

## For Immediate Release

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### **Long Beach, CA, Resident Dr. Mary E. Barton is Named “Friendship Ambassador to Shandong Province” of China**

LONG BEACH, CA -- The Shandong Province government of China, in connection with the Qingdao Foreign Affairs Office, will name Dr. Mary E. Barton of Long Beach their "Friendship Ambassador" for the province on Thursday, October 21, via a Zoom event at 6:30 pm PT.

Qingdao, China, has been a sister city to Long Beach for 36 years. Barton been an active member and officer of the Long Beach-Qingdao Association for more than 30 years.

“During the event, we will also be signing a Letter of Intent to create a cooperative agreement between CSULB and Qingdao University of Technology,” said Barton.

Also present will be Dr. Jeet Joshee, Vice-President of Global Engagement at CSULB. The two universities became acquainted through the Long Beach Qingdao Association’s Digital Pen Pal Program during the summer of 2020 and continuing through 2021. Dr. Jolene McCall of the International Studies Department at CSULB was instrumental in making the program successful.

“I was nominated for this award earlier this year and am most honored to receive this title,” said Barton. “My dedication to the sister cities’ mission is always in the mode of ‘people-to-people’ and not much of the ‘official business’ type of relationship that typically makes the news. For 30 years, I have been helping to establish relationships through many one-on-one relationships—from student home stays, many visits to Qingdao with specific purposes or sometimes just ‘tourism’ and some occasional formal visits with business delegations that included local Long Beach officials.”

Other participants in the online ceremony will also include the senior government officials from Qngdao and Jinan, the capitol of Shandong Province, as well as the Chinese consulate in Los Angeles. The “Friendship Ambassador” title is most often given to outgoing ambassadors to China from other nations, recently awarded to the former Ambassador from Australia, Iceland, and Lithuania, explained Barton. “In my opinion this is a wonderful tribute to our people-to-people mission through Sister Cities.”

Sister Cities Mission: The Long Beach–Qingdao Association was founded in 1985, following a trip to Qingdao by City leaders who realized Long Beach had much in common with its “big sister.” Today, the LBQA is one of the members of Sister Cities of Long Beach, Inc., and a member of Sister Cities International in Washington, D.C. LBQA members follow the theme of “citizen ambassadors” with a people-to-people mission, as envisioned by the original Sister Cities founder, President Dwight D. Eisenhower back in the 1950’s. For more information, please visit: <http://www.lbqa.org>

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