

IMAGE

SPRING/SUMMER
2016

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN
ADVOCATES



FORGE AHEAD

Advocating for Elders -
and Ourselves
By Daphne Kwok

Seattle City Council
passes resolution on
anti-Chinese legislation

Ed Chow:
A life of Service

OCA | EMBRACING THE HOPES AND ASPIRATIONS OF ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICANS



ADVOCATE

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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CORRECTION: The Speak and Lead Program described in Image Magazine's Fall/Winter 2015 feature article, "Three things I learned at OCA Sacramento's Speak and Lead" was originated by the OCA San Mateo Chapter and serves as OCA San Mateo's signature public speaking and Asian cultural identity exploration program for the past 12 years. Dr. David Chai, current OCA San Mateo Speak & Lead Program Chair, at the request of Linda Ng of OCA Sacramento, helped spread this program to the Sacramento Chapter in hopes of helping many more high school youths gain confidence and leadership ability by improving their public speaking capabilities.

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Message from the President

LESLIE MOE-KAISER | OCA National President

I am extremely proud of OCA's advocacy and communications activities in the past year. These are the core of OCA's mission, and I cannot say enough about the alacrity with which staff addresses the growing complexity of issues that affect our community. This year, especially, divisive rhetoric has required timely responses from OCA.

In this pivotal election year and thanks to continued Coulter Foundation support, OCA is intensifying its civic engagement activities as chapters sign up for voter registration training sessions and hold voter registration drives around the county. In addition, a best practices session was presented at the April National Board Meeting to encourage greater involvement with the community. OCA will continue its efforts at the grassroots level until the November elections. With a focus on closer coordination between the National office and chapters, we will make a difference at the polls.

I am equally proud of OCA's leadership programs which provide opportunities for emerging leaders. We anticipate exceeding expectations again in 2016 for the number of participants in APA Y-Advocate, APIA U, B3, and MAAP. Thank you to all Chapters that host these critical trainings as we stoke the leadership pipelines from which many current chapter and national leaders have emerged. Of course, what would OCA be without the Internship Program? We have a strong cohort of Summer Interns whom you will see at Convention.

With a new grant from UPS, OCA is entering a new area: the Women's Initiative. We are working to provide a leadership program by the end of 2016. Please stay tuned.

Now we turn our attention to the 43rd Annual OCA National Convention in Jersey City, New Jersey. We have many dynamic sessions for everyone from high school and college students, to young professionals/millennials, Generation X, seasoned professionals, and seniors. Just as society has become more complex, we strive with more intention for an inclusive society based on ideals of freedom, justice, and liberty. Convention sessions mirror these ideals as we "forge ahead" to build a bright future for our community.

Please join me in giving shout-outs to the National staff, OCA - New Jersey (led by Convention Co-Chairs Virginia Ng and Karen Low), the hundreds of volunteers and supporters, and interns who work miracles to make Convention a success. You can recognize all of them by their ribbons.

And thank you to our members and supporters for modeling civic engagement and leadership for the next generation. You make a better future possible for us all!



Message from the CEO

KEN LEE | OCA National Chief Executive Officer

Once again, we welcome the return of summer – and along with it, the return of OCA’s National Convention. Thanks to support from members and supporters like you, year after year, our convention remains one of our most successful annual events. For that, we at OCA are immensely grateful.

It is only because of our members and supporters that OCA has been able to serve the community for over four decades. Every victory we have achieved is a direct result of many hours spent laboring together towards the common goal of improving our local and national Asian Pacific American community. Strangers who never knew one another before now work side-by-side, dedicating themselves to our common goal. With each day, we grow stronger together as a family. In creating this family, we have created a place for all individuals of Asian and Pacific Islander descent to call home.

As a family, however, we must not only grow strong but maintain our strength. One of our most important goals at OCA is to remain diligent in our financial solvency. Our corporate-funded and self-funded programs and events have always played a key part in OCA’s advocacy work. For example, our highly successful internship program – now in its 27th

year – has produced many thought leaders and policy makers within the Asian Pacific American community, and continues to do so year after year. Without your financial support, we would not be able to maintain the integrity and standards we place on our internship program and we would not be nearly as successful in our efforts

So as you read this edition of *IMAGE* and see the good work being done by OCA members around the country, consider helping us continue our efforts here at OCA. We would like nothing more than to be able to better serve you and your local community through our nationwide efforts.

