

# The Sundial



Issue 6 | Spring 2024

## 30 Years

After the  
Northridge Earthquake



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Cover photo from Sundial file. The earthquake destroyed Parking Structure C on Jan. 17, 1994 in Northridge, Calif.



# Letter from the Editor



Dear Sundial readers,

The first spring issue of the magazine falls on the 30-year anniversary of the 1994 Northridge earthquake. With every building on campus damaged, the earthquake and its effects are integral to the identity of California State University, Northridge. In this issue, we highlight the diverse group of people who rebuilt and recovered our San Fernando Valley home, from faculty to alumni.

While 30 years is a long time, the impact of the earthquake reverberates throughout campus. A parking structure collapsed in on itself, wings of the University Library were severely damaged and the former Fine Arts building was destroyed. Through tireless work from many people, spring classes started only two weeks past schedule, four weeks after the earthquake. With the Lindley Library Dome and other temporary buildings, students studied amidst ongoing construction.

Manzanita Hall, the home of the Sundial newsroom, was built to replace the Fine Arts building and opened in 2001. Other buildings were repaired and rebuilt over time under strict earthquake safety regulations. We are currently seeing the introduction of multiple buildings across campus, including Maple Hall, which was covered in the first fall issue of the magazine last year. Our ever-evolving campus grows to fit the needs of students while remaining safe and sustainable.

This month, we remember not solely the earthquake, but the people affected and those who made the past 30 years a reality.

Спасибо,

*Саша Аликханов*

Sasha Alikhanov, Print Editor

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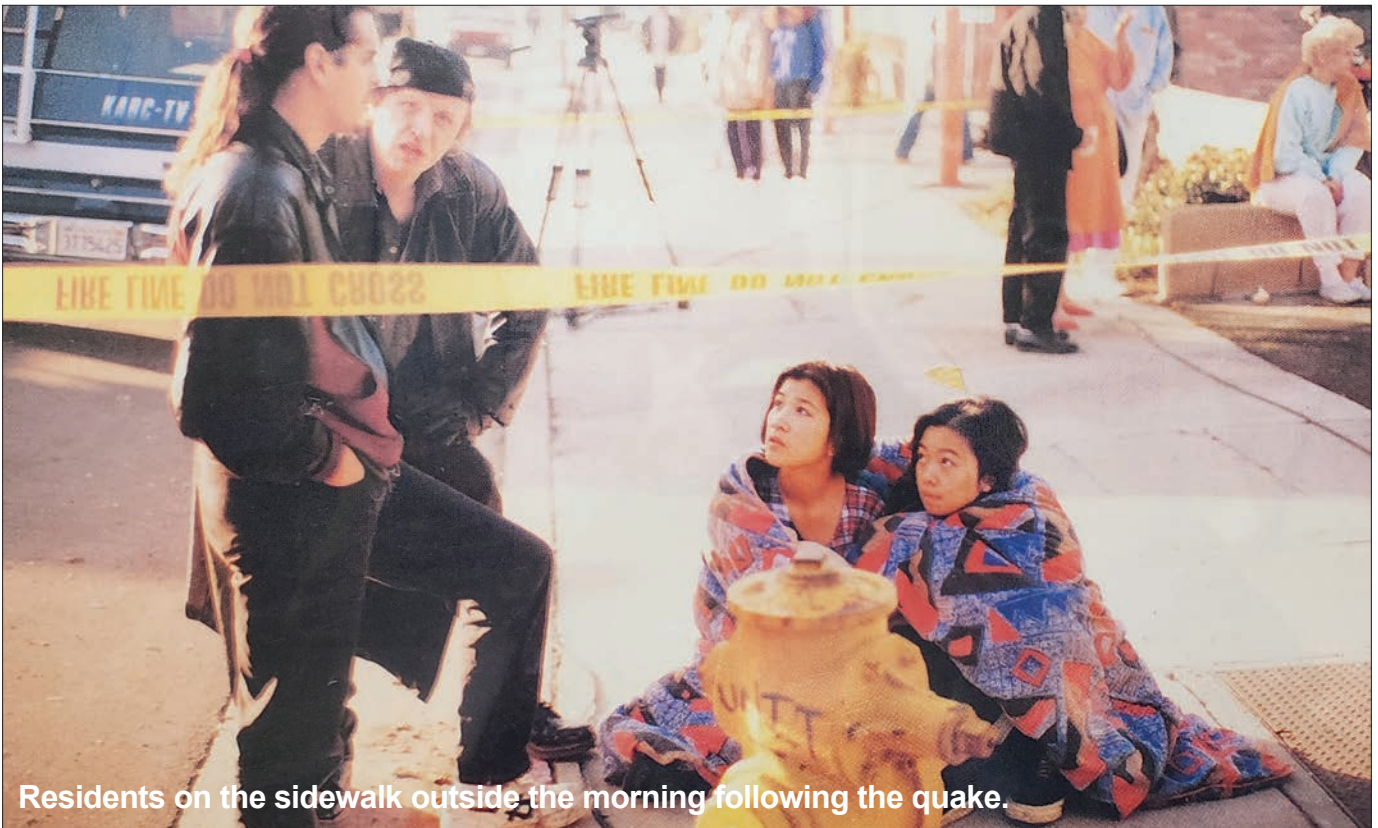
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Residents on the sidewalk outside the morning following the quake.



## Clippings Capsule

WRITTEN BY MAYA MORALES

These newspaper clippings were published by The Daily Sundial following the 1994 Northridge earthquake. A reported 56 people, including two California State University, Northridge students, lost their lives that night. Many buildings on and around campus were damaged, leaving students and residents displaced and frightened. The clippings capture the residents' shock and search for relief in tragedy. Even facing disaster, CSUN remained hopeful they would recover and prioritized keeping their students safe when coming back to campus.



On Jan. 17, 1995, President Bill Clinton visited California State University, Northridge to congratulate the campus on its recovery efforts and assure students they would still receive assistance from the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Vice President Al Gore visited CSUN the year of the quake praising how quickly the campus recovered and claimed that the federal government would "go all out" assisting the campus in further recovery.

*Continued on next page*



On PAGE 15  
**CSUN damage report**

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**The Oviatt Library in shambles**

**DAILY SUNDIAL**

INFORMING THE CAMPUS COMMUNITY  
CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY AT NORTHRIDGE

**SPECIAL EARTHQUAKE EDITION**

Volume 39 Monday, February 7, 1994 Number 1

On PAGE 15  
**CSUN damage report**

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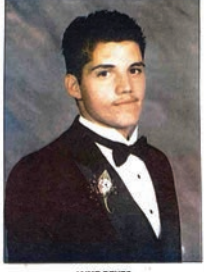
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## QUAKE KILLS CSUN STUDENTS



**MANUEL SANDOVAL**

Among the 56 people who died in the Jan. 17 earthquake were CSUN students Manuel Sandoval and Jaime Reyes who, along with 14 other people, were killed when the second and third floors of the Northridge Meadows Apartments crushed the first floor.



**JAIME REYES**

All 16 victims at the Meadows, including Los Angeles Valley College student Myrna Velazquez, lived on the first floor of the building.

Among the first-floor survivors were CSUN softball players Shannon Jones and Amy Windmiller.

*For complete details of the Northridge Meadows tragedy, see page 2. For obituaries on Sandoval, Reyes and Velazquez, see pages 22 and 23. For Jones and Windmiller's story, see page 2.*

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## CSUN CAMPUS DEVASTATED!

