

MISSION CHRONICLES

Information for Locals

Presented by Mission San Juan Capistrano

Projects Underway to Ensure the Preservation of Mission History

El Viaje de Portolá Riders

Honorees at Gala

They celebrated 50 years with last year's Ride, and this year, the "El Viaje de Portolá" riders began their second "half-century" with their ride on April 4, part of a three-day celebration that included the Empty Saddles Ceremony at Mission San Juan Capistrano, honoring members who have passed on.

The goal of the eight original riders more than 50 years ago was no different than the 300-plus who are associated with the ride these days -- celebrate the American West, California history, "The Code of the West," and "The Cowboy Way."

"The first ride was in 1964 and we rode from the El Adobe in San Juan Capistrano to the Saddleback Inn, which was a hotel in Santa Ana," said Tony Moiso, a member of the Mission Preservation Society Board of Directors and President and CEO of Rancho Mission Viejo. It was Moiso who offered the riders continual use of his 40,000-acre ranch in the early 1970s.

And along the way, El Viaje de Portolá has raised thousands of dollars that have been donated to the Mission and the San Juan Capistrano Historical Society.

The Portolá riders don't do it for the recognition, but they'll get it anyway. They will be honored at Mission San Juan Capistrano's event of the year -- the annual *Romance of the Mission* Benefit Gala Concert and Dinner on Friday, September 12, during which the group's "El Presidente," Tony Gregory II, will accept the award.

"They're very thoughtful, to cook up this idea of honoring the horseback riders," Moiso said. "There is a genuine caring and love for the Mission by the people on the ride."

