Good Afternoon. Thank you all for coming!

And many thanks to all who created this exhibition. I was thrilled to find out that part of my grandfather’s collection would again be presented to the local public, and for such a long run at that! I’m not an expert on Renaissance
antiques - not even the works in Sigmund’s collection. But the news about this show made me want to share some personal memories about my grandfather and aspects of his complex personality and life. And to do so I finally had to delve into boxes of family documents stored in our garage for over 20 years, some from Sigmund, some from my parents and uncles. So thanks for the nudge!
Here just some of the contents, almost all in German:
All quite challenging to study in detail, especially with some being in obsolete cursive, and many being faded carbon copies.

Now I want to share with you some of the factual and visual gems I found in this treasure trove over a two month period.

But first, you may be wondering why our family branch is Lackner and not Morgenroth - lots of Lackners here this evening! The short version: In Europe during the Third Reich, my father, born Ernest Gustave Morgenroth, was writing articles critical of Hitler and fascism. His father Sigmund demanded he choose a pseudonym to avoid endangering other Morgenroths. My father chose Stephan Lackner and later made it his official name when getting US citizenship.
My parents - Stephan and Puck Lackner- and their three sons - Thomas, Lucas, and myself - lived next door to Sigmund and his wife Lucie in upper Montecito for about 12 years, from 1951 to Sigmund’s death in 1963.

Here our Lackner house. As the guest house of the Sigmund’s larger home next door, it was too small for a family of five, so a living room and studio were added:
My parents saw Sigmund and Lucie almost daily for business and caregiving reasons, but two or three times a week Opapa and Omama came over for tea via a pathway through the hedge, or our family would visit them. We three boys were growing up as California kids, playing Robin Hood and digging underground forts - just boys being boys - and we were often smudged and sweaty:
But the grandparents lived an insular life in both time and space. This is their house, with Montecito Peak in the distance:

They still wore clothing brought along from Europe decades earlier, maintained their Prussian values of tidiness and decorum, and spoke almost only German. They even had a German live-in housekeeper/cook. The only phrase I recall Omama trying in English was “Will you cake?” which she gradually expanded to “Will you chocolate?”
Sometimes they approached our home unannounced. Then Sigmund would bellow a warning at the far edge of our lawn: “Guten Tag!” And as they slowly approached our house, Puck made us quickly change clothing, wash our faces, comb our hair - all with reminders to be polite. And the same ritual preceded our visiting their home. Over there we usually sat outside because their house was too full of antique furniture and art to safely accommodate three fidgety boys.

However, I recall at least one occasion when I was sent to my grandparents alone to deliver a document. Sigmund invited me into the living room which was usually taboo for us kids. He sat down near a chest with many flat drawers and beckoned me to a footstool close by.

He pondered, then pulled out a drawer which revealed rows of metal objects laid out in velvet. He told me to choose one, and when I pointed at a larger piece he smiled and asked me to help him lift it out of its nest, and then he gently left it in my hand.

It was much heavier than I anticipated, and when I seemed nervous about dropping it, he said, “Don’t worry, it’s hard metal that has survived centuries of travels and wars and will survive us as well. Close your eyes and feel the face as if you were blind. Now turn it over and look at the back side.” With quiet enthusiasm he translated some phrases and explained when and where it had been made
and for what special occasion. I wasn’t understanding much, but Sigmund’s secretive excitement was contagious and I felt we were two pirates relishing some stolen treasure. And I was relieved that this often stern and imposing elder was in such a playful mood.

We only studied two or three pieces, then he wiped them off with his crisp handkerchief, returned them to their nests and carefully closed the drawer.

But how did Sigmund and Lucie end up in Santa Barbara? And how did his collection end up in this museum?

