



Proclamation

HONORING THOMAS FOON CHEW

WHEREAS, the City of Palo recognizes the contributions made by Thomas Foon Chew and Bayside Cannery to the history and development of our city; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Foon Chew was a visionary businessman who was willing to take risks and take advantage of luck even in hard times, and his father Sai Yen Chew was the owner of the Precita Canning Company, which canned tomatoes; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Foon Chew arrived in America in 1897 at the age of 8 and stayed with relatives in Los Gatos, where he learned English and American ways; and

WHEREAS, Bayside Cannery was located in Alviso, an ideal spot because of the waterway that connected the South Bay and the East Bay, and used the water and rail to ship produce by boat to San Francisco, Sacramento, and Stockton; and

WHEREAS, Bayside Cannery had additional fruit canneries, including Sacramento, Isleton, and Mayfield in Palo Alto, where it packed apricots, pears, peaches, and fruit salad, employing Spanish and Portuguese-speaking workers, white workers, and many administrators and supervisors who were Chinese; and

WHEREAS, Bayside Cannery had a fruit and asparagus sorter and was known for its high-quality produce, especially the Bayside label, and was the first to can green asparagus, making Thomas Foon Chew known as the Asparagus King; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Foon Chew and Lee Gum Ching were married in 1907 and completed their family of seven children, who were raised on the premises and attended an elementary and high school started by Thomas Foon Chew; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Foon Chew's legacy continued through his children, who inherited the land he placed in their name every two years and continued to run the cannery until demand dropped during the Great Depression; and

WHEREAS, Thomas Foon Chew passed away on February 25, 1931, leaving behind a legacy of innovation and hard work, and was honored with a funeral procession of over 25,000 people in San Francisco Chinatown and State officials.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Palo Alto honors Thomas Foon Chew, a visionary businessman and a man of the times whose hard work and innovative ways and whose Bayside Cannery played an important role in the history and development of our City of Palo Alto.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lydia Kou, Mayor of Palo Alto, further encourage the community to learn more about the history of Thomas Foon Chew and Bayside Cannery, and to appreciate the contributions made by Chinese immigrants to the development of Palo Alto.

PRESENTED: May 22, 2023

Lydia Kou
Mayor