

# Legacy Business Registry Staff Report

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

## FTC SKATEBOARDING

*Application No.:* LBR-2018-19-005  
*Business Name:* FTC Skateboarding  
*Business Address:* 1632 Haight Street  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Kent Uyehara, Owner Principal  
*Nomination Date:* August 6, 2018  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Vallie Brown  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

### BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

FTC Skateboarding was established in 1994 by Kent Uyehara. The business is comprised of a skateboard shop and boutique clothing brand, which includes skateboards, skateboarding necessities, T-shirts, tops, sweatshirts, pants, hats, beanies and accessories. The business started out as an offshoot of Kent's father Lloyd Uyehara's business, FTC Ski & Sports, which opened in the late 1960s. "FTC" originally stood for "Free Trade Center," but in the new business it now stands for "For The City." Over the years, the business has evolved from a store into a lifestyle brand. The company distributes products worldwide helping to attract international fans to visit San Francisco.

In the late 1970s, FTC Ski & Sports began selling skateboards as a small wall display of skateboard decks and parts within the store. Then, in the 1980s, Kent Uyehara started selling skateboards to his high school friends, eventually creating a catalog so people could choose what to buy from him. Orders became regular, and Lloyd let Kent start selling skateboards in the store. In 1994, FTC Skateboarding, also known as FTC Skate Shop, moved from Bush Street to the Haight Ashbury neighborhood at 622 Shrader Street and officially became an independent business. There had been a history of other core skate shops there, and FTC Skateboarding wanted to keep the tradition going. In 2003, the business moved to a larger space at 1632 Haight Street at Clayton Street where it is still located today. FTC Skateboarding also has franchise shops in Tokyo, Japan, and Barcelona, Spain.

The business is located on the north side of Haight Street between Clayton and Cole streets in the Haight Ashbury District.

### **CRITERION 1: Has the applicant operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?**

Yes, the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years:





SAN FRANCISCO

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS

CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO
LONDON N. BREED, MAYOR

OFFICE OF SMALL BUSINESS
REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

1586 Bush Street from 1986 to 1994 (8 years)
622 Schrader Street from 1994 to 2003 (9 years)
1632 Haight Street from 2003 to Present (15 years)

CRITERION 2: Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?

Yes, the applicant has contributed to the Haight Ashbury neighborhood's history and identity.

The Historic Preservation Commission recommended the applicant as qualifying, noting the following ways the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community:

- FTC Skateboarding is associated with the sport of skateboarding, specifically street skating, and with its development in San Francisco. According to Kent Uyehara, street skating originated in San Francisco in the 1980s. Skating was largely popular to the masses because of vert and half pipe skating – getting “big air.” Then, primarily due to insurance issues, skate parks and ramps disappeared and the sport got reinvented due to street skating. By the early 1990s, as technical skateboarding became more popular, Justin Herman plaza became the world’s epicenter for skateboarding. During the mid-1990s, San Francisco was dubbed the Mecca of skateboarding for the entire world. Ever since that time, San Francisco has been considered a famous skate town.

FTC Skateboarding was central to the rise of the skateboarding scene. Since FTC opened its doors in 1994, it has been well-recognized within the skateboard industry for its longevity and contributions to skateboarding. The family business helped nurture past and present generations of skaters to build successful careers in business and skating.

- FTC Skateboarding has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco by serving as a sports retail shop.
- FTC Skateboarding co-owner Kent Uyehara joined the Skateboarding Task Force in 1998, which he was a part of for six years as a part of Gavin Newsom’s mayoral administration. The Task Force examined existing skateboarding laws, which were outdated and vague, and developed new plans for skate parks.
- FTC has sponsored the majority of the skateboard events held in the city for the past couple decades including, but not limited to, Dew Tour, X Games, San Francisco skatepark events and FTC’s FOR THE CASH pro contests.
- The building is identified by the Planning Department as Category A (“Historic Resource Present”) with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. It is located within the California Register-Eligible Haight Ashbury Historic District. The area known as the North of the Panhandle (NoPa) neighborhood consists primarily of two- and three-story residential buildings single-family houses and multiple-family flats) that were constructed during the late 19th century and early 20th century. The neighborhood is bounded to the south by the panhandle of Golden Gate Park.
- FTC Skateboarding has been featured in local and national media, including:
➢ In 1995, an article in TransWorld SKATEboarding magazine, an international magazine on skateboarding based in Carlsbad, California.
➢ In 2001, an article for the Zipang Worldwide Special Interview in the Japanese magazine Zipang Skateboard Archives.





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- In 2005, an article in the Transworld Business Skate, Surf, and Snow magazine.
- In 2012, an article by ESPN for the X Games.
- On February 2, 2015, an article in Hoodline titled, "Meet Kent Uyehara, Owner Of Haight Street's FTC Skate Shop."
- In 2018, an article by Jenkem magazine.
- Columnists such as Herb Caen and Pat Steger frequently mentioned the Balboa in their weekly references about happenings around San Francisco.

### **CRITERION 3: Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?**

Yes, (FTC Skateboarding is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business.

### **HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

The Historic Preservation Commission recommends that FTC Skateboarding qualifies for the Legacy Business Registry under Administrative Code Section 2A.242(b)(2) and recommends safeguarding of the below listed physical features and traditions.

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Quality clothing and authentic products.
- Mural painted on metal sign.
- Dedication to skateboard activism and service.
- "For The Cash" pro contest.

### **CORE PHYSICAL FEATURE OR TRADITION THAT DEFINES THE BUSINESS**

Following is the core physical feature or tradition that defines the business that would be required for maintenance of the business on the Legacy Business Registry.

- Skateboarding store.

### **STAFF RECOMMENDATION**

Staff recommends that the San Francisco Small Business Commission include FTC Skateboarding currently located at 1632 Haight Street in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

Richard Kurylo, Program Manager  
Legacy Business Program



# Small Business Commission Draft Resolution

HEARING DATE SEPTEMBER 10, 2018

FTC SKATEBOARDING

LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

*Application No.:* LBR-2018-19-005  
*Business Name:* FTC Skateboarding  
*Business Address:* 1632 Haight Street  
*District:* District 5  
*Applicant:* Kent Uyehara, Owner Principal  
*Nomination Date:* August 6, 2018  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Vallie Brown  
*Staff Contact:* Richard Kurylo  
legacybusiness@sfgov.org

## ADOPTING FINDINGS APPROVING THE LEGACY BUSINESS REGISTRY APPLICATION FOR FTC SKATEBOARDING, CURRENTLY LOCATED AT 1632 HAIGHT STREET.

**WHEREAS**, in accordance with Administrative Code Section 2A.242, the Office of Small Business maintains a registry of Legacy Businesses in San Francisco (the "Registry") to recognize that longstanding, community-serving businesses can be valuable cultural assets of the City and to be a tool for providing educational and promotional assistance to Legacy Businesses to encourage their continued viability and success; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years; or

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has operated in San Francisco for more than 20 years but less than 30 years, has had no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, has significantly contributed to the history or identity of a particular neighborhood or community and, if not included in the Registry, faces a significant risk of displacement; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business has contributed to the neighborhood's history and identity; and

**WHEREAS**, the subject business is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the business; and

**WHEREAS**, at a duly noticed public hearing held on September 10, 2018, the San Francisco Small Business Commission reviewed documents and correspondence, and heard oral testimony on the Legacy Business Registry application; therefore





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BE IT RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission hereby includes FTC Skateboarding in the Legacy Business Registry as a Legacy Business under Administrative Code Section 2A.242.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission recommends safeguarding the below listed physical features and traditions at FTC Skateboarding:

Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business:

- Quality clothing and authentic products.
Mural painted on metal sign.
Dedication to skateboard activism and service.
For The Cash pro contest.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Small Business Commission requires maintenance of the below listed core physical feature or tradition to maintain FTC Skateboarding on the Legacy Business Registry:

- Skateboarding store.

I hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was ADOPTED by the Small Business Commission on September 10, 2018.

Regina Dick-Endrizzi
Director

RESOLUTION NO. \_\_\_\_\_

- Ayes -
Nays -
Abstained -
Absent -





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REGINA DICK-ENDRIZZI, DIRECTOR

**Legacy  
Business  
Registry**

# Application Review Sheet

*Application No.:* LBR-2018-19-005  
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*Nomination Date:* August 6, 2018  
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**CRITERION 1:** Has the applicant has operated in San Francisco for 30 or more years, with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years?       X       Yes                      No

1586 Bush Street from 1986 to 1994 (8 years)  
 622 Schrader Street from 1994 to 2003 (9 years)  
 1632 Haight Street from 2003 to Present (15 years)

**CRITERION 2:** Has the applicant contributed to the neighborhood's history and/or the identity of a particular neighborhood or community?       X       Yes                      No

**CRITERION 3:** Is the applicant committed to maintaining the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms?       X       Yes                      No

**NOTES:** N/A

**DELIVERY DATE TO HPC:** August 8, 2018

Richard Kurylo  
 Manager, Legacy Business Program



Board of Supervisor  
District 5



City and County of San Francisco

## Vallie Brown

Monday, August 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Office of Small Business  
Small Business Commission  
City Hall, Suite 110  
San Francisco, CA 94102

To whom it may concern:

I am writing to nominate FTC Skateboarding at 1632 Haight Street for the Legacy Business Registry Program.

Though it was founded in 1994, the origins of the business extend back to FTC Ski & Sports, a sports retail store that opened in the late 1960s at 1586 Bush Street at Franklin Street. While many changes have occurred since then, this family owned shop continues to be a pillar of the community.

According to owner Kent Uyehara, street skating really originated in San Francisco in the 1980s and in the mid-1990s it was dubbed the Mecca of skateboarding. During this time, FTC Skateboarding was supporting skateboarders and the San Francisco skateboarding community, cementing its place in San Francisco history. FTC sponsors most of the skateboarding events held in the city including; Dew Tour, X Games, San Francisco skate park events, and also works with the San Francisco Recreation and Parks Department on skateboard issues and programming. The family business has been well-recognized within the skateboard industry for its longevity and contributions to skateboarding, and is dedicated to supporting the skateboarding community of San Francisco.

I am proud to nominate FTC Skateboarding for the Legacy Business Registry Program. The proprietor, Kent Uyehara, can be reached at (415) 407-2208

Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to my office at (415) 554-7630 or [BrownStaff@sfgov.org](mailto:BrownStaff@sfgov.org). Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Vallie Brown".

Supervisor Vallie Brown  
Board of Supervisors

# Section One:

**Business / Applicant Information.** Provide the following information:

- The name, mailing address, and other contact information of the business;
- The name of the person who owns the business. For businesses with multiple owners, identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business;
- The name, title, and contact information of the applicant;
- The business's San Francisco Business Account Number and entity number with the Secretary of State, if applicable.

<b>NAME OF BUSINESS:</b>		
FTC SKATEBOARDING		
<b>BUSINESS OWNER(S) (identify the person(s) with the highest ownership stake in the business)</b>		
KENT UYEHARA		
<b>CURRENT BUSINESS ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
1632 HAIGHT ST- SF, CA 94117		(415) 626-0663 shop [REDACTED]
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		Kent@FTCSF.com
<b>WEBSITE:</b>	<b>FACEBOOK PAGE:</b>	<b>YELP PAGE</b>
FTCSF.com	FTCSF	FTC SKATEBOARDING
<b>APPLICANT'S NAME</b>		
KENT UYEHARA		<input type="checkbox"/> Same as Business
<b>APPLICANT'S TITLE</b>		
owner principal		
<b>APPLICANT'S ADDRESS:</b>		<b>TELEPHONE:</b>
[REDACTED]		[REDACTED]
		<b>EMAIL:</b>
		Kent@FTCSF.com
<b>SAN FRANCISCO BUSINESS ACCOUNT NUMBER:</b>		<b>SECRETARY OF STATE ENTITY NUMBER (if applicable):</b>
0321252		
<b>OFFICIAL USE: Completed by OSB Staff</b>		
<b>NAME OF NOMINATOR:</b>		<b>DATE OF NOMINATION:</b>



## Section Two:

### Business Location(s).

List the business address of the original San Francisco location, the start date of business, and the dates of operation at the original location. Check the box indicating whether the original location of the business in San Francisco is the founding location of the business. If the business moved from its original location and has had additional addresses in San Francisco, identify all other addresses and the dates of operation at each address. For businesses with more than one location, list the additional locations in section three of the narrative.

ORIGINAL SAN FRANCISCO ADDRESS:	ZIP CODE:	START DATE OF BUSINESS
1586 BUSH ST.	94109	1986
IS THIS LOCATION THE FOUNDING LOCATION OF THE BUSINESS?	DATES OF OPERATION AT THIS LOCATON	
<input type="radio"/> No <input checked="" type="radio"/> Yes	1986-1994	

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
622 SHRADER ST.	94117	Start: 11/94 End: 11/2003

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
1632 Haight Street	94117	Start: 2003 End: Present

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

OTHER ADDRESSES (if applicable):	ZIP CODE:	DATES OF OPERATION
		Start: End:

## Section Three:

### Disclosure Statement.

#### San Francisco Taxes, Business Registration, Licenses, Labor Laws and Public Information Release.

This section is verification that all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses are current and complete, and there are no current violations of San Francisco labor laws. This information will be verified and a business deemed not current in with all San Francisco taxes, business registration, and licenses, or has current violations of San Francisco labor laws, will not be eligible to apply for the Business Assistance Grant.

In addition, we are required to inform you that all information provided in the application will become subject to disclosure under the California Public Records Act.

Please read the following statements and check each to indicate that you agree with the statement. Then sign below in the space provided.

- I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the business.
- I attest that the business is current on all of its San Francisco tax obligations.
- I attest that the business's business registration and any applicable regulatory license(s) are current.
- I attest that the Office of Labor Standards and Enforcement (OLSE) has not determined that the business is currently in violation of any of the City's labor laws, and that the business does not owe any outstanding penalties or payments ordered by the OLSE.
- I understand that documents submitted with this application may be made available to the public for inspection and copying pursuant to the California Public Records Act and San Francisco Sunshine Ordinance.
- I hereby acknowledge and authorize that all photographs and images submitted as part of the application may be used by the City without compensation.
- I understand that the Small Business Commission may revoke the placement of the business on the Registry if it finds that the business no longer qualifies, and that placement on the Registry does not entitle the business to a grant of City funds.