**Damage in the hundreds of millions**

*By Paul Ross*  
Editor in Chief

CSUN sustained severe damage as a result of the Jan. 17 earthquake, delaying the start of the spring semester for at least two weeks, President Blenda J. Wilson said. "We're looking at hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of damage," said Kaine Thompson, director of the University News Bureau.

"The estimates keep rising as we get aftershocks."

See **DAMAGE**, page 5

**Classes to be held in portable buildings**

*By Brian Zinn*  
Opinion Editor

CSUN President Blenda J. Wilson affirmed a "99.9 percent chance" that classes will start Feb. 14 and said there is an overwhelming possibility many lectures and exams will be held in mobile classrooms.

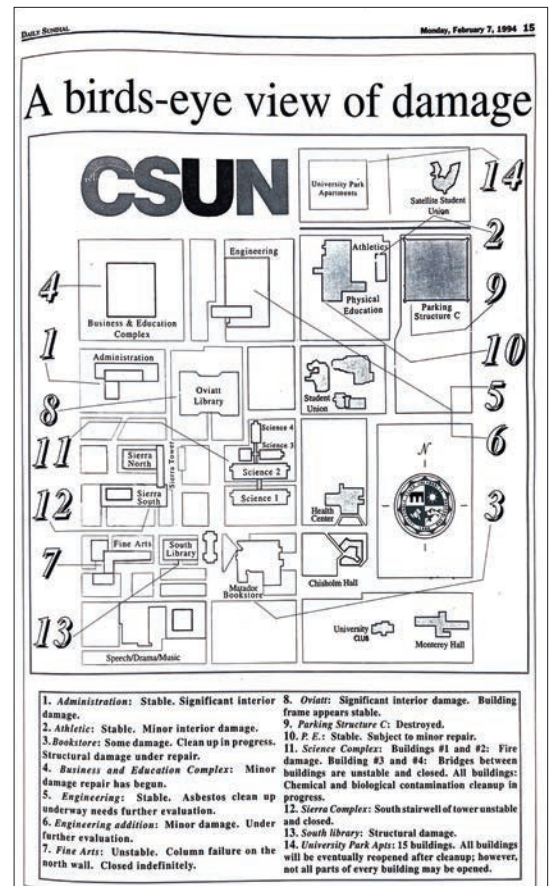
Bill Chatham, CSUN associate vice president in charge of facility planning, said 250-300 portable buildings will be trucked to CSUN for use as temporary classrooms.

See **PORTABLE**, page 5

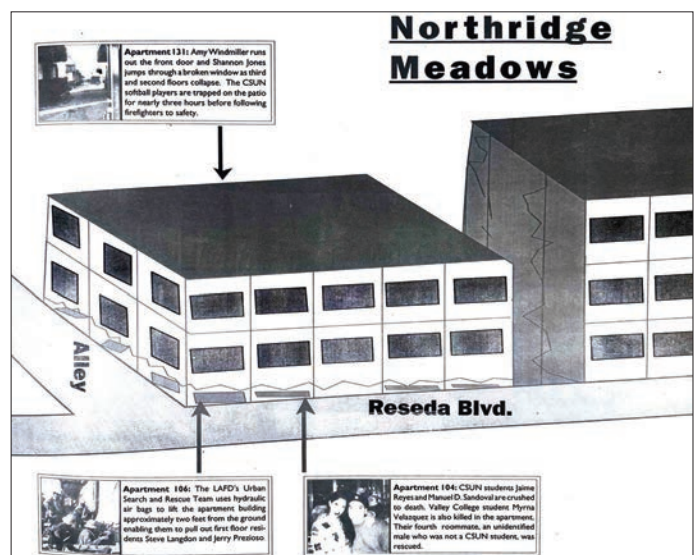
CSUN students Manuel Sandoval and Jaime Reyes tragically lost their lives when the second and third floors of the Northridge Meadows Apartments collapsed.



The images depict an entire parking structure collapsed and lost due to the earthquake's strength.



The above map shows how the campus buildings were damaged, what parts were closed off, and where they began cleaning up.



The above image shows where two CSUN softball players quickly jumped out of their apartment, where rescue teams went to save first-story residents, and where two CSUN students lost their lives from the floors collapsing.



## Account of a tragedy

### 'It felt like the devil was sending everyone to hell'

By Steve Keane  
Managing Editor

CSUN students Jaime Reyes and Manuel Sandoval died the morning of Jan. 17.

The apartment complex they just moved into hardly looked like a graveyard, but it soon became one for 16 people, including Reyes and Sandoval. The Northridge Meadows looked like many other 1970s-style, two-level, wood-frame, apartment buildings.

But they weren't.

The dozen or so Santa Perfect sleepers that lined the sidewalk along Reseda Boulevard resembled a large mattress liquidation sale.

But it wasn't.

"They threw out everything in my bedroom," said Diana Bui, a CSUN freshman whose second-floor apartment crashed to the ground level. "They had to tear out my bedroom floor to get a body out."

The apartment Bui and Jamie Lam occupied was located over the entry way. However, because the building shifted six feet north, their floor landed on Apt. 101, killing James Lee, 46, and his 14-year-old son, Howie. Lam's son broke his foot getting pulled out.

"Some of the civilians helped the mother out," Bui said. "Her other son broke his foot getting pulled out." Bui and Lam said that although the damage was extensive, they had no idea

they had descended to the first level. "I didn't figure it would just drop automatically," Bui said. "I didn't even know we were on the first floor until I looked out the window afterwards. I'm like, 'Oh my God, we're on the first floor.'"

Bui and Lam debated at first, then jumped from their balcony, becoming the first two of the complex's 140 residents to leave the collapsed building.

"It was like someone was tearing apart the corner of my apartment," said Scott Krumm.

27, who lived on the third floor. "It felt like the devil was sending everyone to hell."

Fire officials said the earthquake forced one half of the building about six feet north, while the other half moved about six feet south. LAFD Battalion Chief Bob Defeo compared the motion to that of a screwdriver.

"It just kind of turned," Defeo said. "It twisted right on an axis. There must have been some torque kind of force that came here."

"The bottom floor just went like a house of cards. You make a house of cards. You push it. It falls. That's exactly what happened here. Thank God the second and third floors didn't follow."

Approximately 75 firefighters—including the LAFD's Urban Search and



Rescue workers pull resident Steve Langdon from his crushed first-floor apartment.

**"I went through the Second World War. I was at Dunkirk. This was the worst experience of my life."**

Stanley Hand  
Northridge Meadows Resident

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See MEADOWS, page 3

Northridge Meadows' residents recount the night of the earthquake. They share how it was the most terrifying experience they had been through.

18 Monday, February 7, 1994

## SCIENCE COMPLEX EXPLODES

17 firefighting companies extinguish Science Complex blazes; HazMat investigates toxicity

By Jean Burman  
Features Editor

Like a thief in the night, the magnitude 6.6 earthquake that ripped through the Southland from its Northridge epicenter, robbed CSUN of many valuable resources.

Along with other damage, three of the four science buildings caught fire a few hours after the tremor hit, destroying at least one room and causing smoke damage to others.

As of Jan. 24, no exact numbers in terms of dollars, rooms destroyed or equipment lost were available from university officials.

