



## They Called Me Mayer July Father and Daughter Illuminate a Lost Culture



“IF INTERVIEWING IS ‘listening with love,’ I have been listening with love for four decades.” Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, University Professor and Professor of Performance Studies at New York University and author of *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (UC Press, 1998), began interviewing her father, Mayer Kirshenblatt, over forty years ago while taking a folklore course at UC Berkeley. He had grown up in a small town in southern Poland, where he was born in 1916 and lived until emigrating to Canada in 1934. An industrious yet poor provincial city of 10,000 during Kirshenblatt’s childhood, Opatów (Apt in Yiddish) was devastated during World War II; only 300 of its 6,000 Jews survived the Holocaust.

Barbara continued to interview her father over the years, but it occurred to her that his memories were so visual that they should be translated into paintings. After a decade of coaxing, Barbara convinced Mayer to begin painting when he was 73. Since then, he has made it his project to document the world of his childhood in living color, “lest future generations know more about how Jews died than how they lived.”

Seventeen years and more than 250 paintings later, Mayer, who turned 91 in September, was in the San Francisco Bay Area to help launch *They Called Me Mayer July: Painted Memories of a Jewish Childhood in Poland before the Holocaust* and to attend the opening of a companion exhibition at the Judah L. Magnes Museum in Berkeley. The exhibition will travel to several venues in the United States and Europe, including the Jewish Museum in New York City; the William Bremen Jewish

Heritage Museum in Atlanta; the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam; and the new Museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw, which will open in 2010.

A unique blend of memoir, oral history, and artistry, the book draws readers into a lost world. The town, as Barbara explains, became a “memory palace. On an imaginary walk through the streets of Apt, Mayer would call forth the memories attached to each of the city’s topographical features: the old city gate, the church bell, the World War I monument, the marketplace, the military latrine, the synagogue, his father’s leather store, his grandmother’s grocery, the cemetery.” The result is a treasure trove of information and insight about the inhabitants, customs, and legends in one Jewish hometown. Mayer and Barbara selected 198 works of art for the book, reproduced in color; in



*In this glorious ark of a book, Mayer Kirshenblatt has... rescued from oblivion stories of his town of Apt as it lived and breathed before the war.*

—Los Angeles Times

addition, the text is embellished with black-and-white sketches documenting—in exquisite detail—daily scenes such as how to bridle a horse, make a tin whistle, and bind a book.

Barbara recounts her method of working with her father to encourage his painting and develop the book. “I decided that the text would be entirely in Mayer’s words and that its structure would arise from an internal logic . . . in the tangled network of stories and images that he had created.” UC Press anthropology and Jewish studies editor Stanley Holwitz says, “This collection of pre-Holocaust memories is a lasting contribution to our understanding of Eastern European Jewish life and culture and a tribute to the creative relationship between an extraordinary father and daughter.”

You can find more information about the book and exhibition at [www.mayerjuly.com](http://www.mayerjuly.com) and [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).

# Fundraising & Campaign News

## Generous Donors Help UC Press Achieve Campaign Milestone

### Major Gifts Complete Prestigious Challenge Grant

UC PRESS IS FORTUNATE to count among its benefactors Barclay and Sharon Simpson in the San Francisco Bay Area and The Fletcher Jones Foundation in Los Angeles. In June, both donors made major endowment gifts to support UC Press's humanities programs in perpetuity. Together, the gifts completed a challenge grant awarded to UC Press by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the first major milestone in the \$5 million Voice for Great Ideas Campaign. The challenge



*Barclay and Sharon Simpson established the Simpson Imprint in Humanities in honor of her mother, Muriel Carter Hanley.*

required UC Press to raise \$1.6 million in humanities endowment funds in order to receive \$400,000 in NEH matching funds. Says Campaign Co-Chair Jim Naify, "We're very pleased to have successfully completed our third NEH challenge grant with the help of the philanthropic community in California and beyond. The exceptional level of support we've received shows how much the arts, culture, and literature contribute to our society."

