

DEPARTMENT: Board BY: Supervisor Baggett PHONE: 966-3222

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION: (Policy Item: Yes\_\_\_ No\_X\_\_)

Pass and adopt resolution recognizing Best's Studio, Inc.,/The Ansel Adams Gallery as a Historic Business in Mariposa County.

Resolution will be available on Tuesday, and will be presented at a special event to be held.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:  
None on this request.

LIST ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

- 1) Approve
- 2) Do not approve.

**COSTS:** (x) Not Applicable

A. Budgeted current FY \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. Total anticipated costs \$ \_\_\_\_\_

C. Required additional funding \$ \_\_\_\_\_

D. Internal transfers \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SOURCE:** ( ) 4/5ths Vote Required

A. Unanticipated revenues \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. Reserve for contingencies \$ \_\_\_\_\_

C. Source description: \_\_\_\_\_

Balance in Reserve for Contingencies, if approved: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS:**  
List the attachments and number the pages consecutively:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**CLERK'S USE ONLY:**

Res. No.: 92-660 Ord. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Vote - Ayes: 5 Noes: \_\_\_\_\_

Absent: \_\_\_\_\_ Abstained: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_ ( ) Denied: \_\_\_\_\_

( ) Minute Order Attached ( ) No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

ATTEST: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board  
County of Mariposa, State of California

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Deputy

**ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:**  
This item on agenda as:

Recommended

Not Recommended

For Policy Determination

Submitted with Comment

Returned for Further Action

Comment: \_\_\_\_\_

A.O. Initials: *JBW / by mw*

A RESOLUTION RECOGNIZING  
BEST'S STUDIO, INC./THE ANSEL ADAMS GALLERY  
AS A HISTORIC FAMILY BUSINESS IN YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

WHEREAS, BEST'S STUDIO/THE ANSEL ADAMS GALLERY, originated in 1902 by Harry C. Best and joined by his son-in-law Ansel Adams, is commemorating 90 years and 4 generations of a family owned and operated business in Yosemite National Park; and

WHEREAS, HARRY C. BEST, panoramic landscape artist, and ANSEL ADAMS, photographer, teacher, writer, were instrumental in establishing and promoting inspiration for countless visitors to the USA, and Yosemite National Park in particular; and

WHEREAS, THE BEST-ADAMS FAMILY in Yosemite continues to:

- be responsible for environmental awareness, education, leadership, and encouragement of resource protection and National Park ideals;

- further the legacy of their forebears by providing a nurturing place for artistic interpretation and by conducting workshops in creative photography which have had worldwide impact and participation;

- assume a leadership role in the community by serving in advisory capacities to academic, resource, and cultural institutions which align to benefit Yosemite National Park and the environment.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors, a political subdivision of the State of California, that BEST'S STUDIO/THE ANSEL ADAMS GALLERY is hereby recognized for its world-renowned legacy of paintings and photographs depicting the majesty and meaning of Yosemite National Park and for its continued efforts to serve Yosemite through evolving commercial, interpretive and environmental activities.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors this 15th day of December, 1992, by unanimous vote.

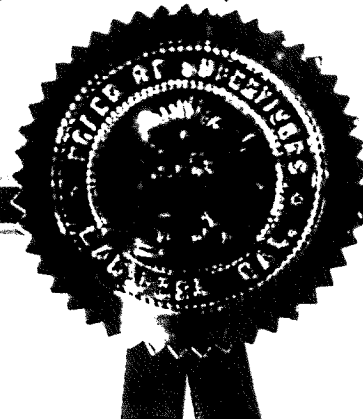
  
ARTHUR G. BAGGETT, JR., Dist. I

  
GEORGE P. RADANOVICH, Dist. IV

  
SALLY S. PUNTE, Dist. II

  
GERTRUDE R. TABER, Dist. V

  
ERIC J. ERICKSON, Dist. III



AX 209/966-5147  
Mariposa County

from: Jeanne Adams, YNP  
"on the road again..."

Points for Mariposa County proclamation of  
Best's Studio, Inc. / The Ansel Adams  
Gallery as historic <sup>business</sup> in  
{Yosemite, Mariposa County, CA}

I regret that I could not type this. You may wish to elaborate differently.

- ① Since 1902 in Yosemite. (more than 90 yrs.)
- ② four generations of Best/Adams family  
continuous ownership/operation
- ③ Tradition of marriages in Yosemite; wedding  
licenses from Mariposa Co. Courthouse  
Sarah Jane Rippey & Harry C. Best 7/28/02  
Virginia Best & Ansel E. Adams 1/ /28  
Anne Adams & Charles Mayhew  
Jeanne Falk & Michael Adams 7/28/62
- ④ Artists  
Harry C. Best (panoramic landscape painting)  
Ansel Adams (photographer, teacher, writer)  
Workshops in Creative Photography, 1946  
to present; worldwide impact &  
participation)
- ⑤ Free visitor camera walks  
free films  
Rotating exhibitions of photography as  
art.  
Exclusive original photographs of Ansel  
Adams Yosemite images - as  
affordable art.
- ⑥ Merchandise that interprets & educates  
as well as entertains & inspires

⑥ Merchandise that interprets & educates  
as well as entertains & inspires

Amel Adams  
ardent  
supporter  
National Park  
ideals

Kings Canyon National Park  
Photographs & writing move  
people to respect, protect.  
Seminal thinking, tenacity.  
Michael Adams, M.D.