For information on how to donate, please see the back page of the magazine. For a list of our Lifetime Members and individual supporters, please see page 20.



Message from the Editor

MIRIAM YEUNG | OCA National Vice President of Communications

Dear Friends of OCA,
It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Spring/Summer 2016 edition of IMAGE magazine, which has been published nationally by OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates for over three decades. This edition of IMAGE will be included in the registration packet at the 43rd annual National Convention at the Westin Jersey City Newport in Jersey City, New Jersey from July 21-24, 2016.

OCA is a national organization that serves all Americans and aspiring Americans of Asian and Pacific Islander descent, with over 100 chapters and affiliates across the country dedicated towards advancing the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans. In the past year, the OCA National Center and OCA chapters around the country have worked hard to fulfill this purpose.

Just one of the many ways that OCA helps make life better for Asian Pacific Americans is by working to keep the members of military safe from deadly hazing. After this issue was brought to national

attention by the death of Pvt. Danny Chen in 2011, OCA has fought hard to ensure that hazing will never cause the death of another soldier. I am proud to say that the effectiveness of our advocacy is evidenced this year by the inclusion of anti-hazing language in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act: legislation that will protect young people like Danny who wish to serve their country.

However, this single victory does not begin to encompass the many ongoing battles OCA is fighting around the nation, and I hope that this issue will help bring to light some of our organization's diverse interests. In this issue, we cover the ongoing efforts to obtain justice for Asian American scientists falsely accused of espionage, the National Center's work on data disaggregation in education, and OCA – Seattle's recent success in getting the city of Seattle apologize for anti-Chinese discrimination. We hope reading about these efforts will help expand your horizons and inspire you to get involved.

Hope to see you at the National Convention in New Jersey!

Counting the Invisible

JUSTIN TRINIDAD | OCA Civil Rights Fellow

Decision makers constantly rely on the assumption that Asian Americans are the highest-income, best-educated, and fastest-growing racial group in the U.S, with Asians now making up the largest share of recent immigrants. The model minority myth plagues all systems in the US making it appear that AAPIs are doing better than all other races. However, by lumping AAPI data into one racial category, we lose insights on the struggles of poverty, low educational attainment, and health disparities within our diverse communities. For too long, the model minority myth has left out underserved ethnic groups from accessing targeted resources and interventions.

The AAPI community includes over 48 distinct ethnic groups and over 300 languages. The model minority myth masks the plight of refugee AAPI communities who continue to face economic and educational barriers to success. Hmong, Lao, and Cambodian Americans have an average high school achievement rate of 63% compared to 95% of Taiwanese Americans and 85% of the total US population. Among Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander ethnic groups, only 3% of Marshallese, 12% of Samoan, 13% of Fijian, and 13% of Tongan Americans obtain a bachelor's degree.

OCA and partner organizations have long advocated for data disaggregation, particularly in the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) over the past year. Congressman Mike Honda introduced the All Students Count Act which would have amended the ESEA to require annual state report cards on student achievement disaggregate AAPI data. This amendment, however, was not



incorporated into ESEA as we had hoped, and the final compromise reached was technical assistance. Under the reauthorized ESEA, State Educational Agencies (SEAs) are able to request for technical assistance from the US Department of Education to disaggregate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander data, using the same race response categories as the decennial census of the population, and to use such data to improve academic outcomes for such students. The US Department of Education also introduced the data disaggregation (D2) Grant, a competitive grant that would allow SEAs to apply for funding to disaggregate AAPI data in their schools. We hope this is the first of many efforts that will allow institutions to begin collecting such data to produce better-informed policies.

What can you do to continue the fight for data disaggregation? Join state level campaigns to push your legislators to disaggregate AAPI data. AB 1726 in the California legislation aims to uncover health and education disparities in the California AAPI population. Washington and Rhode Island have also introduced legislation to disaggregate AAPI data. Furthermore, share your stories and struggles as Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to educate your school boards, local and state governments, and workplaces on the importance of disaggregated data to ensure that all parts of our community are counted.