Initial fears of chemical, biological and radioactive toxicity, as well as the subsequent closure of the campus, have prevented a precise appraisal of the damage's extent.

Building 2 of the Science Complex sustained the most damage as fires wrecked a number of second and third floor rooms on the east end of the building.

Science Buildings 1 and 3 appeared to lose only one or two rooms each, while Building 4 was unscathed.

Seventeen Los Angeles City Fire Department companies, two battalion chiefs and a Hazardous Materials Squad responded to the blaze, arriving around 7:30 a.m., according to fire Capt. Mike Rodriguez.

Approximately 60 firefighters extinguished the three blazes in just over two hours, Rodriguez said. Other fire officials said the three fires began separately, most likely because of flammable chemicals that may have been ignited by the quake.

"The latest report from HazMat [Hazardous Materials] was that there was no radiation leaks, no release of biological toxins and the situation is stable," said Jaime Thompson, director of the University News Bureau. "It's mostly a clean up problem now."

"Before students can return, buildings must be declared structurally

sound and work areas must clear up heavy equipment scattered by the earthquake," Thompson added. "Then faculty and staff will salvage what remains in the damaged rooms."

Battalion Chief William Burner said he was advised by some faculty and staff members about what hazardous materials were stored in the buildings.

"Some people were here when we got here," Burner said. "There were professors (and) people who work in the buildings. They were left to us."

Physics professor Adria Herzog, who lives near the campus, said he was initially concerned about a possible release of low-level radioactive "nucleotides" used by his department in experiments.

"At about 8 or 9 (a.m.), I saw black smoke from campus and I was worried about our nucleotides getting loose," he said.

According to subsequent inspection by HazMat and other health authorities, no nuclear material escaped their 50 lb. lead containers.

"As far as I know, there was no fire in any lab with radiation," said William Kupfer, CSUN radiation safety officer.

Capt. Rodriguez said 40 acetylene tanks did explode as a result of the blast. "They really enhanced the fire," he said. But, one of the buildings contained a hazardous waste dump that could have exploded but didn't, according to Rodriguez.

At first, firefighters sprayed water through the windows of the building in order to test the "reactivity," or test how the fire would react to water. The science buildings are each marked "4-4" on the red, yellow, blue "diamond placards," which are warning signs posted on the outside walls indicating the level of toxicity contained in the buildings.

This level of toxicity "is about the worst you can get for health, reactivity and fire," Rodriguez said.

After the fires were extinguished many firefighters responded to other emergencies. This left only HazMat



Science Complex 2, shown here, sustained the most damage from the clean, induced fire.

and a few firefighters to watch the charred buildings and the sweet smoke they emitted.

"We let it burn for a while so hopefully most of the chemicals would burn off," said Ray Hamel, a member of the HazMat squad. "We had to go in and mop up with hoses."

As much as HazMat feared raw flames, they knew the smoke can be just as deadly, Hamel said.

"I worry about it everyday because there's so many unknowns," he said. "Who knows if we're contaminated or

not." After the worst appeared over the firefighters packed up their gear and began leaving, biology professor Dr. Steven Oppenheimer came to see and surveyed the damage.

"There are maybe 100 or so animals in the basement," he told the firefighters, pointing in the direction of the science building. The mice, cancer mouse cell line and are used in research at the university, Oppenheimer said.

The air bags were used to rescue survivors Jerry Prentiss and Steve Langdon, who shared Apt. 106, next door to Reyes and Sandoval in Apt. 104.

Prentiss and Langdon were trapped in a "void," the term firefighters use for an area that allows minimal crawl space.

When buildings fall, structural members sometimes lean against other structural members, creating void space, Defeo said.

"Many (survivors) happened to be in these voids, but (Langdon's) leg was trapped so he had to be cut out," Defeo said. "They had to use air bags to lift some of the structural

Cal State University Los Angeles came through the quake with serious structural damage, but closed for two days after the quake to comply with the city's few, according to the UCLA University Times.

Valley Star reporter Robert contributed to this article.

## CSUN not only campus damaged; Royce Hall hit

By Jean Burman  
Assistant to the Editor

While CSUN was at the epicenter of the devastating 6.6 earthquake, several other local colleges and universities also suffered structural losses.

Allan Valley College in Van Nuys, the tremor prompted the closure of the chemistry building, according to Robert Finkel, a Valley Star reporter.

It was feared that hazardous chemicals may have been released during the quake, he said.

In Los Angeles, USC's damage was "very minimal," but two buildings were closed for a day, said Wayne Sage, USC news service director.

Bricks from the bell tower of the USC's Mudd Hall of Philosophy fell onto the roof and courtyard.

No housing on or off the campus was condemned.

The remainder of the building removed and the building was opened three days after the quake.

UCLA sustained water damage, despite structural damage to the Royce Hall towers, according to the UCLA Public Information Office. The damage closed the center and all scheduled events either been rescheduled or canceled.

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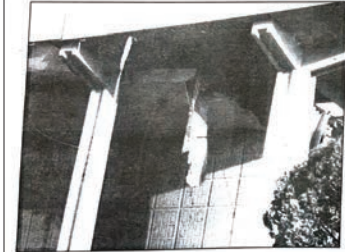
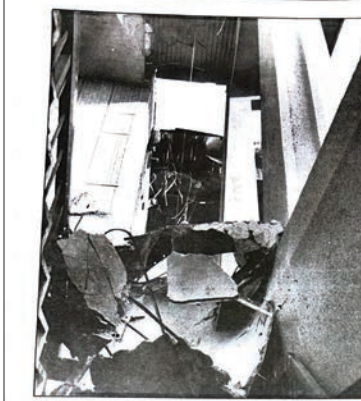
Valley Star reporter Robert contributed to this article.

16 Monday, February 7, 1994

## The Oviatt Library

"We know that it's a very serious mess inside and we know that cosmetically it looks awful. But apparently, structurally the library is not as bad of shape as it would look to us."

President Blenda J. Wilson  
Jan. 19, 1994



Photos by Bryan Wilson



"We will probably have to move some pillars. I don't know how they will do that, but it will open this semester."

Jaime Thompson, Director,  
University News Bureau  
Feb. 1, 1994

The images display the substantial amount of damage to the Oviatt Library post-earthquake. "...We know that cosmetically it looks awful. But apparently, structurally the library is not in as bad of shape as it would look to us," said then President Blenda J. Wilson.

## MEADOWS

Continued from page 2

Rescue teams—extracted eight first-floor residents who were trapped beneath the rubble.

Defeo attributed the successful rescue to new sonar equipment that locates victims by detecting breathing sounds. A hydraulic jack—known to firefighters as a rescue air bag—with a 70-ton lifting capability is used in saving structural debris.

The air bags were used to rescue survivors Jerry Prentiss and Steve Langdon, who shared Apt. 106, next door to Reyes and Sandoval in Apt. 104.

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When buildings fall, structural members sometimes lean against other structural members, creating void space, Defeo said.

"Many (survivors) happened to be in these voids, but (Langdon's) leg was trapped so he had to be cut out," Defeo said. "They had to use air bags to lift some of the structural

members, and then they did him out."

In addition to the new equipment and the LAFD's canine squad, Defeo attributed many of the rescues to his dedicated staff.

"I think anybody that went inside and started making actual physical rescues have to be considered heroes," Defeo said. "The conditions in there were dangerous. In some areas, unsafe. There's a lot of structural mem-

bers just standing alone that are not leaning against anything. With the people being alive in there and the opportunity to rescue, they went forward with those rescues."

