



Up Close & Personal

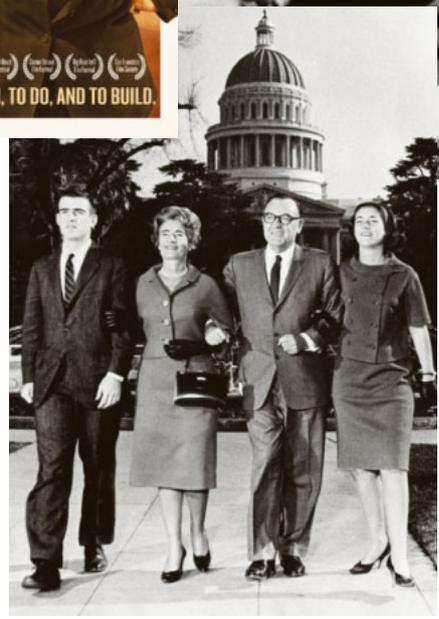
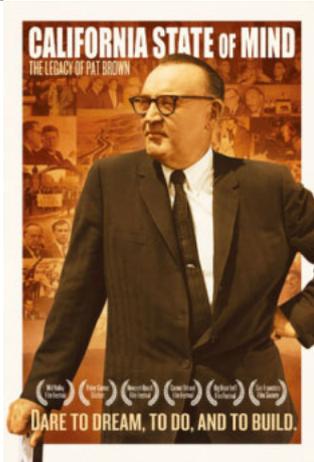
Two siblings looked at their own family roots and produced a documentary for all Californians

BY ELIZABETH KHURI CHANDLER

After the death of their grandfather in 1996, Sascha Rice and Hilary Armstrong spent more than seven years interviewing, producing and fund-raising for the new documentary *California State of Mind: The Legacy of Pat Brown*—to understand who he really was.

The story of Edmund Gerald “Pat” Brown, Sr. is an American dream tale. Born in San Francisco, the son of a man who owned a gambling room, Brown never attended college but rose to become California Attorney General, and Governor of California from 1959 to 1967. The sisters’ mother, Kathleen Brown, ran unsuccessfully in 1994. Jerry Brown, their uncle, is re-elected to the seat last year. “In my family, a politician is a public servant and someone who dedicated his life to serving—someone who was a leader and willing to be criticized,” says Rice, the award-winning co-writer/director/producer.

Rice asked her sister, who co-founded Cow Hollow Preschool and raises funds for various charities, to executive produce the documentary. “When a task is in front of her, she’s unstoppable,” remarks Rice. While Armstrong corralled the Annenberg Foundation, Edison International, PG&E and others, Rice began roping in political touchstones. Former governors Arnold Schwarzenegger, Gray Davis and Pete Wilson; journalist Tom Brokaw; Senator Dianne Feinstein; Representative/Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi; and historian Kevin Starr all sat down and shared their thoughts. Brown, after all, was celebrated for laying 1,000 miles of freeways and enacting the California Master Plan for Higher Education, a bill that expanded the Cal State and UC system. He constructed the California Aqueduct (longer than the Empire State Building is



FROM TOP THE Governor Edmund G. Brown California Aqueduct is the largest state-built water system in the U.S. Hilary Armstrong, Sascha Rice, Brown and President John F. Kennedy during the dedication of the Whiskeytown Dam in Redding. Visit Patbrown.com for screenings. At the State Capitol: Jerry, Bernice, Pat and Kathleen Brown.

tall), and he played an important role in the Civil Rights movement. The documentary also covers difficult bipartisan projects that came to fruition. “It was ‘Mad Men,’” says Armstrong. “Starting at 10 a.m., they would play cards and drink. Republicans and Democrats, playing cards and drinking together—there was a basis for trust and camaraderie.”

Balancing anecdotes with meaty Golden State history proved a challenge, and the filmmakers were often surprised by what they learned. Armstrong didn’t know her grandfather knew Martin Luther King. Rice had no idea that he didn’t go to college because he couldn’t afford it, thus

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