Justin Trinidad is the Civil Rights Fellow at OCA National Center, where he is responsible for OCA's education policy portfolio, working with partner organizations under the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), and coordinating the annual JACL/OCA Leadership Summit



"I am part of the minority of Hmong American students that graduated from college. I am one of the few lucky college grads because I had parents who were able to support and understand the value of an education. However, I have many friends and family members who didn't have the same privileges I do. About half of my Hmong peers did not have the right support systems to attend and graduate from college."

– Pajouablai Monica Lee, OCA National Program Associate

Advocating for Elders — and Ourselves

DAPHNE KWOK | AARP Vice President of Multicultural Markets & Engagement

“When is it time to take away the car keys from my mom or dad?”

“How can I fix up our home so that it is safe for my aging parents?”

“What am I going to do when my mom and dad will no longer be able to live independently?”



Yes, I have reached the age where these issues are dominating the conversations when getting together with my friends. And yes, some of my friends are already balancing work with caring for their parents. And yes, even some of my friends who are much younger than I am, have already been caregivers. Yes, I am one of the people who dreads having to face the above issues that each and every one of us eventually will have to address. AND IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE FACE THESE ISSUES SOONER RATHER THAN LATER! That is what I have learned over the past three years working for AARP.

Having grown up living inside “The Beltway” – the Washington, DC Beltway – I knew that AARP was a powerhouse lobbying organization for the elders. I had no idea about the discounts that most people are interested in. I really did not even know about all of the issues and resources that AARP addresses until I started working for AARP! And now that I know how incredibly important the information and issues that AARP has that we ALL need to know, I want to be able to share this information with everyone!

Having spent my career empowering the Chinese American and Asian American & Pacific Islander community in the civil rights arena for OCA, political arena, disability rights arena – I now want to focus my work on helping to empower the 4.3 million AAPIs who are 50 years old and older.

For instance, OCA and our AAPI community have addressed employment discrimination due to race, ethnicity, accent discrimination, the glass ceiling. But we haven’t begun to address employment discrimination occurring among our older workers. AARP has been fighting age discrimination through federal and state legislation. In a New York State

AARP research report, AAPIs said that age discrimination was one of the major issues of concern to them. 10,000 people a day turn 65 years old. Let’s start addressing age discrimination!

Since Day 1, OCA’s mission of civic engagement has focused on the importance of voter education and voter participation. Some of the issues OCA has addressed have included: immigration reform, language access, bilingual ballots as part of the Voting Rights Act, hate crimes legislation, advocating against English-only legislation to name a few. Now it’s time to add to the repertoire issues pertaining to the 50-plus age cohort such as the Care Act, which provides rights to caregivers upon the discharge of their loved ones from the hospital. Or the Work and Save Act which would enable small businesses to be able to provide financial savings opportunities for their employees. Or during this current election cycle, asking candidates “To Take a Stand” on social security when they become President.

Our community has had highly successful educational campaigns for Hepatitis B and Bone Marrow Donor drives. Now we need to also add to the agenda the impact of hearing loss. Did you know that hearing loss affects not just quality of life but can have real effects on your health, and can lead to depression? We also need to start to add to our educational campaigns more information and resources about dementia/Alzheimer’s.

Our community has made great strides in raising mental health issues. Now we also need to add social isolation and its impact on our elders with mental health needs. Did you know that social isolation is equivalent to smoking 15 cigarettes a day? Hearing loss, by the way, leads to social isolation. And in our AAPI



Florence and Chin Fun Kwok with Daphne Kwok

community, social isolation is compounded by language and cultural isolation.

Our community is so focused on the well-being of our children: providing day care, after school programs, summer school supplemental programs, SAT prep, and often, language school on the weekends! We also need to ensure that our elders remain equally active – keeping their brain challenged and in use, whether through social interaction at senior centers, or brain games on paper or on computers, or through health and wellness programs. Thank goodness for Mah Jongg, Go, badminton and ping pong! Can we all pledge to help out one senior who is socially isolated?

I also want to shout about the accomplishments of AAPIs who help those of us who are 50-plus. Our community has produced innovators who've revolutionized the technology world – from Jerry Yang, one of the founders of Yahoo, to James Park, the co-founder and CEO of Fitbit, the wristwatch gadget that helped spark the current “wearables” revolution.

