Great Davis Tree Search: The survivors

By Special to The Enterprise

In the early 1970s the city planted ginkgo trees in the front yards of new homes along Kent Drive, near Covell Boulevard and Anderson Road. Many of the trees died and were replaced.

Darrell Rash's family lived in one of the first homes built on Kent Drive. The top of their new tree broke out, but a small lateral branch bent upward to take its place. The Rash family saw something promising in that twisted stem, and convinced the city crew not to remove and replace their tree. Over the ensuing 45 years that ginkgo tree has thrived and now stands as a landmark along the street.

It is 60 feet tall, with a girth of 5.3 feet. Every fall the Rash family enjoys the foliage's buttery yellow color, and the beautiful patterns made on the ground after falling all at once. Perhaps inspired by this tree, neighbors have planted other ginkgos along the street to replicate its splendor. Ginkgos are notoriously slow-growing, but can live a very long time.

Thanks to the efforts of the city, as well as past and current Kent Drive residents, future generations will enjoy the many wonders that mature ginkgo trees have to offer.

Olive

The ancient olive tree that stands in front of Sproul Hall on the southeast corner of the UC Davis campus caught the eye of Dr. Richard Plant. A professor for 44 years at UCD, Dr. Plant nominated this tree because it's spiraling trunk and gnarled branches reflect the vicissitudes of more than 150 years of life.

This olive is 60 feet tall and its girth is 8.7 feet. It is one of several trees that remain from the Jerome C. and Mary Chiles Davis homestead. A nearby plaque notes that these olive and fig trees are relics from the prize-winning farm of the 1850s.

In 1867, after the Davises retired from farming, the homestead became Davis' first hotel, the Yolo House. A portion of the farm became University Farm in 1906, and later UC Davis.

— Submitted by Dr. Greg McPherson, vice president, Tree Davis Board of Directors and retired U.S. Forest Service urban forest researcher. Be part of Tree Davis’ Great Tree Search when it begins again in the fall by nominating a tree you love and appreciate because of its species, size, form, history, or whatever. Readers will be able to nominate trees on-line by clicking on the Great Tree Search banner, downloading a paper form on the website at http://www.treedavis.org/city-of-davis/gts-final-v2-2/, or requesting a form at 530-757-7337.