

Calif. governor's mansion reopens to the public

By Anita Creamer, Sacramento Bee

The third floor of the California governor's mansion, which reopened to the public this month after being closed to visitors for decades, is a place filled with history that's mostly quiet and personal rather than political: a place of family memories.

Gov. Jerry Brown, already in seminary and college when his father, Pat Brown, was elected governor in 1959, remembers holing up in the third floor in early 1965 to study for the California bar exam.

"I spent a lot of time there," he said through a spokesperson. "The whole house was quite livable."

His sister, former state Treasurer Kathleen Brown, spent much of her teenage years living in the mansion. She was the last governor's child to occupy the house, which has been a state park since shortly after Nancy Reagan famously declared it a firetrap in 1967 and refused to live there. Kathleen Brown remembers the third floor as a secluded and unpretentious space in a large, grand house.

"The third floor had two bedrooms and an office, but it wasn't used much," she said by phone from Los Angeles. "There was an attic room, and I set up a clubhouse there."

More than a decade before the Brown era, Robert Warren, the youngest of Gov. Earl Warren's five children, also remembers spending time on the third floor, which then housed his father's home office.

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