

A Beacon For Youth

A new light, directed from atop the Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse warns mariners of the perils of Lighthouse Point in Santa Cruz.

The new Santa Cruz Light Station, a replica of lighthouses along the New England coast, was presented to the City of Santa Cruz this past week by Chuck and Esther Abbott.

The Abbotts presented the light station to the city (and the coast guard) in memory of their son, Mark, who died while surfing in Monterey Bay more than two years ago.

A bronze plaque will carry this inscription:

"Mark Abbott, age 18, challenged the sea and lost, February 28, 1965. His ashes are here interred beneath his favorite statue, The Castaway. This lighthouse is further dedicated to all our youth whose lives, through fate or misadventure, are terminated before realizing their true potential. May their spirits find new dimensions in the unknown horizons that await us all."

The lighthouse is in its simple elegance, an extraordinarily beautiful building. It is designed as a model of yesterday as a special example of what can be done to restore, and to retain the heritage of American life.

It stands, too, as a precious gift from two outstanding citizens of the commu-

nity. Comparative newcomers, Chuck, Esther and Mark Abbott came to Santa Cruz only four years ago. Chuck and Esther were established as notable photographers of the West.

They came to Santa Cruz because they wanted to live here.

Since that time they have become an integral part of the community. They have been active in SCOPE, and in other organizations to preserve and to maintain that part of Santa Cruz worth saving for tomorrow.

But their interest has not been only in preserving worthwhile buildings of the past, but to help Santa Cruz build for a more eventful future. Chuck has been the major sparkplug in the mall committee to aid in the future of the downtown business district.

The Abbotts hope that their recognition of the tragic loss of their son will serve not only as a warning light in the historical standards of the lighthouse service, but also as a beacon to other people to help pave the way for greater recognition, both of our heritage, and of the importance of utilizing the youth of the nation in building for tomorrow.

As Chuck told us recently, "We hope that this is just not a light station, but rather a broad beacon to whet the interest of people from coast-to-coast, to renew their interest in the American heritage, and the vital potential of our youth."

The light station, itself, is a magnificent gift to the community.

It represents both the past and the future.

It stands as a significant example that the city and its people can build together when they are willing to make the effort.

In a letter to the editor published today in the Voice of the People, Chuck Abbott stresses the importance of vigilance to meet the inevitable growth so that we can both grow with dignity and preserve the charm of yesterday.

We agree with Chuck's sentiments.

But even more we praise their interest, their achievements and their goals for Santa Cruz.

All too often we limit our support to vocal agreements. The Abbotts have taken a different approach. They have been active builders, active workers; they follow their statements with action and they have attracted the interest of their fellow citizens.

We may not always agree with their goals or their programs, but we certainly are in complete accord with their total interest in their community and its future.

The Mark Abbott Memorial Lighthouse sparkles today, its beams of light reflect across the waters of Monterey Bay, but even more it stands for a beacon of hope for tomorrow.