



MEDIA ALERT
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August 23, 2012

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France
Confers the Award of
Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres
on
Olga Garay-English
City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs
Executive Director

Los Angeles - Olga Garay-English, Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), has been made a Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Knight of Order of Arts and Letters), one of France's most distinguished titles, by the French Ministry of Culture and Communications.

The Ordre des Arts et des Lettres (Order of Arts and Letters) is an Order of France, established on May 2, 1957 by the Minister of Culture, and confirmed as part of the Order National du Mérite by President Charles de Gaulle in 1963. Its purpose is the recognition of significant contributions to the arts, literature, or the propagation of these fields. The rank of Chevalier (knight) confers membership in the Order, and is only very selectively awarded to non-French nationals.

"It is a deep honor to receive this prestigious award," Ms. Garay-English said. "I have been privileged to collaborate with the French Consulate here in Los Angeles serving under Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa, and with New York's French Consulate while I was the founding Program Director for the Arts of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. The collaborations launched with the French Cultural Services in both cities have been highlights of my career. I am proud to say that the projects we initiated helped establish stronger ties between the people of France and the United States."

Throughout her career, Ms. Garay-English has worked closely with the French community. She helped establish the French-American Jazz Exchange (FAJE), a partnership of the Cultural Service of the French Embassy and the Mid Atlantic Arts Foundation during her tenure at the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation. More recently at the Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs, she established the France Los Angeles Residency Exchange (FLARE) fellowship program with



MEDIA ALERT
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LA's French Cultural Services as part of DCA's Cultural Exchange International (CEI) program. FLARE sends Los Angeles visual artists abroad to conduct two to three month residences in either Paris or Bordeaux, France and supports French artists in Los Angeles.

"Olga's selection for this honor recognizes her proven ability to bridge cultural borders and her significant contributions to the arts," Mayor Villaraigosa said. "Her accomplishments at the Department of Cultural Affairs, showcasing our City's great artists and all they do to improve our lives, is impressive and distinguished. The City takes great pride in learning of this honor, and we congratulate Olga on her new title."

Directeur Général Georges-François Hirsch, Ministère de la Culture et de la Communication Direction Général de la Création Artistique in Paris informed Ms. Garay-English of her nomination in a letter announcing that the title would be conferred upon her. The award has recognized eminent artists and writers, in addition to other individuals who have contributed significantly to furthering the arts in France and throughout the world.

On the recommendation by Jean-Christophe Harel, then Cultural Attaché at the French Consulate in Los Angeles, the candidacy of Ms. Garay-English was presented by Consul General David Martinon. The ceremony to confer the title upon Ms. Garay-English took place on the evening of Wednesday, August 22, 2012, at the Beverly Hills home of David Martinon, the Consul General of France in Los Angeles.

"Olga is an exceptional individual who has worked diligently to support the arts in France, America, and abroad," Consul General Martinon said. "We are grateful for her efforts to promote more cultural exchange between our two countries, and are pleased to confer upon her this great distinction."

Ms. Garay-English shares this honor with the likes of Los Angeles Philharmonic Conductor Gustavo Dudamel, dance pioneer Tricia brown, Academy Award-winning actress Cate Blanchet, and contemporary opera composer Jon Adams.

About Olga Garay-English

Olga Garay-English is the Executive Director of the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA), a position she assumed in 2007. Reporting directly to the Mayor of Los Angeles and managing a budget of over \$40 million, the Executive Director is DCA's chief artistic and administrative officer.

Since her appointment with the City, DCA has been awarded \$19 million in funding support from private and public entities. These funds are being used to re-grant to LA-based artists and arts organizations through programs such as the



MEDIA ALERT
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Cultural Exchange International (CEI) Fellowship Program, which provides support for LA-based artists to conduct extended residencies around the world, enhance DCA programs including its celebratory Heritage Month Celebrations, and refurbish its theaters and art centers.

Prior to working in Los Angeles, Garay-English was an independent producer and performing arts consultant working with organizations such as the Lincoln Center Festival, the National Performance Network, and El Museo del Barrio.

As Founding Program Director for the Arts for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation (1998-2005), Olga was responsible for the planning, design, management, and evaluation of the Arts Program, one of the largest national arts funders in the United States. A total of \$145 million was awarded to arts organizations during Olga's seven-year tenure.

In 2011, Los Angeles Magazine named her to its list of 10 Game Changers, women who make an impact in LA every day. She received a Bessie, the New York Dance and Performance Award, and was named the Cuban Artists' Fund Distinguished Honoree in 2006. She also received the 2003 Fan Taylor Distinguished Service Award for exemplary service to the field of professional presenting from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters.

Garay-English was born in Santa Clara, Cuba, and came to the United States in 1961. She is bilingual in English and Spanish.

About the City of Los Angeles Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)

The **Department of Cultural Affairs (DCA)** generates and supports high quality arts and cultural experiences for Los Angeles' 4 million residents and 26 million annual visitors. DCA advances the social and economic impact of the arts and ensures access to diverse and enriching cultural activities through: grant making, marketing, public art, community arts programming, arts education, and building partnerships with artists and arts and cultural organizations in neighborhoods throughout the City of Los Angeles.

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