

**LOOKING BACK IN OUR CHAPTER'S HISTORY by Diana Cull, Chapter Historian**

Foremost is the founding of our Chapter by Washingtonian Ellen Gordon Allen, who was also the Founder of Ikebana International. This occurred on October 8, 1956, when a group of Mrs. Allen's students and friends met for tea at the home of Medrith Striker. They paid \$5 dues apiece and appointed officers with Medrith Striker becoming the first Chapter President.



**Viewing Chapter No. 1's Charter**

Left to right: Chapter Vice President Lady Betty de la Mare; Chapter President Medrith Striker; Japanese Ambassador's wife Koichiro Asakai; and Founder Ellen Gordon Allen

We are beginning this year's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration with a luncheon and demonstration featuring the Saga Goryū School of Ikebana, located at Daikakuji Temple in Kyoto, Japan. This is not the first time that teachers from the Saga Goryū School have visited our Chapter. In the fall of 1959, then Headmaster Kōshū Tsujii gave a lecture and demonstration for Chapter members. On May 25, 1972, his son and successor, Headmaster Hakushū Tsujii gave a lecture and workshop. This took place 15 days before the unexpected death of Founder Ellen Gordon Allen on June 9<sup>th</sup>.

Saga Goryū Headmaster Kōshū Tsujii and son Hakushū Tsujii collecting materials for demonstration



Most interestingly, in 1983, the Chief Abbot of Daikakuji Temple, Archbishop Ryokai Ajioka, came to Washington, D.C., on a "World Mission of Peace and Friendship through Ikebana." He was the guest of honor at a Chapter Special Event and dinner held at the Key Bridge Marriott on



October 4, 1983. The Archbishop gave opening remarks followed by a demonstration by Saga Goryū Professor Jishu Watanabe. A letter written on behalf of the Archbishop to then Chapter President, Beverly Harden, expressed "Our deepest appreciation for the warm and enthusiastic hospitality which you extended us." It also stated: "Ikebana is so wonderful that it can work toward friendship and cooperation on a family level, on a community level, and on an international level." A sentiment worth remembering!

Right to left: Saga Goryū Bishop Daiyu Henjyoji; Saga Goryū Archbishop Ryokai Ajioka; Saga Goryū Professor Jishu Watanabe; with Chapter President Beverly Harden, 2nd from left