

## The Philanthropic History of Las Patronas

On June 2, 2007, the San Diego Historical Society recognized Ms. Terry Cooper and Las Patronas for their dedication and support of local charitable organizations with the presentation of the San Diego Historical Society's Legacy Award for Philanthropic Leadership. Cooper, current president, has been a member of Las Patronas for six years and has had a variety of roles within the organization, including Vice-President of Grants, Jewel Ball Co-Chair, Board Recording Secretary, Warehouse Chair and Donations Chair. In her current capacity, she serves as general executive of the organization and is an ex-officio member of all committees. Under the guidance of Terry Cooper, along with the dedication group of volunteer members, Las Patronas plans to support nonprofit organizations within the county for years to come.

Shortly after the end of World War II, a dedicated group of women from La Jolla formed Las Patronas, a philanthropic organization dedicated to assisting local charitable institutions throughout San Diego County. For nearly sixty years, Las Patronas has donated more than \$12 million to over one thousand nonprofit organizations that have provided valuable community services in the areas of health, education, social services and cultural arts. Based on the efforts of the founding members, Las Patronas has, over time, gained recognition for its generous tradition of giving to the community.



*Rana Simpson, wife of the mayor, San Diego Mayor Jerry Sanders and Terry Cooper, President of Las Patronas, at History Makers Dinner, U.S. Grant Hotel, 2007.*

The concept of supporting local charities has long been a part of Las Patronas history. In 1947, a committee of fourteen members organized the first Jewel Ball at the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club in an attempt to raise money for the China Relief Fund, a charity dedicated to providing aid to the people of China. With 200 guests in attendance, the inaugural Jewel Ball raised \$1,357 for the Fund and received much acclaim. As a result of its initial success, the Jewel Ball has become an annual event, serving as the primary fundraising event hosted by Las Patronas.

Preparations for Jewel Ball take place throughout the year, as the organization's president and ball chair oversee fifteen different planning committees and twenty administrative positions established specifically for the event. Highly decorative sets are designed for the Jewel Ball and are then transported to the La Jolla Beach and Tennis Club prior to the gala; all installation and set-up is handled by members of Las Patronas. Immediately following the night's festivities, the all-volunteer members of Las Patronas once again physically return the Beach and Tennis Club to its original condition.

All proceeds generated from the Jewel Ball are distributed the following year through numerous grants, which are awarded to various nonprofit organizations in the County. Recipients of these grants must complete an application and interview process and awards are given for capital items. Major and minor grants are dispersed during two funding cycles each year. Major grant beneficiaries receive more than \$20,000 and are chosen in the fall; minor grant beneficiaries receive up to \$20,000 and are chosen in the fall and spring. In 2007, the eleven major grant recipients were: Camp Fire USA San Diego and Imperial Counties Council, The Old Globe, Helen Woodward Animal Center, Family Health Centers of San Diego, Rady Children's Hospital – San Diego, The San Diego Aircraft Carrier Museum, The San Diego Museum of Art, St. Paul's Retirement Homes Foundation, University of San Diego School of Leadership and Education Services, Urban Corps of San Diego and Voices for Children. In the same year, Las Patronas awarded minor grants to sixty-six local beneficiaries. The San Diego Historical Society congratulates Terry Cooper and Las Patronas for their outstanding work in the community.