### Oral History Interview Record

**Topic:** Memories of the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake

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<th>Interview Date</th>
<th>Interview Place</th>
<th>Name of Interviewer</th>
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<tr>
<th>Interviewee Name</th>
<th>Age and Location at Time of Earthquake</th>
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**Interview Questions**

**Notes (continued on reverse)**
Oral History Interview Tips

Starting the Interview
Introduce yourself and briefly explain your project. Since the word ‘interview’ can sound formal and intimidating, it may be best to approach someone by asking “Do you have five minutes to chat about your experience in the 1989 earthquake?” or “Do you have a few minutes to tell me your story?”

When you visit the California Academy of Sciences, be on the lookout for docents wearing buttons that advertise our Earthquake exhibit. They may be potential interview subjects.

During the Interview
» Don’t interrupt a good story. Your aim is to get them to talk, not to talk about yourself.
» If you think of a question while your subject is talking, write it down so you don’t forget.
» Always wait for a pause before you ask the next question.
» Ask one question at a time.
» Keep questions short and clear.
» Avoid questions that can be answered with a “yes” or a “no”. Start with “why,” “how,” or “what kind of...”
» Listen carefully and maintain good eye contact.
» Nodding and smiling gives more positive feedback than verbal responses such as “Really?”
» Be relaxed, unhurried, and caring.
» Take accurate notes! You can ask for clarification or for help with spelling words.
» Ask follow-up questions, but don’t jump from one subject to the next too abruptly.
» Remember that oral history interviews are not scripted. Come prepared with questions, but let your interview subject tell his/her story and work from there.
» In addition to capturing descriptions of events, try to explore motives and feelings with questions like:
  “Why?”
  “How did you feel?”
  “How did that affect you?”

Sample Interview Questions
» Where were you when the 1989 Loma Prieta earthquake hit the Bay Area?
» Can you describe the experience? How did you feel? What did you think?
» Can you describe the place where you lived at the time? Did any damage occur?
» Did any of your friends, family, or coworkers also experience the earthquake?
» What do you remember most about that day? About that week? About the months and years following the quake?