



# PATRONATO

*Mission San Xavier del Bac 2013*



## White Dove Campaign to Restore East Tower

Patronato's board plans to raise an estimated \$3 million to restore San Xavier's East Tower through a special effort called the "White Dove Campaign."

With your help and support, Patronato San Xavier has completed major restoration projects at the Mission including the roof, interior art restoration, the West Tower, and soon, the sacristy arcade project.

That support has been critical in preserving the Mission for future generations and has paid for the completion of more than 80 percent of the critical restoration.

The East Tower is scheduled for restoration beginning next year and

will complete the major work on the Mission's exterior and preserve the structural integrity of the building.

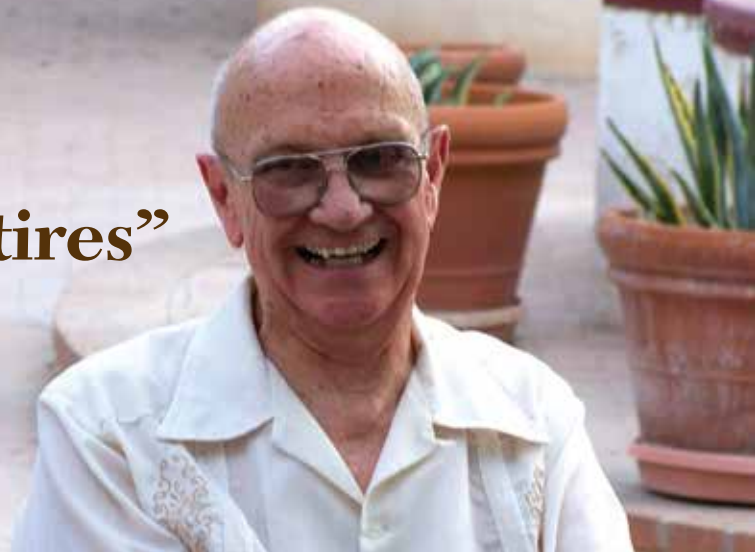
Cracking of the tower's exterior allowed water to migrate behind the stucco and wick into the interior brick. This moisture threatens the basic fabric of the church and endangers the priceless art treasures inside. If the tower restoration is not completed, we risk undoing the work that has been accomplished, both on the outside and the interior.

For more information about the project, or to pledge your financial support, please contact Patronato at (520) 407-6130 or visit us at [www.patronatosanxavier.org](http://www.patronatosanxavier.org)



*Views of San Xavier's East Tower show continuing deterioration*

# Patronato Founder “Retires” Bunny Fontana - The Heart of San Xavier’s restoration



Bernard “Bunny” Fontana

It may be that one insight led Bernard “Bunny” Fontana to a fruitful and singular career. “I realized the someone doing anthropology could do it here, that it wasn’t necessary to go to Africa or to Asia or to Polynesia or to the Swiss Alps or some place, that anthropology is all around us,” he says. As a result, Bunny’s life work became first cultural anthropology in the Southwest, and then a legacy as a historian and author, and a founder and director of Patronato San Xavier.

Bunny’s personal attraction to the Mission seemed predestined. In 1955, He and his wife Hazel were looking for a place to live while he pursued his doctoral degree at the UA. They found a cheap place for rent on Mission Road, just off the reservation (a place they later bought). Practicing Catholics, they learned that the only church nearby was San Xavier, and so the historic mission became their regular church.

Bunny’s doctoral thesis became a study of the San Xavier community. “I got interested, of course, in the history of the place and how it had come to be,” he said. “And there was no way you could exclude the Mission from the history of what went on in the community.”

A scholarly debate continues whether contemporary O’odham are related to or descended from the Hohokam. The ancient people occupied parts of Arizona from about AD 1 through the middle of the 15th century when the culture suddenly collapsed. As part of his doctoral work in 1950s, Bunny knew that the only stratified



Bunny with Fr. Michael Dallmeier (1992)

site at Ventana Cave pointed to a gap between the prehistoric Hohokam and the historic O’odham who had later moved into the area.