Humanities and the humanistic social sciences represent over half of UC Press's book publishing program. Art, classics, film studies, history, literature, and music are also among our most distinguished fields. However, because of a constellation of changes in the industry over the past decade, publishing in these areas requires significant philanthropic support—both to develop books and to price them affordably. This critical need made the NEH challenge grant UC Press's top campaign priority.

The Simpsons' recent gift doubled the Endowed Imprint they established in late 2003 in honor of Sharon Simpson's mother, Muriel Carter Hanley. To date, the Simpson Imprint in Humanities has supported a dozen exceptional books in a range of fields, including critical biographies of Walt Disney and American novelist William Dean Howells, Lawrence Kramer's inspirational *Why Classical Music Still Matters*, and the pathbreaking study *Artists at Continent's End: The Monterey Peninsula Art Colony* by Scott Shields. "It means so much to me that important and beautiful books pay tribute to my mother's intellect and creativity, and that they may inspire other readers to share her passions," says Sharon Simpson. The new Fletcher

Jones Foundation Humanities Imprint will also fund an array of humanities subjects. The imprint's debut title, *Our Distance from God: Studies of the Divine and the Mundane in Western Art and Music* by UC Irvine Art History Professor James D. Herbert, will be published in spring 2008.

### Longtime Friends Create Named Endowment Funds

DURING THE FIRST PHASE of the Voice for Great Ideas Campaign, magnanimous donors have established or augmented thirteen Named Endowment Funds. Several of these donors have supported UC Press for years and have responded to the opportunity presented by the campaign to increase their commitment. Most recently, San Francisco resident Peter Booth Wiley, who serves on the UC Press Board of Directors and as Chairman of publisher Wiley & Sons, together with his wife, Valerie Barth, made an endowment gift to support books in history. And last spring, longtime Chairman's Circle members Ralph and Shirley Shapiro of Los Angeles established an endowment in environmental studies. "Our endowment fund brings together two of our favorite causes—the University of California and protecting the environment," says Shirley Shapiro. Director Lynne Withey adds, "UC Press publishes acclaimed programs in history and environmental science. We are extremely grateful to have new Named Endowment Funds that will sustain and enrich these programs."

### Perpetuate Your Legacy in Books

ENDOWMENT GIFTS permanently sustain UC Press publishing programs and offer donors the opportunity to perpetuate their legacy in books of enduring value. Endowed Imprints may be established with a gift of \$250,000 or more, and Named Endowment Funds with a gift of \$25,000 or more. Such gifts may be designated to support books in a UC Press subject area of the donor's choice. Each title published in an Endowed Imprint carries a specially designed inscription on a page reserved to honor the benefactor's generosity. Donors who establish a Named Endowment Fund are recognized prominently in the books their fund supports. For more information about Named Endowment opportunities or the Voice for Great Ideas Campaign, contact Deborah Kirshman, Director of Development, at [deborah.kirshman@ucpress.edu](mailto:deborah.kirshman@ucpress.edu) or 510-643-7704.

# Author Spotlight: Gary Braasch

## An Extraordinary Journey to Protect the Planet



Director Lynne Withey and author Gary Braasch.

A PROFESSIONAL NATURE PHOTOGRAPHER for 30 years, Gary Braasch has published his work in *Life*, *Time*, *Discover*, and other prominent magazines and in several books. Last year he received the prestigious Ansel Adams Award from the Sierra Club. UC Press recently published Braasch's latest book, *Earth under Fire: How Global Warming Is Changing the World*, culminating a decade of travel, research, and photography. The book's editor, Blake Edgar, interviewed Braasch for *Imprints*.

### ***What inspired you to document global climate change?***

The immediate impetus was a trip to Alaska in 1997. I had been hearing of rapid changes there, such as thawing permafrost and changes to tundra plants, and of course had seen reports about global warming in general. One day I was lucky enough to witness the Porcupine Caribou herd migrate in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. Two days later, flying out of the airport at Prudhoe Bay, I saw (and smelled and heard) the industrial oil field laid across the tundra. Seeing one source of American oil right after seeing isolated wilderness animals whose landscape was being affected made the global warming connection real to me.

