



## LEIGH TALMO WINS NATIONAL AWARD

Leigh Talmo was awarded an Elizabeth Abernathy Hull Award for Early Environmental Education in recognition of her work with elementary school children in the Roots and Shoots program at the Arboretum. The Hull program, administered by the Garden Club of America, annually

recognizes the outstanding achievements of individuals furthering the early environmental education of children. In making the 2012 award, the GCA noted:

"Leigh has been working with elementary-aged school children since 1994 at the Arboretum. Her program, Roots and Shoots, brings a designated classroom of children to the Arboretum 14 to 17 times over the course of the school year. In addition to working in their vegetable garden, the children join Leigh in reading stories, journaling their experiences, exploring the Arboretum, collecting seeds, flowers and leaves and observing the life in such a place. Once or twice during the year, Leigh invites a local chef to the garden to help the children prepare meals from their plants. The participating schools have shifted over the years, but consistently there have been low income, disadvantaged, urban children experiencing the natural, outdoor environment with a kind, compassionate, intelligent, experienced and knowledgeable guide. Leigh has had an emotional and intellectual impact on these children for so many years, and has enriched their lives and given them insight into the greater natural world around them."

The award recognizes Leigh's excellence and dedication as an environmental educator. The Arboretum thanks her on behalf of all the children whose lives she has touched over the years with Roots and Shoots. Congratulations Leigh! 🌱

## REMEMBERING FRANCIS CHING

Francis Ching was the man at the helm of the Arboretum through some of its most important history. He guided the formative growth of plant introduction and research programs, only to then also steer the difficult course of budget cuts following the passage of Proposition 13. As director of the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens, he worked to ensure the continued existence of the four county-operated gardens as well as to advance the Arboretum as a unique horticultural resource.

Mr. Ching, who retired in 1990, died in May at the age of 82. During his 20-years as director, he oversaw the operation of the Arboretum in Arcadia, Descanso Gardens in La Cañada Flintridge, South Coast Botanic Garden in Palos Verdes Peninsula and the Virginia Robinson Gardens in Beverly Hills.

In the years after Proposition 13, the Arboretum staff was cut by almost

40% with the Research Division bearing the biggest reductions. Despite the setbacks, Mr. Ching helped build the Hall of Environmental Education, later dedicated to Dr. Samuel Ayres, Jr. and his wife, Helen. Under Mr. Ching's leadership, horticulture flourished at the Arboretum, with the cycad collection more than doubling in size, the orchid collection vastly expanded and the Aquatic Garden on Tallac Knoll completed.

He received many awards for his work, including the prestigious Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden and Horticulture Award from Pennsylvania's Swarthmore College. Mr. Ching was named an honorary life member of the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta, now known as the American Public Gardens Association. A native of Hawaii, he joined the Department



*Director Francis Ching (left) with Dr. and Mrs. Samuel Ayres, Jr. at an event in 1983*

in 1956 after earning degrees from Michigan State University.

He set a standard and goal for the Arboretum that resonates today. In 1972, Mr. Ching said, "The Arboretum must be viable...the Arboretum must be dynamic, offering programs... to share the knowledge we have accumulated." 🌱





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