But did you know about Kenneth Shinozuka, who at the age of 14 developed a sensor and a mobile app that alerted caregivers when his grandfather who had Alzheimer's climbed out of bed and started wandering? He just graduated from high school, and at 17 is now CEO of his own company, SafeWander. There must be numerous Kenneths out there from our AAPI community working on patents, devices and services that will serve our AAPI seniors. I want

to know who they are so we can highlight them and talk about their inventions! Are you one of them? Let me know!

Where is a one-stop site to learn about all of the above issues I have raised and more? AARP!

AARP has built a reputation ever since 1958 as the credible source of vetted information for Americans who are 50-plus. There is a wealth of information on the www.aarp.org website that is available to all. Information about the 3 questions I posed at the top of the article can be found at the website! One can spend hours going through just a small fraction of the website!

To get more specific AAPI information you can go to our website www.aarp.org/aapi.

I encourage you to go to our websites, learn about the myriad of information addressing your health, wealth and self!

Daphne Kwok is Vice President, Multicultural Leadership for Asian American & Pacific Islander Audience Strategy at AARP. 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.

Seattle City Council passes a historic resolution on anti-Chinese legislation

DOUG CHIN | OCA - Greater Seattle

Last year, the Seattle City Council unanimously passed a historic resolution expressing regret for the anti-Chinese legislation and riots in the 1800s, acknowledging the contributions of Chinese to Seattle, and reaffirming the City’s commitment to civil rights of all people.

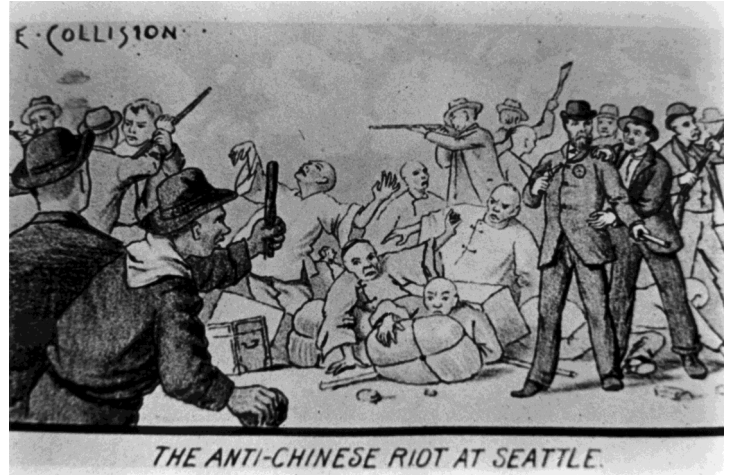
Former City Councilman Nick Licata initiated sponsorship of the resolution at the urging of the Greater Seattle Chapter of OCA - Asian Pacific Americans Advocates and the local chapter of the Chinese Americans Citizens Alliance. “We shouldn’t bury our history,” Licata said in reference to the numerous anti-Chinese legislation and anti-Chinese riot in Seattle in 1886. “Discriminatory policies ripple from the past and still affect Chinese communities today. Awareness and recognition of shameful policies in our history is the first step to moving forward together,” he added.

“I am really glad to have the opportunity to support this excellent resolution that honestly acknowledges the racist policies towards Chinese in the past,” said Councilmember Kshama Sawant. “The Chinese did some of the hardest work with some of the least amount of pay - being the backbone in building this region. This resolution honors that struggle,” she added.

“The resolution was a strong and powerful statement that expressed gratitude for the contributions of the Chinese and denounces the racial discrimination towards the early Chinese pioneers,” OCA – Seattle Chapter President Jacqueline Wu. “It also recognized the role of the Chinese in the history of this city and will make us feel that we are a valuable and integral part of Seattle.”

“This resolution was a very significant step towards recognizing one of the great - but often overlooked – injustices in our city’s history,” said CACA member Bettie Luke, whose grandfather was Mayor Yesler’s servant at the time of the 1886 riots. “Passage of the resolution helps educate and remind us of the sacrifices Chinese made to Seattle. It means a lot to the Chinese community in Seattle because it gives us recognition long overdue.”

