

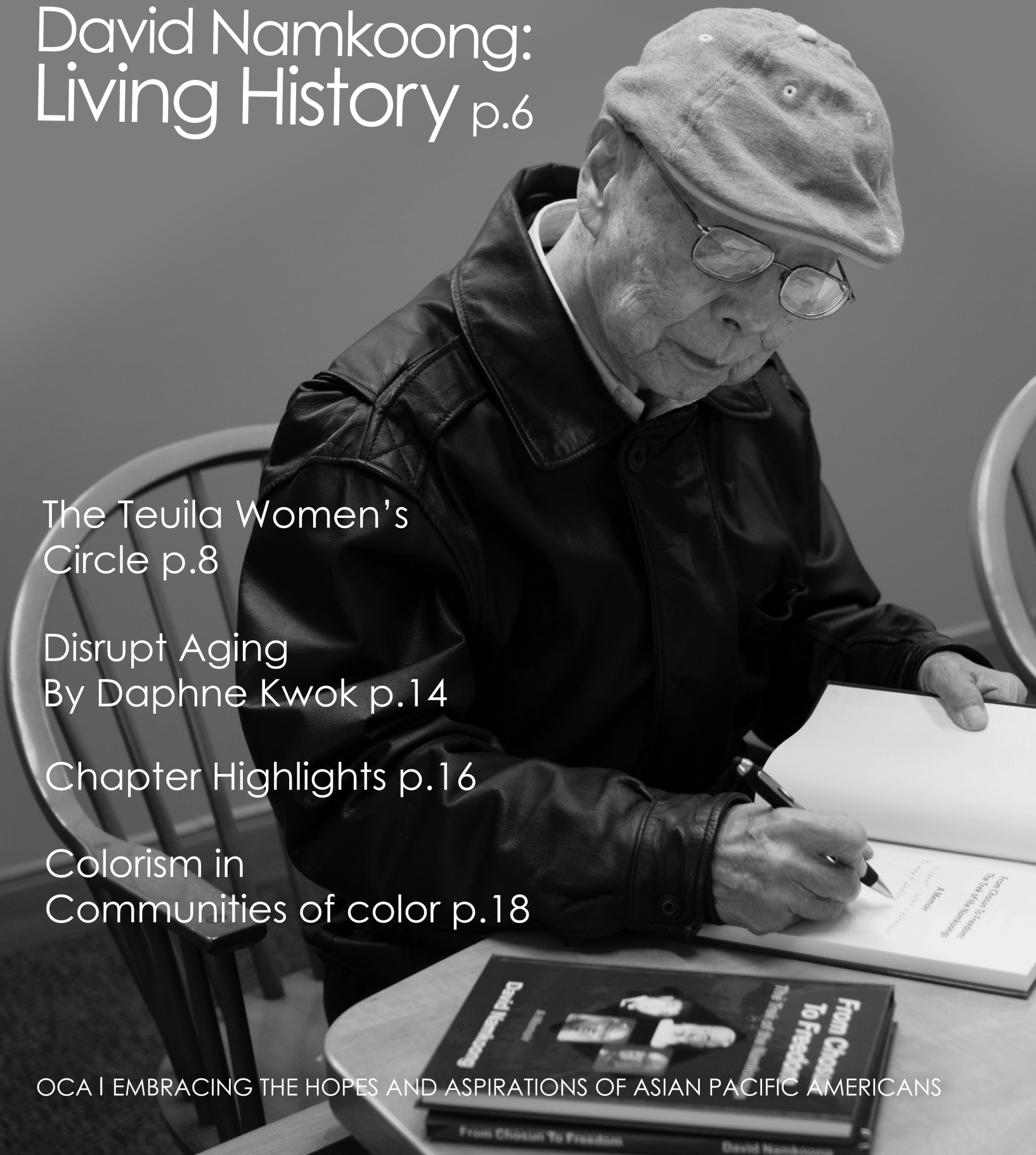
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About OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates

OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates is a national membership-driven organization of community advocates dedicated to advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans (APAs) in the United States.

To fulfill its mission, OCA has adapted the following goals to:

- Advocate for social justice, equal opportunity and fair treatment;
- Promote civic participation, education, and leadership;
- Advance coalitions and community building; and
- Foster cultural heritage

Founded as Organization of Chinese Americans in 1973, OCA has since grown to a robust national advocacy organization to advance the civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans and aspiring Americans. The organization presently has over 100 chapters, affiliates, and partners, impacting more than 35,000 individuals all across the country through local and national programming. While the organization's headquarters remain in Washington, DC, allowing OCA to directly engage in critical public policy issues on a macro level, it continues to largely remain as a grassroots constituency of lay advocates from all walks of life and diverse ethnic identities addressing uniquely local level issues impacting over 19 million Asian Pacific Americans across the country.

OCA takes no collective position on the politics of any foreign country, but instead focuses on the welfare and civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans.

IMAGE

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Message from the President

LESLIE MOE-KAISER | OCA National President

On behalf of OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates, I want to wish all of you happy holidays and a wonderful new year. I am so proud to have served as the National President of OCA this past year. We have accomplished much in our advocacy and programs, and I know that under the true and tested leadership of President-Elect Sharon M. Wong, we will continue to make progress for our community.

As you consider your giving this holiday season, I invite you to consider donating to OCA. There are many reasons to give; here are just a few from some of our special donors:

“I contribute mainly to help build OCA’s ongoing mission of helping our community to know, be comfortable in, and empowered with our identities. Not only as individuals, but as a community and as a vital part of our country. OCA does this without regard to age or gender discrimination. In particular, I am very proud of our work with youth and young professionals.”

- Stan Lou

“We understand the support that is required to further the great advocacy work OCA has accomplished, as well as the value of promoting awareness and education topics involving the AAPI community. Stronger AAPI communities mean a stronger and more powerful voice.”

- Ken and Ashley Lee

“OCA truly is my second family! The personal friendships – some more than 30 years old – are so meaningful to me!”

- Daphne Kwok

My reason for giving is because I know that OCA’s deep commitment has advanced the lives of AAPIs in fresh and creative ways. In the past six months, we have contacted tens of thousands of AAPI voters, launched a new hate crimes tracking website, helped shepherd an important anti-hazing amendment through Congress, and introduced two new programs focused on professional development of women and training promising advocates. These and many other new successes show how OCA renews and reinvents itself each day to meet the challenges facing Asian Pacific America.