The Odyssey of Sigmund’s life has many twists and turns because he and Lucie moved to different cities EIGHT times, sometimes having to start anew, rebuilding their financial foundation and lives.
For centuries, many generations of Morgenroths resided in central Germany in and around Bamberg:

They were mainly hops merchants for that renowned German beer, and some were medical doctors and lawyers. My father wrote in his autobiography: “We were prosperous Jews, fortunate and liberal and involved in community matters.”
This family tree begins with Sigmund’s great-grandparents, my great-great-grandparents:
Here Sigmund’s grandparents - Lazarus and Jette Morgenroth:
Here Sigmund’s parents - Heinrich and Henriette Morgenroth:
Sigmund was born in Bamberg in 1874, one of three boys. In all those documents I found nothing about Sigmund’s youth, probably it all was destroyed in World War One.
Here the earliest photo I could find of Sigmund, at age 33 in 1906:
In that year, 1906, a nurse named Lucie Gast was brought into his parents’ home to take care of the bedridden father with a heart condition.

Sister Lucie was a devout Protestant with strict ethical principles. My father wrote: “There was a giant contrast between the lively, cosmopolitan Morgenroth family and the dutiful nurse who had the misfortune of falling in love with the son of her patient. She was a regal, quiet beauty.”
Sigmund compared her to Giorgione’s ‘Venus’, calling her ‘My Giorgionele’.

While Sigmund’s father was still alive there was no talk about him marrying the Christian Sister Lucie. But shortly after the patient’s death in 1907 the wedding took place as a civil ceremony.
Here the marriage license:

A ‘mixed marriage’ was quite unusual at that time, and in provincial Bamberg, their engagement and wedding stirred up so much spiteful neighborhood chatter - among Protestants and Jews alike - that the newlyweds moved to Paris.

That’s their MOVE NUMBER ONE of eight - please keep count.
Blessed with fluent French, an adventurous spirit and entrepreneurial cleverness, Sigmund founded a telephone company which also produced the first office intercoms. The Morgenroths prospered.
Sigmund gained respect as a businessman:
Their sons were born in Paris: Henri and Ernest, in 1909 and 1910:
And Charles was born in 1912:
They enjoyed seaside vacations:
I love this next photo because it captures Sigmund’s true nature:

In 1914 the outbreak of World War One abruptly ended the good life. Suddenly France was hostile territory for Germans. As a patriotic German Jew, Sigmund felt his services were needed in the Fatherland, and so they hastily moved to Berlin.
Almost everything left behind in Paris - assets, house, furniture, artworks - was confiscated by the French as enemy spoils. Landing in Berlin with three little children and relatively penniless, Sigmund had to begin anew. He produced grenade fuses and other weapon components for the German military. As the War dragged on for five years, the family’s quality of life descended into poverty and hunger. My father later wrote: “We growing boys
wore the same shoes until our toes became painfully bent.”

When the war ended in 1919, Sigmund seized a business opportunity in Bad Homburg. The family moved once again.

MOVE NUMBER THREE -
There he founded a factory for electric clocks, and prosperity steadily returned. Here Sigmund and Lucie in 1924:
Sigmund’s desk in Bad Homburg:
Seaside vacations were again possible:
The kids had grown:
In 1925, the growth of Sigmund’s business led them to move to the larger city Frankfurt am Main.

MOVE NUMBER FOUR -
They took mountain vacations in their very own car:
And it was during this longer stable period that Sigmund began collecting medals and plaquettes. This purchase list shows the first piece was bought on May 19, 1926:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Seller/Source</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
<th>Expenses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. Mai 1926</td>
<td>A.E. Cahn aus</td>
<td>Versteigerung Waldor von Holtzlin Nr. 125 Pattenplakette</td>
<td>RM 57.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Nr. 563 drei silberne, ovale plaketten</td>
<td>RM 388.--</td>
<td>RM 339.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. Okt. 1926</td>
<td>Dr. Lederer, Berlin</td>
<td>4 Kinderplaketen, spast.</td>
<td>1150.--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Nov. 1926</td>
<td>Werch Ein. Kind und Paunkinà</td>
<td>Sequoia</td>
<td>400.--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10% Provision an Lyon Ein.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>40.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Nov. 1926</td>
<td>Bruder Lyon Mehm, Silur s.3rd franz.</td>
<td>wohl aus Waldor</td>
<td>300.--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Nov. 1926</td>
<td>Dr. Lederer, Ein. A. or Fra Ant. d. Brassia</td>
<td>spaster getauscht.</td>
<td>200.--</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15% Provision an A.E.C.</td>
<td></td>
<td>60.--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dez. 1926</td>
<td>Eugen Weisser, Ein. d. Lederer + 2 Kindernplaketten nach Parzsi</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
The list only goes to 1931 but reveals his collection contained around 140 pieces by then, with much more to follow.
In 1933 the Third Reich was officially declared. Having learned from the 1914 experience of hastily fleeing Paris and losing so much, Sigmund prepared efficiently and thoroughly for the family’s second emigration - ironically, back to Paris.