Initially, the early Chinese were tolerated, and even welcomed by a fair amount of the early Seattle settlers. After all, many of the Chinese were brought here to help do work at low wages that were often shunned by whites. In Seattle the early Chinese laid the tracks for the first railroads to the town;



graded Pike, Union, Washington, and Jackson Streets; worked at local canneries and sawmills; grew produce; worked as domestic servants; dug the earliest portion of the Lake Washington Ship Canal, and established a Chinese quarter in what is now Pioneer Square. At one point, there were 700 Chinese in the town, about 10 percent of Seattle’s total population. Indeed, the arrival of Chinese was once seen as a sign of progress.

But by the mid-1880s, economic times grew worse and many men in the Seattle and the region were out of work. Perceived as “unfair laborers”, who were willing to accept lower wages, and “tools of the Capitalist,” the Chinese became the number one targets.

A number of discriminatory and unfair laws were passed at the federal, territorial, and local levels to get rid of all the Chinese because they were seen as “unfair labor,” unassimilable, inferior, deceitful, and heathens based on race. In 1882, the federal government passed the infamous Chinese Exclusion Act, which prohibited Chinese laborers from entering the United States. When these laws failed to exclude or get rid of the Chinese, mobs forcibly and brutally drove them out of Seattle, Tacoma and other towns in the Territory.

On November 2, 1885, a mob of hundreds, armed with guns and clubs, marched to Chinese shanties that dotted the city’s business district and along the waterfront. Smashing doors and breaking windows, they told the Chinese to pack and to grab their belongings while kicking and dragging them out of their quarters. Chinese were directly removed

from Tacoma by the anti-Chinese mob. But to make sure that the Chinese would not return, some of the mob went back to burn down the Chinese quarters along the waterfront.

Meanwhile, the citizens of Seattle waited for legislative action to remove the Chinese and awaited the outcome of conspiracy trials of leaders of the anti-Chinese direct action group, that wanted to forcibly remove the Chinese. Seventeen persons were charged with conspiring to deny Chinese their legal rights under the equal protection laws. Following 14 days of testimony, the jury deliberated for 10 minutes and handed down a “not guilty” verdict, which served to motivate and encourage the call for direct removal of the Chinese.

On December 3, 1885, the Seattle City Council passed the so-called “Cubic Air Ordinance,” similar to those enacted in California towns. The ordinance provided that each resident of Seattle was entitled to a sleeping compartment 8’ x 8’ x 8’. On February 5, the Seattle City Council passed additional ordinances to expedite the removal of Chinese from the city. One ordinance prohibited the operation of wash houses in wooden buildings. Another prohibited the sale of goods in the streets. Still another instituted a license fee for itinerant and non-residential fruit vendors. All of these laws were aimed at the Chinese.

The passage of these ordinances did little to diminish the cry of the anti-Chinese forces to immediately get rid of the Chinese. On the night of February 6, the direct action agitators and idle transients finalized their plans to expel the Chinese at a mass public meeting.

The next morning, on February 7, 1886, the direct action group carried out their plans to expel the Chinese. This huge mob of some 1500 forced the Chinese from their homes and marched them to the steamship Queen of the Pacific, to be transported to San Francisco.

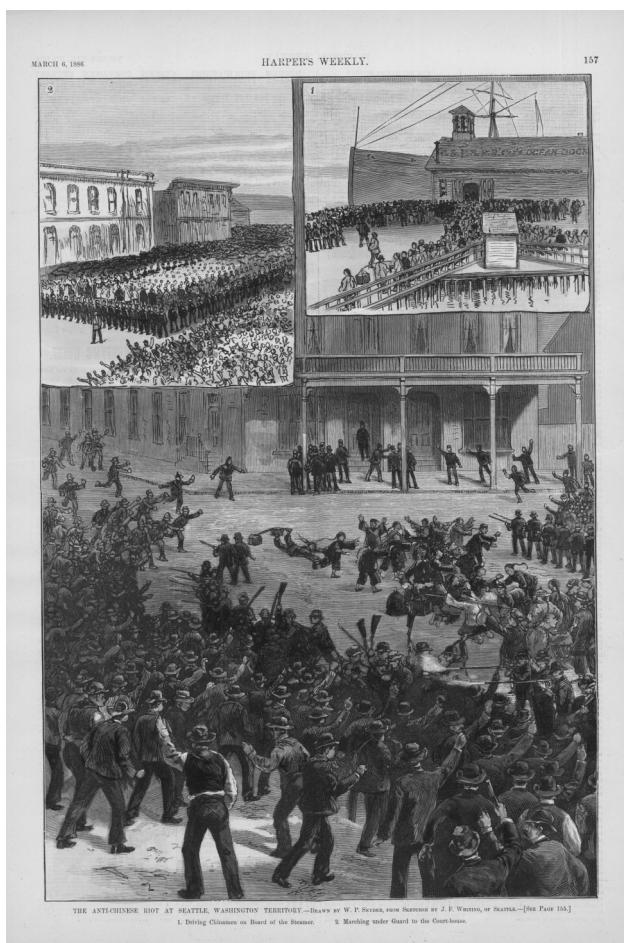
During the afternoon, a writ of habeas corpus was issued

