

## **2004 Texas Community Forestry Awards**

### **Arboricultural Project Award-Hermann Park Conservancy: Main Street Tree**

#### **Project**

Arboricultural Project Award: Recognition of a specific tree planting, care, or protection project that exemplifies modern arboricultural practices and customer service. Nominees may include arborists, tree care companies, landscape contractors, etc.



#### **Picture: Barbara Jo Harwell, Hermann Park Conservancy**

Hermann Park is a Houston regional urban park visited by over 5.5 million visitors each year. In 2002, staff noticed that 171 historic live oak trees along the western edge of Hermann Park were showing signs of stress. These trees had been planted along Main Street in the early 1920's. These trees were planted at the same time the famous alle live oaks along the west side of Main Street by Rice University.

Over time, the increase in population, vehicular traffic with resultant pollution, lack of care and harsh environmental conditions have led to signs of decline. These trees contained old and brittle deadwood, wounds from passing truck and bus traffic, thin crowns and small leaves, and twig and limb dieback. In order to prolong the life of these historic trees lack of water, poor soil, lack of organic matter, compaction, surface root damage and low areas holding water needed to be remedied.

As a result of these beloved trees' declining conditions, Hermann Park Conservancy searched out funding to protect and preserve these historic live oaks. In the Spring of 2003, the Houston Parks and Recreation Department's Forestry Division generously donated the pruning of these trees. The Natural Guard Conservancy volunteer group assisted PARD with the cleanup. The tree contractor proposed a cost of \$19,161 to fertilize, aerate and vertically mulch all 171 trees. A local organization, The Garden Club of Houston, funded \$7500 of the project. After the Houston Chronicle covered the project in its Wrap-Up section entitled "Turning over a new leaf for 80-year-old oaks", a generous individual donor who had fond memories of her childhood in Hermann Park and felt a special affinity to those trees, funded the remainder of the project. Presently there are plans to complete the project by recruiting volunteers to lay chipped bark mulch, donated by Houston PARD over the root zones of all 171 trees in an effort to protect them from damage by pedestrians and park maintenance equipment.

**Congratulations to Hermann Park Conservancy for helping to preserve these impressive trees.**