

Major Milestones



Many ancient gardens in China, built and expanded over decades and renewed over centuries, are still enjoyed today as community gathering places. The Seattle Chinese Garden will be one of the largest traditional gardens outside of China. This ambitious and complex cultural project is a long-time labor of love for many many volunteers and advocates in our region. The garden's genesis dates to the early days of the Seattle-Chongqing sister city relationship. Knowing the Spring Courtyard is the first major bloom, and this glimpse of the vision for the full 5-acre garden should inspire all to move ahead to complete this new landmark for the region.

1983-1987 — **Seattle and Chongqing** became sister cities in 1983 and in 1986 signed a memorandum of understanding for the Seattle Chinese Garden, launching an ambitious cultural and educational project. Chongqing and Seattle parks officials conducted site reviews and discussed design ideas in 1987.

1988 — The Seattle City Council affirmed the selection of the **South Seattle Community College** (SSCC) campus as the preferred garden site.

1989-1997 — The **Seattle Chinese Garden Society** (SCGS) was established in 1989 and received a tax status that promotes the ability to receive donations; Chongqing designers completed the first master plan that year. SCGS launched early fundraising efforts and continued preconstruction planning work. In 1993, City of Seattle officials designated the society as its representative for ongoing dealings with Chongqing.

1998-1999 — In December 1998, the SCGS and the State signed a lease agreement for the SSCC tract. Capital campaign fundraising began, and King County allocated \$500,000 to the project. The completion of the **Song Mei Pavilion** and demonstration garden in 1999 **stimulated gifts** of \$500,000 from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, **\$1.5 million from The Boeing Company**, and \$600,000 from the City of Seattle.

2000-2005 — SCGS continued master plan design and fundraising and expanded educational programs and community engagement. In 2004 the SCGS signed a long-term renewable lease with the college, and the society's board of directors approved a new, **4.6-acre master plan**.

2006 — The SCGS obtained its **Master Use Permit** from the City of Seattle to allow development of the site. In December, the society completed its share of fundraising (\$400,000) to support construction of the **Warren and Nobie Chan Education Center**, a joint project with SSCC and adjacent to the garden site.

2007 — In June, Mayor Greg Nickels announced **Chongqing's new gift of \$1.2 million** in-kind support for Knowing the Spring Courtyard. The City of Seattle approved \$318,000 to be awarded when the courtyard is open to the public. Governor Gregoire's capital budget included \$500,000 for the courtyard.

2008 — On January 10, SSCC and the SCGS dedicated the Chan Education Center, which provides a classroom and laboratory for the college's horticulture students, space for the society's administrative office, and a classroom for educational programs and events. From August through October, local contractors built the foundation, walls, and steelwork for **Knowing the Spring Courtyard**.

2009 — **The Norcliffe Foundation** made a \$200,000 grant, and in November the SCGS raised more than \$100,000 at a benefit dinner and auction to support the completion of the courtyard.

2010 — The **Pendleton and Elisabeth Carey Miller Charitable Foundation** approved a \$250,000 grant for Knowing the Spring Courtyard. The SCGS raised more than \$45,000 at a June 19 **brick campaign kickoff dinner** in the Chinese community, attended by Consul General Gao Zhansheng of the PRC Consulate in San Francisco. The brick campaign continues in the wider community through 2011.

August 6 to November 9 — A team of 21 **artisans and master craftsmen** from China constructed the traditional elements of Knowing the Spring Courtyard.

2011

- ♦ *February 5* — More than \$100,000 raised for the Garden at the annual Chinese New Year Gala sponsored by the Hong Kong Association of Washington.
- ♦ *February 6* — Garden opens gates to the public (soft opening).
- ♦ *May 15* — Open House Celebration, 3-5 pm (free) — lion dance, traditional music and dance, martial arts