Highlights in Pat Brown Years

1905  Pat Brown born in San Francisco, California “April 21”

1917  As a young schoolboy, Brown used his oratorical skills to encourage people to buy Liberty Bonds during World War I. At the end of his passionate speeches he would quote patriot Patrick Henry’s line, “Give me liberty, or give me death!” thus acquired the nickname Pat.

1927  Brown graduates from San Francisco Law School and passes the California State Bar Exam.

1928  At 23 years old, and with no political experience, Brown runs unsuccessfully for an Assembly seat under the Republican Party.

1930  Brown married his high school sweetheart Bernice Layne. “October 30”

1931  Daughter Barbara Brown born. “July 13”

1933  Daughter Cynthia Brown born. “October 19”

1935  Brown changes his registration from Republican to as a Democrat.

1939  Son Edmund G. “Jerry Brown born. “April 7”

1943  Brown elected San Francisco District Attorney.

1946  Daughter Kathleen Brown born. “September 25”

1947  In a landslide victory Brown re-elected San Francisco District Attorney.

1950  Brown elected Attorney General, the only democrat elected in otherwise Republican sweep.

1951  Brown appointed as member of California Water Project Authority and leads state in addressing water issues.

1954  Brown re-elected Attorney General.

1958  Brown elected Governor of California. Takes oath of office as the Governor, using for the first time, in his inaugural speech, the phrase he believes will define his administration “responsible liberalism.” In outlining his program, he speaks of the need for banning racial discrimination in employment, creation of consumer protection laws, encouragement of economic development, safeguarding workers’ rights, expansion of publicly funded medical care for the poor, establishment of minimum wage reforming election practices, promoting government efficiency, improving the quality of education, and protecting public health.

1958  Every state office except secretary of state swept by the Democrats, and a Democratic majority is elected to both houses of state legislature for the first time in the 20th century.

1959  State Legislature passes Unruh Civil Rights Act banning “discrimination in business dealings, in access to restaurants and other public accommodations, and in occupancy of public funded housing facilities.”

1959  Legislature passes Fair Employment Practice Act, which forbids discrimination in the workplace, a bill Brown calls "a great symbol of human progress- an achievement of enlightenment and
1959  Legislature passes income tax and cigarette tax bills
1959  Brown's proposed oil and gas tax is defeated by Legislature, one of the only defeats of his administration that year.
1959  Brown signs Water Resources Development Bond Act (Burns-Porter Act), kicking off the first phase of the massive California Water Project that Brown heavily lobbied the legislature to pass.
1959  Board of Regents & Board of Education unanimously approve the Master Plan.
1959  Brown elected as California’s Favorite Son in the Democratic Presidential Primary.
1960  Brown issues a temporary reprieve for Caryl Chessman just hours before the scheduled execution and asks the Legislature to abolish the death penalty. A storm of public protest and enraging legislative leaders, bill is easily defeated.
1960  Brown signs the Donahoe Education Act passed, creating a Master Plan for Education. Four new state colleges opened and three new university campuses are built.
1960  Caryl Chessman is executed. “May 3”
1960  Voters approve Brown’s California Water Project-associating $1.75 billion bond measure.
1961  Building begins on Oroville Dam, Brown declares the sound “will echo in California history for generations to come.”
1961  Brown administration creates Advisory Committee on Indian Affairs
1962  Legislature authorizes the Constitutional Revision Commission. Brown backs legislature that makes state government more efficient.
1962  Brown debates Nixon in live telecast from the Fairmont Hotel in San Francisco.
1962  Brown Defeats Richard Nixon and is re-elected Governor. A disheartened Nixon declares in his concession speech that "you won't have Nixon to kick around anymore."
1963  Brown takes oath of office, the first democrat to be elected twice as Governor in the history of the state. He ends his inaugural speech with an aggressive civil rights agenda, including outlawing discrimination in housing and in state agencies.
1963  Brown signs Rumford Fair Housing Act, a “path breaking piece of civil rights legislation” that places California in the vanguard of the country’s push for equal rights.
1964  Free Speech student protest held at Berkeley’s Sproul Hall.
1964  UC Board of Regents led by Brown adopts a statement that permits unrestricted political speech on Berkeley campus.
1965  Watts riots break out in Los Angeles, California. 6 days, 34 deaths, 1,000 injuries and almost 4,000 arrests and property damage estimated at $40 million. “August”
1965 Brown appoints blue-ribbon commission to examine riots headed by John McConne.

1966 Reagan defeats Brown in his third race for Governor. “November 8”

1970 Jerry Brown elected Secretary of State. “November”

1970 Pat Brown publishes Reagan and Reality: The Two Californias

1976 Pat Brown publishes Reagan: The Political Chameleon

1974 Jerry Brown re-elected Governor. “November”

1975 Kathleen Brown elected to Los Angeles City Board of Education

1976 Jerry Brown enters presidential race in order to stop the nomination of former Governor of Georgia Jimmy Carter. Brown wins in Maryland, California and Nevada in the primaries.

1979 Pat Brown Institute is created as non-profit, non-partisan public policy center dedicated to Brown’s living legacy. In its mission statement it is established that the institute is “committed to conducting timely public policy research, organizing and participating in policy debates, collaborating on community-driven initiatives, and facilitating educational opportunities for diverse communities.”

1980 Jerry Brown raises $2 million to run in the presidential race.

1982 Jerry Brown pushes a bill to build the Peripheral Canal, a canal that would bypass the Delta by transporting water from the Sacramento River east around the Delta and connect with the federal and state aqueducts to the south. With the canal the water would behave more naturally, heading out to sea rather than toward huge pumps sending the water south, the proposal however was rejected by California voters.

1982 Jerry Brown unsuccessfully runs for a seat in the U.S. Senate.

1989 Pat Brown publishes Public Justice, Private Mercy: A Governor’s Education on Death Row, which condemns capital punishment

1990 Daughter Kathleen Brown elected California State Treasurer. “November”

1991 While officially announcing his candidacy on the steps of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Brown told listeners that he would only be accepting campaign contributions from individuals and that he would accept no contribution over 100 dollars, thus initiating an ultra-grassroots campaign.

1992 Jerry Brown is victorious in Maine, Colorado, Nevada, Alaska, and Vermont in the state primaries, but is defeated in the final primary by Bill Clinton by a margin of 48% to 41%, receiving the vote of 596 delegates.

1994 Kathleen Brown runs for governor, but was defeated by incumbent Republican Governor Pete Wilson (who had previously defeated Jerry Brown for one of California’s US Senate seats in 1982) in the gubernatorial election.

1996 Pat Brown dies in Beverly Hills, California. “February 16”

1998 Jerry Brown elected as Mayor of Oakland, California.

2002 Jerry Brown re-elected as Mayor of Oakland with over 60 percent of the vote.

2002 Bernice Layne Brown dies “May 10”

2007 Jerry Brown inaugurated as Attorney General of California. “January 8”