Soarasis - backcountry restoration  
and environmental scholarships

**BEST'S STUDIO, INCORPORATED / THE ANSEL ADAMS GALLERY  
YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, SINCE 1902**

**HARRY C. BEST**

**ANSEL ADAMS**

This exhibition of paintings of Harry C. Best and photographs of his son-in-law Ansel Adams commemorates the first ninety years and four generations of the family owned and operated Best's Studio / Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite National Park. This is a pre-celebration to the century anniversary in the year 2002.

Best's Studio began in a tent in the Old Village in 1902. Harry C. Best rebuilt his studio several times along the Merced River, before he constructed the present Studio in 1926 at the request of the National Park Service. Virginia Best and Ansel Adams were married here in January 1928. In 1969 the building was extensively remodeled, continues to have some "historic fabric" and is designated historic as part of the Yosemite Valley Historic District. Work of artists Best and Adams and continuity of the Best-Adams family ownership and operation lend credibility to the historic value of the buildings.

Best's Studio and The Ansel Adams Gallery has always been more than a gift store. The business has hosted nearly a century of continuity of vital human interaction, including inspiration for countless visitors to the USA, West, California, National Parks, and Yosemite itself. The Photography Workshops Ansel Adams pioneered in 1940 continue to inspire, hone craft and vision. The goal of the current generations of the Best-Adams family is to continue to serve Yosemite through evolving commercial, interpretive, and environmental activities.

In a 1975 letter to his son and daughter-in-law, Michael and Jeanne Adams, Ansel Adams provided his insights and guidance for a family-owned business operating in Yosemite National Park:

"The Gallery stands alone in the Parks... This fact is known and appreciated more than you realize. We represent a potent force of opinion that, in a sense, justifies -- for me -- all the work I have done for 30-40 years.

"I never considered the Studio - and now the Gallery - as a place for casual 'fun' and relaxation. It is a dead-serious symbol of a constructive Park ideal. Everyone concerned therewith should accept this fact; in addition to making the business function well, they also have a certain responsibility to see that the National Park ideals are supported."

Throughout four generations of uninterrupted continuity by this family business, Best's Studio has been the nurturing place for the artistic interpretation of Yosemite. The paintings of Harry C. Best and

photographs of Ansel Adams, as well as their lives, are inextricably linked to Best's Studio / The Ansel Adams Gallery and the expression of Yosemite's heritage. The Best-Adams family in Yosemite has been responsible for seminal environmental thinking, education, leadership, encouragement of resource protection and National Park ideals. No other park enjoys this tradition.

To business operations, the family's first generation added artistic interpretation through the landscape painting of Harry C. Best. The second generation is identified with the memorable photographic images of Ansel Adams which have become worldwide symbols of perceptions of nature. Ansel Adams is closely identified with Yosemite and the National Parks. A constructive adversary of the National Park Service on many issues, Ansel believed that the National Park idea represented a personal park experience - individual, emotional, spiritual, and participative in wilderness. The environmentalist, aesthetic, and philosophical activities of Ansel Adams are the foundation of the third generation's (Michael and Jeanne Adams) involvement in the family's business. In addition to operating The Ansel Adams Galley, they serve in advisory capacities to academic, resource, and cultural institutions which align to benefit Yosemite and the environment. The fourth generation (Sarah Jeanne and Matthew Adams) plans to carry on the multi-faceted activities of interpretation through commercial activities, as well as a leadership role in environmental protection and awareness. An example is the pledge to fund (from the sale of Ansel Adams Yosemite Special Edition Photographs) work of the integrated Geographic Information System for Yosemite National Park.

As recently as this past Thanksgiving, former National Park Director George B. Hartzog, Jr., commented on the special importance of the Best-Adams family continuity in Yosemite:

"Harry Best came to Yosemite National Park a few years after the Park was established in 1890. Later he was joined by Ansel Adams who married Best's only daughter, Virginia. I first met Virginia and Ansel when they invited me to lunch at Best's Studio on my first visit to the Park in October, 1950.

"Together Best and Adams created a world renowned legacy of paintings and photographs and forged a partnership with the National Park Service to present the majesty and interpret the meaning of Yosemite that is unique in the annals of public land management. This tradition of cooperative interpretation of America's heritage still flourishes under the leadership of the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of these remarkable artists. It is a great delight to join in celebrating the lives, the art and the commitment to public service of this illustrious family."