Nearby residents were able to rescue several tenants of Northridge Meadows before firefighters arrived.

"We helped some old lady who was deaf," said Alfred Sales, a CSUN student who was one of the first to

arrive at Northridge Meadows. "We knocked the door down and she was still in bed. She refused to go out. We tried to explain to her with sign language and finally, we got her out. Then she saw what the hell was going on."

Sales also attempted to help an elderly woman trapped on the third floor. Firefighters arrived and finished the rescue.

"I guess the people that were caught in there were elderly people that couldn't react as fast as younger people," Sales said.

One elderly man who did react quickly was Stanley Hand, 79, who lived in the north end of the complex.

"I didn't even feel the ceiling falling on me," said Hand's wife, Joanne, 57. "I thought I could get out of bed, but I couldn't. This little man (Stanley) had to lift me up and carry me."

The Hands crawled through the wreckage and then squeezed through an 18-inch opening in their bedroom window.

"I went through the Second World War. I was at Dunkirk," Stanley Hand said. "This was worse. This was the worst experience of my life."



Valley Star reporter Robert contributed to this article.

Firefighters discuss strategy to extinguish chemical fire.

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# Calculating the Quake

WRITTEN BY ISAAC GAVINO | INFOGRAPHIC BY ISAAC GAVINO

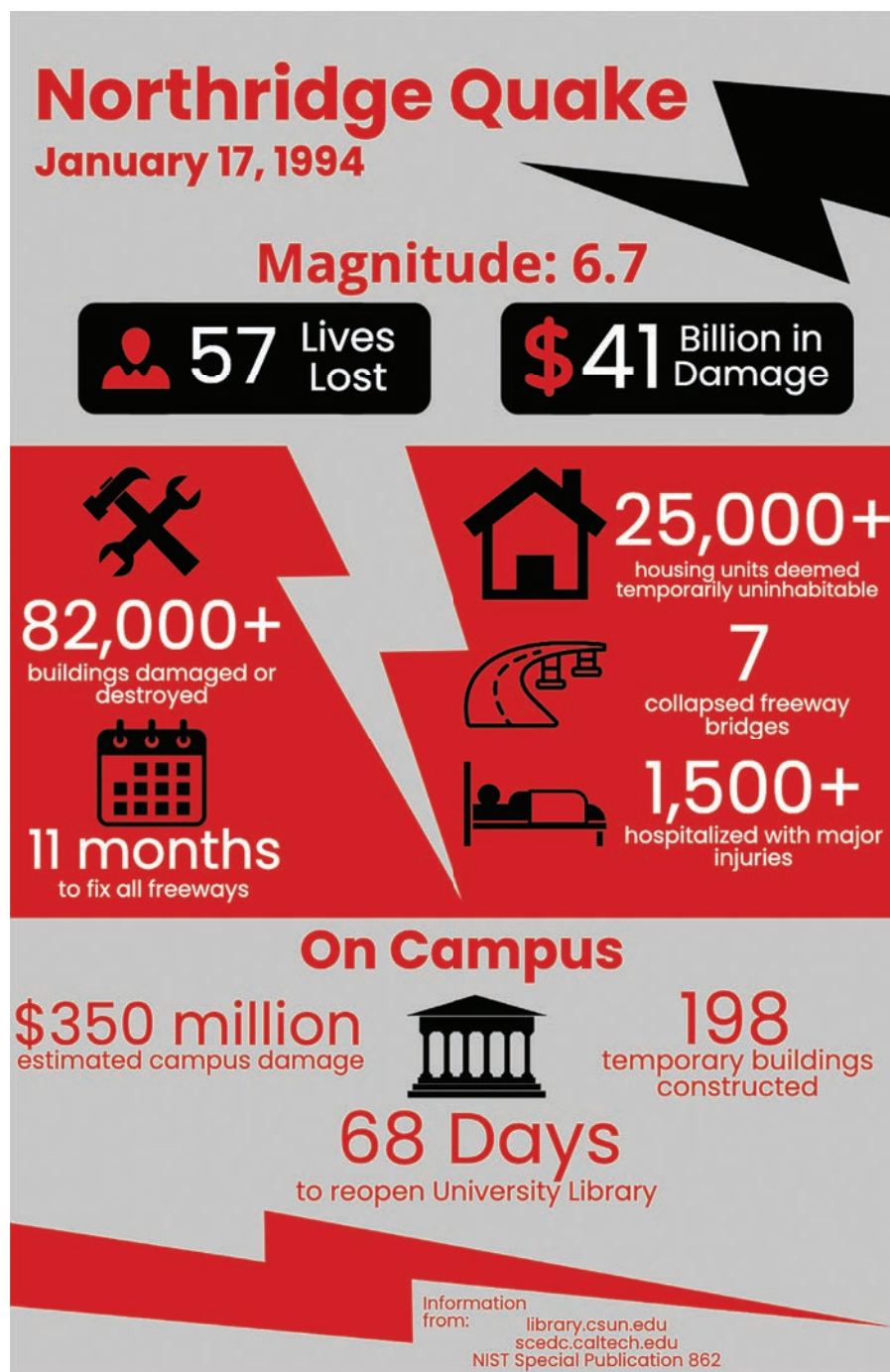
At 4:30 a.m. on Jan. 17, 1994, the San Fernando Valley shook. With a recorded magnitude of 6.7, the Northridge earthquake may not have been “the big one,” being neither of California’s two biggest earthquakes of the ’90s, but the densely populated location of the quake’s epicenter caused a significant loss of life and, at the time, the costliest earthquake in U.S. history.

Fifty-seven people died in the disaster, many in collapsing apartment complexes, according to the National Center for Earthquake Engineering Research. While the early morning timing of the earthquake on Martin Luther King Jr. Day significantly reduced possible casualties, damages equated to an estimated \$41 billion in direct costs, according to William Petak, a professor at the University of Southern California.

State reports and inspections found 82,000 buildings damaged or destroyed. Of the surviving buildings, 9,441 were yellow-tagged, restricting entry. Another 3,060 structures were red-tagged, completely banning access. Federal reports centered on infrastructure identified 212 freeway sections needing repair, as well as multiple collapsed parking structures and bridges.

After the disaster, confusion was met with a swift emergency response. Up to 125,000 people were deemed temporarily unhoused due to the quake, largely due to the overrepresentation of apartment buildings among damaged structures, according to the Los Angeles Daily News. State reports note that this number was drastically reduced in the following weeks.

Some 11,800 people received hospital treatment. Most hospitals suffered little structural damage, a



testament to earthquake preparedness programs in the state that continue to be expanded in the wake of the tragedy.

Residential buildings took years to rebuild, but most transportation infrastructure was fully repaired by December 1994, according to a report

from the Project Management Institute.

Spring classes began two weeks late at California State University, Northridge, with many students filling temporary portable classrooms, as every building on campus needed repairs.



# How to Be READY to RUMBLE

WRITTEN BY ALLISON MALTUN

Earthquakes can happen anywhere, at any place and time, so many people in Southern California keep go-bags with safety essentials. California State University, Northridge, has protocols and emergency systems in place, which can be found on the Emergency Management and Preparedness site.

Some items in a go-bag include a flashlight, batteries, water, a first-aid kit, a whistle, and non-perishable food. Emergency survival backpacks on the market come with all the items you would need, and they are available at stores like Walmart and Amazon.