In order to prove or disprove the historical relationship, one would need to identify an O’odham settlement that may be sitting on top of Hohokam remains. “And looking around we thought, well what do you know, the Mission itself is

actually built on a hill,” he said. “And we thought well you know that’s a possibility. We know there’s O’odham stuff on top and we don’t know what’s under it. Let’s dig it up and find out.”

So he and another graduate student Bill Robinson got permission and began digging near the Mission.

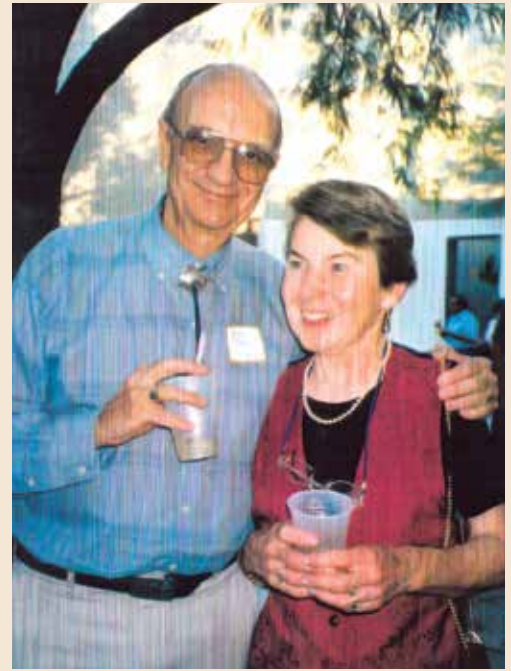
Volunteers from the Arizona State Museum and students from the UA helped out. After excavating an area, they discovered foundations of walls that were not prehistoric. “What we had actually dug up was all that was left of the footings of the first church at San Xavier. But it took many years to figure that out.”

Proof came from a letter a priest had written in 1800 that described the rooms of the original church. “Simultaneously when you are digging historic sites, you are not only doing archaeology but you’re spending as much time as possible in archives reading all you can to try to put the two together. And so that’s what happened, piece by piece, bit by bit, we kept digging up more data and information.”

“That’s how it all kind of came to pass. I ended up being interested in the history; I ended up being interested in the archaeology. Of course for many,



*Dianne Bret Harte & Bunny. The two surviving founders of Patronato share stories at Patronato's 30th anniversary.*



*Bunny & Hazel Fontana*

many years, I had a fairly significant involvement with the people who live here in the community.

“Seed” money from the Pew family led to the creation of Patronato. Fr. Kieran McCarty, the San Xavier parish priest at the time, Jim Murphy, the diocesan attorney, Jane Ivancovich, and Bunny had discussions about what to do with it. It was Murphy’s idea to create a non-profit, non-sectarian corporation whose sole purpose would be to take care of the historic physical property. In 1978, Murphy, Ivancovich, Fontana and Dianne Bret Harte, Watson Smith and Emil Haury became the original six founders. Each brought a special interest and expertise to the organization.

“It was a long time before we got around to doing very much,” Bunny said. “We thought, well, before we try to raise any money, and need to do anything, we need some sort of assessment. And our concern initially was not the exterior, but the interior.”

“And so we hired Gloria Giffords, an art conservator, and historian Miguel Celorio who was teaching at the University of the Americas in Puebla, in Mexico. They went over virtually every inch of the interior, and they ended up writing up a report that pretty much detailed everything that was wrong.” Before anyone could work on those problems, plaster was found, falling off the wall in the sanctuary.

“So we thought, boy, there’s no sense in spending any kind of money doing anything on the interior, until we address the water problems on the outside.” Morales Restoration & Builders spent five years working on the drainage and leaks -just to stop the damage.

