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BLUE & GOLD FLEET CELEBRATES 40 YEARS ON SAN FRANCISCO BAY

Blue & Gold Fleet celebrated 40 Years of business on the San Francisco Bay by receiving a Mayoral Proclamation stating May 23, 2019 as “Blue & Gold Fleet Day”. Remarks were given by: Elaine Forbes, Executive Director of the Port of San Francisco; Taylor Safford, President and CEO of PIER 39 and Patrick Murphy, President of Blue & Gold Fleet. To complete the celebration, the Cal Band performed while a 40th Birthcake cake was presented.

On May 27, 1979, Blue & Gold Fleet started as a local boat company, providing excursion services on the San Francisco Bay to visitors. Over the past 40 years, Blue & Gold Fleet has grown significantly. Today, the company carries more than four million passengers annually on 23 vessels to and from San Francisco on boat tours and ferry services. Blue & Gold operates the largest fleet of vessels on the west coast of the United States.

Roger Murphy and Warren Simmons founded Blue & Gold a few months after PIER 39’s Opening Day. Murphy and Simmons were both Bay Area natives. Murphy attended St. Mary’s College of California and Simmons was a proud University of California Berkeley alumnus. Blue & Gold has been entrenched in the Bay Area community from its inception. The first three boats were named OSKI, GOLDEN BEAR and OLD BLUE, all references to UC Berkeley. These three vessels are still cruising on the Bay today.

Blue & Gold has responded to the transportation needs of Bay Area residents over the decades. This was evident during the 1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake and the 2013 Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) strikes. During the earthquake, the Bay Bridge experienced devastation that caused a section of the upper deck to fall onto the deck below. In response, Blue & Gold helped carry over 15,000 stranded passengers between Oakland and San Francisco. During the following weeks, Blue & Gold continued expanding ferry service to Oakland and Alameda, as well as Berkeley, during the month-long bridge closure. Ultimately, this led to the revitalization of the Alameda and Oakland ferry service to San Francisco and the expansion of the Vallejo ferry service.

The BART strikes of 2013 were another example of serving the Bay Area commuters. More than 400,000 commuters were stuck and the traffic nightmare that ensued proved both frustrating and all-consuming. Blue & Gold mobilized quickly and became part of the solution to transport commuters to work and school each morning and back home each evening. The ability to move a large number of passengers safely is what helped create the upsurge of transportation on the Bay. Blue & Gold operates all the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA) vessels.

Much has changed over the past 40 years, yet the core of the operation has remained steady. Roger Murphy’s son, Patrick Murphy, is now President of Blue & Gold Fleet. Patrick started working at Blue & Gold as a summer employee when he was 15, eventually obtaining his captain’s license to transition from the wheelhouse to operations. In 2017, Patrick was appointed President of Blue & Gold.

“In the beginning days, when my dad was at the helm, it was all hands-on deck for the Murphy family. My mom, brothers, sister and cousins all helped out,” said Murphy. “Forty years later, I feel there still is a family atmosphere at Blue & Gold, and I couldn’t be prouder of our incredible team.”

EDITORS PLEASE NOTE: For high-resolution photography, please contact Anthony Licciardi at Alicciardi@pier39.com.

Please visit the special [Blue & Gold Fleet 40th Anniversary web page](#).

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Blue & Gold Fleet is the premier provider of ferry and water excursion services on San Francisco Bay. The company provides regular service to Sausalito, Tiburon, Angel Island and through its contract with the Water Emergency Transportation Authority (WETA), service to Vallejo, Oakland/ Alameda, Harbor Bay, Richmond, South San Francisco, and Oracle Park (on San Francisco Giants game days).