

JAY T. LAST

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Jay T. Last is considered one of the “fathers” of Silicon Valley. Born in Butler, Penn., in 1929, he graduated from the University of Rochester in 1951 with a bachelor’s degree in optics and earned his doctorate in physics from MIT in 1956. Last then worked for William Shockley, who won the 1956 Nobel Prize for his role in the invention of the transistor. In 1957, Last and seven other scientists and engineers left Shockley Semiconductor to form Fairchild Semiconductor Corp., the firm that produced the first planar silicon diffused transistors. Fairchild helped establish Silicon Valley as a center for technological innovation and entrepreneurialism. At Fairchild, Last directed the group that produced the first integrated circuit chips. In 1961, Last left Fairchild to start Amelco Semiconductor as a division of Teledyne, Inc. A few years later he became the vice president of technology for the parent company in Los Angeles.



As Last was working in Silicon Valley, he also pursued his passion for collecting. He began acquiring African Art in the early 1960s. An interest in fruit-box labels in the 1970s sparked a passion for color lithography that would lead to his amassing about 135,000 printed items, most of them created in 19th-century America when techniques in lithographic color printing were rapidly developing. Last's collection is rich in books, advertising posters, product labels, sheet music covers, trade cards, historical prints, railroad ephemera, and city views from this era. In 2006 he announced his plans to donate to The Huntington the entire collection, which is now being transferred and cataloged. Last also has provided funds to support a curator of lithographic history and ephemera.

Last's interest in the history of lithography extends to his own independent scholarship. He is the author of *The Color Explosion: Nineteenth-Century American Lithography*; he is co-author, with Gordon McClelland, of five other books: *California Orange Box Labels*, *Fruit Box Labels*, *The California Style*, *California Watercolor Artists 1925–1950*, and *California Watercolors 1850–1970*. Last is also a founder and member of the board of directors of the Archaeological Conservancy, a national nonprofit organization established in 1980 to preserve archaeological sites in the United States. The conservancy, based in Albuquerque, N.M., has helped preserve more than 300 sites in 39 states.

In 1999, Last received the Hutchison Medal from the University of Rochester. The award is given annually to a graduate for achievements in business and community service, along with distinguished service to the university. In 2005, he won the Maurice Rickards Award from the Ephemera Society of America for his important contributions to the field of ephemera studies. In 2007 he received the Newman Award for the outstanding book of the year dealing with print studies from the American Historical Print Collectors Society for *The Color Explosion*. Last lives in Beverly Hills, Calif., with his wife, Deborah.