

# **About the Pomona College Special Convocation for Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn February 4, 2014**

On February 4, 2014, the Pomona College community attended a special Convocation for the awarding of an honorary degree to Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand. As recommended by the Honorary Degrees Committee and approved by the Faculty and the Board of Trustees, this honorary degree recognizes the princess' contributions to education, development, and philanthropy.

The ceremony included music by Professors Genevieve Lee and William Peterson and speeches by Trustee Bernard Chan '88 and Pomona student Witisada Wattananimitgul '16, as well as Her Royal Highness. Professor John Seery introduced the princess and Professor James Likens, as faculty marshal, assisted in the awarding of the degree.

## **Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn**

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn is a member of the royal family of Thailand, the third child of King Bhumibol and Queen Sirikit. She is currently Director of the Department of History at the Chulachomkhalao Royal Military Academy, where she has played a key role in revising the curriculum. She also supervises agricultural activities and the Thai Music Club at the Academy and lectures at several other institutions.

As a scholar, the princess has worked in heritage protection, development of traditional Thai music and creation of an electronic corpus of the modern Thai language. In 2007, she established the Sirindhorn Thai Language Institute at Chulalongkorn University to promote teaching, learning and assessment of the Thai language. She speaks Thai, English, French, Chinese and German and is a scholar of Pali, Sanskrit and Cambodian.

Her Royal Highness is active in development and philanthropic works both in Thailand and around the world, with projects focusing on education and nutrition for marginalized populations and people in need. She is executive vice president of the Thai Red Cross Society and serves as president of a foundation awarding prizes annually to members of the international community for outstanding contributions to medicine and public health. She also runs several philanthropic organizations and foundations promoting Thai culture and higher education, protecting the environment, and supporting disabled veterans. The Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn Foundation, established in 1979, supports disadvantaged students in schools, vocational colleges and universities.

She also works on behalf of several international organizations, including the World Health Organization, the Health Advisory Board of the Bloomberg School of Public Health at The Johns Hopkins University, the Council of Refugee Education Trust, UNESCO and the United Nations World Food Programme. Among the international awards she has received are the Ramon Magsaysay Award for Public Service and the Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.

Her Royal Highness earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Chulalongkorn University with first class honors and a gold medal in history, Master of Arts degrees in Oriental Epigraphy from

Silpakorn University and in Pali-Sanskrit from Chulalongkorn University, and a doctoral degree in development education from Srinakharinwirot University.