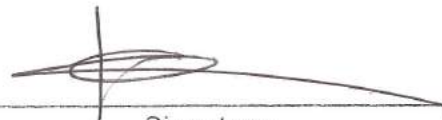
KENT UMEHARA

Name (Print):

2/1/13

~~1/1/13~~

Date:



Signature:

## **FTC SKATEBOARDING**

### **Section 4: Written Historical Narrative**

#### **CRITERION 1**

**a. Provide a short history of the business from the date the business opened in San Francisco to the present day, including the ownership history. For businesses with multiple locations, include the history of the original location in San Francisco (including whether it was the business's founding and or headquartered location) and the opening dates and locations of all other locations.**

FTC Skateboarding, presently located at 1632 Haight Street, was established in 1994. The origins of the business extend back to FTC Ski & Sports, a sports specialty retail store that opened in the late 1960s at 1586 Bush Street at Franklin Street. FTC Ski & Sports, owned by Lloyd Uyehara, sold skis and cycling and other sports gear. "FTC" was short for "Free Trade Center."

In the late 1970s, FTC Ski & Sports began selling skateboards as a small wall display of skateboard decks and parts within the store. In the 1980s, Lloyd's son Kent Uyehara started selling skateboards to his high school friends. He made a catalog with all the different boards, and people would just choose what they wanted. At a certain point, Kent was making weekly orders, and Lloyd let Kent start selling skateboards in the store. The year was 1986. Kent went to college, but was coming back every week or so to manage the skateboard portion of the store. Eventually, skateboarding and snowboarding took over the whole store.

In 1994, FTC Skateboarding, also known as FTC Skate Shop, moved from Bush Street to the Haight Ashbury neighborhood at 622 Shrader Street and officially became an independent business. There had been a history of other core skate shops there, and FTC Skateboarding wanted to keep the tradition going. FTC Ski & Sports continued to exist at 1586 Bush Street.

The business is owned by mother and son team Kim Uyehara and Kent Uyehara who are third and fourth generation San Franciscans, respectively. "FTC" stands for "For The City" in honor of San Francisco.

In 2003, the business moved to a larger space at 1632 Haight Street at Clayton Street where it is still located today. FTC Skateboarding also has franchise shops in Tokyo, Japan, and Barcelona, Spain.

FTC Skateboarding is comprised of a skateboard shop and boutique clothing brand, which includes skateboards, skateboarding necessities, T-shirts, tops, sweatshirts, pants, hats, beanies and accessories.

Over the years, FTC Skateboarding has evolved from a store into today's lifestyle brand, which is always representing San Francisco along the way. The company distributes products worldwide helping to attract international fans to visit San Francisco.

FTC Skateboarding, if not included on the Legacy Business Registry, would face a significant risk of displacement. The lease is up in October 2018, and the Legacy Business Program would help secure a fair term and price. The business is struggling due to the overpricing of rent, ever-increasing operating expenses and declining in-store sales due to the massive shift to online sales. Most of the neighbors on Haight Street face the same situation. It is a never-ending sad state of reality on Haight Street.

**b. Describe any circumstances that required the business to cease operations in San Francisco for more than six months?**

FTC Skateboarding has not ceased operations since it opened in 1994.

**c. Is the business a family-owned business? If so, give the generational history of the business.**

FTC is a family-owned business operated by Kim Uyehara and Kent Uyehara (mother and son) and their dedicated staff.

**d. Describe the ownership history when the business ownership is not the original owner or a family-owned business.**

The present owners of the business, Kim Uyehara and Kent Uyehara, are the original owners:

1994 to Present      Kim Uyehara and Kent Uyehara

**e. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30 years, the applicant will need to provide documentation of the existence of the business prior to current ownership to verify it has been in operation for 30+ years. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

Documentation demonstrating existence of the business for 24 years is included in the Legacy Business Registry application.

**f. Note any other special features of the business location, such as, if the property associated with the business is listed on a local, state, or federal historic resources registry.**

N/A

## **CRITERION 2**

### **a. Describe the business's contribution to the history and/or identity of the neighborhood, community or San Francisco.**

According to Kent Uyehara, street skating really originated in San Francisco in the 1980s. Skating was largely popular to the masses because of vert and half pipe skating – getting “big air.” Then, primarily due to insurance issues, skate parks and ramps disappeared and the sport got reinvented due to street skating. By the early 1990s, as technical skateboarding became more popular, Justin Herman plaza became the world’s epicenter for skateboarding. During the mid-1990s, San Francisco was dubbed the Mecca of skateboarding for the entire world. Ever since that time, San Francisco has been considered a famous skate town.

FTC Skateboarding was in the middle of the action during the rise of the skateboarding scene. FTC was there, supporting the skaters and the San Francisco skate scene, which started cementing the business’s contribution and reputation. Since FTC opened its doors in 1994, it has been well-recognized within the skateboard industry for its longevity and contributions to skateboarding. The family business helped nurture past and present generations of skater friends to build successful careers in business and skating.

### **b. Is the business (or has been) associated with significant events in the neighborhood, the city, or the business industry?**

FTC Skateboarding co-owner Kent Uyehara joined the Skateboarding Task Force, which he was a part of for six years (1998-2004) as a part of Gavin Newsom’s mayoral administration when he was in office. The Skateboarding Task Force examined existing skateboarding laws, which were outdated and vague, and developed new plans for skate parks. However, politics got too involved little progress was made.

FTC generally sponsors most of the skateboard events held in the city for the past couple decades including, but not limited to, Dew Tour, X Games, San Francisco skatepark events and FTC’s FOR THE CASH pro contests. FTC also works with the Recreation and Parks Department on skateboard issues and programming. Recently, a grant was awarded to remodel the Waller Street skate area, and FTC is facilitating the private corporation donation portion of the grant.

For the X Games, FTC was asked by then-Mayor Willie Brown to assist the city in building the X Games pavilion. FTC also worked with the X Games itself.

### **c. Has the business ever been referenced in an historical context? Such as in a business trade publication, media, or historical documents?**

FTC Skateboarding and Kent Uyehara have been featured in a number of articles, publications and documents including, but not limited to, the following:

- In 1995, an article in TransWorld SKATEboarding magazine, an international magazine on skateboarding based in Carlsbad, California.
- In 2001, an article for the Zipang Worldwide Special Interview in the Japanese magazine Zipang Skateboard Archives.
- In 2005, an article in the Transworld Business Skate, Surf, and Snow magazine.
- In 2012, an article by ESPN for the X Games.
- On February 2, 2015, an article in Hoodline titled, “Meet Kent Uyehara, Owner Of Haight Street's FTC Skate Shop.”
- In 2018, an article by Jenkem magazine.

**d. Is the business associated with a significant or historical person?**

FTC Skateboarding started in late 1960s as high end sport shop. Many families in San Francisco were customers. Most people that grew up in city have some kind of exposure to and or experience with FTC. Gavin Newsom and his family were customers at FTC. Newsom’s uncle was the FTC Skateboarding’s attorney and, during the time Newsom was Mayor of San Francisco, the X Games came to SF in 1999-2000. Newsom was a supervisor then and he helped to get FTC on board with the event.

FTC Skateboarding has had many well-known customers including Robin Williams, Dave Chappelle, Ali Wong, Lars of Metallica and Carlos Santana. Almost every skate pro the past two decades like Christian Hosoi, Brian Anderson and Tony Hawk have supported the store. Also, all the skate pros raised in the San Francisco Bay Area like Karl Watson, Mike Carroll, Jovontae Turner and Nico Hiraga have been customers of FTC.

**e. How does the business demonstrate its commitment to the community?**

FTC has been a longtime active community member specifically for the Haight as well as the city at large. A Haight merchant and neighbor since 1994, FTC Skateboarding has a history of involvement that continues today. Here are some notable examples:

- Regarding skateboarding advocacy issues, FTC has represented the betterment of skateboarding in San Francisco. This includes building more skate parks and advocating for more fair laws and trying to get the police to be more fair to the skaters and understand a bit more about the skate community in general.
- FTC held a pro contest inside the store called FTC FOR THE CASH contest.
- FTC worked with the Recreation and Parks Department on skateboard events and issues. Many skateboarding friends and other sponsored skaters are employed by the department, and the department now has a full skateboard program year round.
- FTC helped promote skate parks built over the past 20+ years with various City departments and officials.
- FTC was a member of the Skateboard Task Force member (under the Gavin Newsom mayoral administration) for 6 years, from 1998-2004.

- FTC was a member of Mayor Lee's Small Business Group.
- Kent is a Board Member of the Haight Ashbury Merchant Association (HAMA).
- Kent was the Merchant Chair of HAIA (Haight Ashbury Improvement Association) before HAMA restarted).
- Kent has been a member of past Park Station Police Advisory Boards for the past 5+ years.
- FTC donates product and time to many San Francisco nonprofits and public schools.
- FTC is a grant project facilitator for the current Waller Street skateboard area phase II improvement.

**f. Provide a description of the community the business serves.**

FTC Skateboarding serves the San Francisco skate community. FTC Skateboarding and Kent Uyehara demonstrate a strong support for the skate community. Kent has received three certificates from Mayor Newsom and the Board of Supervisors for skateboard activism and service.

**g. Is the business associated with a culturally significant building/structure/site/object/interior?**

The historic resource status of the building at 1626 to 1636 Haight Street is classified by the Planning Department as "Category A" (Historic Resource Present) with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. It is a possible contributor to the Haight Ashbury Historic District.

**h. How would the community be diminished if the business were to be sold, relocated, shut down, etc.?**

If FTC Skateboarding were to close, the local community would be the most affected, not only by losing a small business, but also losing a business caters to San Francisco's youth. Losing FTC Skateboarding would not just be the loss of a store at which one can buy skateboards, it would be the intangible loss of what FTC does. A skate shop is like a community center, and because FTC has been around for so long, it is like a multigenerational community center. There are a lot of young people who skateboard, have skateboarded or know someone that has skateboarded. This is what builds the community of skating. FTC Skateboarding nurtures and fosters a lot of young people entering the skating community in San Francisco, which would be lost if the store were to close. A lot of people such as the ones who work in the Recreation and Parks Department as counselors are a product of FTC. There would be an overall loss of general community involvement in San Francisco if FTC Skateboarding were to be sold, relocated or shut down.

### **CRITERION 3**

**a. Describe the business and the essential features that define its character.**

FTC, established in 1994, humbly began as a small collection of skate gear buried in the back of a ski and tennis shop. Over the past three decades, FTC has earned the reputation as one of the true epicenters of real skate culture. FTC opened the doors of its first shop in San Francisco's historic Haight-Ashbury just as skateboarding was evolving beyond its surf-inspired roots and exploding into a new style of city street skating. FTC was there for the whole ride, attracting and nurturing the talented outsiders, misfits and artists that put legendary spots like the Embarcadero AKA EMB, Hubba Hideout, Pier 7 and many more on the map. Over the years, FTC has grown beyond the confines of its original shop and has evolved into a brand known for its authentic, grass roots innovation in apparel, design, video, art and music. The FTC family grows larger but the original vision remains: quality clothing and authentic products born from the heart and soul of the streets.

**b. How does the business demonstrate a commitment to maintaining the historical traditions that define the business, and which of these traditions should not be changed in order to retain the businesses historical character? (e.g., business model, goods and services, craft, culinary, or art forms)**

FTC Skateboarding started out as a ski and sport shop and transitioned into a skate shop. FTC is committed to maintaining its historic traditions as a skate shop and promoter of the true skateboarding street lifestyle. It holds tight to family values and fostering skate youth around the city. Co-owner Kent Uyehara cares strongly about helping others and deepening the rich community of skaters in San Francisco.

**c. How has the business demonstrated a commitment to maintaining the special physical features that define the business? Describe any special exterior and interior physical characteristics of the space occupied by the business (e.g. signage, murals, architectural details, neon signs, etc.).**

In 1995, one of Kent's friends drew a mural on the outside of the store on a metal sign, when they moved locations, they had it removed and brought to the new location, where is now hangs in the front window of the current location.

**d. When the current ownership is not the original owner and has owned the business for less than 30years; the applicant will need to provide documentation that demonstrates the current owner has maintained the physical features or traditions that define the business, including craft, culinary, or art forms. Please use the list of supplemental documents and/or materials as a guide to help demonstrate the existence of the business prior to current ownership.**