MOVE NUMBER FIVE -

Stephan described a typically clever strategy of his father: “The Nazis put stringent limits on financial assets that emigrants could take out of Germany, but early on there were no restrictions on personal belongings, furniture and works of art. So Sigmund immediately purchased several coin collections from old aristocratic families as well as more medals and plaquettes.”

There’s a sweet irony in that the Nazis limiting currency exports resulted in Sigmund’s collections being enriched all the more.

And as for Sigmund buying antique coin collections, this thirty-three page list shows 1,766 collectible coins paid for with non-exportable Reich Marks, and all those coins landed in Paris - the first half of an original money laundering scheme.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Griechen</th>
<th>Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts</th>
<th>Berlin 42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Etruscanus. Eck Denar Heiss i.</td>
<td>212.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Etruscan Denar Sassoni 225</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Neapel Didrachmon 20.3.35</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Taras Didrachmon Ewans IV.2</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. tv. LXXI 61</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Heraclea Triobol BMG</td>
<td>12.00</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Rhea Didrachmum BMG - Beiselchen Schlange</td>
<td>68.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Metapont Stater 16</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Didrachmon 12</td>
<td>125.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. Syr. Stater BMG</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. A. Stater BMG 1</td>
<td>150.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Etruscan Stater BMG 38</td>
<td>45.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Stater 38</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Croton Didrachmon 20</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Lokroi Stater</td>
<td>65.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Agrigent Tetradrachmon BMG 38</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Selinus Didrachmon BMG 25</td>
<td>70.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Tetradrachmon 40</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. Segesta Didrachmon Stater Collection 1914</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Syrakus Tetradrachmon Schringer 24041</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Antikythera Tetradrachmon</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Antikythera Tetradrachmon</td>
<td>110.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. Tarentum Stater</td>
<td>150.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Apollogale Tetradrachmon BMG 247</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Philolis Tetradrachmon zu BMG 543 ff</td>
<td>60.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Sikyon Tetradrachmon, Tetradrachmen Cat.de Luynes 106.11.</td>
<td>100.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Thasos Tetradrachmon Muller, Lysimachos 3926.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Neapel (Nakador) Archaischer Stater BMG</td>
<td>25.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. Thasos, makedonische Stämme Stater BMG Syr. 1745</td>
<td>50.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35. Philippos II Tetradrachmon (Ampipolis) Muller 23</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36. Alexandros der Grosse Tetradrachmon Hr. 24</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37. Antigonos Gonatas Tetradrachmon</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38. Lysimachos Drachme Hermann 2.0.1</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39. Persepolis Tetradrachmon BMG 1</td>
<td>30.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40. Korkyra Stater BMG 122</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41. Bythinia Tetradrachmon BMG 4</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42. Bythinia Tetradrachmon BMG 4</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43. Bythinia Tetradrachmon BMG 4</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Here another example of Sigmund’s bureaucratic thoroughness: the Frankfurt Police’s official document of the Morgenroth change of residence to Paris, dated December 30, 1933. Most Jews fleeing Germany later on certainly did not - or could not - register their ‘change of residence’ with the police.
With the wealth of belongings Sigmund and Lucie brought to Paris, they set up a comfortable home in a small villa near Versailles. Sigmund reconnected with business associates from his first Paris residency two decades earlier and rapidly regained his financial footing.

In early 1934 my father Stephan discovered the paintings of Max Beckmann which had just been banned by the Nazis as degenerate art. Stephan later wrote: “I immediately knew this art would determine the direction of my life.” He wanted to purchase one large canvas, entitled ‘Man and Woman’:
But as a 23 year old student, he had no funds, so he asked his father for assistance. Although Sigmund was by no means convinced of the value of Beckmann’s paintings, he trusted his son’s enthusiasm and financed Stephan’s first purchase. And in the following six years he backed the commissioning of no fewer than 21 oil paintings and a set of lithographs for a book Stephan published.
One of the commissioned paintings was a portrait of Stephan as a student in Paris:

Some time later Sigmund and Stephan even committed to monthly stipends for Beckmann, also in exchange for paintings, but this gave Beckmann the financial and emotional stability to continue his creative life even during his exile in Amsterdam.

