

MEMORANDUM For: The Record

From: Diana Cull, Chapter Historian

Re: Chapter Anniversaries

In 2021, the Washington, D.C. Chapter No. 1 of Ikebana International reached another milestone - our 65th year! Our Chapter President, Avis Black, received a congratulatory letter and certificate marking the occasion from Nobuko Sakata, International President of Ikebana International.

Ikebana International was founded by Washingtonian Ellen Gordon Allen in 1956 with the mission to: 1) Stimulate, cultivate and perpetuate the study of Ikebana throughout the world; 2) strengthen relationships among masters, teachers and students; and 3) create international collaboration through the establishment of associate chapters in Japan and abroad. Under her direction and guidance, the Washington, D.C. Chapter was the first to be established outside of Japan.

The very first Anniversary of Chapter No. 1 was celebrated in September 1957 with a luncheon attended by Ellen Gordon Allen, and featured a Birthday Cake decorated with cherry blossoms. At the event, Mrs. Allen presented the Chapter's Charter to Medrith Striker, the first Chapter President. During that first year, the Chapter established many activities to further Mrs. Allen's vision that continue to this day including sponsoring ikebana demonstrations and lessons, holding public exhibitions, and interacting with various other community organizations to promote ikebana.

The 10th Anniversary was celebrated in September 1966 with a Birthday Tea held in the Diplomatic Rooms of the Department of State. At that time, the Chapter had grown to a membership of 500 with six area workshops meeting monthly. The highlight of the year was participating in the Cherry Blossom Festival by staging a large exhibition and offering daily demonstrations by various schools of ikebana.

The Chapter's 20th Anniversary in 1976 coincided with the North American Regional Conference, which was held in Washington, D.C. and hosted by Chapter No. 1. The Ohara School Headmaster, Houn Ohara, was the featured demonstrator. Marion Scott was Chapter President, and Allie Uyehara and Betty Taylor were co-chairs of the Conference, which was attended by 104 I. I. chapters and study groups from the U. S. and Canada.

During the 25th Anniversary Year, Chapter No. 1 forwarded \$19,600 (raised from all chapters) in January 1981 for the construction of the Ellen Gordon Allen Memorial Garden at the U.S. National Arboretum, and in June 1982 the Garden was dedicated and a reception held on site. The Silver Anniversary events included a demonstration and workshop by Vice Head Master Akihiro Kasuya of the Ichiyo School and an Exhibition at the U. S. National Arboretum.

The 50th Anniversary was celebrated by a full year of events, kicked off by a large ikebana exhibition and an opening ceremony and reception at the U. S. National Arboretum. Chapter President Joyce Overholtzer was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation from the U. S. Department of Agriculture "In honor of the Chapter's 50th Anniversary and in appreciation of your continuing cooperation and support of the U. S. National Arboretum".

More recently, the 60th Anniversary was also celebrated with multiple events including a Gala Diamond Jubilee Dinner, a Grand Exhibition at the U. S. National Arboretum, and a special event luncheon and demonstration by Mika Tsujii, Head Teacher of the Saga School in Kyoto, Japan. Mika's grandfather, Koshu Tsujii, was a friend of Ellen Gordon Allen and along with his

son demonstrated for Chapter No. 1 several times. Bruce Wilson, Chapter President and Saga Professor, provided two identical bronze "shogonka" containers, one of which Mika's father, Hakushu Tsujii, had presented to Ellen Gordon Allen.

Throughout our 65 year history, Chapter No. 1 has enthusiastically supported the mission of I. I. through its many activities; and each Chapter milestone has celebrated the success of each succeeding generation of members in fostering ikebana. The following are Mrs. Allen's words on the occasion of the 10th Anniversary, but I think she would echo them today!

*"In celebrating the 10th anniversary of the founding of Ikebana International on August 17, 1956, we may also celebrate the 10th anniversary of the founding of the **first Chapter ever outside Japan**, namely our distinguished Washington, D.C. Chapter...founded October 8, 1956! I have watched the Chapter grow during the past 10 years. Its strength is derived from the enthusiastic and conscientious willingness of its members to cooperate and participate in sharing responsibilities which are vital to its existence. What is more, the membership of the Chapter have "lived" the ideals of Ikebana International: the study and spread of the art of Ikebana together with the spirit, namely, harmony and friendship among us all. Congratulations to each and every member of the Washington, D.C. Chapter of Ikebana International for the accomplishments of the past. The future of the Chapter is in your hands, so follow the pattern already set which will guarantee continued success!" Affectionately, Ellen G. Allen*