

For Immediate Release

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History of Thais in Los Angeles Explored in New Book

Local authors release new book featuring stunning collection of vintage photographs

New from local authors Chanchanit Martorell and Beatrice "Tippe" Morlan is *Thais in Los Angeles*, the latest title in Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America Series*. *Thais in Los Angeles* boasts more than 200 vintage black-and-white photographs. The book aims to provide the first written and photographic narrative of a community that has finally come of age after an immigration history that spans fifty years.

Los Angeles is home to the largest Thai population outside of Thailand. With a relatively recent history of immigration to the United States dating to 1965, reports estimate that 80,000 Thais make their home in Southern California. In spite of its brief history in the United States, the Thai community in Los Angeles has already left its mark on the city.

While the proliferation of Thai-owned businesses and shops has converted East Hollywood and some San Fernando Valley neighborhoods to destinations for cultural tourism, the Thai community in Los Angeles County reverberates still from global attention over the 1995 El Monte human trafficking case. The great popularity of Thai cuisine, textiles and cultural festivals continues to preserve, enrich and showcase one of Asia's most distinctive cultures.

Meet the authors!

April 3rd from 9am – 8pm

8th Annual Thai New Year Songkran Festival

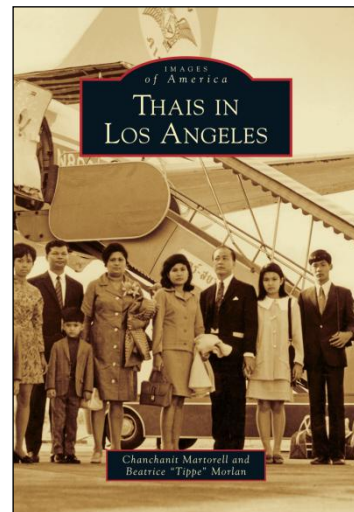
Thai Town (Hollywood Blvd between Western and Normandie)

Hollywood, CA

Books will be available for sale.

Books are available at Thai CDC tax free and at prices that beat retailers and Amazon. All 100% of the proceeds will be donated to the non-profit, Thai CDC, if books are purchased from Thai CDC. Books are also available at area bookstores, independent retailers, and online retailers. To purchase books from Thai CDC, call Rick at (323) 468-2555.

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Chanchanit Martorell is the executive director of the Thai Community Development Center (CDC), which led the successful campaign to designate a section of East Hollywood as "Thai Town," the only municipally recognized Thai district in the nation. Beatrice Morlan also works with Thai CDC as an urban-planning student from the University of Southern California. These evocative photographs were collated from the collections of the Thai CDC and other Thai organizations and from throughout the Los Angeles Thai community.

Thais in Los Angeles

by Chanchanit Martorell,
Beatrice "Tippe" Morlan

Images of America series

Thai CDC Price: \$20.00
without tax

128 pages/ softcover

Retail Price: \$21.99 and add tax

Available: **March 23, 2011**

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About the Author of *Thais in Los Angeles*

Chanchanit (Chancee) Martorell, 42, was born in Bangkok, Thailand and raised in Los Angeles, California, home to the largest population of Thais abroad. As an immigrant growing up in a working class, Thai immigrant household, she experienced first hand the struggles of Thai immigrants. For the past twenty five years, she has been dedicated to the advancement of Thais in Los Angeles, beginning initially as a youth council member in Los Angeles City Hall then as a leader of the Thai student organization at UCLA.

While in college, she also went back to Thailand for her study abroad where she attended Chiang Mai University. While in graduate school, also at UCLA, where she earned a M.A. in urban planning, she created and taught the first Thai American Experience course. Now as the executive director of the non-profit Thai Community Development Center (Thai CDC), which she founded in 1994, she is engaged in an effort to improve the lives of Thai immigrants in Los Angeles through services and programs that promote cultural adjustment and economic self-sufficiency.

One of the most notable achievements of Thai CDC has been the designation of the first and only Thai Town in the world, located in the East Hollywood neighborhood of Los Angeles. Hence, the subject of this new book is Thais in Los Angeles. The book aims to provide the first written and photographic narrative of a community that has finally come of age after an immigration history that spans fifty years.

Prior to her work on behalf of the Thai community, Martorell worked as a planner and as an aide to local, state and federal legislative offices. Besides authoring this book, she has also written on the topics of Asian poverty, community economic development, urban revitalization strategies, human trafficking and global capitalism. She is known most notably for her work as an immigrant workers' rights advocate and for her economic development work in low-income, minority urban communities.

Besides actively serving in a variety of capacities in a number of community organizations with local, national and global concerns, Martorell is also currently serving her second term as planning commissioner for the City of Los Angeles and as chair of the Union Bank Community Advisory Board.

Martorell has been married to her husband, Esteban Martorell since 1994 and has two children. She is currently the Cub Scout Master of Cub Scout Pack 184.

What lasting impact do you hope your book will leave?

It is my sincere hope that this book will give Thai-Americans a sense of their own place and history in Los Angeles and in the United States, and that it will give non-Thais a better understanding of the type of journey that all immigrants have to go through as they come to America and become Americans; leaving behind their homeland, gaining a new identity and adding a new pattern to the fabric which binds together this entire nation.

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About the Author of *Thais in Los Angeles*

Beatrice “Tippe” Morlan, 21, was born and raised on the beautiful island of Oahu in Hawaii. As the daughter of a Thai immigrant mother and a Caucasian father, her interest in the Thai American community, both in Los Angeles and throughout the United States, is genuine and deeply personal.

A 2010 graduate of the University of Southern California in Los Angeles, CA, Tippe is currently pursuing a master’s degree in sociology at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT where she continues to study the Thai American population in Thai Town and Los Angeles. She is pleased to have had the opportunity to compile photographs and narratives for the stories found in her book, *Thais in Los Angeles*, with Chanchanit Martorell.

Tippe has been an intern and volunteer for the Thai Community Development Center since 2008 and particularly enjoys working on cultural tourism events and projects in the Thai community. She has been an active member of both planning and sociology organizations on a student level including the American Planning Association and helped to plan Southern California’s first undergraduate planning Make Your Mark conference in 2010 as a Vice President in USC’s Student Association of Policy Planning and Development.

Outside of her academic and educational endeavors, Tippe enjoys traveling to new places and exploring the outdoors.

What lasting impact do you hope your book will leave?

She hopes this book will serve to educate and inform others about the Thai American population, a more hidden and invisible population, within Los Angeles and the United States. She also hopes this book will bring more people to Thai Town to experience Thai culture beyond Thai food. Visibility and awareness helps places like Thai Town develop legitimacy and political clout to gain access to much needed resources, which is an important issue facing many ethnic enclaves today.