Of course Sigmund the businessman assumed Stephan would soon sell many of these works for a profit, but
Stephan’s various ambitious efforts seemed cursed for almost two decades. With the 1,766 antique coins now in Paris, Sigmund wanted to complete his money laundering and transmute the coins back into cash. His business instinct proclaimed: why not found a coin dealership, complete with board of directors and stockholders! He convinced coin experts in Basel, Switzerland, to participate, and, with many lawyers and legal documents involved, in 1933 the Muenzhandlung Basel became an official company.
Being in Switzerland, it was not endangered by Nazi confiscation. Sigmund wisely included his three sons as shareholders. Over time he sold most of the coins through this venue.

Although the Nazis didn’t invade France until 1940, Sigmund recognized years earlier that Jews in France would be in increasing danger. Antisemitism within France was becoming more threatening, and Nazi spies and provocateurs were infiltrating French society. So, with his customary courage in anticipating and responding to foreseeable dangers, he convinced his youngest son Charles to move to New York to pursue his ambition of dealing in antiquities, but also to serve as a scout for his parents. Then, on September 17, 1938 Sigmund wrote this letter to his other sons:
It basically informed Henri and Stephan about the growing danger and that he and Lucie were taking a steamship to the USA within months. He most urgently recommended that the sons also leave France, either by moving to Switzerland or joining Sigmund and Lucie on board. Stephan and Henri joined their parents’ exodus, booking passage on the same ship to New York for April 19, 1939.

Half a day before departure the family heard on the radio that their ship had been destroyed by a fire in the harbor of Le Havre. All their belongings - including antiquities, furniture, and the collection - were on that ship, as well as Stephan’s 21 Beckmann paintings.

Imagine the despair felt by the family at this point. However, soon they were informed that all their possessions had not yet been loaded on board and were safely stored on the pier. Fortuitous incompetence! A few days later they boarded another ship, the Champlain, and made it to New York.

MOVE NUMBER SIX -
Imagine having to show this passport going through customs:

Thanks to Charles’ diligent preparations, the family went directly to reserved hotel rooms on Central Park West.

And the crates with Stephan’s twenty-one paintings were transported directly from the ship to the prominent New York art dealer Curt Valentin. Charles soon introduced his brothers to other German speaking refugees involved in arts and literature. At a
soirée Stephan met the Austrian Elizabeth Pernkopf, nicknamed ‘Puck’ -who would fairly soon become his wife:

From his hotel room desk, Sigmund established transatlantic postal relationships with friends and business partners in Europe.

One such correspondence involved the cultural philosopher Walter Benjamin. Stephan had befriended him in 1936 in Paris.
In 1937, Benjamin had written Stephan about extreme financial hardships preventing him from working. Stephan and Sigmund sent him some funding. Father and son had repeatedly urged Benjamin to flee to New York with their
financial assistance, but he had remained indecisive. Now in New York in June 1939, both Stephan and Sigmund received newsy letters from Benjamin in Paris. After an update about his struggles came the apologetic request for more survival funds. Sigmund wired funds to Paris. After Germany invaded Poland in September 1939 Benjamin wrote again, finally requesting funding for fleeing to the US. Sigmund emphatically confirmed his willingness to assist, but Benjamin fled over the Pyrenees to Spain, and then committed suicide. Sigmund and Stephan were very saddened that their many efforts and offers had been in vain.

The Morgenroth’s first New York autumn grew bitter cold. They decided to spend the Winter in Florida.

