

# NEVER FORGET

Earthquake - 10 year later

10.18.14

Residents, city officials gather to remember lives lost in Loma Prieta earthquake



SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Dick Wilson, who as city manager, led Santa Cruz through the challenges after the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, speaks at the 25-year commemoration of the quake in downtown Santa Cruz, just steps from the hole that remains where Bookshop Santa Cruz and the Santa Cruz Coffee Roasting Co. stood before they were destroyed by the temblor.

**By Calvin Men**

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**SANTA CRUZ »** The wooden rocking horse inside of Bookshop Santa Cruz is a relic from the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake, rescued from the debris of the old store.

Neal Coonerty, who ran the bookstore at the time, remembered the rocking horse Friday during a 25th anniversary Loma Prieta commemoration ceremony in downtown Santa Cruz.

"The old wooden rocking horse that was in our children's section, I thought if I'm going to start over with nothing, I'm going to get this rocking horse out of the store," Coonerty said.

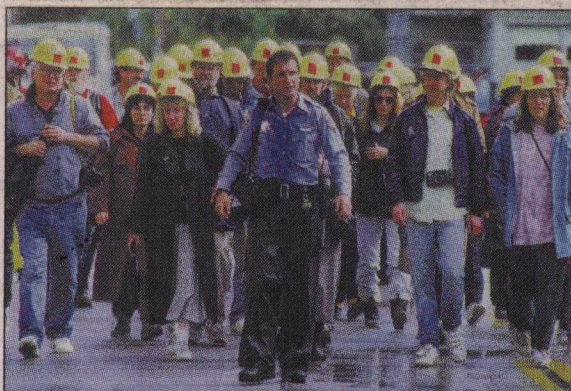
He was one of a handful of speakers at Memorial Plaza in downtown Santa Cruz on Friday during a

commemoration ceremony for the 25th anniversary of the 6.9-magnitude earthquake. Dozens of spectators stood solemnly as former and current city officials, scientists and others remembered the terrifying temblor that rocked the Bay Area.

While the facade of the bookstore was undamaged, walls within had collapsed and the building was declared unsafe. Coonerty recounted the response of the community when he asked for help, with hundreds of people lining up to sign a safety waiver and risking their lives to help salvage the shop's inventory.

"When we saw the line, well, it still gives me goose bumps today thinking about it," he said. "How many people came and were willing to take that risk to help save the bookshop. That they wanted

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BILL LOVEJOY — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL FILE

Anxious merchants get a police escort to the downtown business neighborhood for the first time days after the quake left many of their businesses in ruins.

**+ Online:** To watch a video of Neal Coonerty talking about the kindness of strangers in the wake of the earthquake, go to [SANTACRUZSENTINEL.COM](http://SANTACRUZSENTINEL.COM) and click on this article.

**+ Online:** To view a slideshow of photos from the Loma Prieta earthquake, visit [SANTACRUZSENTINEL.COM](http://SANTACRUZSENTINEL.COM)

## Quake

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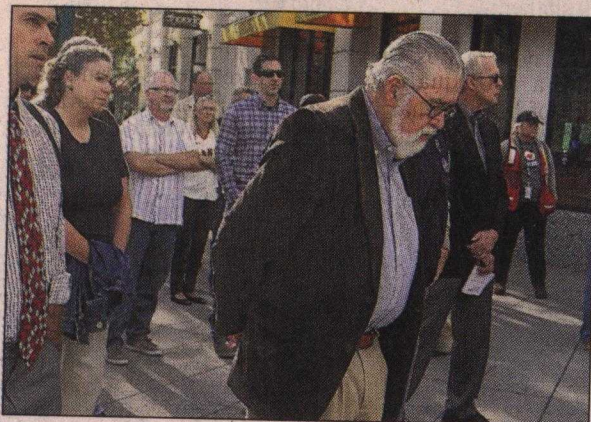
downtown back and wanted Bookshop Santa Cruz to be a part of it."

Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey were there to talk about the high risk of earthquakes now.

"Our work tells us that there's a two-thirds chance that there's going to be a Loma Prieta kind of magnitude earthquake in the Bay Area in the next 30 years," said Tom Brocher, team chief scientist for the earthquake hazards team at the USGS. He added there is only a one-eighth chance an earthquake would happen on the San Andreas fault in the Santa Cruz Mountains.

"That's a high enough chance that we ought to be prepared for that," he said.

While much has been done in the more than two decades since Loma Prieta, there are still more mea-



SHMUEL THALER — SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL

Downtown Association Executive Director Chip, far left, county supervisor and former Bookshop Santa Cruz owner Neal Coonerty, center, and former Santa Cruz City Manager Dick Wilson, second from right, are among those observing a moment of silence for those who died in the Loma Prieta earthquake during a ceremony Friday morning commemorating the 25th anniversary of the quake.

sures to prevent losses during an earthquake, including retrofitting older buildings to withstand the tremors, Brocher said.

Representatives from the Santa Cruz County Chapter of the Red Cross also spoke at the event, re-

iterating the organization's relief efforts at the time.

Patsy Gasca's three kids were playing outside of their Live Oak apartment at the time. When the earthquake hit, her children frantically pounded at the door of their apart-

ment to be let in while Gasca struggled to get to the door.

"I still remember the screams today," she said.

Gasca works as the disaster program manager for the Santa Cruz County Chapter of the Red Cross and is amazed at the progress made in the 25 years since.

"I think we're a lot better prepared than we were back then," she said. "We've seen it with the tsunami. We've seen it with the wildfires we've had. People are more resilient now."

Heather Allen arrived at the ceremony minutes before it began. At the time of the earthquake, 5:04 p.m., Allen, of Aptos, was a mother of a 1-year-old daughter and five months pregnant. Though she didn't lose anyone in the quake, she came to Friday's event to remember nonetheless.

"I came here to honor the people that died," she said.