To stay safe during an earthquake, it is essential to remain calm. Dropping to the ground is the first step when one feels the ground shake. The second step is to cover the neck and head by crawling

under something sturdy. The third step is to hold the position until the shaking stops. It is advised to avoid large objects that are likely to fall and windows. If someone is outside, they should find a secluded area and avoid trees, light poles, and tall buildings. Should someone be in a car, they should stop driving and put the car in park.

University protocols are implemented in case of an emergency to ensure campus safety, including following staff directions, evaluating the surroundings, and evacuating when needed. Students are not to use elevators during emergencies and should opt for stairs, according to the CSUN Emergency Management and Preparedness website.

CSUN's Campus Emergency Operations Center coordinates resources and personnel

to handle an emergency effectively. The center can be found on the second floor of the Department of Police Services and students can go to it with any emergency-related concerns.

Knowing what to do in an emergency is vital to staying safe, as informed actions are faster than uninformed actions. With easy access to evacuation maps, students can learn exit routes and assembly points. Faculty, staff and students have different responsibilities to keep each other safe. CSUN sends email updates in emergencies; information is also available on its website and social media.





# Constructive Feedback

## How Northridge Rebuilt Itself

WRITTEN BY CLAIRE BOECK

Carmen Ramos Chandler heard the sound of the earthquake before she felt it. It sounded like 10 freight trains speeding directly towards her house, all at the same time.

It was in the middle of the night, just after 4:30 a.m. on Jan. 17, 1994. Her mattress sat atop a metal box frame with four rolling wheels. When the 6.7 magnitude earthquake hit, the vertical shaking motions forced her body up into the air. Then, the horizontal shaking motions rolled her bed out right from under her, while she plummeted to the ground.

Ramos Chandler is the current director of media relations at California State University, Northridge. But back then, she was a reporter for the Los Angeles Daily News. Following the quake, her newsroom was unsafe to enter. It had been damaged heavily, and she had to work from home while listening to the radio.

Her friend Tony visited CSUN shortly after the earthquake. He was shocked at the destruction. Piles of rubble, caved-in classrooms and parking structures. Cracks in nearly every wall. Staircases woven in jumbled messes that looked like an M.C. Escher painting. A chemical fire that broke out near Bianchi Planetarium and forced firefighters to wear hazmat suits. And he saw the iconic columns of the University Library were crumbling. They were bending. Some had been

twisted nearly 180 degrees.

He came back hopeless. “The campus will never reopen,” he said.

But it did. The spring 1994 semester started in February, just two weeks behind schedule. It was a momentous reconstruction effort, made possible by several state and federal agencies and the leadership of CSUN’s then-President Blenda Wilson.

The earthquake occurred on a fault line that was previously undetected by scientists. According to the Southern California Earthquake Data Center, it “produced the strongest ground motions ever instrumentally recorded in an urban setting in North America.” Its strong up-and-down motions combined with side-to-side motions created a level of devastation that most buildings on campus were not equipped to handle.

Each of the 58 buildings on campus received some kind of damage. Some were in worse shape than others.

George Johnson, currently an equipment technician for the cinema and television arts department, was contracted to help record footage of the destruction. This footage was then sent to FEMA, or the Federal Emergency Management Agency, to prove the extent of the damage and to receive the appropriate emergency funds.

He and several other teams would inspect various buildings and capture footage on handheld video cameras. When deemed safe, they also stepped inside to witness books knocked off shelves, desks crumbled to pieces,

staircases ripped from their walls, and piles of glass from broken windows.

Aftershocks, or a series of smaller earthquakes after the main one, made the work dangerous. One building Johnson was inspecting suddenly shifted because of an aftershock, and cement projectiles the size of a bullet shot out of the crumbling wall at high speeds.

It was harrowing work, but Johnson said he did not think about it that way in the moment.

“At the time, you understand your role is to help the school rebuild. Help the students out,” Johnson said. “You don’t think about that stuff at the time.”

After inspection, if a building was so damaged it was deemed too expensive to repair — or cheaper to tear down — it was demolished. Johnson compared it to car insurance. If an insurance company finds the damage is more costly than the value of the car, they will not try to fix it.

Four buildings on campus met this fate, and were torn down.

One of them was the South Library. It was built in 1959, and was the first permanent building to be constructed on campus back when it was known as the San Fernando Valley State College. It was originally near Santa Susana Hall. The building was torn down and not replaced.

Another was the Fine Arts Building, built in 1960. It was the precursor to the modern-day Manzanita Hall and located in a similar spot. Much like its present incarnation, it held a





**Left: Photo by Rodrigo Hernandez. Right: Scan from George Johnson.**

combination of classrooms, faculty offices, and venues for fine art events. It was demolished three years after the earthquake, being deemed structurally unsafe.

The University Tower Apartments, a seven-story tall dormitory constructed in 1969, was also demolished four years after the quake. However, the apartments had been closed since 1991 due to poor plumbing systems and asbestos contamination.

A five-level concrete parking structure, built just 18 months before the quake, famously bent like rubber due to shoddy construction that didn't meet earthquake construction codes at the time. It was the only building on campus to completely collapse. To this day, it remains one of the most iconic and memorable images following the Northridge earthquake. It was demolished.

While the spring semester may have started in February, reconstruction efforts were far from finished. Professors worked out of their cars, trailers and houses in nearby neighborhoods. Students had classes under trees, on lawns, fields and inside large mylar tents. A 10,000-square foot tent named the Lindley Library Dome temporarily housed fine arts collections and acted as a makeshift study area. All the while, construction workers and engineers from all around the country flew in to help.

President Wilson was adamant the reconstruction would not get in the way

of students' success.

"She told me, 'Socrates did not teach in the classroom. Aristotle did not teach in the classroom,'" Ramos Chandler said, quoting Wilson. "All I need to ensure education takes place are faculty who are willing to teach and students who are willing to learn."

Months after the earthquake, Ramos Chandler was working at CSUN. There were still groups of engineers on the campus sent by FEMA to assess damage and assist with reconstruction. One of the engineers let her in on just how destructive the earthquake had been for the campus.

"It was as if a giant on campus had reached down and picked up the University Library, the entire building, and lifted it up about 10, 15 feet, and then let go," Ramos Chandler said. "He said that's what it did to every single building on campus."

In 2023, CSUN buildings are constructed a lot differently. All campuses in the California State University system are required to go through an intensive seismic review process for the construction of any new building, a process that didn't exist prior to the Northridge earthquake.

It begins at the very start of the planning stage, with engineers creating computer models and simulations to determine structural weak points. These models are also used on pre-existing buildings to determine if they need to be seismically retrofitted, or upgraded to better withstand future earthquakes. Then, seismic engineers

remain present throughout the entirety of the construction process to make sure things are going as planned.

Kenneth Rosenthal, the associate vice president of facilities development and operations, said that the safety of all students is "paramount" when designing new CSUN buildings.

"That's the number one thing we're concerned with," he said.

The seismic assessments cost a considerable chunk of change, but Rosenthal thinks it is well worth it. He says it is better to pay a small amount now than pay an even bigger price tag to repair a faulty building damaged in a future earthquake.

Not only does it cost money, it also costs time. Rosenthal says most people do not expect construction projects to take as much time as they do. The planned Sierra Hall renovation, for instance, is planned to take around three years.