by the District Court to the master of the steamship requiring him to bring before the Court the Chinese persons then on board of his vessel who were alleged to be unlawfully deprived of their liberty.

The next morning the Chinese were marched to King County Courthouse. There, Judge Roger S. Green told them that those who stay would be protected. Having just experienced the anger and hatred of an uncontrollable mob, all except 16 Chinese chose to leave.

After their courthouse appearance, the Chinese were taken back to the waterfront dock under the guard of Sheriff McGraw and his deputies. But the Queen of Pacific could only take a limit of 196 passengers. Another 160 Chinese left for Portland on the next two steamers the following two weeks.

The antagonism directed at the Chinese, and the suffering and harm inflicted upon them is among the worst against any racial or ethnic immigrant group in the history of the American West. The impact of the exclusionary laws and the Anti-Chinese Movement on the Chinese in America was lasted for decades. These laws lead to the segregation of the Chinese into the Chinatown ghettos, deprived them of opportunities and rights afforded others, and drastically curtailed their population growth.



The Anti-Chinese riot in Seattle, 1886

(Author's note: Similar resolutions have been passed by the U.S. Congress, State of California, and City of Tacoma. The Greater Seattle chapter of OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates is currently working on establishing a memorial in the vicinity of the dock where the Chinese were forced on steamships in 1886 as a reminder of the anti-Chinese riots and to pay tribute to the early Chinese in Seattle.)

Doug Chin is OCA - Greater Seattle's Co-Secretary and former chapter president.

Ed Chow: A Life of Service

NICK LEE | OCA Communications Associate



Governor Martin O'Malley swears Secretary Chow in as Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the State of Maryland.

Over the years, Ed Chow has held several high ranking political appointments, received a Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam, and been a personal friend and student of Bruce Lee. However, on a first meeting with Ed one could be forgiven for not assuming the nature of his achievements, simply because of his unassuming and humble nature.

Ed grew up Chinese American in the International District/Chinatown of Seattle, Washington in the 1950s. From a very early age, his views on race were affected by his high school's microcosm of diversity, bringing together Black, Latino, Japanese, Chinese, and Jewish kids in the city. Though the kids at school were definitely low-income, Ed recalls, "We never knew we were poor because we had clothes on our back and enough food at home." Where Ed grew up, kids were in this sense all equal to one another; all their houses were the same size, and nobody had significantly more than anybody else.

In Ed's family, public service is a fact of life. Of his brothers, one served in the Navy, another was in the Airforce, while another is a judge. His mother was also the first Asian American County Elected Official in Montgomery County, Maryland. In true Cantonese fashion, he was encouraged to love his mother, his family, and also his country; which propelled him towards service in the Army during the Vietnam War.

During his service, Ed acquired a reputation as a shrewd commander and a fixer of problematic units. Though he observed that many officers coasted through their two or three year deployments, Ed worked hard to stand out above the rest. He knew that his career path had been paved for him by Japanese Americans who served with honor and distinction in WWII, and that he would have to live up to their precedent if he wanted to maintain the reputation of Asian Americans in the Armed Forces for future generations.