N/A





← **FTC Skate Boarding**

ALL INSIDE

**FAMILY**











← FTC Skate Boarding  
ALL INSIDE

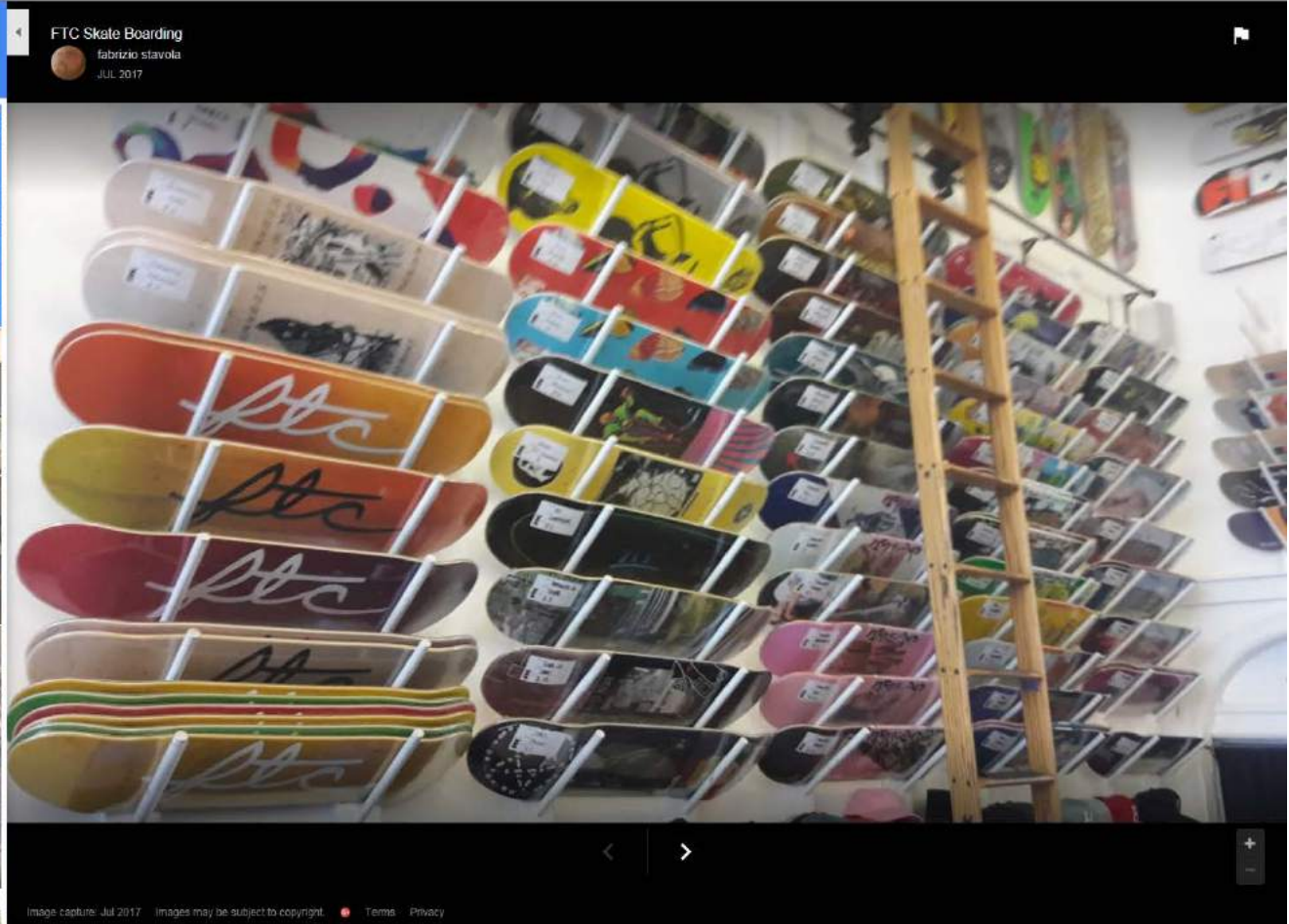
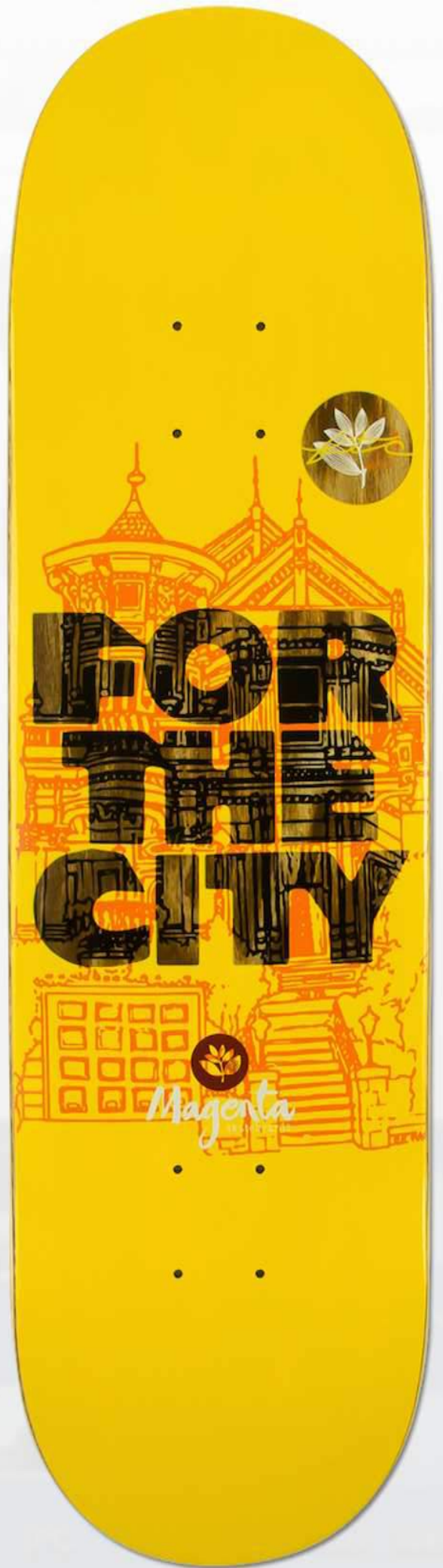


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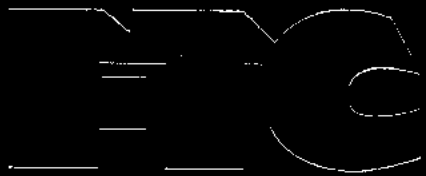






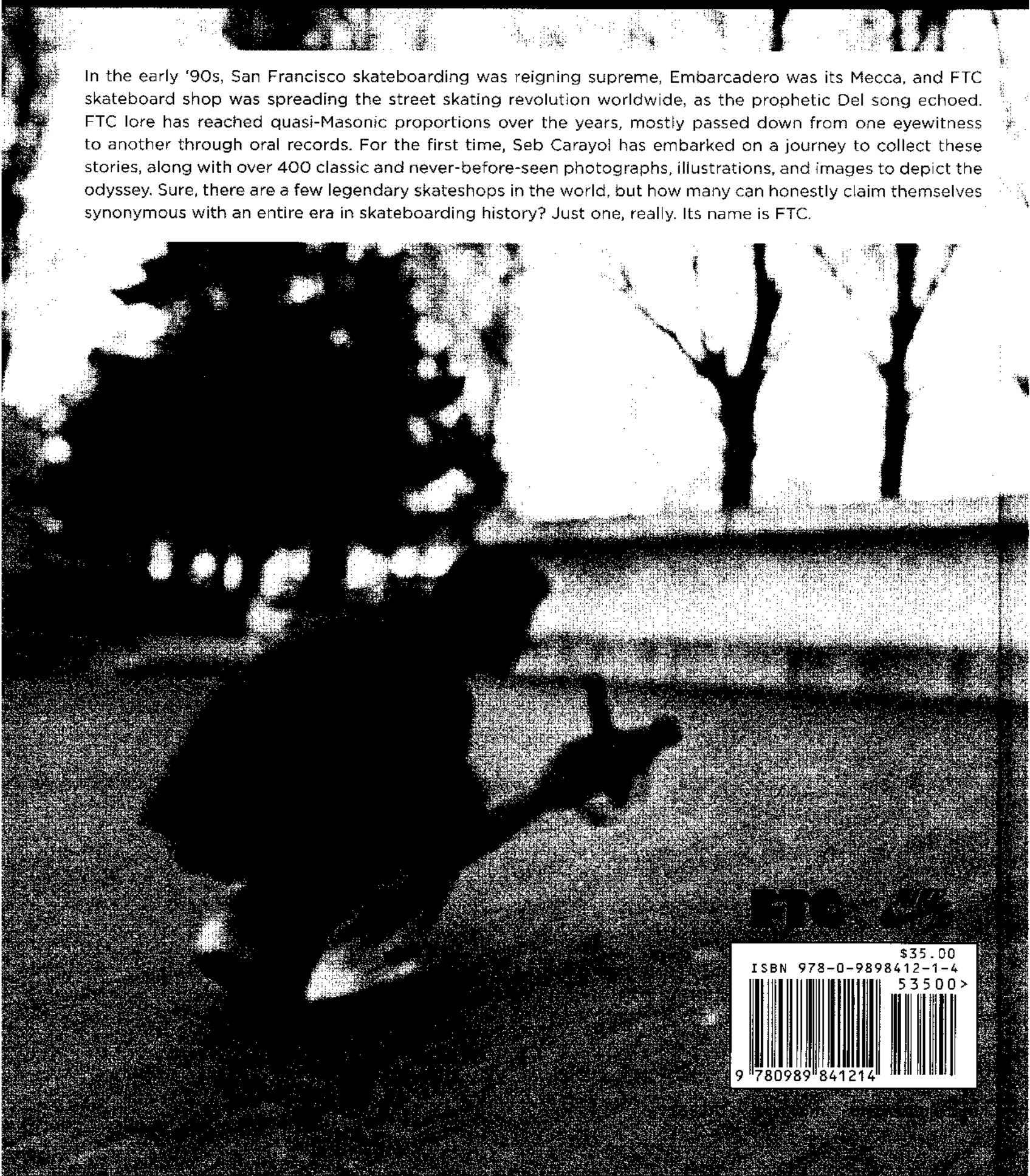
FTC





Second edition with 24 pages of all-new material featuring Jovontae Turner, Rick Ibaseta, James Kelch, Mike Carroll, Brian Anderson, Keith Hufnagel, Nick Lockman, Scott Johnston, Bobby Puleo, Marcus McBride, Lavar McBride, Stevie Williams, Josh Kalis, Mike York, Lennie Kirk, Nick Tershay, Mike Cao, JB Gillet, Chico Brenes, Ben Sanchez, Karl Watson, Rob Welsh, Drake Jones & many more.

In the early '90s, San Francisco skateboarding was reigning supreme, Embarcadero was its Mecca, and FTC skateboard shop was spreading the street skating revolution worldwide, as the prophetic Del song echoed. FTC lore has reached quasi-Masonic proportions over the years, mostly passed down from one eyewitness to another through oral records. For the first time, Seb Carayol has embarked on a journey to collect these stories, along with over 400 classic and never-before-seen photographs, illustrations, and images to depict the odyssey. Sure, there are a few legendary skateshops in the world, but how many can honestly claim themselves synonymous with an entire era in skateboarding history? Just one, really. Its name is FTC.



**FTC** *Del*

\$35.00  
ISBN 978-0-9898412-1-4  
53500 >

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**KENT UYEHARA**

“Then at one point my dad was like, ‘Hey it looks like you’re buying a lot of stuff. If you want we can give you a section on the wall.’ That’s how the skate chapter of FTC started.”

*In 1966, a huge ski and tennis shop opened in the heart of downtown San Francisco. Its name? “Free Trade Center.” Then something weird happened: one of the owner’s three children—Kent Uyehara—decided to get deep into skateboarding, and to use the venue’s account to buy skateboards at wholesale. Here’s how a legendary slice of raw City life was built, piece by piece, contributing without realizing it to the flavor of street skating for years and generations to come.*

**Did FTC start before the Embarcadero days?**

Yeah. My dad was a biochemist by trade, but for leisure he liked skiing. From the time I was born, he was operating a ski shop, FTC Ski & Sports. He didn’t actually start FTC. He started working there part time as a ski bum, I suppose. In a very short amount of time, somehow, he had the opportunity to take over the place. From what I know, Free Trade Center was originally an importing business that focused primarily on sporting goods from Asia and Europe. It started in 1966 or 1967. I was born in 1968. They decided to turn the front of the building into a retail store. That’s when my father stepped in. It was the right place at the right time. That’s when tennis and skiing started to blow up.

**When did you start working there?**

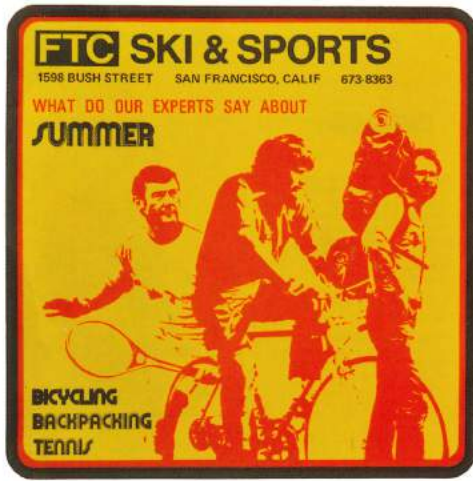
I grew up the son of a sports shop owner. We were “latch key kids,” where both of your parents work. After school we’d either go home or go to our parents’ work, so I suppose I officially started when I was ten years old. I remember it because that would have been 1978. That was kind of the heyday of FTC Ski & Sports, when my dad was running it. I mean, it had up to eighty employees, a four-story building, ski and tennis equipment... those were rich sports. I remember being around a lot of people. To me, it was like being at Macy’s or something.

**What would you do there at ten years old?**

We were always told that if you want to buy something, you had to go to the store and work. You didn’t get paid for chores, they were just part of the duty. If you wanted extra money to go do something or go buy something, then you had to do extra work at the store. I remember being ten years old specifically, because I was with my dad, and I had just started working after school, pricing and putting socks out on the floor. I worked forty-three hours over two weeks, and for that I received a paycheck of four dollars and thirty cents. That’s ten cents an hour! My dad said that I had done such an outstanding job that he gave me a raise, on the spot, after the first paycheck: twenty-five cents an hour!

**You worked your way up fast!**

That was big time.



Clockwise from top left: FTC Ski & Sports ad circa 1977, FTC Cyclery event circa 1978, FTC affiliates, the skate wall in all its glory

**How did you develop an interest for skateboarding?**

I had an older brother, Lance, who was already skateboarding, so I wanted a skateboard. In the late '70s, FTC had a bike shop, and they already carried skateboards, the original Sims wide boards: all natural wood, eleven inches wide, wheel wells... I ended up getting a Santa Cruz fiberglass slalom board. Luckily we had a set of cones. It was the late '70s.

**How did the actual skate corner in FTC happen?**

Basically before 'my time,' FTC was already selling skateboards. In the second half of the '70s, rollerskating and the roller disco thing were huge, especially in San Francisco. FTC was a big part of that as well, to the point where at 1586 Bush, the entire store was a rollerskate shop. They basically turned the entire store into a roller rink! They even had a quarterpipe in there, so people could try their rollerskates. It was bizarre. Every once in a while you'd get a rollerskater or a skateboarder hitting the ramp. Anyway, in 1984, when I was a sophomore in high school, I asked my dad if I could order some skateboard stuff using the store's resale license. Before that, I had been buying my stuff through other stores. Specifically, I didn't want to go to Skates On Haight.

**So, that was for your own personal use?**

Yeah, at first. I contacted Powell Peralta first, they said, "No problem, \$100 minimum." That's two decks, a couple sets of Rat Bones, a couple rails, and some tailbones. I did this a few times, then I started ordering for friends I was skating with. In the beginning, I was just hooking up my crew, my friends from high school, but word got out about this guy you could buy skate stuff from. Suddenly, I started getting random people asking me, "Hey, can I buy something from you?" I grew up in a retail environment. I was constantly thinking of ways to start something from nothing. When *Star Wars* came out in 1977, I convinced my dad to let me sell merchandise. There was a random *Star Wars* section with shirts and posters in FTC!

Anyway, once people started asking for skate stuff, I saw the opportunity, and quickly put together a mini-catalog in a binder. I took orders on a certain day of the month, set up a schedule, and stuff would arrive within a week. The difference between myself and Skates On Haight was that I didn't really care about making money. You had the retail price and you had the wholesale price, but I'd give people the middle price. I was getting my personal stuff for free, so it didn't matter. It was paid for by the stuff I sold.

“In the late ‘70s, FTC had a bike shop, and they already carried skateboards, the original Sims wide boards: all natural wood, eleven inches wide, wheel wells...”

—Kent Uyehara



Clockwise from top left: FTC crew at trade show with Lloyd Uyehara in the center, FTC Cyclery window with OG Sims boards, Skate City USA display; FTC business card circa 1977, FTC Junior Ski Team, 1598 Bush Street, FTC Display at the Consumer Sports Show, late '70s

**Did your catalog have a rad name? Like *Kent's Kold Kuts* or something?**

I don't think it did. I remember having a price list at one point, but that was about it. There might have been an FTC mention in there somewhere, but it was really a separate venture. I was doing the orders and everything. Funny thing, too, I remember being fifteen years old going to my first ASR trade show, and everybody was clowning me because I was so young. They said, "Where's your dad? Where are your parents at?" I don't even remember if I went with my dad to that first one. I was doing the buying when I was fifteen or sixteen.