Bunny had met Paul Schwartzbaum when the head of conservation at the Getty Museum was working at the National Historic Park at Tumacacori. He had followed Schwartzbaum’s career. In 1992, when the Patronato was ready to begin work in the interior,

the board agreed to have Bunny ask him if he could assemble a team to do the work. The team worked in six campaigns over five years.

“Those were exciting times, because there were weeks, if not months, where we didn’t know if we had the money to meet payroll. But somehow God always provided. Somebody did. And we were able to pay things off.”

Since that time, the Patronato has continued the work, restoring major portions of the exterior, conserving the Baptistry in the church and now beginning a new campaign to restore the East Tower.

It’s hard to imagine Mission San Xavier today - without thinking of the contributions of Bunny Fontana - who has done so much to research, explain and then help guide the restoration of this National Historic Landmark, his beloved church.

**An Abbreviated Bibliography, San Xavier-related:**

- “A Gift of Angels : The Art of Mission San Xavier del Bac” by Bernard L. Fontana & Edward McCain; University of Arizona Press, 2010
- “Biography of a Desert Church: The Story of Mission San Xavier del Bac” by Bernard L. Fontana; The Smoke Signal #3, Tucson Corral of the Westerners, 1996
- “Entrada: The Legacy of Spain and Mexico in the United States” by Bernard L. Fontana; Southwest Parks and Monuments Association, 1994
- “Trailing the Holy Cross: Soldiers’ Feet, Apache Ears, and the Santa Cruz Valley” by Bernard L. Fontana; Peccary Press, 1991

## The directors of Patronato are pleased to welcome several new members to the board this past year.



### **MARTIN DESOTO**

Martin DeSoto, an eighth generation Tucsonan, is a descendant of Tucson Presidio Capt. Jose Antonio Comaduran. A member of Los Descendientes del Presido de Tucson, he has lived nearly all his life only a mile from the mission. An active and long-time parishioner at Mission San Xavier, he serves as a mass lector, Eucharistic minister, Tucson catholic Engaged Encounter marriage prep instructor for the diocese of Tucson, catechism instructor and a member of the church finance committee. Martin volunteers as a Patronato docent. An avid horseman, he has participated in several mandas, riding horseback from “A” Mountain to the mission. Martin retired from the City of Tucson Water Department as a construction inspector after 33 years.



### **JACKIE LUDWIG**

Jackie is a 25-year veteran of the tourism and hospitality industry. She began her career in 1987 in the destination management sales segment of the convention industry. In 1991 she pioneered the first destination services department in Tucson for the Loews Ventana Canyon Resort. Following the department’s opening, many other resorts followed suit. In 2004 she created Starr Destinations for the J.W.Marriott Starr Pass, also a destination services department. In 2008 Jackie became Director of Tourism for the Tucson Convention and Visitors Bureau for the Leisure Travel Market.



### **MICHAEL URMAN**

Michael R. Uрман graduated with highest distinction from the University of Arizona College of Law in 1982 where he was editor-in-chief of the Arizona Law Review. He thereafter joined the DeConcini McDonald Yetwin & Lacy, P.C. law firm and has been a shareholder with the firm since 1988. He maintains a civil practice including the representation of financial institutions in complex commercial transactions and in workout matters, with special emphasis on mining and natural resource acquisition, finance and development. He is a former President of the Tucson Community School and was a long-time member of the board of directors of the Arizona Kidney Foundation where he was State Chairman in 1997-1998. He is also a former President of the Arizona Historical Society’s Southern Arizona Division and is currently a member of the State Board and the President of the Arizona Historical Society.



### **CLAGUE VAN SLYKE III**

A Tucson native, Clague Van Slyke, III, graduated from the University of Arizona in 1978 with a bachelor’s in history and then earned a law degree from the UA College of Law in 1981. His practice area is plaintiff personal injury litigation. Active in community and political service organizations, he has served as president of such diverse groups as the Tucson Parks Foundation, the Arizona Trial Lawyers Association and the Peter Howell Neighborhood Association. San Xavier has always been a special place to the Van Slyke family. Clague’s father, Clague Van Slyke, served on the Patronato board from 1993 until his death in 2008.