"The Northridge earthquake happened in 1994, and we fundamentally didn't finish rebuilding the campus until roughly 2004, so it was a 10-year process," Rosenthal said. "It took a decade to put the campus completely back together again."

If the "Big One" ever rears its head soon, it is safe to say that CSUN will be prepared.

"If we had an earthquake of that size again, I guarantee you, I want to be at CSUN," Ramos Chandler said. "I feel safer at CSUN than anywhere else in Southern California."



# **DIGITIZING THE PAST**

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**Videographer  
Archives Northridge  
Earthquake Footage**

WRITTEN BY JAZ MENDEZ







The University Library,  
formerly known as the  
Oviatt, after the quake,  
January 1994.





The interior of the Fine Arts building after the quake and an aisle of fallen books in the University Library, January 1994.

George Johnson is no stranger to earthquakes. He grew up all over the San Fernando Valley, moving from West Hills to Northridge to Mission Hills and back to Northridge again. Like one big seismic wave, his life became intertwined with the Northridge earthquake.

Johnson studied television and film production at California State University, Northridge. He graduated in 1984 and landed a job with the Federal Emergency Management Agency as a videographer soon after.

He considers himself homegrown, so leaving FEMA to return to his

Matador roots was a welcomed change. "Call it fate or whatever - it took an earthquake to bring me back and keep me here."

Things aligned for Johnson in 1994, when a 6.7 magnitude earthquake hit Northridge. Like many areas in the San Fernando Valley, CSUN's infrastructure was completely damaged.

Cracked sidewalks and broken-down buildings made the campus look like a war zone. "It was horrible what the quake did, and I wanted to prove what I was seeing," Johnson said.

Working for FEMA allowed

Johnson to offer his services in capturing footage of the damages. "I was just an outside contractor. My previous employment contract was up, and the [cinema and television arts] department was advertising my current job. I applied and got it," he explained.

As an equipment technician, Johnson has been digitizing earthquake footage for CSUN. "I was the only person from my department here. And one of the things that I did was scan all the earthquake pictures that were taken here, and then I donated the original pictures to the





Johnson looking at the construction of Manzanita Hall around 1999.

library archives.”

Prior to the earthquake, CSUN’s physical landscape consisted of more grass and trees. That isn’t the case anymore. “There are more buildings. And I think that is because of the growth. There are so many more students here now, and they need a place to have a classroom or a place to learn, but some of the original landscaping is still on campus,” Johnson said.

Rebuilding CSUN was not an easy task. According to Johnson, it took upwards of 10 years to get the campus fully functioning. Present-

day Manzanita Hall was among the buildings torn down around 1996.

“FEMA has a rule that if there’s a building that’s lost, they have to tear down and replace the physical building or something close to it. But it took quite a few years before they got the campus back to the way it is today,” Johnson explained.

Digitized earthquake footage has been sectioned into four phases. The first phase consists of physical damages of all the buildings, particularly inventory.

“Videographers would go into somebody’s office, maybe their VCR

was on the floor, the computers. So they made sure to capture that,” Johnson said.

The first phase of the footage also consisted of handy work. When it came to restoring electricity, CSUN brought in structural inspectors and maintenance people who specialized in electrical.

“If they were coming in this room, in the electrical tradition, the structural inspector would be walking around and looking at loose wires. The carpenter would see some ceiling tiles down, and someone else would say there is a piece of an air conditioning



Johnson on site  
at the demolition  
of the Fine Arts  
building in 1998.







*Like many areas in the San Fernando Valley,  
CSUN's infrastructure was completely damaged.*

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hose hanging out. Each expert in their field would talk about what they saw that needed to be fixed," Johnson explained.

The second phase also included inventory footage. The third phase is perhaps the largest, consisting of 260 tapes. "Phase three is basically reconstruction."

The reconstruction is followed by phase four, which is the end of reconstruction and the general day-to-day canvas of campus. Phase four has around 200 tapes.

"Since August, I have digitized all of phase one. I started two, but it was really boring. So I stopped phase two, and moved directly into phase three, which is what I'm working on now."

Johnson has range with his craft; he normally gets through a minimum of four tapes or a maximum of 10 tapes done in a day.

"There was never any documentation like that done for the school. Now that we are doing the earthquake stuff, now is a good time to get that done for prosperity," Johnson said.

Most of the footage is not so glamorous. All accidents were required to be documented. "I was just looking at a tape the other day where a guy was working in an electrical room, and he got shocked. So sometimes there were

accidents, and we had to record stuff like that," Johnson said.

Nonetheless, Johnson believes some good came from the earthquake. "I would say the buildings needed to be better, and now they are stronger."

After the earthquake, administrators needed to revamp the campus's west side. Manzanita Hall and the newly-built Maple Hall did not exist. "Manzanita Hall was not the original building on this lot. There used to be a library that was at one end of the lot and a fine arts building that took up the rest of it," Johnson explained.

The creation of Manzanita Hall, which houses the Mike Curb College of Arts, Media, and Communications, led to a revitalization of its programs. "Journalism got a nice studio, CTVA and [communication] studies got rooms they never had before."

Johnson is looking forward to completing his digitizing project, but the project has also enabled him to reflect on how the earthquake helped the campus evolve.

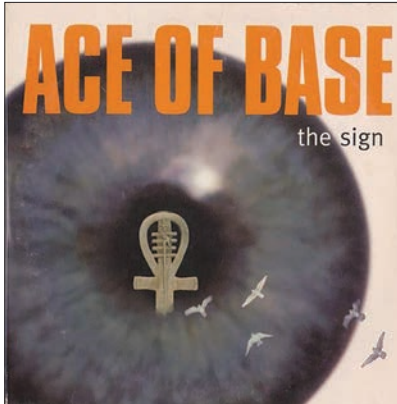
"I think the infrastructure is better. There are a lot of places with Wi-Fi connected to the building on the outside, so students can use their devices all across the campus. So the earthquake benefited us ultimately," Johnson said.



# Cantando

WRITTEN BY SASHA ALIKHANOV

The 90's saw a mainstream love for R&B and romantic ballads. Billboard listed the following songs as the year-end top five of 1994, the year of the earthquake. As the forefront of American music charts, success on Billboard translates to widespread popularity in the States. Before people streamed music on Spotify, high charting songs reached their peaks with pure sales and radioplay. These are the songs people bought on CDs and tuned into on their car radios.



## The Sign

Ace of Base

Ace of Base's reggae-inspired Europop single "The Sign" was the top Billboard-ranked song of 1994. Despite its release the year prior, the song had stable success throughout 1994 and earned a Grammy nomination in 1995 for Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals. The song's success also showed the power of Swedish-made pop music and paved the way for the prominence of Swedish musicians and producers in the global market.

## BILLBOARD 1994 YEAR END CHART



Data from Billboard.  
Infographic by Sasha Alikhanov.



## I Swear

All-4-One

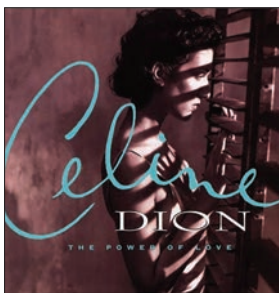
The group All-4-One showcased their vocal abilities on the ballad "I Swear," which Billboard ranked second. The song was an R&B cover of a country song, reminiscent of the genre-swapping success of Whitney Houston's cover of "I Will Always Love You" two years prior, and both covers remain staples of marriage receptions. All-4-One's rendition is one of their signature tracks and won Best Pop Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals at the 1995 Grammy Awards.