Then at one point my dad was like, "Hey it looks like you're buying a lot of stuff. If you want we can give you a section on the wall." That's how the skate chapter of FTC started. We started off with six boards, some Santa Cruz boards. I remember that because the first pro to ever come into the store was Steve Olson, who had SOS Skateboards. He asked if we carried SOS. We didn't. He said, "Can I ask why?" I told him we hadn't had any requests yet. He said, "Oh, that's cool..." I remember being really embarrassed, but I was also really excited at the same time, because Steve Olson came into FTC!

**What other shops were there at the time?**

Skates On Haight had already been there for a while. They were the world's largest mail order at one point. Though they were big, they never represented skateboarding the way I wanted to. Concrete Jungle was around back then, too. I partied with this guy Mike Johnson in high school and he worked there, so I never got vibed. Jake Phelps worked there, too, but I never knew him then.

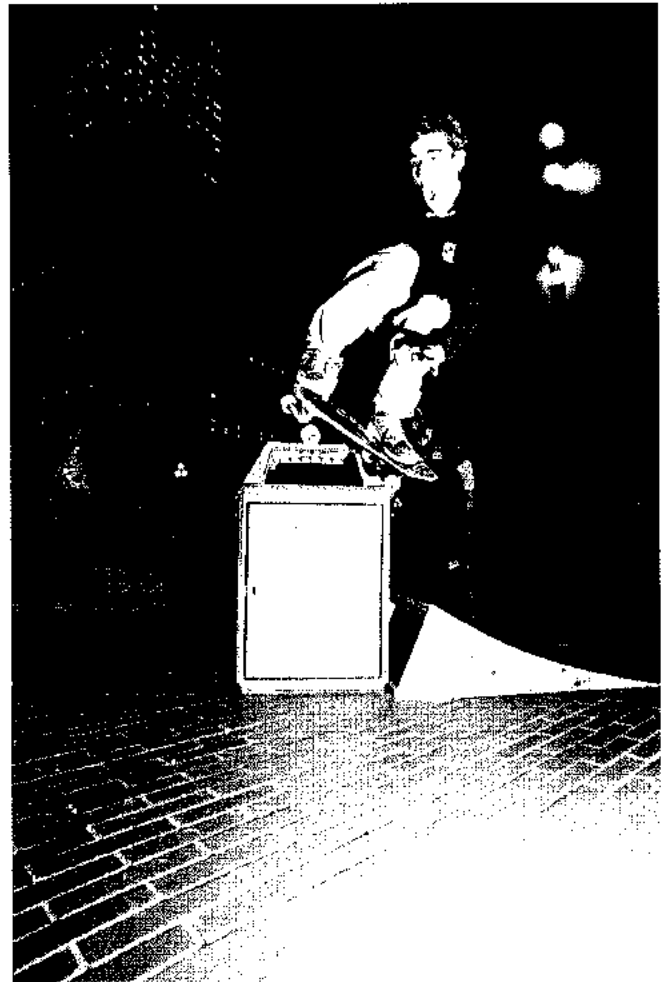
We were maybe the third or fourth shop. We were basically the multisport shop that sold skateboards. We weren't a lifestyle store yet, but somehow I met Concrete Jungle's boss, Ron, and at least on the surface he respected me. In fact, when he decided to close down his business in 1989, he came over to my store and gave me the blessing. He said, "I'm closing down, I want you to take over SF." I never knew his last name, he was just 'Ron from Venezuela.' To me, the Concrete Jungle generation is the real jump off of San Francisco skating.

**Were there tensions between shops?**

Not between us, but there were always tensions between Concrete Jungle and "The world's largest skateboard toy store," Skates On Haight. It was ridiculous.



*You can stuff anything into saggy pants. Anything!*  
*The Carroll brothers, Bryce Knights*



*Greg Carroll, wallie, circa 1988 Gus Duarte*

**When did FTC become more than a few boards on a wall?**

We brought more boards in, took over the back part, and set up a free work bench. Concrete Jungle had one, too. Skates On Haight had tools, but they'd charge you a bullshit 'labor fee' if they put your board together. That was my first strategic move.

Then customers started hanging out, and we started getting random people from that neighborhood coming in. That's how I met Jovontae Turner around 1987 or 1988, and all these other kids who lived in the Richmond and hung out in Japan Town, for example, Graham, our art director, and his friends... a lot of Asian kids. That's the whole thing in the City: it might sound weird, but because it was an Asian-run business, FTC helped foster more minorities into local skateboarding than otherwise would have happened. I think it played a role, and I was reminded last year when we participated in an exhibit at the California African American Museum in LA. Apparently FTC is a contribution to African-American skateboarding, probably because we pretty much sponsored almost every key black skater, at least in the '90s. Again, it's SF, so it's not like some racist black or white town, but everybody in the skateboarding business was a white male, like a lot of the industry today. I think that helped make a difference at an early stage.



*Mike Carroll and Rick Ibaseta at Embarcadero, Larice Dawes*



*Rick Ibaseta circa 1988, Gus Duarte*





Rick Ibaseta and Jovontae Turner circa 1990

Henry Sanchez and Chris Branagh

**Did the increase of skaters create tension with your dad?**

Well, his traditional ski and tennis store was gradually transforming into a very different type of store. What made it different was that skateboarding isn't a sport, it's a lifestyle. Also, by that time skateboarding had started its first decline, so the only people who stuck to it were very young teenagers, and a lot of rebellion came with that. There were rules you had to abide by coming into FTC, Lloyd's rules. Either you lived by them, or you were out of FTC. It was family-style, and Lloyd was the dad.

**Wouldn't he slap people?**

He didn't slap people, but everybody on the early team got kicked out at some point, especially Karl Watson. When he was a teenager, Karl was the biggest punk ever. A lot of these kids didn't have father figures. There was no discipline in their lives while they were coming of age, so FTC was like a community center for all these kids.

**Did you end up having this role, too?**

I was more like the mediator. I had to go to my dad and tell him to be cool with so-and-so, and then go to so-and-so and say, "Look man, you have to understand that's why you're not allowed in the store right now." Despite the tensions, without my dad I would never have grown up in sport retail or opened a shop. My family became surrogates for our skaters, which made FTC truly unique.

“Our first team was four guys: Mikey and Greg Carroll, a Filipino guy named Rick Ibaseta, and Jovontae Turner. Henry Sanchez was the next guy. Talk about a melting pot!”

—Kent Uyehara



Henry Sanchez, switch 180 to 5-0, Lance Dawes



The first day at 622 Shrader, left to right: Nick Lockman, Richard Hart, Lil' Gary, Chico Brenes, Mike Carroll, Karl Watson, Marcus McBride, Ando, Ed Loftus, Ben Sanchez, Bobcat, Chris Dunn, Raine



Lee Smith, Ando, Carmella, Stevie Williams, Shrader St., December 1998

**When did FTC become the cool shop in town?**

Probably a year or two after moving over to the Haight. We moved in November of '94. We moved in the middle of the night, unannounced, because I felt that I was moving into enemy territory, right across the street from Skates On Haight who was the world's largest mail order. They had huge economics; power, I would say. If they had noticed I was coming, they could've tried to rent the place out and block me from getting the space I wanted.

**The sudden move had nothing to do with your dad?**

No, no, not at all. After I opened the store, probably within six months, that's when I had a falling out with my dad. Opening the store had nothing to do with it. I knew it was time for FTC Skateboarding to stand on its own.

When the new store opened, I felt it would allow him to bring golf in, and he would have more room during ski season. My stuff was absorbing all of his stuff, and there's a pride thing, too. For him, it was tough having his son come in and take the recognition he built from nothing. FTC ended up not being known as a ski shop anymore, but for skateboarding.

**Were you tempted to change the name when you moved on your own?**

No. Why would I want to change a name that was world famous? It just became FTC Skateboarding. That's been the official, legal name since 1994. I didn't want anyone to question our commitment to skateboarding.

**Why did you pick the Haight and not something closer to Embarcadero, for instance?**

Because of the skateboard retail history in that area. We thought about getting closer to Embarcadero, but ultimately we chose the Haight because of that. We never wanted a store by the Embarcadero. I was never attracted to the idea. When we got our specific space, it was really cool because it was two doors down from Fogtown. FTC Skateboarding opened in 1994, continuing the legacy of skateboard shops in the Haight.

**Why did you move from Shrader to Haight Street proper?**

FTC moved onto Haight Street in 2003 after ten years on Shrader Street. It was time for us to grow once again, this time into a huge space compared to the Shrader Street post. It was always my goal to be on Haight Street, but we



622 Shrader at night

started in the Haight with a tiny 400 square foot space to test the waters first. Basically, we had outgrown the Shrader Street shop so it was time to look for a new home!

**Was it necessary to turn FTC into more of a boutique than the skateshop where “people take naps in the window,” as Rob Welsh describes it?**

When we opened our Haight Street flagship store everybody was shocked at how “boutique” it appeared. The funny thing is, we didn't intend it to be like that at all. We moved into a Victorian building with lots of fine interior detailing. We gave it a coat of fresh paint, then installed carpet and faux oak flooring, but somehow it was too fancy for most of our skaters' approval. It took over a year for the store to look “lived in” to everyone's satisfaction.

**Do you get more weird street characters in there now that you're on Haight Street proper?**

Upper Haight Street is a constant mixture of tourists, local youth, and of course, the street characters. There are dozens of rehab centers and programs around, as well as many folks with mental health issues, so it creates a lively and unpredictable atmosphere. Sometimes it's cool but

“There were rules you had to abide by coming into FTC, Lloyd's rules. Either you lived by them, or you were out of FTC.”

—Kent Uyehara



“FTC moved onto Haight Street in 2003 after ten years on Shrader Street. It was time for us to grow once again, this time into a huge space compared to the Shrader Street post.”

—Kent Uyehara

sometimes it's not. If anything, Shrader Street was a bit rougher in the first couple years, as we had to confront the crack dealers using our block for “pickups.” We also had to deal with “SF” aka the “Scum Fucks,” a bunch of belligerent transients who claimed the Haight as theirs—until we educated them on who runs things.

**What are the pros and cons of the Haight Street store?**

The Haight store is all positive. It's a big, airy store with tons of wall space for decks and gallery exhibitions. We are also the OGs of Haight Street which comes with benefits like bottomless sangria at Cha Cha Cha and comp'd burritos at Zona Rosa. Lately, a few street brands have recently set up shop on Haight, so hopefully that will boost Haight Street's shopping reputation even more. FTCSF is also the home of For The Cash.

**How did these For The Cash contests come about?**

For The Cash is our novel approach to skate competitions. It's an invitational open contest that takes place inside our Haight Street store. We close the store for two days and literally take everything out, leaving only the bare floor. Then we build out a complete skate course, throw the contest, and pay the winner with a briefcase full of cash. It started with the idea to do a photo shoot on our handrail.



Matt Miller nollie heelflips down the stairs at For The Cash II inside the Haight Street store, 2011, Mike Blabac

Soon the idea grew to doing a rail contest, then it only made sense to raise the ante and do a full-blown skate course. Each new contest pushes us to a new level.

**Was it difficult to make it happen?**

With only two days to breakdown, build, hold the contest, and get the store reopened, there's always a nervous hope that it'll get done on time. We have the course built in advance, otherwise, it wouldn't be possible.

**What's the craziest thing you saw during For The Cash?**

It's not necessarily "crazy," but Danny Way hanging out in my office the whole afternoon is a great memory, and the skating itself is always pretty insane.

**What's next for FTC? Buying an old bank on Fairfax in LA? Extending to other cities?**

Right now, our FTC clothing line is heating up, so that's my main focus these days. We also hope to continue spreading the FTC message around the globe while opening more stores with the right partners. Currently we have five stores: San Francisco & Sacramento (US), Barcelona (Spain), and Tokyo & Sendai (Japan). At the end of the day, we're just doing what we've always done. Same business, different day, I like to say.

“For The Cash is our novel approach to skate competitions. It's an invitational open contest that takes place inside our Haight Street store.”

—Kent Uyehara

**KIM UYEHARA**

“I was just there. I kept an eye on them, and made sure they were doing okay. Especially, like, Jovontae. I felt free to tell him anything if it seemed like he was wavering.”

*Kent's mom Kim was a second mom to many an SF skater, to the point that Jovontae Turner named his daughter after her. How did she put a posse of inner-city, unruly skaters in check? Let the elusive Godmother break it down.*

**Did you order boards at the shop, too?**

Yeah. I can pack boards and put grip tape on. You just watch the guys do it. You pick up a board and that's it.

**Did you ever do the backwards truck thing?**

I may have. I think Greg Carroll was there. He said, “Yo, you got this backwards,” and started laughing.

**What were the popular brands back then?**

What was it called? Plan B? World Industries.

**Sam Smyth told me that his mom would come to the shop just to hang out with you.**

I don't know about that, but she used to come with him for sure. His mom was cool. His father was very low key. They were both very nice, down-to-earth.

**Was it weird to hang out with all these guys?**

No. Mike Carroll and those boys, they were only like ten or twelve years old. They were really young. I think Jovontae and Mike were about the same age.

**They all say you were a second mom to them.**

I was just there. I kept an eye on them, and made sure they were doing okay. Especially, like, Jovontae. I felt free to tell him anything if it seemed like he was wavering.

**Who did you have to scold the most?**

They were all good boys but they had family trouble. You just have to encourage them and let them know it's okay to do their thing. That's the only way they learn. They were just lost because they had no guidance or anybody to talk to. There were kids like Chico, who was really quiet and well-behaved. Mike used to hide behind his brother Greg. He used to follow him. Nobody was outrageous.

**Kelch is starting a company called “Hella Cool.”**

Oh, that's a hella cool title! They were all little angels in front of me. They never really showed the rough side. If somebody was smoking pot I'd make a remark to show that I knew what was going on, like, “Oh, kinda smelly here,” or, “How much is a dime sack?” You get keen to what's going on when you hang out with those boys.

**Did you like that you discovered skateboarding?**

Yeah, it's been really satisfying, especially after all these years, seeing how everybody turned out and to see that they're responsible citizens.

**Oh, are they?**

I hope so!

**FTC**

## LLOYD UYEHARA

“Overall skiers and skaters got along pretty cool, but we always had a few individuals that caused some chaos!”

