

Enriching Lives



Civic Art

## PRESS RELEASE

For Release June 13, 2008

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### EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:

High resolution visuals of the Foltz artwork may be downloaded at the links below:

[http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic\\_foltzcjc\\_lrg1.jpg](http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic_foltzcjc_lrg1.jpg)

[http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic\\_foltzcjc\\_lrg2.jpg](http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic_foltzcjc_lrg2.jpg)

[http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic\\_foltzcjc\\_lrg3.jpg](http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic_foltzcjc_lrg3.jpg)

[http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic\\_foltzcjc\\_lrg4.jpg](http://lacountyarts.org/civicart/images/civic_foltzcjc_lrg4.jpg)

All photographs are by Ed Krieger. PLEASE CREDIT.

Remarks at the Installation of Foltz Memorial are at

<http://womenslegalhistory.stanford.edu/csf08.html>

## **CLARA'S LEGACY: California's First Female Attorney Inspires Artist Susan Schwartzberg to Create Masterpieces for Jurors and the Public to Enjoy**

LOS ANGELES—Two woven tapestries and a series of glass panels made by San Francisco artist Susan Schwartzberg highlight the life of legal pioneer Clara Shortridge Foltz—a champion of the modern-day public defender's office and women's and minority rights. The new artwork will be dedicated at 12 noon, June 13 at the Clara Shortridge Foltz Criminal Justice Center located at 210 West Temple Street.

Foltz (1849-1934) was the first woman to practice law in California and became the first female deputy district attorney in Los Angeles. Born in Lafayette, Indiana, she was the sister of U.S. Senator Samuel M. Shortridge and a descendant of Daniel Boone. Her law career began as an apprentice for a local judge after her husband deserted her. She fought her first major legal battle against Hastings College of the Law in San Francisco,

which denied her admission because of her gender. She sued, argued her own case and won admission.

Foltz's trailblazing career spanned more than 50 years and in 1930 she became the first woman to run for governor of California at age 81. In 2002, the Criminal Courts Buildings in downtown Los Angeles—located on the site of the original courthouse where she practiced—was renamed in her honor.

“Clara Shortridge Foltz was an extraordinary woman,” said Los Angeles County 2nd District Supervisor Yvonne B. Burke. “We honored her life and work by naming the courthouse after her. Now Susan Schwartzberg’s artwork magnifies that honor and stands as a permanent tribute to Foltz’s vision and achievements.”

Foltz’s remarkable life and career is traced on an “image biography” that appears throughout the building’s lobby. Using photographs, photo illustrations and text, Schwartzberg created a visual timeline along glass windows at the north entrance, along Temple Street. Also featured at the north entrance are two large portraits of Foltz made on woven tapestries. Two small glass panels with portraits of Foltz are near the lobby elevators. The patio terrace includes marbled benches inscribed with quotes from Foltz and her initials. Along the south entrance glass window walls is a large portrait of Foltz with an overlay of a map of Los Angeles.

Schwartzberg said she wanted to make the courthouse feel more hospitable.

“This building hosts thousands of people each day doing their citizen’s duty being jurors,” said Schwartzberg. “But [the building] is not as warm or welcoming as one would wish. We hope bringing in this artwork will illuminate the space.”

The artist said people can identify with Foltz and her struggles. When Foltz passed her bar exam in California in 1878, she was not allowed to practice because California law at the time permitted only white males to become members of the bar. Foltz then authored a state bill, which replaced “white male” with “person,” and in September 1878, she was the first woman admitted to the California bar.

Foltz delivered a moving speech at the 1893 Chicago World’s Fair on the “Rights of Persons Accused of Crime—Abuses Now Existing” and introduced the idea of the public defender. “The idea to provide assistance to indigent criminal defendants was a radical at the time,” said legal scholar Barbara Babcock, who will publish a biography on Foltz next year.

Foltz also raised five children, mostly as a single mother, and encouraged women not to overlook their traditional domestic roles.

Schwartzberg is a photographer and visual artist based in San Francisco. Her work incorporates themes of biography, memory, studies of urban life and the psychology of place. Her recent projects include “Cento: A Market St. Journal,” which juxtaposed urban history with contemporary stories in an experimental guidebook, journal and map. She co-authored *Hollow City: The Siege of San Francisco and the Crisis of American Urbanism*, and was co-designer of The Rosie the Riveter Memorial in Richmond, CA. In 1998-99, she was a recipient of the Loeb Fellowship for Advanced Environmental

Studies at Harvard University. Currently she is a senior artist at the Exploratorium in San Francisco.

This project was funded by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors prior to the adoption of Civic Art Policy in December 2004. Since then, one percent of construction costs of all County capital projects over \$500,000 are allocated for the incorporation of civic art. The Los Angeles County Art Commission's Civic Art Program administers all aspects of the civic art allocation in concert with County departments and community stakeholders.



The **Los Angeles County Arts Commission**, Laura Zucker, Executive Director, provides leadership in cultural services of all disciplines for the largest county in the United States, encompassing 88 municipalities. In addition to implementing the County's Civic Art Program for capital projects, the Arts Commission provides leadership and staffing to support the regional blueprint for arts education, *Arts for All*; administers a grants program that funds more than 300 nonprofit arts organizations annually; funds the largest arts internship program in the country in conjunction with the Getty Foundation; programs the John Anson Ford Theatres; and, supports the Los Angeles County Cultural Calendar on ExperienceLA.com. The Arts Commission also produces free community programs, including the L.A. Holiday Celebration broadcast nationally, and a year-round music program that funds more than 50 free concerts each year in public sites. The 2008-09 President of the Arts Commission is Betty Haagen.

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