So this holiday season, please consider donating. Your support will help sustain critical advocacy campaigns, train next generation leaders, and promote one of the most distinguished and long-lasting voices in the AAPI community.



Message from the Director

KENDALL T. KOSAI | Director of OCA National

Earlier this month, hundreds packed into a small theater in downtown Washington, DC to see *Allegiance*, a musical showing for one night only in theaters across the country. The performance starred George Takei and Lea Salonga and is set during the Japanese American Incarceration during World War II. During the two hour performance, tears flowed from the eyes of moviegoers, and a sense of understanding of the historical injustice and racism flowed through the theater. I could not help but think about my own grandmother 2,500 miles away, once a victim of the Japanese American incarceration during World War II, who also viewed the movie with the rest of our family. I think her strength, wisdom, and perseverance is a testament to not only her experience, but also the broader AAPI community experience.

While the incarceration was over 74 years ago, many of its implications and the blatant xenophobia it embodied echoes in our communities today. For example, recently we have seen an uptick in similarly motivated racial harassment directed towards our community.

OCA plays a role in our world where we embrace diversity, empower the disenfranchised, and lift each other up to make our voices heard. Our work is critical to providing a voice to the marginalized and pushing our community's agenda forward. We

are committed to speaking out against hate and will stand on the values that have been integral to our foundation the last 43 years.

On behalf of OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates, I'd like to thank you for your support this past year. We're extremely proud of the successes that we enjoyed in 2016 including reaching hundreds of thousands of people, meeting our programmatic commitments, advocating for protections for AAPI servicemembers in the National Defense Authorization Act, helping push for recognition of World War II Filipino Veterans, and continuing to develop a pipeline of future leaders that embolden our community to make change.

In 2017, we look forward to strengthening our chapters, deepening our grassroots organizing network, and touching more AAPIs than ever before. Your support is critical to our success and we need your help. Please consider supporting OCA through your time, skills, or a monetary gift this Holiday Season.

David Namkoong's Living History

NICK LEE | OCA National Center

I recently met with David Namkoong in Cleveland to discuss his life and his new book "From Chosun to Freedom: The Trek of the Namkoongs". Written from a first-person perspective, the book is the product of David's re-discovery of his family history. It begins in 19th century Korea, where his grandfather, Eok, heroically tries to maintain Korean culture in the face of Japanese colonization. Eok gives his life for the cause of a free Korea, but not before passing the torch to his son, David Yum, who becomes the first Consul General of South Korea in the United States after independence in 1948. The last chapter is dedicated to his younger brother, Gene Namkoong, a promising pioneer in forestry science who passed away before his time in 2002. Similar to his esteemed family members, David is also highly accomplished professionally. He was among the first engineers hired to do groundbreaking heat transfer research at the newly reorganized National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) Research Facility in Cleveland, Ohio.

Though the aforementioned aspects of the book are enlightening, the sections of the book that may interest OCA's membership the most are about David's involvement with civil rights and the the early Asian American movement. The driving force behind his civil rights advocacy has been his wife, Fran Namkoong. Though she was not available to interview for this story, her effervescent presence can be felt throughout his account of their lives. Daphne Kwok, OCA's former Executive Director and a member since 1984, described the couple as "inseparable" and a "team". She also recalled the only National Board Meeting where Fran attended by herself, after which the Namkoongs resolved to never travel without one another again. "Fran and I are unique," David told me, "I never saw a woman, who is just about everything I had ever thought the ideal person to marry should be. And I find myself very lucky to have done that."

The backdrop for much of David's life is in Cleveland, where the Namkoongs have lived for decades and got their start in civil rights work. After receiving a job offer at NASA in Cleveland, David and Fran began looking for housing and settled on a house in a white neighborhood called Bay Village. They were ready to sign the papers, but then the realtor informed them that a poll of

neighbors decided that they did not want the house to be sold to Asians. Though they were dismayed at their rejection, David told me, "it's a good thing they did that, because we wouldn't have wanted to live there anyway."

Though what happened to the Namkoongs is shocking to us now, it was all a part of a nationwide movement by many white people to either flee minority neighbors or prevent minorities from moving into neighborhoods. Predatory realtors also exacerbated the phenomenon by convincing white homeowners to sell their

homes at a loss to escape the perceived threat of minorities. This social phenomenon is known as "white flight" and resulted in declining property values for many homeowners, particularly those in minority communities. David explained, "people were willing to sell their homes at a loss just to get away from Blacks," adding, "the real estate people ran away which allowed the prices to drop."

The Namkoongs received a lot of unsolicited sympathetic outreach and media attention as a result of their rejection from the Bay

Village community. To many, it seemed ludicrous that a NASA engineer and his wife could be excluded from a community because of their race. However, the Namkoongs still needed a place to live, and on the advice of a NASA co-worker, they settled on the Shaker Heights neighborhood, a place they still treasure and reside in.

Where Bay Village had been forbidding to minorities, Shaker Heights was heralded as one of the first neighborhoods in the country to embrace a multicultural composition of residents and take direct action to stem the flight of white homeowners. "It was recognized that Shaker Heights was among the first to fight back," David recalled, "our pride was that we were not being told to do this, we took it upon ourselves to not do as the mob was doing." A group of Shaker Heights neighbors, including David and Fran, successfully challenged white flight by creating a strong community through gatherings hosted by their neighborhood improvement organization, the Ludlow Community Association. Though they were a small group, everything the neighborhood association did took on heightened importance because they were part of a grand multicultural experiment. Their efforts resulted in



A photo of David and Fran receiving awards from the Chicago Korean Consul General for his father's service to Korea.

a strong, collective community that hosted top-tier events, such as an Ella Fitzgerald concert and the premiere of *My Fair Lady*.

As a result of her work in Shaker Heights, Fran was hired by the Urban League to be in charge of public relations for a campaign to encourage multicultural living. This resulted in a visit from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. to Cleveland, an encounter memorialized by a large framed photo of Fran and Dr. King in the living room. David said of the visit, "We felt pride that it was Dr. King coming to our place, recognizing we have a place like this where we were fighting the housing situation."