*Ask any FTC pro and they'll tell you that Kent's dad definitely endorsed the "bad cop" role at the OG shop. Regardless, in 1986, he dared to walk the plank, embracing his son's skateboard friends as the oddest of all additions to a ski/tennis shop. How did that work? After reminiscing about his upbringing, the elusive man known as Lloyd Uyehara explains it all.*

**You were born and raised in SF, what area?**

As a teenager, I was influenced by my parents to participate in sports. My dad was a Kendo instructor and my mom played team basketball. I grew to love football, basketball, track, and baseball. During college, I developed a huge passion for snow-skiing to the point that, during our winter quarters, I went to ski and work at Sun Valley Ski Resort in Ketchum, Idaho. For two winters, I worked as night auditor and I was skiing everyday. We were the ski bums in those days. While employed at Bayer Biochemical Labs in Berkeley, I always had the burning desire to open up a retail ski shop just like the one in Sun Valley. Instead I found myself investing in an SF wholesale ski import company which distributed ski equipment to U.S. retail shops. It was called Free Trade Center, Inc. importing goods from Japan, Austria, Switzerland, and

China. As a division of this corporation, I started the retail stores FTC SKI SPORTS. Since skiing represented 80% of the business, it was very important to expand and grow our summer business. We grew into several related companies within a few years: FTC Ski, FTC Travel, FTC Cyclery, FTC Sports, FTC Burlingame... that's how it all began.

**What was your first reaction when Kent approached you with the idea to carry skateboards in there?**

When Kent wanted skateboards in the store I was positive. He had a keen sense of new emerging markets and business, even as a kid in middle school. I saw skateboarding as a supplement to our growing summer business.

**Did you have any ideas about skateboarding at the time? What did you think of it?**

I did my due diligence studying the industry: all the manufacturers, distributors, media (mags), our competition... FTC Cyclery had stocked skateboards like Santa Cruz, G&S, and Sims in the late 70's so we had some prior experience. I think Kent had a good grasp of a unique marketing concept and did an admirable job taking skateboarding to a new level.

**How did the skaters behave in the shop? Did you have to check them a little?**

Overall skiers and skaters got along pretty cool, but we always had a few individuals that caused some chaos! The hard, fast rule was "conduct yourself in a civil manner and treat everyone as an equal." If not, you were out of the store!

**How would you be able to get respect from these kids with a lot of them coming from tough backgrounds?**

I can relate to many of these kids because as a teen growing up I experienced severe racial discrimination. I had to fight and defend myself in school and on the field everyday. I finally earned some respect by being physically tough and learning discipline and civility by playing on the high school football team.

**Who were some of the most rambunctious guys?**

I can remember Mike [Carroll], Jovontae, Rick [Ibaseta], Mike Cao, [James] Kelch. Just kids growing up needing some guidance. The store was their playground, a place to hang out. They were all okay with a few exceptions at times. I see they all turned out to be pretty cool guys and great parents! I can see we all have some good in us! Kent's legacy is going to be his leadership and guidance for his skaters playing a huge part in their lives as they moved forward in life.

**Was having skateboarders in the shop a nuisance or a blessing for your "classic" tennis/ski customers?**

Blessing! There was never a conflict with our different clients. We were also selling lots of snowboards so the cross-over was very easy.

**James Kelch told me you always had cool cars, what were your favorites?**

Cars? I didn't know Kelch was watching! I love cars! My first was a '51 Chevy. Then a '61 Vette, a '65 GTO, a '67 Riviera, a '80 Porsche... my favorite for sheer speed and cornering!

**What are you up to these days?**

I play lots of golf, make custom clubs, and give golf lessons.



*Lloyd in classic late '70s form*



*Lloyd and a 12-year-old Kent getting in the Porsche 928, 1980*

“The hard, fast rule was ‘conduct yourself in a civil manner and treat everyone as an equal.’  
If not, you were out of the store!”

—Lloyd Uyehara



## Dogtown's Locals Only

Art Show To Exhibit In Select Skate Shops Around The World

Instead of the usual trade-show gimmicks, Dark Horse Distribution decided to take a more—dare we say—sophisticated approach to its ASR booth this year. The company converted its floor space into a virtual skate-art Louvre—complete with wine, cheese, and a heavy lineup of names on the wall. Artists and skaters like Wes Humpston, Jim Muir, John Lucero, Andy Jenkins, Jim Phillips, Lance Mountain, Chris Pastras, Russ Pope, Eric Dressen, Andrew Pommier, Jeremy Fish, Natas Kaupas, and Craig Stecyk all participated in the show by designing individual decks that pay tribute to the legendary company. According to Dark Horse International Sales and Marketing Director Romy Bertrand, the show was such a success at ASR that it's evolved into a traveling exhibit that plans to visit major cities including New York, San Francisco, Paris, and Tokyo.

"It's funny," says Dogtown Founder Jim Muir. "A lot of the guys featured in the show were skaters and artists that had, told me years and years ago about how they used to doodle Dogtown graphics on their notebooks in class. When Romy and I were working out the details for the show, I called up some of these guys and asked if they would like to doodle again, only this time on a board for our art show." Muir says he's humbled by everyone's willingness to participate and is looking forward to traveling with the show.

Instead of taking the exhibit to art galleries, Dogtown has opted to showcase the work in select retail stores. "We have a lot of art galleries that have asked to showcase the artwork," says Bertrand, "but in order to give back to the skate community, I'm trying to get the work into well-known skate shops first."

The first stop on the tour was at San Francisco's FTC—a shop with a rich legacy of supporting both skateboarding and the arts. "There is mutual benefit to both FTC and the artists and curators, whether it's in the form of business or the ability to expose others to art forms they might not otherwise consider,"



Dogtown Founder Jim Muir stands next to a crazy-eyed Dogtown tribute graphic designed by Jim Phillips.



FTC Owner Kent Uyehara with Dogtown Domestic and International Marketing Director Romy Bertrand.

says FTC Owner Kent Uyehara. "Since skateboarding has always depended on underground artists to help create brand images, it's only natural that we celebrate early pioneers like Dogtown. Red Dog [Jim Muir] has been a friend since his days in SF, so it didn't take too much arm pulling."

Dogtown recently added seven new artists to the current lineup including Chris Miller, Mark Gonzalez, Neil Blender, and Steve Caballero. The show's next stop is New York City. For more on national retailers involvement in the arts, log on to [www.twsbiz.com](http://www.twsbiz.com).

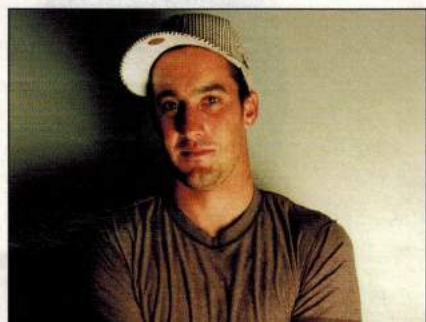
—Cullen Poythress

## Gold Sticker And All

New Era's 59fifties are as hot in the street as they are on the field.

If you're a baseball player, you probably bend the bill. If you're a rapper, you most likely keep the bill flat and leave the gold sticker on. And if you're a skateboarder, you might ditch the MLB logo for your favorite skate-company insignia—gold sticker and bill bending optional. No matter how you wear it, it's hard to deny that New Era's 59fifty caps have bridged the gap between industries by turning a functional sun-blocking baseball

According to Osiris Junior Footwear Designer Bryan House, New Era's popularity is tied into current fashion trends relating to matching footwear, apparel, and headwear items. "A lot of people are into matching their outfits these days," he says. "We're trying to tie some of our footwear lines in with our hats, and New Era has been really cooperative with us in terms of materials. If we're using a certain print,



<https://hoodline.com/2015/02/meet-kent-uyehara-owner-of-haight-street-skate-shop-ftc>



Discover & engage with the world around you

## Meet Kent Uyehara, Owner Of Haight Street's FTC Skate Shop



Photo: Stephen Jackson/Hoodline

by Stephen Jackson

Mon. February 2, 2015, 11:30am

**FTC** has been a San Francisco skateboarding institution since its early origins within Kent Uyehara's father's sporting goods store, FTC Ski and Sports.

Since then, Uyehara has built somewhat of a skate empire here in San Francisco and across the globe. We stopped by his store on Haight Street to talk shop with the man who's been involved in the burgeoning skateboarding industry since the 1980s.



*FTC's wall of skateboards / Photo: Stephen Jackson*

**Where are you from?**

“I’m fourth-generation San Franciscan. I came from about as far as UCSF, where I was born.”

**How did you first get into skateboarding?**

“I was about ten, and my older brother was skateboarding and I followed in his footsteps. When you’re young, you want to do what your older brother does! That was in 1978.”

**Did you ever skate professionally?**

“No, none of that. Trust me, I wouldn’t be slinging skateboards if I could skate professionally.”

**Tell us how you got into selling skateboards.**

“So when I was in high school at Lowell, I started selling skateboards to my friends. My dad has a sporting goods store called FTC (Free Trade Center), but back then it was FTC Ski and Sports. So we did skis and cycling and other stuff, and then in the late '70s we started doing skateboards for the first time. That store was over on Bush Street, and that store actually started in the late '60s.

“Basically, I made a catalog with all the different boards, and people would just choose what they wanted. At a certain point I was making weekly orders, and my dad let me start selling skateboards in the store. That was 1986.”



*Kent at the Bush St. location in 1993 / Photo courtesy FTC*

### **So when did it fully become a skate shop?**

“Well that was when I was a senior in high school, then when I went to college I was coming back every week or so to manage the skateboard portion of the store and eventually the skate and snowboard part took over the whole store.

"It exploded because of the timing. In the early '90s, San Francisco also became the mecca of skateboarding with the EMB [The Embarcadero]. Then in '94, we moved to the Shrader location,

because there had been a history of other core skate shops there and we wanted to keep the tradition going. In 2003, we moved to the Haight Street location.”



*The EMB (Embarcadero) / Photo: Lance Dawes*

### **How has skating changed over the years?**

"Street skating really originated in San Francisco in the '80s and then in the early '90s, as technical skateboarding became more popular, Justin Herman plaza became the world's epicenter for skateboarding. In the '80s, skating was largely popular to the masses because of vert and half pipe skating, you know, getting 'big air'. Then, primarily due to insurance, skateparks and ramps disappeared and the sport got reinvented due to street skating. Ever since that time, San Francisco has been considered a famous skate town."

### **Tell us about the [“San Francisco Skateboard Task Force”](#).**

“It convened for six years during the Gavin Newsom administration. It basically was created to examine existing skateboard laws and create policy recommendations for skateboarding. Skateboarding had existed here for so long, but nobody seemed to understand it. I was part of the task force...the reality is that San Francisco is renowned for its street skating. I think that at the

same time, the youth deserve skateparks and it's just not fair to ticket skateboarders if there's no alternative."

### **Why do you think skateboarding has always been connected to counter-culture?**

"Because I think skateboarding is counter-culture. Being in San Francisco, we have a unique perspective on skating because street skating essentially started in California, in San Francisco and LA. We are some of the originators, so it's always been part of the culture here, whether it's been accepted or not."

### **What's the relationship between fashion and skateboarding?**

"I would say that to me, skateboarding has always been at the forefront of streetwear fashion. In the early '90s, skaters introduced wide, baggy pants. No one was dressing like that at the time. When skaters started wearing skinnier pants, people started wearing skinnier jeans. Basically, they're trendsetters."

### **Why do you think Haight Street has become such a streetwear destination?**

"It's not that it's something new, but now people are noticing it. What's happening now is that brand retail is popping up even though stores like FTC and True have had multiple brands for a long time. I think companies see having a store on Haight Street is something important for their image."

### **What makes Haight Street so special?**

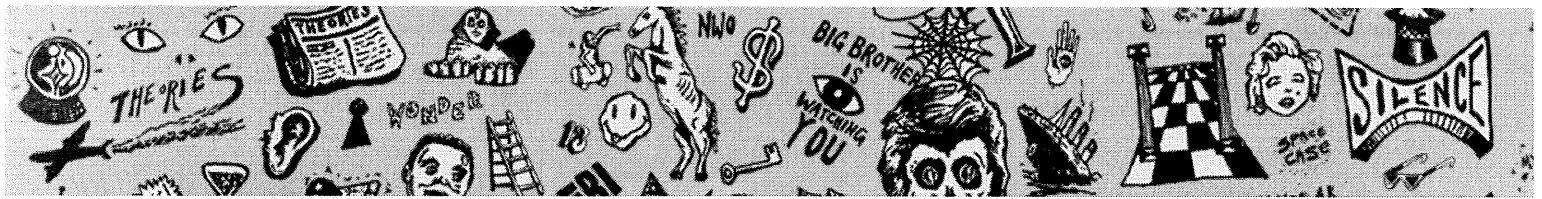
"It's symbolic of independence, as is San Francisco in general. Also, because of the success of other streetwear corridors, like Fairfax in LA. Businesses want to mimic that here."

### **What's next for FTC?**

"We have stores in Tokyo, and Sendai in Japan, and Barcelona. Those are all franchises. We hope to continue growing the stores and growing the brand. Here in the Haight, we are going to continue to support and advocate for skateboarding."

### **What's next for skateboarding in general?**

"Skateboarding has grown to be possibly the most popular youth sport in the world. I'm confident that it will continue to grow in popularity. I don't see any major shifts in the sport itself anymore because for the first time, all forms of skateboarding are accepted. Longboards, street skating, even those plastic '60s-style 'penny boards'. I mean, it's not a real skateboard, but everyone has one and hey, at least they're on a skateboard."



# FTC: PHOTOS & STORIES BEHIND THE HISTORIC SKATESHOP

JANUARY 16, 2014 / SEB CARAYOL / ARTICLES

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FTC skateshop / photo courtesy of Seb Carayol

*FTC isn't just a skateshop. It served as a meeting place, a charity house, and a second home for some of the most beloved pros of all time. There's enough history around the shop and its riders to fill a book, so skateboarder and writer Seb Carayol took it upon himself to make one. He collected some photos & excerpts that didn't make it into the FTC book and shared them with us here, giving us a raw and privileged glimpse into the wheel-on-brick era.*



OG Shot outside of FTC in 1994 / photo courtesy of Seb Carayol

This is an “FTC in a nutshell” type of photo. Super iconic. This one was shot the day the “real” FTC opened in 1994 with a random cast of cats including a young, Adidas-clad Mike Carroll and English photographer Richard Hart. I think I remember it being hung at the shop forever, but I might be wrong. In the book we had all the other FTC’s (Barcelona, Tokyo, Sacramento) try to re-enact this photo. It kinda worked. But not really.

