

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:
Puja Sangar
Tel: 650.724.4211
psangar@stanford.edu

Smile Southern California, You're the Center of the Universe The Economy and People of a Global Region

By James Flanigan
(Stanford University Press, March 2009)

Thirty-five years ago, a billboard announced to the world: "Smile Los Angeles! You're the Center of the Universe." Hyperbolic at the time, today, it seems ironic at best. Yet James Flanigan maintains that Southern California remains at the center of the U.S. economy, "With 22 million people and a yearly output of goods and services (gross regional product) equal to or greater than that of India, Brazil, Russia, or Mexico, the half-dozen counties of Southern California lead a transformation of the US economy."

Over the course of forty years of reporting, author James Flanigan has written about Southern California for such publications as *Forbes* and the *New York Times*. In this book, Flanigan provocatively distills his knowledge of the region, arguing that Southern California is an economic model for the United States and the world. With clarity and precision, the book examines numerous pillars of the region's growth, including dynamic entrepreneurship; the rapid growth of international trade; the harnessing and development of new technologies; and the evolution of the entertainment industry. It highlights the achievements of the region's people, businesses, and institutions.

Calling the region the "the new Ellis Island" and attributing its successes to the surge in immigration since the late 1980s, Flanigan vividly narrates stories of the people and industries of the region. He chronicles the success of many local entrepreneurs, both small and large: from supermarket owner Darioush Khaledi, whose supermarket chain continues to flourish today, though it began with one store; to the blossom of companies which sprang up in the Korean business community; to the remarkable success story of Ted Turner.

With a global depression underway and all the gloom and doom in the news these days, this book presents a silver lining in showing how we have recovered from past downturns that will be inspiring for readers. Flanigan remarks, "In the devastating

downturn of the early 1990s, when the giants of the aerospace defense industry, which had put Southern California on the economic map, declined and in some cases left the area, this region recovered through a turn to entrepreneurial companies that brought the U.S. and world economies into the 21st century.To be sure, Southern California has outsized problems just like everyplace else. But in that too, it is a beacon to the nation. Whether coping with problems or pushing new frontiers, economically, socially and technologically, the region is a model for a country and a world now forced to change.”

James Flanigan is a journalist, columnist, editor, and storyteller. His writings have appeared in Forbes, the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times and the Herald Tribune in Paris and New York. He has covered economies of countries stretching from Europe to Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa. He currently writes a periodic column that appears in the New York Times.

Stanford University Press

March 2009

192 pages

Cloth Edition

\$27.95

978-0-8047-5625-9

For media inquiries, please contact Puja Sangar at 650.724.4211 or puja.sangar@stanford.edu.

###