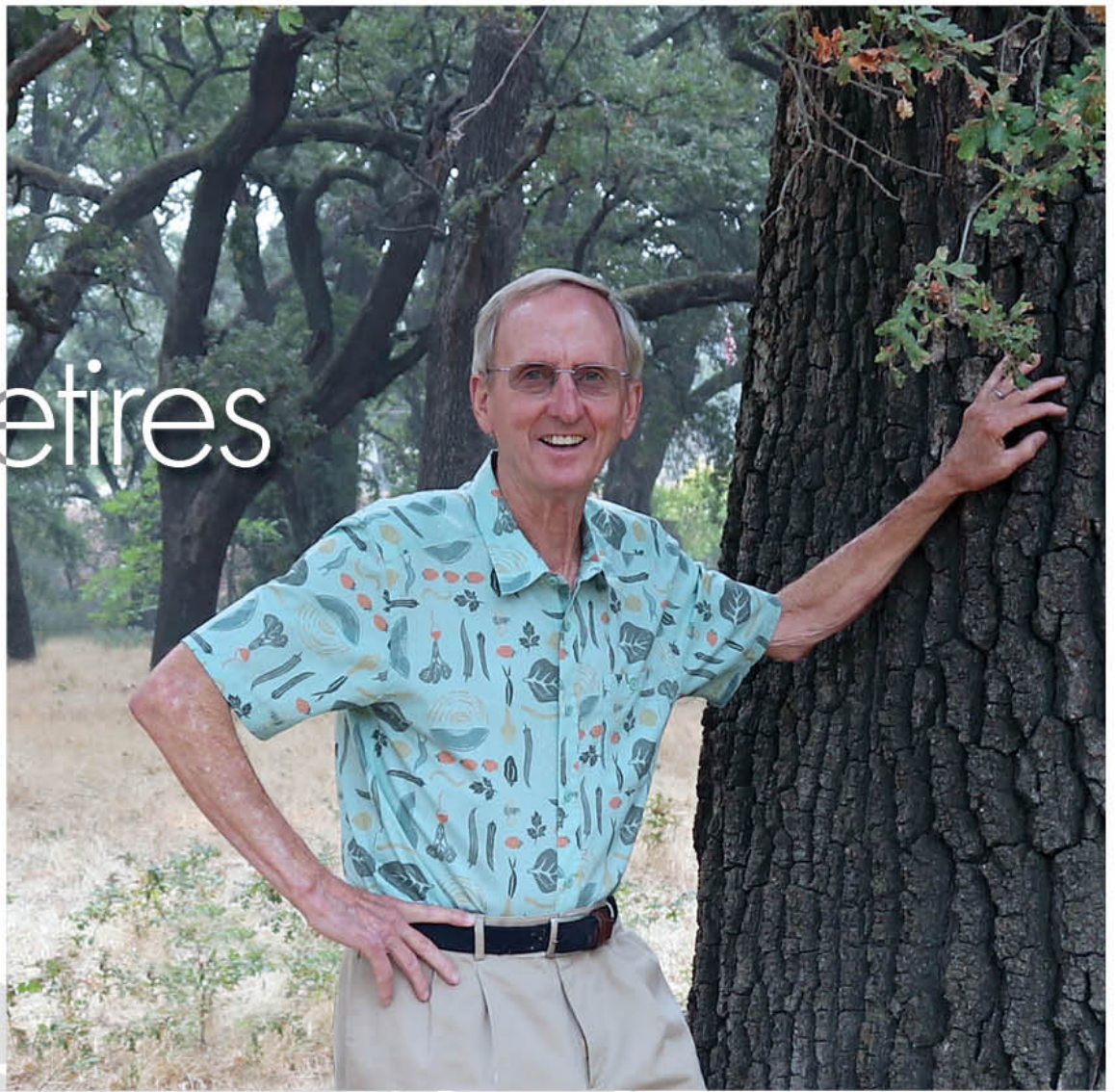




Ray Retires

Ray has always
Inspired and
Connected with
our Community



(top) Ray Tretheway in the grove now named for he and his wife Judy.

(right) Ray and Congresswoman, Doris Matsui a longtime supporter of The Tree Foundation.

Public servant, organizer, tree planter and friend. A Long-time South Natomas resident and community leader, Ray Tretheway, will be retiring this year as Executive Director of the Sacramento Tree Foundation (STF) after co-founding the nationally known, award-winning organization in 1982. To honor both Ray Tretheway and his wife, Judy, the oak grove in South Natomas has been re-named for them.