## I'll Make Love to You

Boyz II Men

The ballad "I'll Make Love to You," written by singer Babyface and performed by Boyz II Men, was a commercial success, landing third on Billboard's year-end list. With 14 weeks atop the Hot 100 chart, the song tied Houston's aforementioned cover for the most weeks at No. 1. The song won Best R&B Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocals at the 1995 Grammy Awards and is exemplary of R&B's dominance in the '90s.



## The Power of Love

Celine Dion

Another covered ballad, "The Power of Love" by Celine Dion ranked fourth on Billboard's year-end list. Dion's first Hot 100-topping song also reached No. 1 in Canada and Australia, becoming the best-selling song by a woman in 1994. The vocal prowess of Dion is on display during the five-minute song, which tells a story of devotion to one's partner, reflecting the trend of romantic ballads in the decade.



## Hero

Mariah Carey

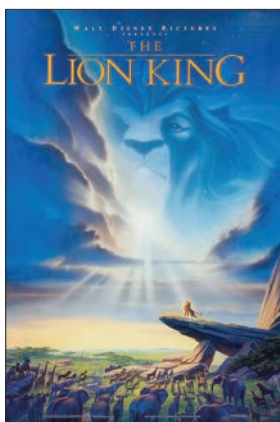
The elusive chanteuse Mariah Carey is a chart-topping juggernaut and Billboard ranked her fan-favorite ballad "Hero" fifth on their year-end list. The triple-platinum certified song's themes of perseverance and inner strength made it one of Carey's signature songs, with a performance at Barack Obama's inauguration over a decade after its release. While not Carey's favorite song, she performs the Grammy-nominated track consistently in hopes the message resonates with someone in the audience.



# Matador Marquee

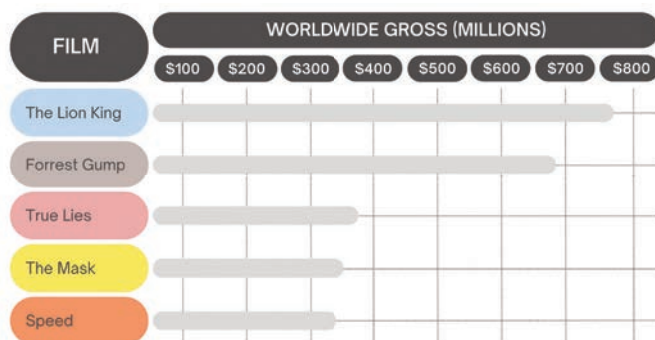
WRITTEN BY SASHA ALIKHANOV

The top films of 1994 went on to become staples people have enjoyed in the theater and in the comfort of their homes. The following films were ranked by their year-end worldwide gross, according to Box Office Mojo by IMDb Pro. Looking at the films that shaped the year sets the scene for pop culture at the time. Among the five titles are household names whose stardom skyrocketed after the success of their performances.



## “The Lion King”

is an animated Disney musical set in Africa. The epic was the highest worldwide grossing film of 1994, with staple performances by James Earl Jones, Nathan Lane, Whoopi Goldberg, and more stars. The narrative was accompanied by music from Elton John, Tim Rice and Hans Zimmer. The film follows a Shakespeare-inspired story of Simba finding his way back to his place in the circle of life.



Data from Box Office Mojo by IMDb Pro.  
Infographic by Sasha Alikhanov.



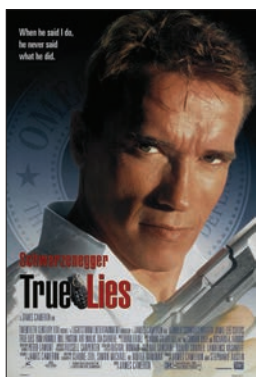
## “Forrest Gump”

is a comedy-drama that follows Tom Hanks as the titular character. The film was named Best Picture, among other Academy Awards, and ranked second in worldwide gross. With five other Oscars, the multi-award winning movie about a man’s complex life from All-American football to the Watergate scandal is a staple in pop culture and is in the National Film Registry for its significance.



## “The Mask”

is a comedy film starring Jim Carrey, based on the comic book series of the same name. When Carrey’s character puts on a green wooden mask, the shy bank clerk becomes a cartoonish version of his inner self. The film had the fourth-highest worldwide gross of the year, with a \$32 million budget and an over \$351 million worldwide gross, which made it the most profitable comic book adaptation until it was surpassed in 2019 by “Joker.”



## “True Lies”

is a comedy-action film that follows Harry Tasker, played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, and his struggle to balance being a spy, husband and father. The James Cameron-written and directed project was the third-highest worldwide grossing film of 1994, and the first to cost \$100 million, a record Cameron doubled with “Titanic” in 1997. Jamie Lee Curtis won a Golden Globe Award for her performance as Helen, Harry’s wife, who is seeking adventure amidst a midlife crisis.



## “Speed”

is an action film that follows public transportation passengers as they operate a bus that will explode if it goes under 50 mph. The film won the Academy Awards for best sound effects editing and best sound, while ranking fifth in worldwide gross of 1994. Keanu Reeves is Jack Traven, a bomb disposal officer trying to diffuse the situation, alongside Sandra Bullock in her breakthrough role as Annie Porter, an everyday person who took control of the bus as it barreled through Los Angeles.



# Remembering Student Volunteer Efforts

WRITTEN BY TRISHA ANAS

Thirty years ago, an earthquake desolated the San Fernando Valley. Buildings were destroyed, locals were devastated and California State University, Northridge crumbled. With community efforts, though, the college quickly recuperated and was soon up and running after a month.

A monument was later erected by CSUN's then-President Blenda Wilson, who was hired in 1992, to commemorate and acknowledge the faculty and staff of the university, but a crucial part was missing — a dedication to students who put in the extra effort and time to volunteer.

During his undergraduate studies, CSUN alumnus Aquiles Morales worked as a community service officer and student volunteer. In partnership with the campus police services, Morales and other student volunteers dedicated time to assisting the campus and the community with anything needed after the earthquake.

Morales was living in an apartment on Reseda Boulevard and Prairie Street at the time. He said the surrounding area had been wrecked.

"Everything around where I lived was pretty badly damaged, and it was pretty scary," he said.

Morales, who was studying sociology, said that the earthquake heavily impacted the community and left students in uncertainty.

"The campus that I knew when I first got to [CSUN] and the way that it was had completely changed," Morales said. "I had classes in Sierra Hall and they



were pretty damaged, so we couldn't go in. As students, it really impacted us because we had to adjust to being in makeshift classrooms."

Bungalows were put in place of classrooms, but because the earthquake happened in January, students had to weather rain and mud to continue attending class.

"Because that happened in January, you go through a season of winds, cold and rain, and that January it really started to come down," Morales said. "A lot of the areas where these bungalows were set had a bunch of dirt and grass areas, so we had to walk through a bunch of mud too. It was pretty nasty."

After the campus had more or less been restored, Morales said the monument Wilson presented a year after the

earthquake felt like a slap in the face.

It only mentioned the faculty and staff who helped the university, but not the students who volunteered just as much time.

