



Proclamation

HONORING CHARLES BENJAMIN WING Palo Alto Day 2023

WHEREAS, Charles Benjamin Wing was called to Stanford University in 1892, the University's second year, to expand the coursework in structural engineering in the Civil Engineering Department; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wing brought teaching experience from Cornell University and the University of Wisconsin to Stanford and supported Stanford's integration of science and technical students into the broader university curriculum; and

WHEREAS, his academic background included general education in public and private schools, a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering (Cornell 1886), and advanced study at Cornell, bolstered by solid field experience in bridge and hydraulic engineering; and

WHEREAS, with deep family roots in New England and New York, Dr. Wing settled in University Park (soon renamed Palo Alto) in 1893 with his wife, Anna Paddock Wing, and a growing family in a newly built house at 345 Lincoln Avenue designed by A.B. Clark; and

WHEREAS, he improved a well in his backyard, erecting a tank house and organizing a small cooperative water system maintained by neighboring professors Marx, Angell, and Thoburn, when, elsewhere in town, water was supplied by a mix of wells, windmills, and horse-drawn tanks delivering water to individual homes and merchants; and

WHEREAS, Charles Benjamin Wing and another civil engineer, C.D. Marx, were well placed to foresee the benefits of significant cost savings yielded by municipal control of utilities. They offered insight and practical skills to the growing community, including support for financing water and sewer systems and the addition of electricity and gas to municipal ownership; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wing served 25 years as a Trustee, now referred to as a Councilmember, and was Mayor from 1901-1909; and

WHEREAS, his interest in radio engineering and Palo Alto-based Federal Telegraph Company led him to design radio masts for the Company's stations in San Francisco and later in Shanghai; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wing was a committed conservationist, deeply involved in protecting coast redwoods from the logger's saw in the Santa Cruz mountains. He was a major force in preserving Big Basin as the first California State Park, later helping develop a State Park plan and serving as chief of the Parks division of California's Department of Natural Resources; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Wing designed the new Stanford stadium, which stood from 1921 to 2005, with its memorable berms cradling the structure and intended to withstand earthquakes. He then succeeded C. D. Marx as head of the Civil Engineering Department in 1923.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Lydia Kou, Mayor of the City of Palo Alto on behalf of the entire City Council do hereby recognize Charles Benjamin Wing as a notable individual who contributed to the founding of Palo Alto.

Presented: April 10, 2023

Lydia Kou
Mayor