



Deborah Szekely Highlights

Deborah Szekely is known worldwide as a true pioneer of the mind/body/ fitness movement. In 1940, she and her husband, the late Edmond Szekely (renowned health researcher, philosopher and author), founded Rancho La Puerta in Tecate, Baja California, Mexico. In 1958 she alone established the world's premiere spa: the Golden Door, in Escondido, California. Deborah, who turns 90 on May 3, 2012 is Creative Director of both spas and travels frequently throughout the world lecturing on the principals of living the longer, healthier life and advocating health reforms such as anti-obesity programs for school children. Complete CV available on request.

Service and Honors Within the Spa/Hospitality Industry:

Visionary Award, SpaFinder magazine; **Humanitarian Award**, International Spa Association (ISPA); **Founding member**, ISPA

Public Service Outside of the Spa/Hospitality Industry:

- Deborah Szekely founded **Eureka Communities** in 1991, a national leadership training program for CEOs of nonprofit organizations. She served as Eureka's President through December, 1995, and is currently Chair Emerita.
- From 1984 to 1990 Mrs. Szekely was **President of the Inter-American Foundation (IAF)**, an independent foreign assistance agency of the United States government which furthers grassroots development by awarding grants directly to the organized poor in Latin America, Caribbean, and the groups that support their efforts. As a U.S. diplomat with the IAF, Deborah traveled to virtually all democratic countries in the Southern Hemisphere and authored program innovations that increased cost effectiveness and accountability of U.S. development efforts. Since beginning operations in 1971, the IAF has made nearly 5,000 grants totaling over \$650 million.
- After running for Congress, she conceived and launched ***Setting Course: A Congressional Management Guide***. Now in its 11th edition, *Setting Course* continues as the comprehensive training and reference manual for newly elected Senators, Congress members and their staffs who are faced with setting up and managing a congressional office.
- Representing the United States she was co-founder and co-president of the **U.S.-Mexico Commission for Educational and Cultural Exchange** (Fulbright Commission).
- She served as the **U. S.A. Principal Delegate** to both UNESCO and the Inter-American Commission on Women (CIM).

Current and Recent Board Memberships:

Claremont Graduate University; Ford's Theatre, Washington DC; Center for Science in the Public Interest; Partners for Livable Communities.

Awards for Community Service:

Doctor of Humane Letters, San Diego State University (2007). In 2002 the presidents of San Diego Rotary named Deborah Szekely "**Mrs. San Diego**," the fourth woman in their history so honored. The *San Diego Union-Tribune*, in reprinting her speech acknowledging the honor, titled her a "San Diego Icon." Other recent awards include **The League of Women Voters Civic Award; The Committee of 200 Luminary Award for Philanthropy**; the **Morgan Award for Community Service** from LEAD, **Humanitarian of the Year** from The National Conference for Community and Justice; **Philanthropist of the Year** by the San Diego Chapter of the National Society of Fund-Raising Executives; **Advocacy Award** (2010) from California Rural Legal Assistance; **Alexis de Tocqueville Society** of United Way, \$1 million donor.

Personal Background: The Brooklyn-born daughter of immigrant parents (her father was in the garment business, her mother a nurse and vice-president of a NYC vegetarian society), Deborah Szekely lived on a beach in Tahiti as a child before moving back to the U.S. and marrying Edmond Szekely in 1939. During the early days of World War II, Deborah and Edmond rented land in a mountain-ringed valley ("Rancho La Puerta") near Tecate, Baja California, and opened a health camp in June, 1940. The price was \$17.50 per week, "bring your own tent" Today the resort, still in its original location, has garnered accolades such as the **2010 *Travel + Leisure* magazine Readers' Poll "World's Best Destination Spa"** award.