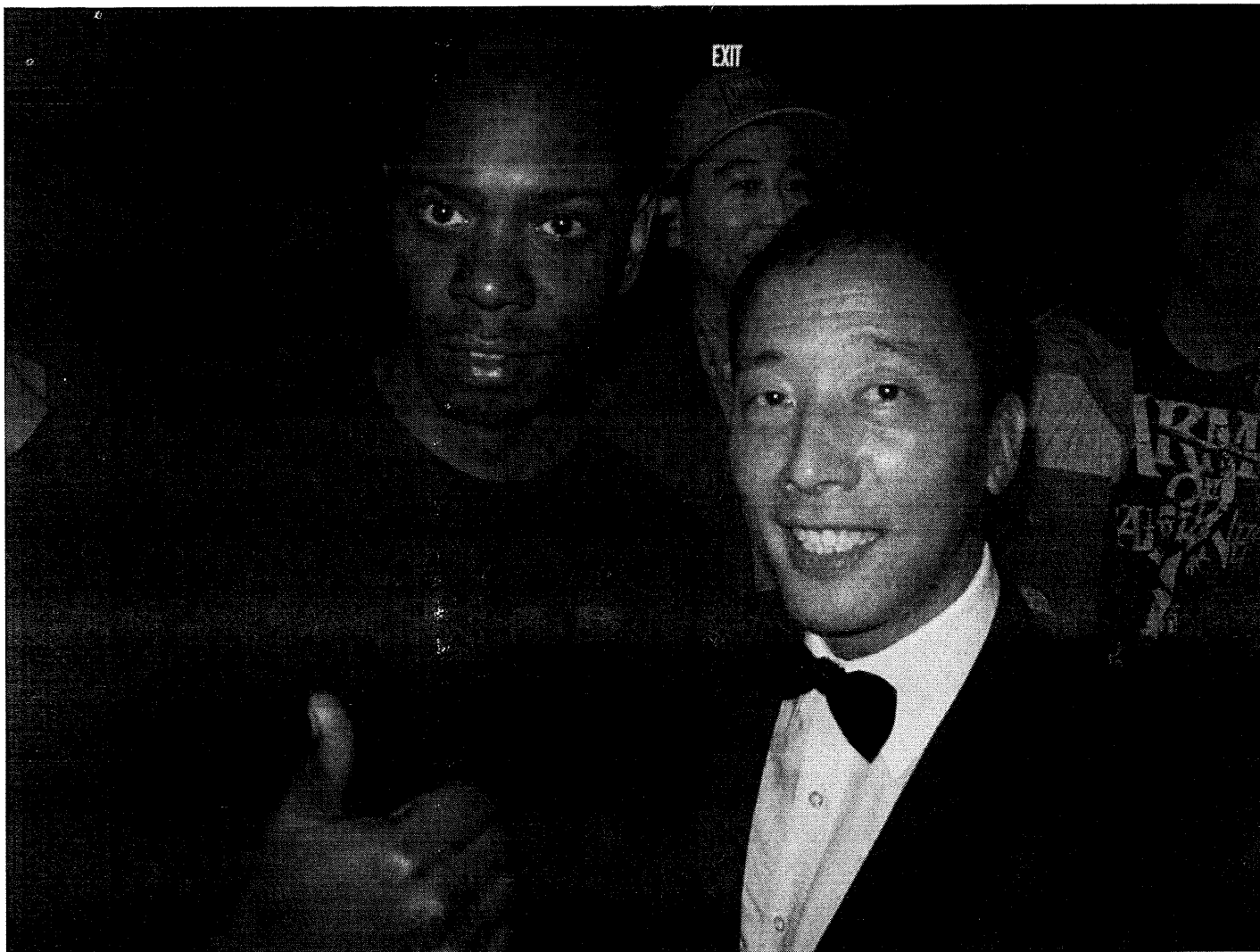






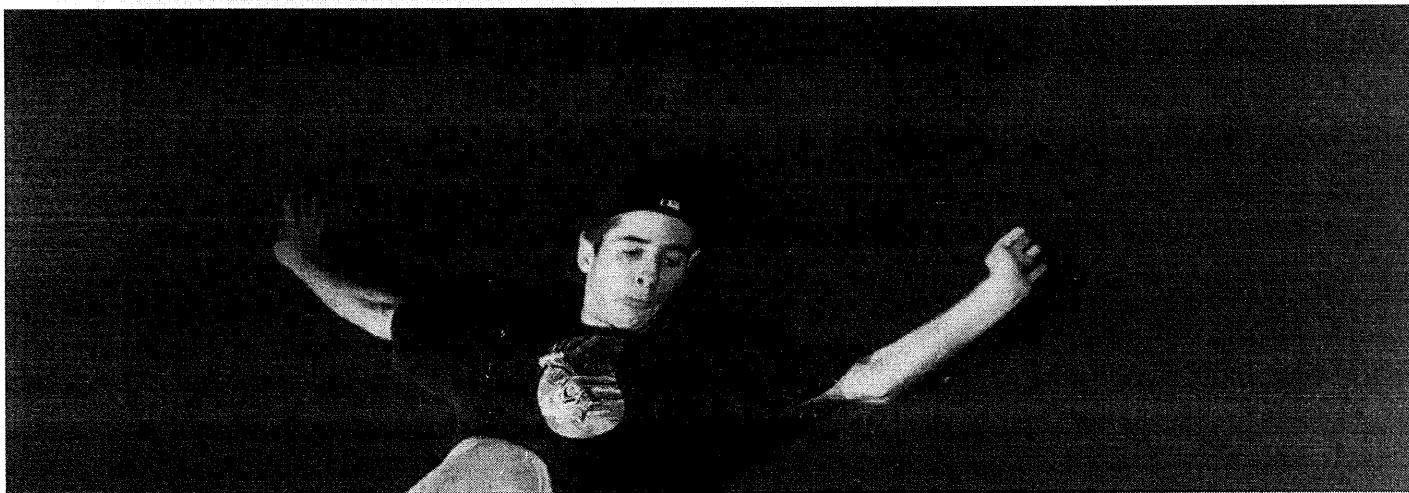
Jovontae Turner – Can Hop / photo: Jacob Rosenberg

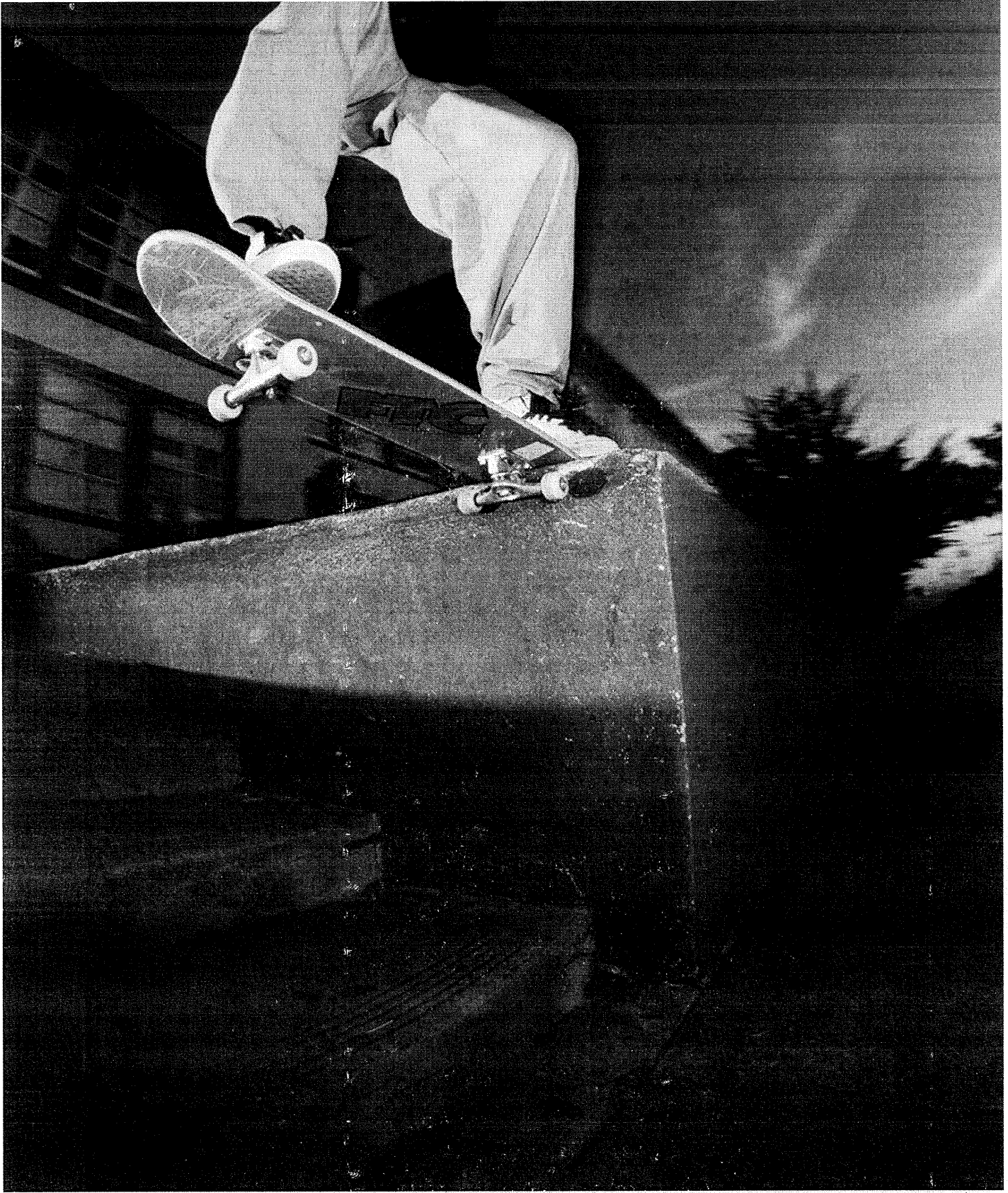
This photo of Jovontae Turner (which didn't make it to the book's final edit) is very dear to me because it's a straight childhood souvenir. Videographer Jacob Rosenberg (of *Plan B Questionable* and *Waiting For Lightning* fame) never really told anybody that he used to take photos. But I knew, because I used to see them in the only place he ever published them: these old French skateboard magazines called *NoWay* and *B-Side*. He had a few Jovontae and Carroll gems that I remember seeing in these mags when I was a kid. This is one of them. Vision shoes and shirt!



FTC Owner Kent Uyehara with Dave Chappelle / photo: Kent Uyehara

Along with Del Tha Funkee Homosapien (who actually drew the cover for FTC's first video) and Robin Williams, Dave Chappelle is one of the few celebrities who shops regularly at FTC. He's so down with the shop that he accepted to write a foreword for the book (how dope is that?!?) in which he explains that he used to tell his kids that FTC means "For The Chappelles." Now friends, das wassup.



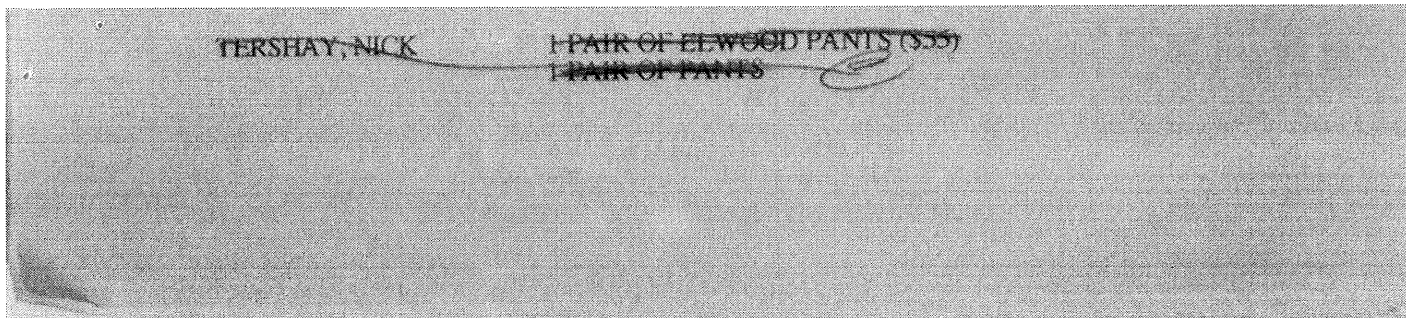


Mike Carroll / photo: Lance Dawes

The next trick of Carroll on this camera roll (nollie switch crooks) ended up on a cover of SLAP mag. The cover shot showed Carroll's board with a FTC sticker scratched off, but in reality it was intact on the slide sheet. I asked Kent Uyehara [FTC's owner]

and he told me that back in the day there was always this weird beef between Thrasher and FTC. Shortly before that, Mike Carroll got a Thrasher cover rocking a similar FTC sticker on his board but, according to Kent, "The Thrasher cover was initially rejected. But Bryce Kanights, the photo editor, stood his ground and said that this was the shot he wanted to use. So they used it." Funnily, SLAP editor Lance Dawes remembers this one differently: "I might have got a free deck or something from FTC, and ended up shooting what was going to be a cover with Carroll - I didn't want anybody to think that the board, or whatever it was I got from FTC for free, was some kind of bribe for the cover, which explains the scratch off." End of story(ies).

	MCMILLAN, JESSE	2 T-SHIRTS 1 SET OF WHEELS 1 PAIR OF RICK HOWARD SHOES 1 PAIR OF LYNX 1 PAIR OF K2 SHOES (SEE KENT ABOUT TRADE)
<i>VISAWA SKE coming direct</i>	METTY, DAVE	1 PAIR OF DC RUDYS 1 SET OF WHEELS
<i>adrenaline</i>	O'BRIEN, MATT	1 PAIR OF PANTS 1 PAIR OF SHOES (\$79.95)
<i>P. J.</i>	OTVOS, PAUL	1 T-SHIRT
<i>W. J. / w/cease suppliment</i>	PAILES, MATT	1 DECK 1 SET OF TRUCKS
<i>ZOO YORK Team Manager</i>	PANG, JEFF	1 PAIR OF SHOES 1 SET OF WHEELS <i>1 deck</i>
<i>OSIRUS manager</i>	<del>PASTORS, CHRIS</del>	<del>1 DECK 1 SET OF WHEELS</del> <i>Pos...</i>
	<del>PEOPLES, LONNIE</del>	<del>1 PAIR OF KOSTON SHOES</del>
	PUPECKI, PUPECKI	1 PAIR PF SHOES
	<del>GARRETT, DANNT</del>	<del>1 SET OF WHEELS 1 SET OF BEARINGS 1 PAIR OF SHOES 2 T-SHIRTS</del>
	SHIPMAN, CARL	2 PAIRS OF ADIDAS 1 ADIDAS WINDBREAKER 1 VANS 36 LO
<i>DLX</i>	STRANGER, JULIAN	2 VIDEOS
<i>GIRL</i>	SHEFFEY, SEAN	1 PAIR OF TRUCKS 2 PAIRS OF SHOES
	STANTON, CARY	1 SET OF WHEELS 1 FTC T-SHIRT



The FTC Tab Book / photo courtesy of Seb Carayol

One of the pillars of the FTC saga is “the tab book” or “the black book” or whatever it was called over the years. “The” book. It was a unique trading system put together by Kent [FTC’s owner] that became the stuff of legend. Getting to have your own page in “the book” allowed sponsored skaters to trade stuff from their package for other items in the shop. It truly meant something – it was an accomplishment in itself – and it still is to this day. In an interview, Josh Kalis says that once he found out about it, it became his goal in life to have his own page in it. That’s the true sign that you were part of the family. I wonder what “2 Videos” Julien Stranger borrowed.