### ***You traveled to over 20 countries. Is there a place that epitomizes the environmental and social consequences of global warming?***

The United States, and specifically Alaska. Beyond the facts mentioned above, Alaska is ground zero for many other changes. The most important is the displacement of hundreds (soon to be thousands) of native Americans whose villages are being eroded away; this is a social and cultural change of great magnitude. The possible loss of most summer Arctic sea ice is another huge change that is well under way. This directly threatens the polar bears, who evolved to hunt from the ice; they are likely to be listed as a threatened or endangered species next year. And the Northwest Passage opened for the first time in human history, which will change geopolitics of the surrounding nations.

### ***This project must have accumulated a hefty carbon debt. How do you atone for that? What can we all do to reduce our impact?***

My lifestyle has always been pretty conservative, and what I learned in my environmental photography and reporting underscored how important that is. I have a very small house, walk and bike a lot, and have always bought used smaller cars. Recently I changed all my light bulbs to compact fluorescents—and my electric bill is 20 percent lower. This stuff works! Consumers who make these choices will soon want more: all-electric cars, integrated solar roofing material, auto-turn-off of all home electronics, efficient homes and offices, and so on.

### ***Earth under Fire bears witness to what can seem an insurmountable problem. What do you hope readers will take away from the book?***

First, that the effects of even one degree of global warming so far are seen far and wide—they are pervasive and not theoretical or far in the future. Neither are the benefits of moving rapidly into available technologies of renewable energy, which promise to provide health, employment, community, and financial benefits while they help slow climate change. Finally, this is the first book to address the much broader implications of climate change: threats to biodiversity and nature; geopolitical readjustments as energy and resources change; effects on inequality and human rights in many places; and the need for new alliances and leadership among the nations of the world.



*Braasch's stories and photographs...make real and vivid what for too many remains speculative and abstract.*

—Amory B. Lovins,  
Chairman and Chief Scientist,  
Rocky Mountain Institute

### ***Will the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to Al Gore and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change inspire governments and corporations to rise to the challenge?***

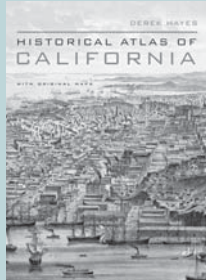
It will elevate the issue worldwide. Whether it will inspire governments and companies is quite another matter, because there is such inertia and protectionism built into these systems. Dr. R. K. Pachauri and Mr. Gore can now argue with stronger voices, and convince more to change. And others can use the heightened visibility to get more information out to more people who lead and vote and purchase.

Read the complete interview at [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).

# Recent & Recommended

## Inspiring Ideas for Your Holiday Gift List

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, enrich the minds and spirits of readers on your gift list with enduring books that document and illuminate history for today and the future. You'll find more great gift ideas on our web site at [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu).



### Historical Atlas of California: With Original Maps

Derek Hayes

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Generously illustrated with nearly 500 historical maps and drawings, this valuable reference and exhilarating adventure through history offers an account of California's past with a unique visual perspective. Hayes's engaging narrative provides a complete chronicle of how California came to be what it is today.



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Ian McAllister's stunning photographs and narrative record the complex way of life of wolves on Canada's North Pacific coast, one of the last places where wolves live wild and undisturbed. This remarkable portrait reveals how much is at stake in the preservation of these animals. Includes DVD and over 100 photos.

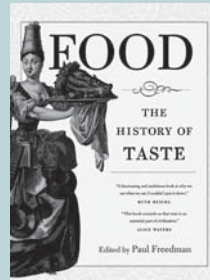


### Christmas: A Candid History

Bruce David Forbes

\$19.95 (cloth)

Forbes tells the story of this winter celebration from its pre-Christian roots to its mind-boggling transformation through modern consumerism. He explores traditions such as Santa, the reindeer, gift giving, and the Christmas tree while offering provocative ideas for reclaiming the joy and meaning of the holiday.

