

Under Mr. Ching's guidance, programs at the gardens have expanded beyond the original scope of conserving, studying and displaying plants from around the world with an emphasis on those adaptable to the Southern California environment. He implemented numerous people-related programs and activities that enabled more people to share and enjoy the full value of plant life in Southern California.

Success of these programs has earned Mr. Ching international recognition in his field. Last year he received the prestigious Arthur Hoyt Scott Garden and Horticulture Award from Pennsylvania's Swarthmore College. Mr. Ching is the first Californian to be so honored during the 60 year history of the award.

From 1974-84, Mr. Ching served on the Board of Directors of the American Association of Botanic Gardens and Arboreta, and as its President from 1980-82. In 1986 the AABGA named him an Honorary Life Member, the organization's highest honor.

Mr. Ching has served on the Visiting Committee of Longwood Gardens and the National Arboretum Advisory Council in Washington, D.C. He also served on the board of directors of the American Horticultural Society and the Botanical Collections Committee of the Zoological Society of San Diego. A reviewer and panelist for *Sunset* magazine for over 25 years, he also served as a reviewer for the Institute of Museum Services and for the Museum Assessment Program and Accreditation programs for the American Association of Museums.

On the popular front, Mr. Ching has judged floats for the Tournament of Roses, towering floral headdresses at the Las Floristas Ball and the Easter Parade at Disneyland.



*Francis Ching*

*President's Message continued from page 1*

Of utmost importance immediately is for all our members and friends to write the county supervisors, or write to your supervisor and send copies to the others plus a copy to the CAO, opposing any takeover, merger or consolidation of the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens by/ with any other county department.

The Chief Administrative Officer is Richard Dixon.

The supervisors are:  
Supervisor Peter Schabarum,  
First District  
Supervisor Kenneth Hahn,  
Second District  
Supervisor Edmond Edelman,  
Third District  
Supervisor Deane Dana,  
Fourth District  
Supervisor Mike Antonovich,  
Fifth District

Address:  
Hall of Administration  
500 West Temple Street  
Los Angeles, California 90012

I cannot emphasize enough how **important your letter** is recommending that our Department remain independent, that a search for a new Director begin immediately and that Francis Ching be recalled until the new Director has reported for work.

The Natural History Museum collections and research deal with the past while the county gardens are working to improve the environment for today and future generations. Our collections are displayed on our grounds - a laboratory of living plants. Dr. Samuel Ayres, Jr. founded the Arboretum to bring more color to the landscape. Many of the seeds that have been planted are now reaching maturity - after 40 years. Some of the Arboretum's most spectacular additions to our environment can now be seen along the freeways, in parks and home landscapes - the hibiscus-like flowering floss silk trees, pink, gold and white trumpet trees blooming in February and March, the freeway daisy, the blue hibiscus. The collections of endangered orchids and cycads are world-renowned. Public service programs for county residents are too numerous to list here. Did you know that our herbarium curator has solved murders by identifying plant material found on clothes or in a car? And saved lives by identifying poison plants and their antidotes?

Please help save the independence of the Arboretum, Descanso Gardens, South Coast Botanic Gardens and Virginia Robinson Gardens - the four botanical research facilities that compose the Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. Write, call, protest any consolidation. Please do it today.

*Alice Frost Thomas, President*

**Alice Thomas  
Receives Volunteer Award**

Alice Frost Thomas, president of the California Arboretum Foundation, was named a Los Angeles County Volunteer of the Year for the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens and a Volunteer in Public Service for Los Angeles County, by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors. Mrs. Thomas has given 23 years of volunteer service to the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum. She has worked diligently to match the Foundation's fund raising capabilities with the Arboretum's needs. Her style of leadership has produced a very successful team effort to support the Arboretum.



1988. "Alice Thomas receives volunteer award." *News* 1990:spring-summer, 2.

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Los Angeles Arboretum

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