David and Fran are also considered the godparents of the larger Cleveland Asian American community. When they joined the community in the late seventies, the Asian American identity was in its nascent stages and nobody had been successful in bringing the various ethnic groups together. David recalled a time when a Korean community member began yelling slurs at a Japanese American speaker. This was the only time he could recall an open confrontation, but it showed that the appearance of calm belied raw tensions within the community.

Taking what they had learned from their multicultural community association, the Namkoongs centered around creating an Asian American event for the American bicentennial celebration in 1976. By fostering an inclusive event, the Namkoongs helped speed along some of the changes taking place in Asian America, where a wide diversity of cultures could be celebrated as one without the loss of the meaning or individual distinction of each ethnic background. In his book, David wrote, "on a larger scale, we were a part of a multicultural wave sweeping through the country. Recognizing the myriad differences among nationalities, religions, and race, and their contributions to this country was a healthy development I didn't expect to see in my lifetime."

Despite the fact that David was Korean and OCA was a Chinese American organization at the time, he also became involved with OCA - Cleveland during the seventies. When I asked why he joined, he responded, "Right off the bat, OCA was an organization facing situations that were deleterious to Chinese and other Asians." In his book he wrote that OCA began their shift towards becoming an organization that served the entire Asian American population early on because of the, "realization that many matters affecting the Chinese were virtually the same for other Asian communities".



The photo of Fran and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Part of David and Fran's legacy with OCA is also in giving young people a start. The current OCA - Cleveland Chapter President Lisa Wong shared with me that she first met Fran and David on her university campus, where they were the only chic Asian couple dancing at an on-campus hangout spot. Lisa approached them and before she knew it, the Namkoongs had enlisted her to be editor of the OCA Cleveland newsletter, clipping articles to send to membership.

Today, OCA - Cleveland is a prominent member of the local Asian American community and a leader in the nationwide civic engagement efforts led by OCA National. This state of affairs was undoubtedly promoted by the initial community organizing done by David and Fran. David told me he was not only pleased with

where OCA had been, but also where it was going, saying, "OCA [Cleveland], especially with Lisa [and Johnny Wu] here, really changed the kind of things that they're doing... And that's what you want, for an organization to remain valuable and accessible rather than what you expected all the time."

With all the experiences that David and Fran have lived through, it is wonderful that the knowledge they gleaned can be passed to the next generation of OCA members and advocates in

book form. Individuals like David and Fran paved the way for the power we now hold in the Asian American community. Without people like them, who refused to back down from injustice and discrimination, we could not enjoy many of the rights and privileges we hold today, such as being able to live in a neighborhood of our choosing. So thank you to David and Fran, for inspiring an entire generation of advocates and laying the foundation for our community to rise to where it is today.

To purchase David's book, please print the order form online at <http://bit.ly/namkoong> or contact Nick Lee by phone at 202-223-5500 x118 or by email at nlee@ocanational.org to request a copy of the order form.

From Chosun To Freedom
The Trek of the Namkoongs

A Memoir
David Namkoong

Nick Lee is the Senior Communications Associate at the OCA National Center.

The Teuila Women's Circle

LAVINIA CLARA TAUMOEPEAU—LATU | OCA - Utah



Teuila women tour the Utah State Capitol building.

We come from a matriarchal society as Pacific Islanders, and because women are an essential part of our Pacific cultures, the red ginger flower or “Teuila” epitomizes the very qualities we inherently possess.

“Like the Teuila flower known for its vibrance, zest for life and the ability to thrive in any situation, our hope was that through this circle of sisterhood we would encourage wellness, strength and the reclaiming of power by elevating our voices, and embracing our Pacific Islander identities.” [Teuila Women’s Circle vision]

In January this year, I attended the Asian Pacific American Women’s Leadership Institute (APAWLI) which is the signature program for the Center of Asian Pacific American Women (CAPAW). The model for this program focuses on “Whole Person Leadership,” and a concept for AAPI women leaders that encompasses being in tune with one’s whole spiritual, mental, and physical wellbeing. As the only Pacific Islander woman in the class, I thought about the richness of my own culture and the strong women from which we hail. I also reflected on how Pacific Islander women including my own mother, and many others whom I’ve had the honor and privilege of knowing, have often times held themselves back in life for the sake of allowing others to shine without stepping into or claiming their own “mana” or innate power.

I reached out to two fierce Pacific Islander leaders/sisters in the community, Daela Taeloali’i-Higgs and Verona Sagato Mauga to help me organize and create the Teuila Women’s Circle (TWC) for Pacific Islander women. This also became my special project for CAPAW. After months of planning, we brainstormed about what the circle could mean to women in our community, and what exactly we wanted our Pacific Islander sisters to take away after attending. The common theme was obvious: empowerment, strength, and the importance of building a bond of sisterhood.



Teuila women at the Utah State Capitol building.

Our first event was held on August 31, 2016 in the Salt Lake County Council Chambers. A cultural chant performed by Tina Cabiles-Carden of the Hawaiian community opened up the space. I gave a brief welcome and background in to why the Teuila Women’s Circle came to be and read a poem sent to me from my APAWLI sisters to set the tone:

“It doesn't interest me to know where you live or how money you have. I want to know if you can get up, after the night of grief and despair, weary and bruised to the bone, and do what needs to be done to feed the children.

It doesn't interest me who you know or how you came to be here. I want to know if you will stand in the center of the fire with me and not shrink back.

It doesn't interest me where or what or with whom you studied. I want to know what sustains you, from the inside, when all else falls away. I want to know if you can be alone with yourself and if you truly like the company you keep in the empty moments.”

– An excerpt from Oriah Mountain Dreamer (May 1994)

I turned some time over to the National Tongan American Society’s Executive Director, Fahina Tavake-Pasi to give us some insight on the history of women leadership in the non-profit organization committed to Pacific Islander issues, which led into the evening’s Keynote speaker, Bev Uipi.

Bev was chosen to represent our present-day Teuila Torch Bearer, a Pacific Islander woman who has excelled and succeeded in her area of expertise, is the Deputy Director of Board of Pardons and Parole for the State of Utah. She is the first female and woman of color in that position, and is also currently running for City Council Representative of Millcreek District 4. She was phenomenal and had everyone in tears as she spoke about the difficulty of campaigning and being met with judgment on the other side of the door when canvassing in her affluent and predominately white neighborhood. It would be her son, Xane’s unwavering love and support that keeps her consistently grounded and focused.