# Dates Set for the 17th Annual Christmas Concerts at San Xavier, Dedicated to Ann Fallon



The 17th Annual Christmas Concerts at San Xavier, Dedicated to Ann Fallon, are set for Tuesday, Dec. 10 through Thursday, Dec. 12, at 6 p.m. and 8 p.m. As many know, the concerts have become the “must see” event that begins the holiday season.

The Sons of Orpheus and the Tucson Arizona Boys Chorus will sing a program of seasonal and classical pieces, set inside the historic and acoustically superlative church. Money from the concerts benefit Patronato’s restoration of San Xavier, a National Historic Landmark and an Arizona jewel. Your support for this event has been an important part of our progress in restoring the church and maintaining its value as a living, multicultural icon.

Invitations to the concerts will be mailed during the first week of October. People who would like to be added to the mailing list, can call (520) 407-6130 or submit their names, addresses and phone numbers to [patronatoSX@earthlink.net](mailto:patronatoSX@earthlink.net).

*We would especially like to especially thank our 2012 Concert supporters:*  
Sponsor: **Ann Fallon**; Our Underwriters: **Laura & Arch Brown, John & Georgiann Carroll, Kathy & Michael Hard, Pat & Chuck Pettis, Snell & Wilmer, L.L.P.**

## The Christmas Concerts at San Xavier - Dedicated to Ann Fallon

The Christmas concerts at San Xavier are now dedicated to retired board member Ann Fallon who has sponsored the concerts for most of their history. “I’ve been happy about doing it,” she said. “Best thing I ever did. Most worthwhile.”

Ann has had a lifelong love affair with the arts. She graduated cum laude from a Wisconsin women’s college, majoring in fine art, and received further study at the Art Institute of Chicago. She is a signature member of the Southern Arizona Watercolor Guild and a three-decades member of the Tucson Museum of Art. At age 94, she continues to create striking art collages, combining objects that interest her in unique and beautiful ways. San Xavier appears frequently in her work.

In 1976, she and her husband Art were set to retire in Florida when friends invited them to stop by Tucson on their way. Ann said they never made it to Florida. One of the first places in Tucson they visited was San Xavier Mission, and for Ann, it was love at first sight. “I couldn’t believe it,” she said.

Shortly after settling here Art died suddenly, and friends convinced her to go on a cruise through the Mediterranean visiting Italy and Greece, among others. She loved the art and architecture, but found the cruise was too short to really learn much, so she vowed to visit again on her own. She found those foreign destinations interesting, but San Xavier trumped them all. “We’ve got the Mission right here. It’s the most beautiful thing there is in the United States.”

But its beauty was hidden for a long time. She recalls one tour of the church, prior to any restoration work, led by Fr. Greg Adolf - with a flashlight. “It was so dark. I thought something had to be done.”

Later, she met Lorraine Drachman, a Patronato board member and its vice president for development, and began helping her with Patronato’s events. Lorraine asked if she would join the board. Ann agreed and became both a passionate member and an active donor supporting San Xavier’s restoration.



*The Christmas Concerts at San Xavier*

Photo © James Paika

During the 1990s interior restoration, Ann was in her 70s but climbed the scaffolding that had been erected high in front of the retablo mayor. “I stood in front of the Virgin Mary. She was so big. It was just amazing to see it up close.”

“All the work that’s been done (on the restoration) is excellent,” she said, citing the efforts of Paul Schwartzbaum and his team from that time.

Ann still loves the concerts. “People say it’s the beginning of the Christmas season. It is almost too much for the senses,” she said. And she remains passionate about San Xavier’s restoration. “There’s a big need. So whatever people can do will help.”

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## On the Web:

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