“Together, Judy and Ray have devoted their lives to promoting trees, their Natomas community, and the City of Sacramento,” says STF President Allison Post Harris. “Because of this exemplary couple, we all live in stronger communities, united around our trees.

We also breathe cleaner air, and live in shadier, healthier and safer neighborhoods. Ray’s smile and positive approach to every challenge are infectious,



and at least part of his success is surely attributable to both.”

“Ray has cared about every part of Natomas since he moved here, and he has tried to take care of it,” says 40-year friend and former Sacramento

Mayor Heather Fargo. “The STF goes beyond Natomas. He and the Foundation are nationally recognized for urban forestry. Natomas has truly benefited from his service.”

Fargo recalls that what started as a kitchen table community organization, grew to planning review and lawsuits against the city to preserve lands and oak trees, such as the Bannon Street Nature Preserve. “Park and open space development became Ray’s life work, starting here in Natomas. He is persistent, tenacious, and focused. He found his niche, and we all benefited from it.”

Randi Kay Stephens, longtime friend and colleague, says that Ray is a connector, problem

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solver and optimist. "In my time working with Ray I experienced a hard-working, smart, genuine and future-focused visionary. Ray looks for what is possible and how to make things better."

How did this dedicated couple come to live in Natomas and serve the community? Ray neatly summarizes for them both: "I grew up in Sacramento's Town and Country Village area, served in the Army, completed my degree at UC Santa Cruz, began work with the Conservation Foundation in DC for a guy writing a book. After our daughter Eleanor was born, Judy and I decided to move to be near one set of grandparents. I got a



Randi Kay Stephens, long-time friend and colleague with Ray Tretheway.

a garden. They were drawn to the older, largely Hispanic neighborhood of River Gardens. "One Sunday after church we looked at land by the Garden Highway. It upset my parents because it was a poor neighborhood."



(above) Ray with wife, Judy Guma Tretheway in their "Ray and Judy Tretheway Oak Preserve

job in Sacramento right away as consultant to Russ Cahill, the state parks director, to write the policy and guidelines."

Ray says he and Judy wanted to live their lives by their values: Be near family, never move again, develop a strong sense of neighborhood, and have

Concurrent with establishing their home, Ray and Judy began their community service by developing community associations, expanding schools, and park/open space planning. Ray also worked on the Stanford Settlement small farms program for Vietnamese and Hmong neighbors.

Ray's view about the importance of urban forests began in 1981, when then Mayor Phil Isenberg and County Board of Supervisor Chair Ila Collin advised that deep funding cuts affect those who have no voice. "The two of them wanted the trees to have a voice; so those of us who were present formed groups, and in just 45 minutes we were all in and appointed a steering committee to start the Foundation.

"On Arbor Day 1982, which was a Sunday, we picked up then Secretary of State March Fong Eu at her Swallows Nest home, drove her to her office, and she stamped our nonprofit corporation," recalls Ray of that special day.

Ray says the original STF plan was to plant a tree a day for five years and be done—with no staff and \$60,000 in the bank. "Three months into the project we found that trees and volunteers need stewardship. I volunteered to be the first employee and was chosen. I have been there ever since."

For nearly 40 years, with Ray as Executive Director, the STF has been focused and aggressive to energize communities about the importance of tree canopies and urban forests. Recently named "Neighbor-Woods," this latest project is one that will carry on his early vision for the organization to Build Community, Improve the neighborhood, and Plant trees.

Tretheway's Top 'Tree' Takeaways

1. Responsibility for urban forests lies within each of us. It is our choice to plant or not plant a tree. It is civic engagement that is good for your yard and the community.

2. Urban forestation is remarkably and inextricably linked to our quality of life, both mental and physical.

3. Although we have older, established tree canopies in middle and upper class areas, We need to plant full urban forests in lower income neighborhoods.

Ray has laid a strong foundation for the next generation. "In his decision making he always puts people first and what is best for the community. Ray has a heart for the next generation. I saw this at both the city level and at the Tree Foundation," adds Stephens.

Once the social distancing ends, Fargo looks forward to more barbecues in the Tretheway back yard. "Ray and Judy are great entertainers. They like having people around. I don't know exactly what Ray will do next, but I am confident he will not sit still. He has truly made a difference, has much expertise and is committed to our community and the region beyond."

Learn More

Sacramento Tree Foundation
sactree.com

Sac Tree Programs
sactree.com/programs

Stanford Settlement
stanfordsettlement.org