Following her wonderful message of resilience was a presentation given by Samoan sister, Verona Mauga paying homage to a historical Teuila Torch Bearer and the first female Samoan scholar, Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa. These presentations highlighted how the P.I. sheroes in our communities have become the focus of our TWC. Our Half Samoan/Tongan sister, Daela Taeoli’i-Higgs moderated a special dialogue session and from this discussion, the essence of the TWC naturally revealed itself.

To date we have had two TWC’s comprised of community members and leaders from the different Pacific Islands in attendance. As women in leadership, we recognize and acknowledge that these are the gifts and talents that are present and permeate throughout our Pacific Islander communities. These Pacific Islander women make up the kind of strength, resilience and the overarching love that is “ALL OF US,” and it has been extremely empowering.

We are the Teuila Women, AND these are the characteristics that are woven in our DNA. We are here to reclaim it!

Lavinia Clara Taumoepeau-Latu is the Past President of the OCA - Utah Chapter, and currently serves as the Civic Engagement Director at the National Tongan American Society (NTAS).

Keeping Pvt. Danny Chen's Legacy Alive 5 Years Later

ELIZABETH R. OUYANG | OCA - New York



Danny Chen (left), Raheel Siddiqui (center), and Harry Lew (right). All were fatal victims of hazing.

Scholars and activists often refer to Private Danny Chen's case as the Vincent Chin case of the 21st century. While both were Asian Americans, one subjected to "racially charged hazing" in the military and the other a "hate crime" in the civilian world, there are important distinctions between the two. With a baseball bat, two strangers bludgeoned Vincent Chin to death in Detroit, Michigan in 1982. They mistook Vincent for being Japanese and blamed him for the decline in the American automobile industry. In 2011, it was unrelenting racially charged hazing by army superiors, leaders who had an affirmative duty to treat all soldiers with dignity and respect, that led to Private Chen taking his life. Enlisting in the military to risk one's own life is the greatest sacrifice an American can make for his country. So what does Danny's death signal about the value of an Asian American life?

OCA-New York leads the commemoration of Private Danny Chen's death each year to remind the public and the military to NEVER let what happened to Danny happen to any American soldier. Every time another incident of racially charged hazing occurs, it's

more imperative that we sear into the American consciousness these human tragedies until meaningful reforms are in place. Raheel Siddiqui, a Pakistani American marine recruit from Michigan reportedly took his life on March 18, 2016 after he was called a "terrorist" and physically assaulted by his superiors at Parris Island boot camp in South Carolina. The rate of suicide in the military remains high, but the military doesn't know why. To chip away at the culture of military hazing, we must never forget what happened to Danny and link his case to several soldiers who have died previously from hazing including Lance Corporal Harry Lew and now Raheel Siddiqui to demonstrate these are NOT isolated incidents, but rather a toxic culture that needs to change.

For the fifth year commemoration of Private Chen's death on October 3rd, 2016, OCA-NY and 19 organizations including OCA sister chapters from Westchester-Hudson Valley, Long Island, and New Jersey, co-sponsored a public event at P.S. 130 in Manhattan Chinatown. Held on October 2nd, the event attracted more than 200 attendees, including U.S. Congresswoman Nydia Velazquez and City

Councilwoman Margaret Chin. The program opened with Chinatown Head Start graduates (where Danny attended as a pre-schooler) singing Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star and on the last line, the children held up a big star with Danny's photo in it as their Little Star. P.S. 130 Principal Renny Fong who taught Danny as an elementary school teacher reminisced about Danny as a young student. Another highlight was Banny Chen, Danny's cousin reading his Open Letter to High School Students, titled, "A Message in Hindsight, Not One More". Banny wrote:

"Who Danny was before he joined the military and passed away at 19 years old, was a boy from New York City. He went to public school, was on the high school track team, and played handball. He enjoyed video games like Resident Evil, Zelda, and was exceptionally good at Super Smash Bros. To me, Danny was not known for much and would best be described as every other teenager. This is also what frightens me because I see a bit of Danny in almost every high school student. What happened to Danny can very well happen to anyone else." - (the full text of Banny's letter appears on Facebook Justice for Danny Chen and 18 Million Rising website). Captain James Yee, Retired Army Chaplain of Muslim Faith, made an impassioned link between Danny's and Raheel's cases and cases involving other minority groups.

Warren Whitlock, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Diversity and Leadership, a civilian with the Army, spoke as the Army's representative. He reported that Danny's case is being taught to military cadets as an example of poor leadership and acknowledged more change is needed, "but change takes time".

The second part of the program focused on creative ways to memorialize Danny's story featuring high school students with OCA-NY's Hate Crimes Prevention Art Project, Spoken Word poets, actresses, and composers—all of whom had created works in honor of Danny. Huang Ruo, a composer who created *An American Soldier* in collaboration with playwright

David Henry Huang, spoke at the event. Fang-Tao Jiang, a soprano, also sang the *Lullaby*, a song sung by Danny's mother in the opera.

An American Soldier originally premiered in a 60 minute version in 2014 by the Washington National Opera's American Opera Initiative which many OCA members from NY, Washington, D.C. area, and New Jersey attended. It has now been commissioned by the Opera Theatre of Saint Louis, Missouri for a full-length version. The world premiere is scheduled for June 2018.

The program poignantly concluded with a march to the site of the street sign, Private Danny Chen Way in Chinatown, Manhattan. Marchers carried enlarged flyers of each year's commemoration. Once everyone assembled at the street sign, Ada Chen, one of Danny's cousins, beat the drum 24 times representing how old Danny would be today if he were alive.

Banny, OCA-NY, and Chinatown Head Start also did a teach on Danny's story for two hundred fifth graders at P.S. 130 on October seventh. Danny's story was the topic of my keynote speech at the Connecticut Asian American Bar Association Annual Gala on September 28th And, on September 29th, the entire class was devoted to Danny's story in my course, Constitution and Communities of Color at New York University.

The fifth commemoration of Danny's death drew coverage from *NBC Asian America*, *New York 1*, *Downtown Express*, and several ethnic media. Through our events, we reached over 800 people directly and tens of thousands through social media and media outreach. OCA-NY asks if you feel compelled by Danny's story to please think and take action to keep Danny's story alive.

Elizabeth R. OuYang is the Past President of OCA - New York, an civil rights attorney, and a teacher.