MOVE NUMBER SEVEN -
The sons rented them a Victorian style house with spacious garden in the Gulf of Mexico:
There, Stephan and Puck got engaged. I couldn’t resist showing this photo:

![Photo of Stephan and Puck](image)

Sigmund swam in the warm ocean almost daily. One day Puck saw Sigmund floating lifelessly far from shore. She swam out, pulled him onto the beach and pumped his chest free of water. A doctor determined a heart attack. When Sigmund got up and slowly ascended the house
steps, Stephan asked the doctor if that was wise. He shrugged and said “It makes no difference, he won’t survive the night anyway.” That was in March 1940. Although Sigmund’s heart never fully recovered, with his pulse never higher than 32 to 40 beats per minute, he lived another 23 years, until 1963. Pacemakers hadn’t yet been invented.

In mid-1940 the Nazis invaded Belgium and France. Beckmann, still hiding in Amsterdam, continued exchanging letters with Stephan, and Sigmund wired monthly payments to Holland, although doubting that Stephan would ever receive the commissioned paintings. The last money transfer on May 8th still reached Beckmann, two days before the German invasion of Holland. And then the connection was cut off. For five years the Morgenroths didn’t even know if the artist was still alive.

After a year in the USA, Sigmund sent Stephan and Puck - now newlyweds - on a mission to find a place where the Morgenroths could enjoy settling down. They explored and rejected options in Texas, Colorado, Idaho, Los Angeles, then discovered Santa Barbara and lived there for half a year before successfully convincing Sigmund and Lucie to move there as well.

MOVE NUMBER EIGHT -
After the four day train ride from New York to Santa Barbara, Sigmund left the train on a stretcher lifted through the wagon window. He seemed weak and confused, and his family thought he wouldn’t live long. But the Santa Barbara climate and peaceful environment were to grant him and Lucie more than two decades of relatively good health. They were never to travel again.

They rented a modest house in the sleepy suburb Montecito. With Puck and Stephan living in Santa Barbara proper and Henri in Los Angeles, Sigmund and Lucie received visits almost daily.

In 1942, Sigmund arranged the first US exhibition of his medal and plaquette collection - at the Santa Barbara Museum of Art, running from January to March, 1943. A second showing followed, at the Art Institute of Chicago, in April and May 1944.

The catalog produced for the Chicago exhibition became a useful reference work for the collection. Sigmund’s handwritten note on this copy says “Exhibitions: Mills College and de Young Museum.”
And the pages are marked to show which works were lent to each institution. I couldn’t find any more details about those shows.
November 1943: as the Third Reich became a global threat, Stephan was drafted and sent off to Europe as US soldier, leaving Puck and Henri to take care of Sigmund and Lucie. Understandably, they all worried a great deal about Stephan, who served as an interpreter and reconnaissance expert in France and Germany.
But when World War Two ended in May 1945, he returned to Santa Barbara alive, to everyone’s great relief.

The Morgenroths wrote friends and relatives to see who had survived the war and the Third Reich. Many letters remained unanswered. Beckmann, who had hidden in Amsterdam throughout the Nazi occupation, did respond, with the news that he intended to emigrate to New York. Soon thereafter he succeeded, with Sigmund’s and Stephan’s support.
Stephan had promised Puck that they could have a child after Hitler was defeated, and the promise was promptly fulfilled: in June 1946 Peter was born. That’s me. Here being held by my Omama:

During the new era of peace, the Morgenroths had several family gatherings:
Henri, with second wife Ruth and daughter Michelle, drove up to Santa Barbara from Los Angeles. Charles and his wife Marion lived in New York but took the train to California.

About these reunions Stephan wrote: “My father gave patriarchal speeches and magnanimously solved all problems in the world.”

In 1947 my parents moved back to Europe with me still a baby. But after three years, letters from Sigmund and Lucie revealed their increasing loneliness and declining
health. So in late 1950 Puck and Stephan returned to Santa Barbara to take care of them, bringing along their newborn son, Tom - and of course me.

Sigmund and Lucie had purchased a two-parcel property in Montecito, with two older houses. They lived in the larger house and wanted us Lackners to move in next door, which we did.
I already shared something about this period of being neighbors. It was the largest block of time we all had together.

My father described this era as follows: “My parents needed reliable caregiving. Papa still had heart blockages. When his pulse was very low or he was feeling ill, Puck had to run over and give him an injection - sometimes even at night. The parents were happy when we took them to the beach or on short walks. We wanted to respond to their every wish - which was sometimes hard
with us having three small children. Papa had hired Puck as his secretary, she took dictation and typed his extensive correspondence.”

