

# The Great Tide Pool

TALES OF PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA

by local award-winning author, [Brad Herzog](#)



## TRIBUTES IN BRONZE

I wrote one of my favorite magazine articles—for *Football Digest* a quarter-century ago—about a man named Ed Smith. He was a former NYU football player who didn't find out until he was nearly 70 that he had actually been the model for... the Heisman Trophy, college football's preeminent honor. It got me thinking about the power of sculptures and statues. When done right, they're tributes to a deserving person, a local tradition, a powerful notion. Pacific Grove has several outdoor sculptures that have been done right:

### “Life at the Top”

Noted marine sculptor Christopher Bell, who was a longtime PG fixture, is said to have scouted out the perfect spot for his bronze sculpture depicting a mother and baby otter at play. In 1994, he and the Pacific Grove Rotary Club presented it to the city and placed it at Berwick Park, along the Recreation Trail, just a few dozen feet from where the real image might often be spotted (another version sits at the Portola Plaza Hotel in Monterey).

### “Butterfly Children”

Two years later, Bell presented the city with a life-sized sculpture in front of the PG post office, which honors not the wildlife that frolics around PG, but the children who don orange and black wings for the annual Butterfly Parade. On the day it was dedicated, a first-grade class dressed as monarchs and joined the festivities. Incidentally, the model for the boy was Bell's then-five-year-old son, Jordan. The girl is Michelle Annereau, who is now a realtor in Carmel.



### **“Monarch Butterfly Sculpture”**

Carved out of black granite by prolific sculptor Gordon Newell and commissioned by longtime resident Hilda Van Sicklen in 1964, this sculpture at Lovers Point honors those winged wonders that annually migrate to PG. For many years, Newell worked out of the former Sculpture Center on Cannery Row (he was a close friend of John Steinbeck). An *L.A. Times* profile in the late 1980s described Newell’s style well—as “balancing the geometric with the organic, the representational with the purely abstract.”



### **“Yesterday’s Dream - Tomorrow’s Memory”**

Sculptor Dorothy Fowler graduated from Pacific Grove High School in 1944, though she spent most of her life in Spokane, where many of her creations can be found (though one even stands in Bangkok, Thailand). Including one just a few dozen steps from the Monarch Butterfly. This one depicts a little boy holding a toy sailboat and pointing out to sea and was commissioned by Fowler’s high school class as a memorial to soldiers who fought overseas. Like many of Fowler’s sculptures, it is accompanied by a poem written by her friend Lorraine Duncan: “Stand with me, look out to sea...”

### **“Honoring Grandfathers”**

Hal Green, who passed away in 2008, was a 50-year resident of Monterey County. For his 90th birthday in 2007, 50 members of his family, including many of his 37 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, gathered in PG to dedicate a sit-by-me statue of a man resting on a bench in front of the PG Chamber of Commerce (with a fine view of Sandy the Whale). The bronze sculpture by artist Alexander Prokopenko invites all to pause for a moment, “Honoring Grandfathers.” Hal was used as the model.

### **“Honoring Mothers and Our Dogs”**

The latest addition to PG’s statue stable was created by the same artist (Prokopenko passed away in 2022) and finished by sculptress Deborah Samia and sits (literally) alongside “Honoring Grandfathers.” It was gifted to the community by the Sandi Green Kolinawski Family last summer. So there you have it - a half-dozen statues (whether they’re memorials or homages to monarchs, marine life or mothers) that serve as lasting homages in America’s Last Hometown.