OCA - Sacramento Holds Fourth Annual National Bullying Prevention Month at California State Capitol

230 students from 3 public school districts--Sacramento, Elk Grove, and Natomas, in addition to Holy Spirit Parish School attend Capitol event to educate on harmful effects of bullying

SUSIE Y. WONG | Sacramento Regional Coalition for Tolerance



The fourth Annual National Bullying Prevention Month at the Capitol on October 19 outreached to 230 upper elementary and teenage school age students on bullying prevention, including cyberbullying on social media outlets. Our region's expert educators, who collaborated with OCA-Sacramento Regional Coalition for Tolerance program, have found outreach to children on bullying prevention is vital at an early age to raise awareness of the harmful effects of bullying on a child's well-being, which can lead to poor performance in school, depression, and even suicide.

News conference speakers shared their personal messages with the children:

State Senator Richard Pan, M.D. of Sacramento spoke about the difficulties he experienced moving from school to school and making new friends, as his father was in academia.

Sacramento County District Attorney Anne Marie Schubert spoke as the county's top law enforcement official and the creation of the district attorney office's new #iSMART cyberbullying prevention program which provides presentations to schools.

Sacramento City Unified School Board Vice President Jessie Ryan spoke of the difficulty of growing up in very low-

**STAND UP
SPEAK OUT!
AGAINST BULLYING**

income circumstances and how that stigmatized her and led to her eating lunch alone and without friends. She also brought her young son, who is half African American and half Caucasian, and pointed out the importance of acceptance and diversity in our community.

Elk Grove Unified School Board Trustee Bobbie Singh-Allen spoke about her commitment to educating youths on bullying prevention and led students on taking a pledge against bullying.

Twin Rivers Unified School Board Trustee Basim Elkarra spoke about a teen in the city of Folsom who committed suicide following being bullied for being different and encouraging youths to reach out to law enforcement officials when they have issues. Basim also happens to be executive director of the Council of American Islamic Relations of Sacramento, better known as CAIR.

Sacramento County Sheriff's Department Undersheriff Erik Maness and Sacramento Police Department Deputy Chief Brian Louie both spoke on the importance of law enforcement being available to help youths and they should feel comfortable reaching out to officers.

Capital City Trial Attorneys' Association, the major sponsor of the Capitol event, was represented by board member Stephen Davids and his dog, Winston, always a hit with the youth. Davids spoke of how during his walks with Winston, he heard a kid make a wisecrack to another kid saying, "Does your mom know about this?" The other kid responded, "I don't have a mom." Steve stressed to be kind to each other because we never know what the lives of others are like.

The event's 230 students and event volunteers all received STAND UP, SPEAK UP VIP badges on lanyards and a list of national and local government, education, and community website resources on hate crimes and bullying prevention (<http://ocasacramento.org/page-1611240>). The students, in an orderly line, visited some 20 community booths representing school districts and organizations highlighting bullying prevention, diversity, and acceptance of various cultures, mental well-being, and youth leadership. Bags were essential as booths gave plenty of swag and a raffle for Starbucks and Jamba Juice gift certificates capped off the event.

A new booth addition this year was Sacramento County District Attorney's #iSMART cyberbullying prevention outreach program which visits students in schools. As in previous years, students wrote anti-bullying messages on hearts for the Wall of Pledge posted on large banner. Sacramento County Sheriff's Department turned out three squad cars to add to the atmosphere of creating safe and healthy communities. The LGBT Center of Sacramento's "Pride Over Prejudice" placards were a hit with youths—these were signs created after the Orlando shooting at Pulse nightclub.

The Capitol event was sponsored for the third year by major sponsor Capitol City Trial Attorney's Association. Other gracious sponsors included UC Davis Office of Community Relations, ARC Document Solutions, Tri Counties Bank and McDonald's.

The National Bullying Month at the Capitol was launched four years ago by the Sacramento Regional Coalitional for Tolerance, a program co-founded by OCA Sacramento in partnership with then California Senate President Pro Tempore Darrell Steinberg of Sacramento, soon to be sworn



OCA - Sacramento and OCA National Center staff at the event.

in as mayor of Sacramento. The coalition, founded in 2011, is driven by more than 30 coalition members, representing chairs and presidents of civil rights, social justice, interfaith, and multicultural groups, ethnic chambers of commerce, educators and legislators. More importantly, federal and local law enforcement agencies serve as observers, including the U.S. Attorney, FBI, Sacramento County Sheriff's Department, Sacramento Police Department, Elk Grove Police Department, Davis Police Department, Sacramento County District Attorney's Office, and Yolo County District Attorney's Office.

OCA former board member Susie Y. Wong chairs the coalition. She spoke about the coalition during a hate crimes panel at the OCA National Convention in Washington, D.C. several years ago.

She explained that the coalition members drive the group's agenda. They defined the goal, which is to outreach and educate in order to prevent hate crimes, in addition to members serving as resources and interconnecting to each other to resolve issues before they escalate. The coalition also serves as a central clearing house for disseminating information to coalition members. For more information on the coalition, visit <http://ocasacramento.org/page-1237286>.

Susie Y. Wong is the Chair of the Sacramento Regional Coalition for Tolerance and a former board member of OCA - Sacramento.

Disrupt Aging

DAPHNE KWOK | AARP

What age do you consider “old”? 50? 70? 90? What are the first three adjectives that come to mind when you think about growing older? As a Chinese American, do you see aging in a positive or a negative light?

I hope I have provoked some thinking! Traditionally, in Chinese culture, the older one is, the wiser one is with the wealth of experience. How about for Chinese Americans? Do traditional Chinese values still pertain or does the Western influence change the perception of elders?

Many of us are rethinking what it’s like to grow older, and some of that can be pretty funny! When most people in their 50s compare themselves to their parents when they were their age, they can see distinct differences. The concept of aging has changed markedly in one generation. Our careers today often last longer than our parents’ generation. We don’t expect to work for one company for several decades and retire with a gold watch and a pat on the back. We may be starting families and having children at a later age than our parents did. We stay active well past 50 whether in the workforce, starting a business, volunteering for organizations and causes, or caring for grandchildren.

So it’s time to redefine what it means to get older. Today, millions of older adults—including Chinese Americans -- are living longer, healthier and more productive lives.

When AARP CEO JoAnn Jenkins turned 50, she received some birthday cards with the usual over-the-hill jokes, and she was aggravated by the idea that getting older was something to joke about. She resolved to be defined by who she was, not how old she was.