"We dedicated a lot of our own time too, not just our school environment where we were trying to learn what we were going to school for, but at the same time we were working," Morales said. "I felt a little betrayed by my school, but particularly by the school president, because I would've thought she would've also acknowledged the students on the plaque."

In response, Morales felt like something needed to be said and that the students needed to be recognized in some capacity for their efforts, so he wrote a letter to the editor at The Daily Sundial





Left page: Aquiles in front of a Christmas tree. Photo by Trisha Anas. Upper right page: A close up of Aquiles holding a scan of his letter to the editor. Photo by Trisha Anas. Lower right page: Two scans of the photos above Aquiles' letter.

and Wilson to express his frustrations with the lack of acknowledgement. He suggested students should have at least been added to the plaque.

"I'm not asking that a building be built for us, but why not add on the names of those few dedicated students who worked within the first month after the earthquake to the monument?" his letter read. "We all helped for the betterment of our university and should be recognized equally."

Shortly after, Morales received a letter in the mail, handwritten by Wilson. She apologized for not including students in the plaque, but added that her reason

was because the faculty and staff would be at the university for more years to come.

"I felt like that was a slap in the face, with all honesty," Morales said. "I thought, 'Well, okay, I get it. They're working there and may be for the next few years, but I'm going to be an alumni. Is that not anything important?'"

He added that while he was not trying to discredit the efforts of other faculty members, he felt the recognition was unbalanced.

"I honestly don't remember faculty members, beyond maybe the police officers and maintenance people, being on

the campus because it happened so early in the morning and it was a Monday," he said. "There were some of us that were there literally right after it happened, like, within an hour or two."

Morales also received a letter from then-chair of the sociology department Harvey E. Rich, who thanked him for his work as a community service officer.

Even now, Morales said he still reflects on what he experienced and how the ordeal left an indelible mark.

"It was something that happened, and I still understand the passion I had then about what happened to now," he said. "I still feel the same."



# A Garden from the Rubble

WRITTEN BY DEVIN MALONE | PHOTOGRAPHED BY RODRIGO HERNANDEZ

While most students currently attending California State University, Northridge, are not old enough to remember the 1994 earthquake, there are a few locations where the quake and the people who dedicated themselves to rebuilding the campus in its aftermath are memorialized, such as the Laretta Wasserstein Earthquake Sculpture Garden.

Before sunrise on Jan. 17, 1994, a 6.7 magnitude earthquake violently shook Northridge and the surrounding areas, claiming the lives of at least 57 people and injuring about 9,000 others. Because the earthquake struck early in the morning, very few people were on campus, which minimized potential injuries and fatalities. Two of the fatalities, though, were CSUN students Jaime Reyes and Manuel Sandoval, who were roommates at the Northridge Meadows Apartments.

Many buildings and streets across the San Fernando Valley suffered heavy damage. Infrastructure that was not built to endure earthquakes of such magnitude collapsed, streets caved in, exposing dangerous gas pipes, and even parts of Interstate 10 Freeway. In total, around \$20 billion were spent on damage repairs following the quake.

CSUN was not left untouched by the earthquake, as the campus itself sustained damage as well. Some of the most notable pictures of the earthquake are of the University Library, as much of the overhanging roof had collapsed to the floor outside. While the main body of the library endured the earthquake, two wings were so badly damaged that they had to be demolished and rebuilt.

Other structures weren't so lucky. An entire parking structure on Zelzah Avenue built two years prior collapsed in on itself as a result of the numerous after-

shocks that followed the earthquake.

The estimated \$400 million of damages to CSUN were so extensive that reconstruction of the campus did not officially conclude until 2007.

Despite the damage to the campus, CSUN has endured long after the Northridge earthquake. However, even 30 years later the quake's impact can still be felt across the San Fernando Valley and CSUN.

Located near the intersection of Lindley Avenue and the Mike Curb College Arts Walk, the Laretta Wasserstein Sculpture Garden – also known as the Earthquake Garden – was made in remembrance of the massive quake that shook the campus to its core.

Originally erected in 2003, the Earthquake Garden was a collaborative effort between artist Margy Sievers and landscape architect Paul Lewis. It was named in honor of CSUN health science professor, Laretta Wasserstein, who passed away a decade prior.

The gardens consist of numerous structures fashioned from rubble left over from some of the damaged buildings. One titled Column Under Pressure is a large bent pillar from the toppled parking structure that juts out of the ground and leans against a rock as a form of support.

Further back, a smaller pillar with exposed, mangled rebar sits at the start of a small, uneven path that leads to the central portion of the garden. This pillar is adorned with a plaque, bearing the garden's namesake and all those who contributed to its construction.

Even some items present at the garden meant for student leisure and rest were originally debris as well, such as the two Rubble Benches. One features a large crack in its center, revealing its innards. The other is a more intact piece,

tagged with bright red graffiti.

While every structure in the garden contains symbolic references to the Northridge earthquake, not all of them are recycled pieces of campus wreckage. The largest art piece in the garden, Seismic Rings, is located at the center. This structure consists of six rings that grow in size as they get farther from their epicenter, a visual allusion to the 6.7 magnitude earthquake.

In a 2003 article written for Community@CSUN, Sievers shared that while her house was destroyed by the earthquake, she was quick to start painting and photographing the damage left in the wake of the incident. It was when she saw the damage at CSUN that the initial idea for what would become the garden took root.

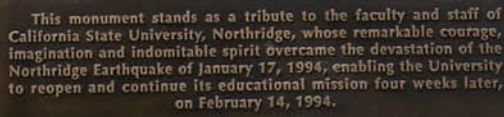
"In the destruction and contorted and bent structures were shapes and forms that reflected elements of beauty," Sievers was quoted in the article.

While it might be the most iconic art piece on campus related to the event, the Earthquake Garden is not the only monument erected as a result of the quake. Near the Sierra Quad and Magnolia Hall are two permanent installations; one was erected in 1995 and was dedicated to the hundreds of faculty and staff members who helped deal with the quake's aftermath and got the campus reopened to the public within a month.

The other is a courtyard with a plaque commemorating former CSUN president Blenda Wilson, who oversaw the university while it was under reconstruction. The courtyard was dedicated to Wilson in 2014, 20 years after the earthquake.

While CSUN has long since recovered from the earthquake, the memory of it is instilled for anyone to come and see.



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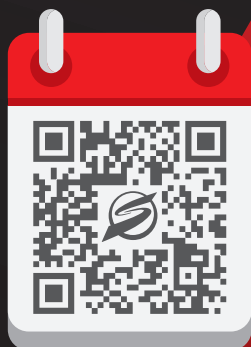
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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*Events subject to change*

## FEATURED EVENTS



### DREAM Center: Welcome Week

Tuesday, Jan. 23: 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

📍 University Student Union

Wednesday, Jan. 24: 5 – 7 p.m.

📍 Games Room



### Pride Center: T-Time

Wednesday, Jan. 24: 5 – 6:30 p.m.

📍 Pride Center



### Spring Fest

Thursday, Jan. 25: 10 a.m. – 3 p.m.

📍 Plaza del Sol



### VRC: Veteran Welcome

Friday, Jan. 26: 6 – 7 p.m.

📍 Zoom



### SRC Personal Training Sale

Monday, Jan. 19 – Friday, Feb. 2

📍 Student Recreation Center



### Art Jam Wednesdays

Wednesday, Jan. 31: Noon – 1 p.m.

📍 Plaza del Sol



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