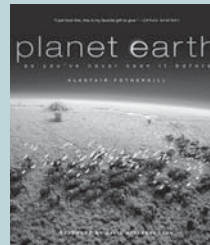


### Food: The History of Taste

Edited by Paul Freedman

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This rich compilation of essays by historians from around the globe comprehensively examines taste from prehistory to the present day. From practices of classical antiquity to the evolution of modern agriculture and restaurant dining, *Food* beautifully illustrates the pleasures of dining and the culinary accomplishments of diverse civilizations.



### Planet Earth: As You've Never Seen It Before

Alastair Fothergill

\$39.95 (cloth)

A visual odyssey that changes the way we see our planet, this companion book to the Discovery Channel/BBC documentary series is a compelling record of one of the most ambitious natural history projects ever undertaken. *Planet Earth* uses aerial surveillance, state-of-the-art cameras, and high-definition technology to capture incredible footage of the rarely seen wonders of the natural world.

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# Members & Events

## UC Press in Pictures



*My Bombay Kitchen* author Niloufer Ichaporia King and UC Press Foundation Trustee Carol Field prepare appetizers for a book celebration at the San Francisco home of Carol and John Field.



Longtime UC Press supporters Sally Tubach and Beatrice Heggie discuss the book *Earth under Fire* at a San Francisco luncheon co-sponsored by UC Press and Northern Trust.



UC Center Sacramento Director Gary Dyrnski presents a commemorative gift to UC President Emeritus Richard Atkinson at a reception honoring his book *The Pursuit of Knowledge*.



Trustees Lisa See and Harriett Gold chat with Jacqueline Avant at the home of Harriett and Richard Gold during UC Press's annual event on the eve of the L.A. Times Festival of Books.

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## News in Brief



Longtime Director's Circle member **Betty Hine** has recently included UC Press in her estate plans. Our newest Perennius Society patron is an avid reader, an enthusiastic participant at UC Press author events, and a dedicated supporter of higher education and cultural organizations. For information about various planned giving opportunities, contact Deborah Kirshman, Director of Development, at 510-643-7704 or [deborah.kirshman@ucpress.edu](mailto:deborah.kirshman@ucpress.edu).

At a private event during the American Sociological Association's annual meeting in New York City in August, **Executive Editor Naomi Schneider** was feted by her grateful authors for her contributions to the field. Michael Burawoy (*Public Sociology*), Diane L. Wolf (*Beyond Anne Frank*), Harvey Molotch (*Urban Fortunes*), and Ruth Milkman (*Farewell to the Factory*) spearheaded the tribute.

The **Mark Twain Project Online**, a resource of authoritative texts, documents, and historical research, launched in November. The project is a collaboration of the **Mark Twain Papers and Project** at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library, the **California Digital Library**, and UC Press. In other Mark Twain news, a recently rediscovered play, *Is He Dead?*, opened on Broadway at the Lyceum Theater this fall. Adapted by David Ives, the comedy was first published by UC Press in 2003 featuring illustrations by Barry Moser.

**Making It New: The Art and Style of Sara and Gerald Murphy**, the Williams College Museum of Art's pathbreaking exhibition and companion book copublished with UC Press and edited by **Deborah Rothschild**, has received exceptional review attention in the *New York Times*, the *New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, and many other publications.

**Nina G. Jablonski** recently received the **W. W. Howells Book Prize** from the American Anthropological Association for *Skin: A Natural History*. The annual award honors a book in the area of biological anthropology that represents the highest standards of scholarship and readability.

**Planet Earth: As You've Never Seen It Before** has sold over 100,000 copies since its publication in March—an all-time record for UC Press. The Discovery Channel is rerunning the complementary television series between Thanksgiving and Christmas.

## Board of Trustees

THE UC PRESS FOUNDATION Board of Trustees oversees UC Press's fundraising activities and allocates publishing grants from endowment income. Board members include community leaders from Northern and Southern California.

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