In her national bestselling book “Disrupt Aging,” JoAnn shows we can all embrace new opportunities no matter what our age. She explores how our society is changing and guides us to redefine what it means to get older.

Inspired by our new reality, “Disrupt Aging” is an open invitation to choose how you live and age. Activist, author, playwright, radio announcer, technology enthusiast, Web video pioneer, and social media superstar George Takei knows a lot about challenging people’s expectations.

Five decades after winning our hearts as Sulu on “Star Trek,” George inspires people of all ages with his distinctive warmth and wit. On social media, and especially Facebook, he cracks jokes, celebrates tolerance and advocates for the many causes he supports.

George doesn’t let his age keep him from new experiences like learning the latest technology. “You’re keeping your mind open, and you’re learning new things, and you’re learning how to do that. And social media, too. I’m 78 years old, and I don’t claim to be a technical expert either, but by trial and error, you learn things,” he says.

“Disrupt Aging” challenges outdated beliefs and sparks new solutions so more people can choose how they live and age. Recently at an AARP co-sponsored Asian healthy aging conference with New York University’s Center for the Study of Asian American Health, I met one of our most impressive speakers—an eighteen-year-old inventor, Kenneth Shinozuka, who knows how to live life fully even at a young age.

While still in high school, Kenneth created a wearable



Daphne Kwok



Virginia Ng at the 2016 OCA National Convention.

sensor called SafeWander that sends an alert to a caregiver’s smartphone whenever the person wearing it gets out of bed. He was inspired by his late grandfather who had Alzheimer’s disease and often got up at night without his family knowing. Kenneth is truly an inspiration who had all of us in awe due to his articulate, passionate commitment to improving the lives of Alzheimer patients. He has disrupted aging for all of us by his love and passion for helping for his grandfather.

“We treat our age as something that confines us to one way of living life or ‘acting our age.’ But owning your age is to act as if you didn’t have any age,” said Kenneth. There are also numerous OCA members throughout the country who are disrupting aging every single day!

Here are some of my heroes:

Ken Lee has gone from Corporate America to non-profit administration as OCA’s Chief Executive Officer, bringing business processes to OCA. Virginia Ng of OCA-New Jersey went from a career of service in the non-profit sector, to a service of even greater community advocacy for the LGBTQ community. Stan Lou, OCA National VP for Education & Culture, has gone from having a decades-long career with the Federal Aviation Administration to OCA Staff Mentor Extraordinaire!



Stan Lou climbs a wall during a team-building exercise with the OCA Staff.



Leslie Moe-Kaiser on her trek across Spain this year.

OCA National President Leslie Moe-Kaiser retired from corporate America at age 69 and one of the first adventures on her bucket list was to walk the entire Camino de Santiago in Spain. One of the world’s most famous pilgrimages, its classical French Route is about 500 miles long—more if you get lost. Two months before retiring, Leslie took a two-week vacation and walked the last 197 miles of the route. Nearly a year and half later, she walked the 500 mile French Route with her son. And she’s gearing up for her third walk on another part of the route. Amazing! Her daily posts and photos from the route have inspired people of all ages to consider setting spiritual and physical goals, and strengthening mental toughness for a lifetime. “And yes, physical pain was a part of these three goals,” she says.

“Disrupt Aging” is a rallying cry for all of us. It’s time to change the story about getting older. It’s time to look at the bigger picture, too, and demand what we want — from our home, our workplace, our doctor, our communities, and more.

Let’s choose how we want to live and age. It’s time to Disrupt Aging. And we can all play a part. Learn more at aarp.org/disrupt_aging.

Daphne Kwok is Vice President, Multicultural Leadership, Asian American & Pacific Islander Audience. She is also a member of President Obama’s Advisory Commission on Asian Americans & Pacific Islanders, and served as Executive Director of OCA from 1990-2001. She has been an OCA members since 1984.

Sorrow Brings Peace for Toi San at Old Belleville Dutch Reformed Church in New Jersey

VIRGINIA NG | OCA - New Jersey



With the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869 connecting the east and west coasts for the first time, Belleville, New Jersey became home to the first Chinatown in the eastern United States when 68 Chinese immigrants arrived from California on September 20, 1870.

“Most people wrongly assume that the first Chinese community was in New York City,” said Michael Perrone, President of the Historical Society. “But it was Belleville, New Jersey.” To celebrate this historic significance, the Belleville Historical Society planned a dedication of a memorial monument to the town’s 19th century Chinese community at the Old Belleville Dutch Reformed Church.

Several groups, including OCA-NJ, were invited and dignitaries from the Chinese Embassy were also on hand. And so, on a rainy and windy Saturday in October, several OCA-NJ members attended this dedication, an unveiling of a special marker at the Dutch Reformed Church in Belleville, NJ.

Attendees learned that over 170 Chinese workers were buried here. A long lost and forgotten part of the Chinese American history was told. After the building of the transcontinental railroad, Chinese workers migrated to the East Coast and settled in Belleville, working in an industrial laundry that was across the river from the church. Within 6 months the first of the workers died and were buried. Slowly most of them died and their bones were supposed to have been brought back to China for burial. These men were sojourners, in a land far away from their homes and families. They expected to make their fortunes and return home, marry and have families. But these sojourners did not.

Why Belleville, NJ? The community was welcoming to the Chinese. After the building of the Transcontinental Railroad, they came here first and eventually spread out to the New York City and Newark, New Jersey Chinatown communities. The Chinese were “safe” in Belleville. The Chinese populations of New York City and Newark would celebrate Chinese New Year in Belleville. Several news clippings from that time period verify this.

A wreath of flowers and the symbolic burial of an urn containing the soil from the burial area were reburied with the offering of prayers to the long ago departed. A member from the Chinese Embassy spoke during the dedication. The Embassy group raised the Chinese flag and the Chinese National Anthem was sung. Immediately after, the American National anthem was sung. As an Asian American, it didn’t feel right at first but with thought I realized it was, Those who were buried in the cemetery probably identified more with China than America at that time.

It was interesting to note that the majority of the attendees that were at the dedication were recent immigrants who felt some connection and kinship to the Chinese who were buried there. I myself was caught up in the ambience. Amidst the swirl of seeing and listening, I realized that these Chinese workers, now buried, were Toi-San people, my people. The first Chinese to arrive on American soil were from the Toi San area and perhaps, for all I knew, they were my ancestors. My own grandfather arrived in this country in the early 1900’s. Maybe one was an uncle or a cousin or a family friend.

