

San Jose To Commemorate the 60th Anniversary of the Grateful Dead's First Official Performance

Honoring the night the Dead got weird, wild, and wonderfully historic — right in downtown San Jose.

SAN JOSE, CA, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the enormously successful weekend shows by Dead and Co. conclude at Golden Gate Park, a Silicon Valley

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Dan Orloff, Founder, San Jose Rocks

organization is unveiling plans for a commemoration of the Grateful Dead's actual performance anniversary in December: San Jose City Hall.

The legendary band's first appearance under that name took place at an “Acid Test” party in downtown San Jose on the night of Dec. 4, 1965. San Jose Rocks, a new non-profit organization dedicated to honoring and highlighting San Jose and Silicon Valley's role in music history, has received permission from city officials to mount a plaque on the site of that milestone initial Grateful Dead show. It took place

on South Fifth Street, on the current location of San Jose's City Hall chambers and adjoining plaza.

“The Grateful Dead are an undeniable part of San Jose's rich musical history,” said San Jose Mayor Matt Mahan. “Our city council meetings are clearly not as exciting as a Dead show, but we're proud to host a plaque for fans to honor the legendary band's legacy where it all began, right here in San Jose.”

The plaque is scheduled to be dedicated on Dec. 4, 2025, exactly 60 years from the Dead's official birth. As part of San Jose Rocks' agreement with the city, the civic-minded group is assembling money to privately pay for the plaque and commemoration ceremonies.

“San Jose played a key role in the Grateful Dead story, just like several other Bay Area cities,” said Dan Orloff, founder and executive director of San Jose Rocks. “But the fact that their very first performance under the name ‘Grateful Dead’ happened right here is something we're incredibly proud of — and it's high time more people knew it. This plaque is more than just bronze on a wall — it's a shoutout to the night the music got weird, wild, and wonderfully historic in San Jose. San Jose Rocks is here to mark that moment and share our city's story with the world.”

Now, San Jose Rocks is calling on music fans, civic boosters, and cultural supporters to help make this historic tribute possible. The nonprofit is actively raising funds for the design, production,

and installation of the Grateful Dead plaque — as well as related public ceremonies and educational programming.

Donors at various levels will receive limited-edition handbills and commemorative posters created by legendary artist Stanley Mouse, whose iconic psychedelic artwork helped define the Grateful Dead's visual legacy. These exclusive prints are only available through this campaign.

"I've had this sitting around for a long time, waiting for a use — for something really cool," Mouse said, referring to individual design elements in the poster he assembled for the project.

Those interested in contributing can visit:

<https://sanjoserocks.org/article/the-grateful-dead-tribute>

- more -

When the plaque is erected at the San Jose site, it will join other famous California musical landmarks such as the Beach Boys monument in Hawthorne on the site of the Wilson brothers' childhood home and the John Denver plaque in Pacific Grove at the location of his fatal 1997 light aircraft accident. Both were underwritten by similar fundraising campaigns. They are visited daily by fans from around the world.

About San Jose Rocks

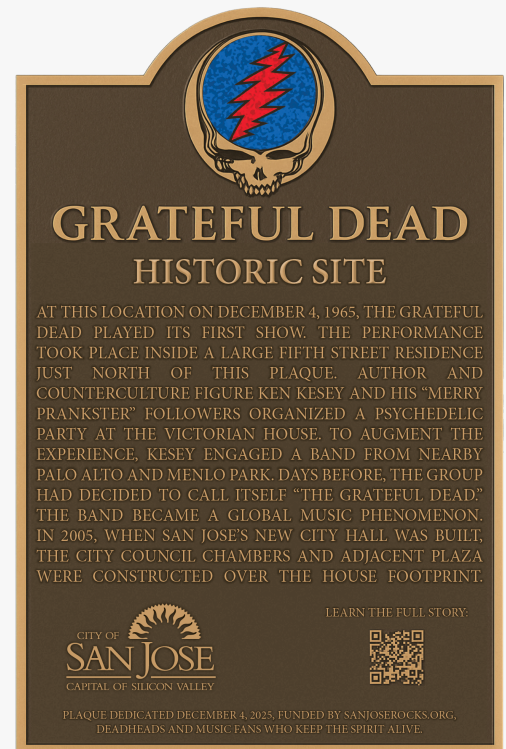
San Jose Rocks is a nonprofit dedicated to celebrating the rich musical and technological legacy of San Jose and Silicon Valley. From historic performances and legendary artists to world-changing innovations in sound, the organization highlights the region's deep influence on global music. Through exhibits, events, and education, San Jose Rocks connects the dots between creativity and invention — past, present and future. Visit sanjoserocks.org

Media Resources

- High-resolution image of the Stanley Mouse-commissioned commemorative print
- Mock-up of the [Grateful Dead 60th Anniversary](#) plaque and location

Expert Interviews

San Jose Rocks' Chief Fact-Finding Officer, journalist and author Mark Purdy and San Jose Rocks' Founder and Chief Rock Officer Dan Orloff are available for interviews. Purdy is a leading



Rendering of the commemorative plaque marking the Grateful Dead's first performance on Dec. 4, 1965 — soon to be installed at San Jose City Hall.

authority on the events surrounding the Grateful Dead's first show under their name on Dec. 4, 1965, Purdy offers unparalleled insight into this pivotal moment in music history.

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