December 1992

captions for:

**Harry C. Best/ Sarah Anne Rippey wedding at base of Bridalveil Fall:**

The marriage of Harry Cassie Best and Sarah Anne Rippey at the base of Bridalveil Fall in 1901 began their family's long involvement with Yosemite National Park. The Best-Adams family's tradition of hospitality began when Harry and Anne Best stopped an incoming stagecoach and invited the passengers to join in wedding toasts.

**Best's Studio picture:**

Best's Studio became home and nurturing place of Ansel Adams with his marriage to Virginia Best in January 1928. Following the death of her father in 1936, Virginia and Ansel inherited Best's Studio, Inc., and lived in Yosemite much of the time. The Studio was a hub of culture, mountaineering, music and joy.

**Virginia Best with her teddy bear or Virginia and her mother:**  
Their daughter was born in San Francisco in January 1904.

**Accompanying a photograph of H. C. Best in his studio:**

Harry C. Best (1863-1936) was born near Peterborough, Ontario, Canada, reared on a farm in the Red River Valley of North Dakota, and apprenticed as a tinsmith in Winnipeg. Harry and his brother assembled a six piece orchestra, travelled west by rail, performing in mining towns, eventually reaching Portland, Oregon in 1887. The magnificence of the West, particularly the sunset glow of Mt. Hood, was the catalyst for brothers Harry and Arthur to learn to paint. In 1891 the brothers arrived in San Francisco, where Harry became a newspaper cartoonist and illustrator. A recognized artist, Thadeus Welch, invited Best to join him in 1901 on a camping trip to Yosemite Valley. Here he met and soon married the beautiful Sarah Anne Rippey. Best, impressed by the beauty of Yosemite, found that painting was his destiny rather than newspapers. He applied to the State, then in charge of Yosemite, for a concession in Yosemite Valley. This was granted, and the Bests returned each summer, wintering in San Francisco, Santa Barbara, San Diego, or Honolulu. Best followed the style of Corot, Bierstadt, Moran, and Hill, and was a direct descendant of the American classic panoramic landscape painters.

**Accompanying a photograph of Ansel Adams:**

Ansel E. Adams (1902-1984) was a living legend. His images fixed nature in minds world-wide. His photographs, books, teaching, the Zone System, outspoken views of conservation, politics, work in behalf of wilderness areas captured essence and shaped opinion. Recognition came

in the naming in his honor of "Mount Ansel Adams" in the Lyell Fork of the Merced River, and the vast "Ansel Adams Wilderness," which encompasses some of the most beautiful of his beloved Sierra Nevada.

The influence of Ansel Adams, universally identified with the powerful images of the grand and intimate natural landscape, extended beyond the West. In the 1930s he worked with David McAlpin and Beaumont Newhall to establish a photography department and collection at the prestigious Museum of Modern Art in New York City. Albert Bender, a San Francisco patron, introduced him to the Southwest. In Santa Fe and Taos, he met and became friends with Mabel Dodge Luhan, Witter Bynner, Paul Strand, Georgia O'Keeffe, and John Marin. His fine Taos Pueblo book (with text by Mary Austin), published in 1929, attests to that early love of the Southwest. <And, while Ansel Adams photographed, Virginia Adams bought Indian artifacts and jewelry for Best's Studio, adding this to the diverse merchandise interpreting Yosemite and the visitors' National Park experience.> Note: The preceding sentence may need to go elsewhere or be reivised.



• Educational Contributions.

Ansel Adams  
Zone System  
(of exposures),  
numerous  
books, as  
well as images  
which fixed  
nature's splendor  
in minds through-  
out the world.  
heightened  
appreciation.

community  
AAG donated libraries for schools, &  
Virginia Adams - built up school library &  
helped start Kindergarten in 1930s  
Michael Adams - trustee  
U. of AZ, Center for Creative Photography,  
former, Yosemite Institute.  
Jeanne Adams, former civics/history teacher  
trustee & advisory board member roles  
Fresno Metropolitan Museum  
Fresno Arts Center (Museum)  
Northern CA Council, National Museum  
of Women in the Arts  
CA State University, Fresno  
Design Council  
Family Business Institute  
School of Education  
Valley Employers Association

• Environmental / Conservation

Ansel Adams  
ardent  
supporter  
National Park  
ideals

Ansel Adams lobbied to establish  
Kings Canyon National Park  
Photographs & writing move  
people to respect, protect.  
Seminal thinking, tenacity.  
Michael Adams, M.D.  
Soarasis - backcountry restoration  
and environmental scholarships

## Environmental Conservation, continued

Jaane M. Adams -

Sierra Summit Steering Committee,  
CA Resources Agency

Yosemite Centennial Symposium  
Advisor

Memberships, study, activism

Above supports NPS - Yosemite  
General Mgt Plan designation as  
~~area~~ retail and interpretive.

Oldest family owned and operated  
business in the National Park  
System.

Michael Adams ~~is~~ was born  
in Yosemite in 1933, graduated  
from the Yosemite School,  
(Practices as internist in Fresno,  
was pilot - physician in USAF,  
is a Major General in the Air National  
Guard).