Occasionally my mother came home from working with Sigmund, exhausted and close to tears - usually after I had heard - even through the hedge - Sigmund’s voice, Prussian and scolding. When I tried to comfort her, she would comfort me instead, explaining that Opapa hadn’t been angry with her, but rather with the recipient of the letter being dictated. So his shouting at Puck was a variation of ‘kill the messenger’, due to his frustration about being so distant from his businesses, and a letter taking weeks to arrive in Europe. But my poor mother also accepted Sigmund’s wrath because our family really needed the money. To be fair, Sigmund usually was very sweet with Puck, thankful for how much she was assisting him. And, after all: Puck had once saved his life.

A few weeks ago I asked my brothers Lucas and Tom to share memories about life with the grandparents. They were seven and four years younger than me, respectively, and both understood very little German, so their perspective is interesting: First from Lucas, an abridged excerpt:

“I recall the musky smell and Victorian formality of their dim house filled with paintings and antiques, the mocha pastries dipped in coffee, the gurgling stone fishpond, the
wiring strung tree to tree connected to the alarm bell at our home to alert us to any emergency at Sigmund’s, the juniper sentinels along the walkways, the family photo sessions on the lawn, with our backs turned to the house and mountains, and with Omama and Opapa surrounded by their progeny…”

Here such a family photo session from the 1953 reunion:

And the next family reunion about four years later, in 1957:
And now brother Tom’s statement, also abridged:

“In my young mind, Sigmund and Lucy embodied a Europe that was equal parts romantic beauty and frightening menace. I have to say they did little to dissuade me of these extremes, not through any concerted effort, but more by the formality of our relationship. Although our family owes its existence to my grandfather’s shrewd perception and his resources, Sigmund and Lucy remained stubbornly European in a place, California, that at the time embodied positive change and optimism.

Our compound was a perfect microcosm of the duality of our worlds. Growing up in my parents’ house, I was enthralled with the contemporary art on all our walls, .. and the forward leaning music from Stravinsky to Woody Guthrie. I was in love with all of it despite my shyness…. My grandparents dwelled in the house adjacent to ours. They lived about 100 feet and a continent away…. I inherited a portrait of my grandparents painted by local artist Don Freeman. I look at it with bemusement, because Mr. Freeman had the astute eye of a caricaturist combined with a very gentle view of human nature. I love it for what my grandparents could have been.”
In the 1950’s and 60’s Stephan arranged various Beckmann exhibitions both in the US and abroad. Finally Sigmund’s enormous overall investment in Stephan’s collection began to bear financial fruit.
At first the sales had a tragically small profit margin. My father later wrote: “We were anything but wealthy. Today one can’t believe how little my Beckmanns were worth and how difficult it was to sell them. But it had to be, even though my heart bled with each sale, when I had to sacrifice my favorite for an amount hardly higher than the original purchase price.”
But Sigmund did live to see the prices rise exponentially and was relieved the sales at last were giving his ‘starving writer’ son financial stability. Of course, had he lived several more decades to see how high the prices ultimately were heading, he would have had another heart attack in amazement.

In 1961 the endgame began. Here an entry from Stephan’s diary: “August 26: Yesterday my mother died - Sigmund and I were in the hospital with her. That afternoon she begged ‘Don’t leave me’, and then the battle with death began - the battle for death, not against death.”
And in his autobiography Stephan wrote: “As a widower my father deserved great pity. Outwardly he bore the loss with composure. He was truly happy when studying his art treasures. … He sat in his easy chair, holding one of the bronze portraits and stroking it lovingly. Often he studied the pertinent historical literature and made notes. Seeing him immersed in such intellectual fascination with an almost physical abandonment is how I best remember him.”
After Lucie’s passing Sigmund’s will to live remained strong. Whenever a black rimmed letter arrived announcing the death of yet another friend or business associate, Sigmund would proudly proclaim, “Hah! Now I’ve outlived that one as well!”