But my feelings that day were of sorrow, and then of peace. They were finally home, blessed by friends and maybe even family members. God Speed to them.



OCA-WHV Youth Gets Out the Vote

LINDA CHING SLEDGE | OCA - Westchester Hudson Valley

H Mart Asian Supermarket in White Plains, NY, was the scene of a spirited voter registration campaign on September 24, 2016, led by young activists from the Westchester-Hudson Valley chapter of OCA. Representatives from Young OCA (YOCA) worked side-by-side with Board Officers to distribute literature, buttonhole unregistered voters and help them fill out forms. Among them were Raymond Zheng, Yvonne Liu, Matthew Tu, Ben Shi, Victor Cai, and Jason Li.



Though AAPIs are the fastest growing ethnic group in America, registration numbers and ballot turnout are disappointingly low. To address voter apathy at the grass-roots level, our chapter called out the troops to join OCA National's 2016 campaign to Get Out the Vote (GOTV) in time for the November elections. Some chapter members went to the National Convention in Jersey City with the specific purpose of attending the voter registration training sessions held by election professionals for volunteers like us. One happy result was the empowering of our youth, who proved particularly effective in convincing other young Asians to participate in the voting process.



Xin Zheng, GOTV chair, reported that seven voter registration drives throughout the year yielded 61 new voters and countless numbers of re-energized voters who were already registered. Zheng observed that GOTV served our chapter as a "prime opportunity to show that OCA really cares about the political process and the socioeconomic well being of all Asians in America."

OCA Detroit Update

ROLAND HWANG | OCA - Detroit



Immigration Law Seminar for Employers: The chapter hosted a seminar for the APA community's employers, highlighting the requirement that employers comply with Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) requirements for hiring workers, especially Form I-9. The presentation was led by Reginald Pacis of Butzel Long, and Chelsea Zuzindlak of Boxwala & Zuzindlak, PLLC at the chapter's Chinese Community Center.

Donor Appreciation: It takes significant donations to run several chapter service centers. So the chapter held its Donor Appreciation luncheon at the CCC to recognize our donors and serve a buffet lunch for about 100 people.

APA-Y: Marie Nguyen led about 35 APA high school students through leadership training on June 18. The session was held at Oakland FlexTech Academy in Novi.

APIA-U: The chapter in cooperation with the University of Michigan Multiethnic Student Affairs hosted APIA-U for 30 students on September 17. APIA-U was held at Trotter Multicultural Center. The session was led by Ben deGuzman, noted for his work for Filipino veterans benefits.

Sherry Chen Visit: Sherry Chen paid a visit to the Chinese Community Center on August 13 to talk about the story of her indictment for espionage, loss of her National Weather Service job, and the subsequent dismissal of her espionage case.

Family Fun Days: The chapter held two family fun days – July 10 in Canton, and August 28 in Madison Heights. Each event featured food vendors and entertainment, and drew hundreds of people.

B3 Build-Breakthrough-Believe: The chapter's B3 event was held on October 21 at Glen Oaks in Farmington Hills and featured keynote Grace Hsia, and panelists Brian Connors of Michigan Economic Development Corporation, Eric Chau, Coco Zhang-Miske, Jimmy Hsiao, Caroline Vang-Polly, and Evonne Xu.

Annual Gala: The chapter held its Annual Gala on October 21 at Glen Oaks following B3. Dignitaries in attendance included State Rep. Stephanie Chang, State Senator Hoon-Yung Hopgood, State Senator Patrick Colbeck, and a guest appearance by Chinese American Adrianna Quan, Miss Michigan 2016.



Colorism within Communities of Color

MEDONA SAMUEL | OCA Fall 2016 Intern

“You’ve gotten darker!” and “Stop playing around in the sun so much!” are typical phrases I heard from my parents growing up and even today; getting darker is not particularly desirable. As a dark-skinned Indian American woman, my skin color has always been critiqued and criticized at almost every family and Tamil community gathering. Asian women are constantly encouraged to cover themselves up from the sun, even in the blazing heat, in order to avoid the consequences of getting darker.

Colorism can be seen as being established after the colonization of Asian countries by European powers, forcing European ideals, and beauty standards upon our cultures. After countless decades of colonization, whiteness has become the standard of beauty, power, and wealth in society, creating a dangerous divide in our communities. Although European imperialism has ended, the legacy of European imperialism can still be felt as whiteness is still seen as the path to success and power. Media keeps these damaging stereotypes fresh through harmful ads against darker skinned people and only casting lighter skinned actors and actresses for roles. This creates an overwhelming desire for lighter skin in all in our communities, highlighting the inferiority complex brought on by our former colonizers to maintain white supremacy. Even though light skin was prized in pre-colonial India, colonization magnified skin color stereotypes to a much larger scale.

Throughout decades of colonial domination, European

colonizers made sure to drill one singular message into the psyches of Asians: Whites rule. Passed down from generation to generation, the colonial mentality has dug its way into our collective subconscious and influences in the way we judge ourselves and others around us, even today. This form of internalized racism within communities of color that privileges light skinned individuals over those with dark skin functions in keeping our history of colonization alive and present.

In Asian communities, dark skin is associated with poverty and working outside in the fields, while light skin is associated with beauty and the wealthy privilege of staying indoors. The social pressure and demand for lighter skin is so high that companies sell “skin brightening” products that have become a multi-billion dollar global industry. In many countries in South and Southeast Asia, skin whitening companies comprise a booming \$10 billion industry.

The relationship between skin color and beauty is still so strong that it is perpetuating skin stereotypes and discrimination. Companies like *Fair and Lovely* have advertisements where women are portrayed as unsuccessful or unable to find a partner because of their dark skin tone, and they only gain success after using skin brightening products. Skin color is also seen as an identifier of one’s socioeconomic class and place within economical hierarchies, and plays a critical role in one’s job placement, college acceptance rate, and living



An advertisement for Fair and Lovely, a popular skin whitening brand.

conditions. People do not want to be associated with darker skinned people (i.e. poor people) because of discrimination and less availability of opportunities.