Mike Carroll Looking onto Aaron Meza filming Chico Brenes / photo: Tobin Yelland

This one is an unseen outtake of the cover shot, with Carroll looking more sideways and the focus of this pic is more on Chico’s trick. When I saw the slide sheet in Tobin Yelland’s garage at 10 PM while digging through his old stuff, I knew this was going to be the cover. It says FTC in a nutshell: Carroll, Chico, EMB, filmed by Meza. I shouldn’t say I was digging in Tobin’s archives: unlike other photographers, the dude is mega-organized. He numbers each slide sheet and has them all archived in his computer.



FTC T-Shirt / photo courtesy of Seb Carayol

My first FTC tshirt. This is basically the reason why me and my buddies, the Calas brothers, went to SF in the winter of 1994, from our town of Montpellier, France: to stock up on shirts, catalogs and stickers from FTC (which stands for Free Trade Center, by the way), as we were obsessed with their first video. Remember, these were pre-internet times so to know anything about anything, you pretty much had to go somewhere in person and find out (which was actually maybe more interesting?) Anyhoo, we met Josh Kalis while we were there. Around this time he was flow on Toy Machine, Jean had popped his cherry, and he filmed the sickest line at Wallenberg, ever, by... JB Gillet. I gotta transfer it to digital some day. Anyway, yeah, we were a bunch of French dudes who crossed the globe to go film French dudes. Ha.



Josh Kalis / photo: Lance Dawes

In the FTC book, we put in a photo of Kalis's actual trick (an ollie over the two bars), and it was also used in an old SLAP. But whenever I looked through photographers' collections, I loved to find these kind of moments: the photo before or after, the dude getting ready...etc. These moments are priceless.





Lennie Kirk – Backside 50-50 / photo: Dennis McGrath

Lennie Kirk... Where to start? I guess we could begin with this Dennis McGrath pic, which was used in one of the most iconic FTC ads ever. It caused a whole generation of kids to try and ride skinny boards with giants trucks and wheels! I personally got to go a bit deeper with Lennie, and that's why I wanted this photo to be part of this selection. No matter how big of a "Gospel Gangster" he was (and believe me, he was), he's the only established pro who let me shoot all the photos I wanted with him. He just didn't give a fuck if I sucked or not – I did, as I had never touched a camera before moving there. Getting a photo with him was a long process because he'd stop and try to "save" EVERY person in sight, for the longest time. Non-stop, crazy preaching. He gave me a Bible that failed miserably to save me, and after that I kept loosely in touch, which led me to interview him in jail a few years ago. I also



interviewed him for the FTC book right before he went back in for a long stay. Thanks Lennie, and hold tight in there!



Kent and Kim Uyehara / photo courtesy of Seb Carayol

Kent's mom Kim is super-pivotal in the FTC history. She became a substitution mom for a lot of these dudes. Sam Smyth's mom would come to the shop just to hang out with Kim and Jovontae Turner even named his daughter after her. To interview her, I had to hide my recorder because she's too shy, but she was cracking me up– saying how she'd let skaters know when she knew they were smoking weed, and how Plan B boards were the best. The true Godmother of FTC, and an amazing human being.

*For more check out the [FTC book](#), with interviews, unseen photos and more history.*

*Words / Captions: Seb Carayol*

*Intro: Morley Musick*

*Photography courtesy of: Seb Carayol, Jacob Rosenberg, Kent Uyehara, Lance Dawes, Tobin Yelland, Dennis McGrath.*

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MORE: CHICO BRENES DANNY WAY EMB FTC SKATESHOP JACOB ROSENBERG JOVANTAE TURNER MIKE CARROLL PHOTOS



## A Pro Skater Has Written the First Good Skateboarding Book for Kids

**Karl Watson's 'My First Skateboard' is the best way to introduce your whippersnapper to the magical world of shred sleds.**

Zach Harris

Dec 11 2017, 9:00pm



Illustrations by Henry Jones

Children's books and sports have a long history together. For decades, authors like Matt Christopher and Jake Maddox have written books about every sport imaginable, painting literary pictures that any little leaguer can relate to. But when it comes to skateboarding, most authors tend to describe things in broad, easily digestible strokes that feel stilted to anyone who's ever actually stepped on a skateboard. Every 11-year-old can seamlessly ollie a 12-stair and if Timmy can stick the Indy 360 at the big competition the bullies won't beat him up. But unlike youth soccer, where one accidental kick can transform a benchwarmer into class hero, skateboarding takes pain, dedication, and a willingness to literally bleed before you can even make it out of the driveway.

Karl Watson knows exactly how hard skateboarding is. The 40-year-old San Franciscan has been bombing hills and innovating on ledges since the early 90s, making a name for himself with incredible on-board style and the skateboard industry's biggest smile. After more than 20 years as a pro for storied companies like Mad Circle, IPath, and Organika, he's now a father to four kids of his own, and is ready to share that knowledge with the next generation. Karl teamed up with cartoonist Henry Jones for *My First Skateboard*, an illustrated children's book about falling down, getting up, and finding community in our favorite useless wooden toy. By rooting the book in their own childhood experiences, Watson and Jones were able to capture the joy and wonder of picking a board and learning to skate, without one competition, sponsor, or bully in sight.

With the book now available to order online, I got on the phone with Watson and Jones to find out more about *My First Skateboard*, how learning to skate is different for today's generation, and to hear some stories that could never run in a kid's book.

WHETHER YOU ARE MALE  
OR FEMALE, BIG OR SMALL,  
SHORT OR TALL, SKATEBOARDING  
ACCEPTS US ALL.



**VICE: Karl, what made you decide to write a skate-themed children's book? And why did you choose Henry to do the illustrations?**

**Karl Watson:** To be honest I was at a turning point in my life and career and was thinking of ways to try and continue making my impact on skateboarding. I wanted to focus on the positive attributes that skateboarding has to offer and it was like, hey, I might as well try to inject our youth with as much information as possible about how amazing skateboarding is.

And of course thinking about Henry Jones I was so stoked to reach out because he's one of my favorite artists, and when it comes to showing movement and expression in a subtle way, he's the best. Having Henry involved was a no brainer.

Advertisement

**Henry, what was your initial reaction to the idea of drawing a kids' book?**

**Henry Jones:** I had always thought of doing something like a kids' book, but never got around to it. So it was cool to have someone, and especially Karl, hit me up to draw it because it made it a lot less work to do for something that I really wanted to do [ *laughs*].

He met people FROM  
ALL OVER THE WORLD.



They were VERY  
Nice AND Liked to  
SKATE JUST AS MUCH  
AS He DID.

***My First Skateboard* keys in on the community and cultural aspects of skating. Why was that so important for you to convey to a wider audience?**

**Karl:** We wanted to focus on trial and error, getting back up after you fall, and basically how skateboarding can save the world. What I mean by that is that skating breaks down the race, language, gender, and age barriers. It's the best activity known to mankind, straight up and down. I'm being biased, but I'm proud of that. The proof is in the pudding; go to any skatepark and you'll see all the colors of the rainbow.

**For me, skating was the first activity that I did entirely on my own, with no adult help or supervision. Do you think the intrusion of helicopter parents and hyper-intense skate dads has taken away some of the freedoms that made learning to skate so fun and rewarding?**

That was a big catalyst for writing the book. Skating's something that I care so much about and I can see it slipping away. It makes a big difference to not have someone barking at you. "You gotta hit it this way! Stand this way! Hold it this way!" Nah, we do our kickflips the way we wanna do it and we do our ollies the way we want to do them. It's an individual form of expression, and that's the beauty of skating.

**Karl, you're a parent. What have been your favorite parts about helping kids learn to skate?**

My oldest son pushed [with his front foot] when he started skating at like three years old, and I didn't want to stress it, but I always showed him the way you're supposed to push with the back foot, not the front. Still, it went on for years until he became a teenager, and at that point his friends had to let him know. Even though I had told him his whole life, very nicely, as both a parent and pro skater, it took his friends telling him to change it.

**Are there any adult characters in the book?**

**Henry:** [The main character] Jonas's mom is in the book, but in a lot of frames we did try to keep it rooted in the kids' world. Even in the skate shop, there's no older dudes there helping him pick his board or anything. We definitely wanted to give the characters a lot of independence.

... AND EVERYTHING  
CHANGED.



**Do you remember your own first skateboards?**

**Karl:** My first was an all-white Zorlac board with green Tracker trucks and orange Sims wheels that I got from the original FTC skate shop in San Francisco in 1987.

**Henry:** I had a Blind board called "The Switchblade," and I know that because I look for it on Ebay all the time. I got it from Gordon's, a hunting and fishing store right next to my house. But I only had enough money for the deck, so I had put my toy store trucks on it and drill in new bolts because the pattern was wrong.

**Ouch. The book takes place mostly at street spots instead of skateparks and there's at least one page in the story dedicated to San Francisco's legendary EMB. Is it sad to you that most kids will grow up meeting their friends at skateparks instead of plazas like Embarcadero?**

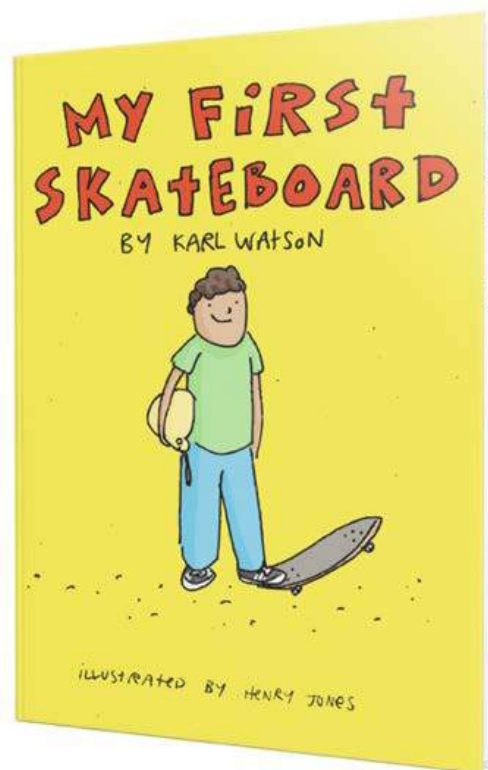
**Karl:** I think the biggest difference between skate plazas and skateparks is not having to run from the cops. When we were at EMB or Love, we were always on guard, and we appreciated the time we got to skate, because we knew it could end at any moment.

The skatepark kids nowadays, it's almost like everything is just given to them. And don't get me wrong, I'm glad they don't have to deal with it. But still, that was a fun element of that scene; being 13 and getting away because you're on your skateboard and the cops can't keep up.

**It definitely forced kids to grow up a little faster.**

No doubt. At EMB there was this guy we called the banana man who would ride around on his bike sucking on a banana and pay skaters to pee on him or watch him pee on himself, and I'm 12 or 13 years old seeing this. Or another guy with a mirror on his shoe that used to go up to businesswomen on their lunch break and look up their skirts.

We would learn from those people, and know, I don't wanna be like that and I don't wanna be like that. So in a messed up way it was beneficial.



**I'm guessing the police chases and banana man didn't make it into the book?**

[Laughs] No, no, no. No banana man.

**Henry:** Karl didn't tell me about that before I drew the book, so I didn't have a chance to include it even if I wanted to.

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**Karl, You've been through a lot of shifts and changes over your 20 years in pro skating. What does it mean to you to be able to branch out of the core skateboard industry?**

**Karl:** Life is more than just skateboarding. I had blinders on for a long time, tunnel vision of just skateboarding, skateboarding, skateboarding. But as you get older it's important to branch out to other aspects of life. And if I can incorporate what I love so much into other people's way of thinking, and make them consider, *Oh, skateboarding is actually something that's really positive*, I feel like that's my way of giving back.

**Skateboarders are notoriously critical of their portrayal in popular culture. What's the reception to the book been like from the skate community?**

I've definitely got some flack. I will say it's been 99 percent positive, but that one percent is people tripping on the helmets.

**Henry:** Are you serious?

**Karl:** Yeah, some hardcore heads have said "C'mon Karl, there were no helmets at EMB, what the hell?" [laughs]. Everyone's allowed to have their opinions, but we're trying to reach the masses, and I think it's best to be as PC as possible in that regard. Also Henry nailed it with the helmets, so thanks, Henry.

Buy My First Skateboard [here](#).



