corporations that have large Federal contracts. UC offers three elementary schools, one Middle School and the High School, plus Mission Bay Montessori Private School.

But, who is this Standley, the namesake of Standley Middle School, Standley Park, Standley Pool & Gymnasium? Admiral Wm Harrison Standley, 1872-1963 had a career in the US Navy

and was serving as the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union during WW II. A native of Ukiah, CA, Standley had planned his life on the family farm but then attended the Naval Academy and graduated in 1895. Standley served meritoriously during WW I and in the 20's held almost all of the ranking commands including Commander of Destroyers and Commanders of Cruises. In 1933, he was appointed Chief of Naval Operations, one of the highest positions. He retired from the Navy in 1937 and was promoted as Ambassador to the Soviet Union which pleased the Soviets to have access to a man of military experience. After the war, he retired to La Mesa and received the Distinguished Service Medal and served on the commission to investigate the Pearl Harbor tragedy. It was the choice of the San Diego school board in the 70's to name them after him; he passed away in 1963.

Some of the streets on the West-End were named after Nobel Laureates, Ivy League Universities, and on various other streets were American Authors, and other humanitarians that lend UC a scholarly air.

Sir Norman Angell, 1833 Nobel Peace Prize

Klas Pontus Arnoldson, 1908 Nobel Peace Prize

Charles Glover Barkla, 1917 Nobel Prize in Physics

Frederik Bajer, 1908 Nobel Peace Prize

Felix Bloch, 1952 Nobel Prize in Physics

Walter Bothe, 1954 Nobel Prize in Physics

Sir William Henry Bragg, Sir William Lawrence Bragg, (father & son) 1915 Nobel Prize for Physics

David Bovet, 1957 Nobel Prize in Medicine

Aristide Briand, co-recipient with Stresemann 1926 Peace Prize.

Ferdinand Buisson, 1927 Nobel Peace Prize

Ralph Bunche, 1950 Nobel Peace Prize

Marie Curie, 1903 Nobel Prize in Physics

Nils Gustaf Dalen, 1912 Nobel Prize in Physics

John Mott, 1946 Nobel Peace Prize, he became one of the YMCA's most dedicated ambassadors and travelled every continent setting up programs that allowed POW's a place to worship and get training.

Charles Gobat, 1902 Nobel Peace Prize with Elie Ducommun

Stetson Ave, Radcliffe Dr, Millikin Ave, Mercer Lane, Wellesley Ct & Tulane are named for American Colleges. American authors remembered are Sara Teasdale, Edna Ferber, Louis Bromfield, Carl Sandburg, James Cozzens, James Agee, John Steinbeck, MacKinley Kantor, Willa Cather, Ivan Pavlov, and Joseph Pulitzer are immortalized on street signs.

**Stresemann St honors German Gustav Stresemann who shared the 1926 Peace Prize with Briand for his contributions of the labor tensions that threatened to lead both France and Germany into war. He was a gifted debater and lawyer and an 11 time Prime Minister.**

**Today, the South end of University City is mostly built out and they rely on North UC for shopping, and urban entertainment. The University of California San Diego is still an important neighbor to us. Developers still try to build on any questionable land like the one on San Clemente Terrace, recently. Many of the UC residents came out to protest and the project was eventually dropped.**

**We are a community that helps where help is needed, a politically active group that doesn't always agree, and an educated populace who are willing to contribute time and money to keep our fine city of University City one to be proud of. University City is 'more than a neighborhood' as families continue to enjoy the small town feeling. The street banner project has been established, we have a monthly local hand-delivered newsletter, work is underway to paint the transformers on Governor Dr, we are fortunate to have the University City Planning Group that screens all new projects for the community and meets above Wells Fargo at UTC Mall the second Tues of the month presided by Jenay Kruger. The agenda is posted at the North and South Libraries, for convenience. Standley Park still continues to act as a town hall, as well as, a site for activities, athletics, classes and meetings.**

**All in all, we have much to be grateful for in University City. Many communities wish they had the well-educated populace and the closely knit community we share in that is devoted to schools, local organizations, sports, places of worship, nor do they have the natural resources we have available to us.**