Having lighter skin automatically gives a person inherent advantages in society, as they gain access to better opportunities and life chances. Light skin is often associated with beauty and intelligence whereas darker skin is associated with being ugly and rowdy. Media has played an important role in reinforcing these stereotypes, portraying characters with lighter skin again and again as the most beautiful and successful. In movie industries throughout Asia and even in the United States, people who represent beauty are always lighter skinned and have European facial features. Eurocentric beauty standards are so embedded in Asian media that it introduced an epidemic of skin bleaching, whitening and even cosmetic surgery in the hopes of achieving success by conforming to the white ideal of success in both psychological and physical terms.

As an Indian American woman, the pressure to have lighter skin is doubly important to me because not only is light skin is seen beautiful in my home country, but I also felt the same pressure to have lighter skin when I moved to the United States. In this country, I was constantly bombarded with the image of a typical American as white

with European facial features and I didn't feel beautiful or comfortable in my skin in India or in the United States. Discrimination due to skin color causes further intragroup divisions and perpetuates social hierarchies. Beauty should not be determined on skin color, and there should be no ideal skin tone or set of features.

When my niece was born couple months ago, the first words she heard from my parents were, "wow, she's so white!" I know they did not mean for it to be hurtful but instead my parents were trying to protect her from those dark skinned stereotypes that would follow her if she did have darker skin tone. It is comments like these that slowly strips young women out of the comfort of their own skin. As I move forward in practicing self-love and rediscovering comfort in my own skin, I call on our communities to also to take a moment to reflect on how themselves perpetuate these harmful darker skin stereotypes, and how they are complacent in this inherited system of racial prejudice and violence.

Medona Samuel was a 2016 Fall OCA Intern. She recently graduated from Salt Lake Community College with an Associate of Science and will be heading to the University of Utah to pursue a bachelor's degree in Political Science.

VIEWPOINTS

Reflections on OCA's leadHERship Summit for AAPI Women

EZRA CALADO | leadHERship Participant

Identify

"Get out of the way," was my first thought during my morning metro ride to the OCA leadHERship Summit. As a young woman of color pursuing a career in a male dominated world, these unconscious thoughts of "getting out of the way," are constant. This summit allowed me to indulge in a self-exploration journey where I could question why I felt this way and define why I could not feel successful and whole at the same time. Whole: where I didn't have to select pieces of myself to connect to a conversation. Whole: where I didn't have to disconnect segments of my identity and culture to succeed. These premeditative thoughts were a perfect set up for a day full of learning from women who embodied success with poise and grace.



Understand

The presence of Asian American women in executive roles becomes more attainable when we step up and speak up. I know that my face, my culture, and my ethnic background may hinder my career goals. I know women of color often do not get invited to join conversations that affect us. In a system that is not designed for me to succeed as myself, my WHOLE self, I am determined to advocate and mobilize to contribute to an institution that will enable communities to achieve their goals without discounts to success caused by gender, race, or identity.



Support

My main takeaway from this weekend was "seek to understand." It's quick and easy to retaliate with words when we've taken offense. What's harder is assessing a situation with patience and the intent to understand in order to respond with words that encourage positive discussions. I am more motivated now to establish coping mechanisms, build a network of mentors, and fight for other women just as other women have fought for me. As always, I return home with more questions for myself. How can I sustain this energy, further my passion, and apply it to my reality? How can I convince my world to include me and make space for me? My fellow leadHERs continue to remind me that our personal identities, our culture, our stories personify the strength of our communities and will always persevere above attitudes of discrimination and exclusion.

Navigate

Thank you OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates for a humbling experience that provided me with tools that allow me to feel secure as a Filipino woman pursuing public service and to continue to grow as a leader. Thank you for inspiring me to advocate and mentor others with the same elegance.



Ezra Calado attended the inaugural OCA leadHERship program, a new program directed towards empowering AAPI women.

Overcoming Our Fears

ELIZABETH R. OUYANG | OCA - New York

Dear Advocate:

Since the presidential election, I've been reminded in stark terms of my humanity and privilege. And they have propelled me to action — to march in protest against discriminatory policies, sign petitions, and to speak out every chance I can.

In the history of my 30 years as a civil rights attorney doing voting rights work, I have never seen so many people petrified by a shift in the political landscape. I also teach at Columbia and New York Universities. Here is a sampling of the fears students, in tears, have shared with me:

I have DACA*. I have just been crying and I'm so tired, I can't plan beyond tomorrow.

I'm a senior and don't know if my hard work these past three years will now go down the drain. I don't even know if I can come back for Spring term if my DACA is not renewed since I won't have ID to board a plane.

I am a U.S. born citizen, but my parents are undocumented. I am so scared what will happen to them especially because my little sister needs them.

I have many family members who are green card holders from Bangladesh. They are so afraid to travel abroad because they don't know if they will get back in again.

If the new president supports stop and frisk, what will happen to my younger brother?

My job to protect my son just got harder.

Are they going to try to fix transgender people now?

I'm scared because decades of progress to integrate and gain access and equality for minority and marginalized groups may now be drastically set back. I'm scared that the hateful rhetoric of this year's long presidential campaign will now guide policy decisions that will fuel more hate crimes and deeper divisions. This, in turn, will lead to expenditure of more resources to maintain "law and order" that should be allocated for better schools, healthcare, and creation of jobs. This is NOT the environment that I want myself, or those I care about, to live in.

As an Asian American, I'm scared because my brothers were victims of hate crimes. I'll never forget the rope burns on my brother's neck when a neighborhood bully landed a lasso around his neck as he rode his bike down the street. As a civil rights attorney, I've helped families whose sons were killed and a doctor who suffers from permanent brain damage as a result of a hate crime.

If you too are scared, then I challenge you to step up, get out of your comfort zone, and mobilize for an inclusive and integrated society that respects the richness of diversity we, as AMERICA, represent.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth R. OuYang

Past President of OCA - New York, civil rights attorney, teacher



Elizabeth R. OuYang

(Photo: Susie Yuen)

*Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals is a program implemented by President Obama that gives certain undocumented children the right to temporarily remain in the U.S. to live, study, and work for a renewable two years.

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Thank You!

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Ken and Ashley Lee

\$25,000+

George Cha

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We salute OCA Lifetime Members for their lifetime commitment and dedication to the organization. We apologize if we have inadvertently omitted anyone from this list. Please contact the OCA National Office at 202-223-5500 or MNguyen@ocanational.org to provide updates and/or corrections.

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