After the death of his dear but quite prudish wife, Sigmund became somewhat freer about telling old Prussian dirty jokes and rhymes. And once he pulled a silver medal out of his vest pocket and let me study it. The medal commemorates the peace treaty of Utrecht of 1713. On the face it depicts representatives of France, Britain and Holland still arguing and physically fighting:
On the back side, successful peace negotiations are taking place, with friendly words such as “I am pleased if you are pleased”:

Sigmund gave me the medal for my 16th birthday. I guess he didn’t find it appropriate for his formal collection. And I apologize if my sharing it now also seems inappropriate. But I still cherish the gift because this image often comes to mind when I see headlines about today’s politicians negotiating national or international agreements.
During his final years, Sigmund dealt with diminished income from Europe and rising expenses in Montecito. Many letters between Sigmund and his sons in 1962 involve liquidating antiques, paintings, furniture and even the collection. Charles, as an art dealer and curator at the Metropolitan, helped his father find buyers and secure sales. But when it came to the medals and plaquettes, profit was not the crucial factor. Early on, Sigmund and his three sons agreed the collection should not be dissolved for maximum total profit.

Henri and Charles negotiated with several candidates interested in the full collection, including the Cleveland Museum of Art, The Kress Foundation and the newly founded LACMA.

However, Stephan, Puck and Henri were personal friends with faculty of this department, including David Gebhard, Alfred Moir, Howard Warshaw and William Dole. So a discussion about a purchase for this museum developed quite organically. Of the three museums in the running, the difference in the offers was secondary. Various factors were weighed, such as the larger museums having a higher public profile and their being more specialized in antiquities. But the decisive factor was the deep understanding of and respect for the collection that the faculty here revealed, so that Sigmund and all three sons chose UCSB as their clear preference.
Before a purchase became concrete a major exhibition of Sigmund’s collection took place in these rooms, with 102 objects on display.

Here articles in the Santa Barbara News Press:
The opening reception was on Tuesday, April 16th 1963. Four days later, on April 20th, Sigmund Morgenroth passed away.

I’d like to think that Sigmund died in contentment, knowing that over one hundred pieces of his dear collection `were being shared with the public in his beloved second home town - and knowing that his collection would most likely be acquired by this museum.
And so it came to pass: On May 22nd ‘63 the department signed a six month option because the UC Regents and UCSB Affiliates first had to approve the purchase and secure funds.

And almost six months later, on November 3rd, the Santa Barbara News Press reported the collection being, quote, ‘acquired by the Art Gallery at UCSB’:
Here UCSB Chancellor Cheadle with Puck and Stephan:

MORGENROTH COLLECTION RECEIVED
UCSB Chancellor Vernon I. Cheadle (left) discusses the famous Morgenroth Collection of medals and plaquettes with Dr. and Mrs. Stephan E. Leckner, part owners of the collection, on the occasion of its delivery to the University. One of the great collections of its kind in the world consisting of a large number of works of Renaissance and Baroque art, the Morgenroth Collection is being purchased by UCSB from the estate of Sigmund Morgenroth and the Leckners. The purchase price is being met by the UC Regents and money being raised by the UCSB Affiliates.
And here a commemorating gift from this department to my parents, slightly damaged in storage, depicting Alfred Moir, Chairman Art Department, Stephan Lackner, and David Gebhard, Director, Art Gallery:
Stephan represented the Morgenroth family, since his father could no longer attend in person. Sigmund was reunited with his Giorgionelle Lucie in the cemetery in Montecito:
I’m certain Sigmund was greatly enamored of and inspired by the spirit of the Renaissance, when families like the Medicis sponsored artistic freedom and productivity as a central component of life and civilization. Sigmund’s generosity of spirit reflected that world view in many ways. He was a true businessman, but ultimately he did business for the sake of the arts.

For many reasons, Sigmund’s collection is much greater than the sum of its parts. One primary reason is that in its entirety it embodies a tremendous dedication and devotion to the world of art, especially considering the foreboding
obstacles Sigmund surmounted in building the collection, and keeping it whole while saving it from the realm of fascist Europe, and then making sure it found a safe home in this bastion of the Liberal Arts.

To end with another quote from my father Stephan’s autobiography:

“A few months later the entire collection went to the University of California in Santa Barbara, where it can be the subject of seminars and dissertations. Here the name Sigmund Morgenroth is finally being kept alive.”

I and the Lackner/Morgenroth clan thank you for that.
The end