A visit with the Mayor of San Francisco, George Moscone

University of the Pacific

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George Moscone left his heart in San Francisco.
The 47-year-old mayor of one of the world's great
cities has strayed from the land of cable cars and the
Golden Gate Bridge for military service, a college
education at University of the Pacific, and service in
the California State Senate.
Yet he has always returned to the cosmopolitan
atmosphere that annually lures thousands of tourists
to the city.
Moscone has come a long way from the confines of
a spartan dormitory room in North Hall at Pacific to
the mayor's office in San Francisco. He was voted to
his current position in 1976 and recently came
through what amounted to be a recall move by a
defeated opponent with a strong vote of confidence
from city residents.
Reminders of the recent vote are two framed
newspaper stories in his office, one stating he was the
winner and the second reporting the demise of his
opponents.
The newspapers aren't the only things to be
noticed in his second floor office at City Hall in the
Civic Center section of San Francisco. There are the
traditional flags, some works of arts, a fireplace, a
rarely seen curved, wooden door and — mounted
high on the richly paneled walls — two special lights
for television news conferences.
There is a feeling of informality in the office, with
papers and correspondence spread across a large but
unpretentious desk. Moscone speaks between sips of
coffee from a cup imprinted "Fontanarossa
Narcisi," the name of his family's region in Italy. His
affection for San Francisco comes through clearly as
he reminisces about his days at Pacific, reflects upon
his career in the political arena, and discusses college
students in today's society.
"I wanted to go away from home for college, but
not too far away from San Francisco," he said. "I
loved San Francisco but knew that to grow as a
person I would have to leave and see a different part
of life."
Moscone was raised in San Francisco and
graduated from St. Ignatius High School. His desire
for competition, which would surface later and lead
him into government service, was channeled into
sports. He was named the "Outstanding Prep
Basketball Player" in San Francisco and was an
All-City selection in 1946-47.
He received a basketball scholarship to come to
Pacific, but that wasn't the only factor that
influenced him to come to Stockton. "I had several
friends who spoke highly of Pacific, and in visiting
the campus I was impressed by the beauty, the
people, and the general atmosphere. The school was
small enough to eliminate my fears of becoming just
a number at a large university."
Like many students today, he was uncertain about
his career, yet he recognized the value of a basic
liberal arts education while majoring in sociology.
He received a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1953.
"Whether or not you have a career goal determines
the intensity of your study; at least it did for me,"
said Moscone, gesturing frequently with his hands and arms to emphasize a point. "Everything I did was set at my own pace. When I decided on law school later on, my studies there (he graduated near the top of his class from Hastings College of Law in 1956) reflected his opponents, sit on Mayor George Moscone's fireplace, among other reminders of his extensive political career.

Because Moscone had served in the Navy before enrolling at Pacific, he was somewhat older than many of the students in his class, and this influenced him greatly in defining his values. "It was an unusual time to be on campus in many respects. There was the interaction between the veterans and younger students, the fact that it was a coed campus and I was coming out of the Navy after going to an all boys high school, plus I was from a very urban area and many of the students I met were not."

He remembers Dr. Harold Jacoby among his professors as a person "who took interest and knew me as an individual," Jacoby also remembers Moscone: "Everybody who knew him recognized him as a person of considerable ability," said Jacoby. "He was an able student and very affable person. Although I would not have predicted that he would enter politics, it doesn't surprise me that he did, and I have followed his career with interest." Moscone served mostly as a playmaker on the court, averaging about five points per game and leading the team in assists one year. "The floor leader of the team, George has a nice long shot, and is the team boss, directing all of the plays," said the basketball press guide in referring to him as "the colorful San Francisco player." Like many aspiring politicians, Moscone got started by working in partisan politics — in his case for the Democratic County Committee in San Francisco. Moscone also was in private practice as a lawyer and taught law courses for five years in the Bay Area.

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All's well that ends well: Two framed newspaper stories, one stating he was the winner and the second reporting the demise of his opponents, sit on Mayor George Moscone's fireplace, among other reminders of his extensive political career.