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City and County of San Francisco

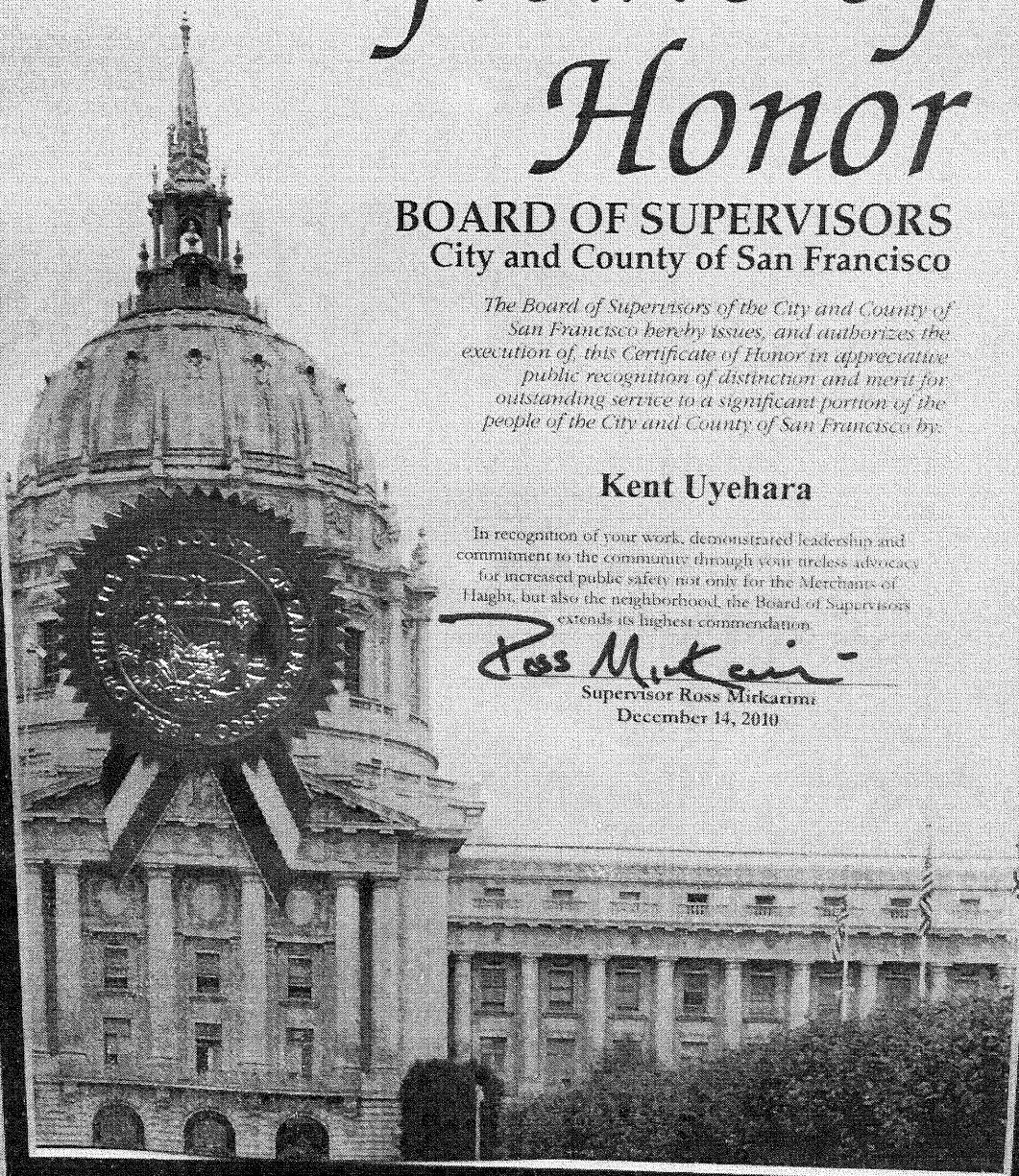
*The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:*

**Kent Uyehara**

In recognition of your work, demonstrated leadership and commitment to the community through your tireless advocacy for increased public safety not only for the Merchants of Haight, but also the neighborhood, the Board of Supervisors extends its highest commendation.

*Ross Mirkanini*

Supervisor Ross Mirkanini  
December 14, 2010





The City and County of San Francisco

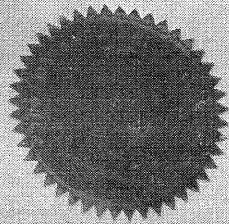
# Certificate of Honor

Presented To

**KENT UYEHARA**

**DECEMBER 15, 2010**

*WHEREAS*, on behalf of the City and County of San Francisco, I am pleased to recognize and honor Kent Uyehara, Merchant Chair of the Haight Ashbury Improvement Association. Your leadership and commitment to the community is unsurpassed and has aided in the success of the civil sidewalks campaign, an important accomplishment for all San Francisco neighborhoods. Your ability to organize your fellow merchants and orchestrate them into a strong voice has been a significant contribution to all citizens. Congratulations on being recognized as a Treasure of the Neighborhood, and best wishes on all your future endeavors!



*THEREFORE*, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the City and County of San Francisco to be affixed.

*Garin Newsom*  
Mayor

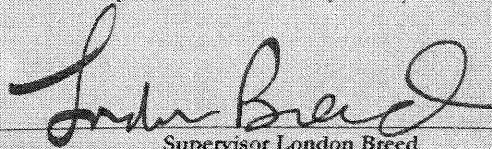
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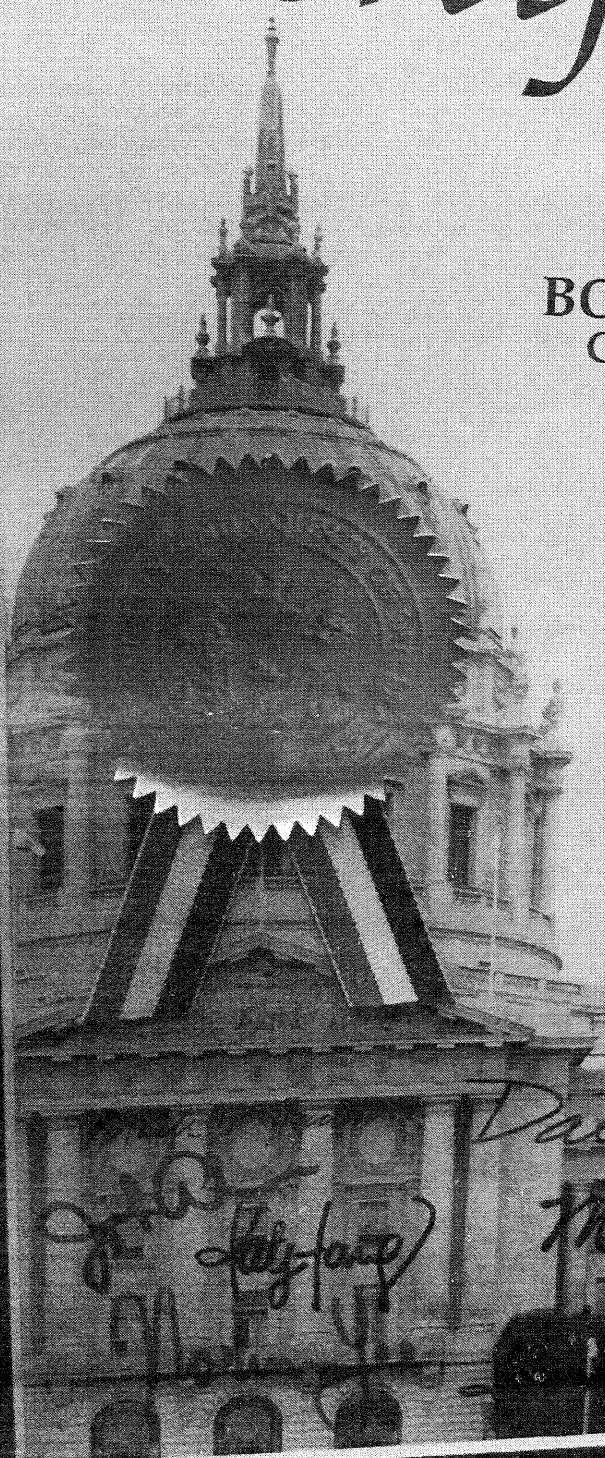
*The Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco hereby issues, and authorizes the execution of, this Certificate of Honor in appreciative public recognition of distinction and merit for outstanding service to a significant portion of the people of the City and County of San Francisco by:*

**KENT UYEHARA**

For your dedication to the Haight-Ashbury neighborhood, the youth of San Francisco, and for promoting skateboarding as a way for youth to attain lifelong skills and reach their goals, the City and County of San Francisco's Board of Supervisors extends its highest commendation. On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, I commend you for your service.

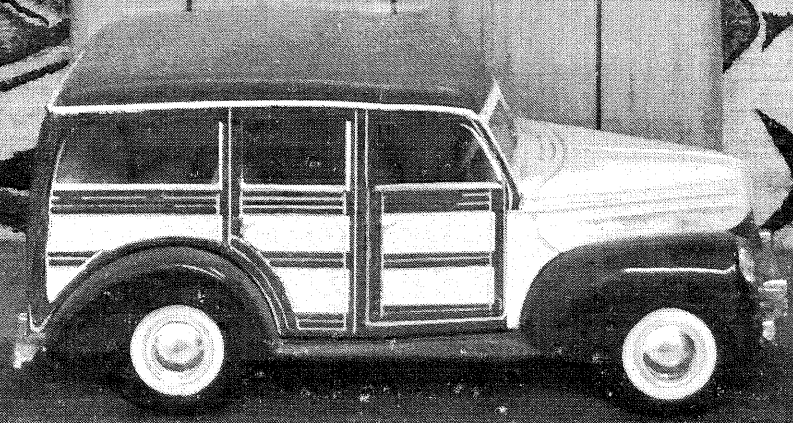


Supervisor London Breed  
San Francisco Board of Supervisors  
May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2014





1998  
ASR Industry Awards  
FTC  
Retailer of the Year - West  
co-sponsored by Moss Adams LLP



*Filing Date:* August 8, 2018  
*Case No.:* 2018-011495LBR  
*Business Name:* FTC Skateboarding  
*Business Address:* 1632 Haight Street  
*Zoning:* Haight Street NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District)  
40-X Height and Bulk District  
*Block/Lot:* 1230/009  
*Applicant:* Kent Uyehara, Owner Principal  
1632 Haight Street  
San Francisco, CA 94117  
*Nominated By:* Supervisor Vallie Brown, District 5  
*Staff Contact:* Shelley Caltagirone - (415) 558-6625  
shelley.caltagirone@sfgov.org  
*Reviewed By:* Tim Frye – (415) 575-6822  
tim.frye@sfgov.org

## BUSINESS DESCRIPTION

FTC Skateboarding was established in 1994 by Kent Uyehara. The business is comprised of a skateboard shop and boutique clothing brand, which includes skateboards, skateboarding necessities, T-shirts, tops, sweatshirts, pants, hats, beanies and accessories. The business started out as an offshoot of Kent's father Lloyd Uyehara's business, FTC Ski & Sports, which opened in the late 1960s. "FTC" originally stood for "Free Trade Center", but in the new business it now stands for "For The City." Over the years, the business has evolved from a store into a lifestyle brand. The company distributes products worldwide helping to attract international fans to visit San Francisco.

In the late 1970s, FTC Ski & Sports began selling skateboards as a small wall display of skateboard decks and parts within the store. Then, in the 1980s, Kent Uyehara started selling skateboards to his high school friends, eventually creating a catalog so people could choose what to buy from him. Orders became regular, and Lloyd let Kent start selling skateboards in the store. In 1994, FTC Skateboarding, also known as FTC Skate Shop, moved from Bush Street to the Haight Ashbury neighborhood at 622 Shrader Street and officially became an independent business. There had been a history of other core skate shops there, and FTC Skateboarding wanted to keep the tradition going. In 2003, the business moved to a larger space at 1632 Haight Street at Clayton Street where it is still located today. FTC Skateboarding also has franchise shops in Tokyo, Japan, and Barcelona, Spain.

The business is located on the north side of Haight Street between Clayton and Cole streets in the Haight Ashbury District. The property is within the Haight Street NCD (Haight Street Neighborhood Commercial District) Zoning District and a 40-X Height and Bulk District.

## STAFF ANALYSIS

### *Review Criteria*

8. *When was business founded?*

The business was founded in 1994.

9. *Does the business qualify for listing on the Legacy Business Registry? If so, how?*

Yes, FTC Skateboarding qualifies for listing on the Legacy Business Registry because it meets all of the eligibility Criteria:

- iv. FTC Skateboarding has operated continuously in San Francisco for 24 years with no break in San Francisco operations exceeding two years, the business is significant to San Francisco history, and the business would face significant risk of displacement if not included in the Registry. The business will be entering lease negotiations in October and placement on the Registry may help to secure a fair term and price. The business is struggling due to the overpricing of rent, ever increasing operating expenses, and declining in-store sales due to the massive shift to online sales.
- v. FTC Skateboarding has contributed to the history and identity of San Francisco by serving as a sports retail shop.
- vi. FTC Skateboarding is committed to maintaining the physical features and traditions that define the organization.

10. *Is the business associated with a culturally significant art/craft/cuisine/tradition?*

Yes, the business is associated with the sport of skateboarding, specifically street skating, and with its development in San Francisco. According to Kent Uyehara, street skating originated in San Francisco in the 1980s. Skating was largely popular to the masses because of vert and half pipe skating – getting “big air.” Then, primarily due to insurance issues, skate parks and ramps disappeared and the sport got reinvented due to street skating. By the early 1990s, as technical skateboarding became more popular, Justin Herman plaza became the world’s epicenter for skateboarding. During the mid-1990s, San Francisco was dubbed the Mecca of skateboarding for the entire world. Ever since that time, San Francisco has been considered a famous skate town.

FTC Skateboarding was central to the rise of the skateboarding scene. Since FTC opened its doors in 1994, it has been well-recognized within the skateboard industry for its longevity and contributions to skateboarding. The family business helped nurture past and present generations of skaters to build successful careers in business and skating.

11. *Is the business or its building associated with significant events, persons, and/or architecture?*

***Events***

FTC Skateboarding co-owner Kent Uyehara joined the Skateboarding Task Force in 1998, which he was a part of for six years as a part of Gavin Newsom’s mayoral administration. The Task Force examined existing skateboarding laws, which were outdated and vague, and developed new plans for skate parks.

FTC has sponsored the majority of the skateboard events held in the city for the past couple decades including, but not limited to, Dew Tour, X Games, San Francisco skatepark events and FTC’s FOR THE CASH pro contests.

***Architecture***

The building is identified by the Planning Department as Category A (“Historic Resource

Present”) with regard to the California Environmental Quality Act. It is located within the California Register-Eligible Haight Ashbury Historic District. The area known as the North of the Panhandle (NoPa) neighborhood consists primarily of two- and three-story residential buildings (single-family houses and multiple-family flats) that were constructed during the late 19th century and early 20th century. The neighborhood is bounded to the south by the panhandle of Golden Gate Park.

12. *Is the property associated with the business listed on a local, state, or federal historic resource registry?*

No, however, the property has a Planning Department Historic Resource status of “A” (Historic Resource Present).

13. *Is the business mentioned in a local historic context statement?*

No.

14. *Has the business been cited in published literature, newspapers, journals, etc.?*

Yes, FTC Skateboarding has been featured in local and national media, including:

- In 1995, an article in TransWorld SKATEboarding magazine, an international magazine on skateboarding based in Carlsbad, California.
- In 2001, an article for the Zipang Worldwide Special Interview in the Japanese magazine Zipang Skateboard Archives.
- In 2005, an article in the Transworld Business Skate, Surf, and Snow magazine.
- In 2012, an article by ESPN for the X Games.
- On February 2, 2015, an article in Hoodline titled, “Meet Kent Uyehara, Owner Of Haight Street's FTC Skate Shop.”
- In 2018, an article by Jenkem magazine. Columnists such as Herb Caen and Pat Steger frequently mentioned the Balboa in their weekly references about happenings around San Francisco.

### ***Physical Features or Traditions that Define the Business***

#### **Location(s) associated with the business:**

- 1632 Haight Street

#### **Recommended by Applicant**

- Quality clothing and authentic products
- Mural painted on metal sign
- Dedication to skateboard activism and service
- “For The Cash” pro contest

#### **Additional Recommended by Staff**

- None