The respect for diversity in the Army in the late sixties vastly differs from what it is today. In response, Ed began to push back against racial discrimination in the Army. He remembered the distinct unfairness of not being invited to dine with his white company commander because of his race, so he took the necessary steps to eliminate racial discrimination from his own command. Ed had no problem putting a sergeant in command whether they were white or black, as long as they got the job done. Through this experience, he began to realize the advantages of diversity and would carry this philosophy with him to his future appointments.

Ed's first political appointment was at the then troubled Department of Emergency Services of the State of Washington. While at the department, Ed found that the leadership skills he utilized to rebuild problematic units in the Army were compatible with fixing some of the recurring problems at the department. True to the leadership style he developed in the Army, Ed quickly fired and replaced ineffective managers to better achieve his mission. As a result of his effectiveness, he



Chow is awarded the Bronze Star for his service in Vietnam.

slowly climbed the ranks to deputy director and eventually director, cleaning up the agency and preparing the department to meet the challenges that arose from the Mount St. Helens volcanic disaster. “I don’t want to say I gained their friendship, I gained their confidence,” Ed said of his time at the department. “You don’t make friends when you have things to clean up.”

After the Department of Emergency Services, Ed served as City Manager of Kent, Washington. There he made it a point to increase representation of underrepresented groups, including women, African Americans, Latinos, Asians, and Native Americans. One of his most memorable fights for inclusion was the hiring of the city’s first woman firefighter. When the Fireman’s Union fought back by claiming that a female firefighter would be unable to lift a 200 pound person down a ladder, he countered by showing that many male firefighters were unable to do so themselves. The first woman firefighter of Kent, Washington would go on to pass first in her class in physical fitness, and Ed would leave office with minority staff representation up from zero to twenty percent.

Ed’s hard work in Washington State eventually led to an appointment as a Deputy Assistant Secretary for the U.S. Department of Veteran’s Affairs, a position that would in turn lead to his most prestigious appointment as the Secretary of Veterans Affairs for the State of Maryland. While there, he set a model for other appointed officials by working 60-plus hour weeks and meeting with each of his employees and fellow appointees over lunch as his treat. He took particular pride in representing the State of Maryland at events for communities with low visibility such as the Sri Lankan or Nepalese communities. He even travelled on his own dime to assist the Governor on a trade mission to China, even though the mission was not a part of his purview as Secretary.

“Don’t do it for a reward; do it because it’s right to do.”

In the midst of his hectic work schedule since moving to Washington, DC, Ed still found time to volunteer his time with organizations like Vietnam Veterans of America and also join the OCA – DC chapter. A long-time chapter member, Ed’s most recent contribution was hosting a group of OCA interns to pass along helpful knowledge from his long and distinguished career.

Since retiring as a government official, Ed has kept himself busy by helping other young Asian Pacific Americans get political appointments. He does this through a class that he created to pass on the wisdom he developed over his decades of working as a public servant. Although Ed was recently diagnosed with terminal cancer, the outpouring of support and praise from the many lives he touched has been commensurate with his achievements, including a statement on the congressional record by Congresswoman Tammy Duckworth on his support for veterans.

In March, OCA – DC, OCA – NOVA, and the OCA National Center jointly held a dinner event recognizing his life and accomplishments. Luminaries from across the racial, political, and governmental spectrum came to honor him, including former Governor Martin O’Malley, former U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki, and Major General Antonio Taguba. In the twilight of his life, Ed remains

an honest, funny, and humble public servant whose willingness to go the extra mile to help another remains his greatest asset. Of the many pieces of advice he gives, the one that may best symbolize his life and character is: “Pay it forward if it’s a good idea. Don’t do it for a reward; do it because it’s right to do.”



L-R: Former Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki, Secretary Chow, Major General Antonio Taguba at the OCA dinner event.

In Review: OCA's Advocacy to Guard Against Racial Profiling Following the Dismissed Cases of Chinese American Scientists

ARYANI ONG | OCA - Greater DC

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In the past year, OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates (OCA), joined midway by the OCA - DC chapter, has been actively involved in efforts by national civil rights organizations and advocates to question whether four Chinese American scientists were the targets of racial profiling. Between 2013 to 2015, the scientists were arrested and indicted on espionage-related charges, purportedly to benefit China. The cases were later dropped. Consequently, several members within the Asian American community questioned whether the scientists – all naturalized U.S. citizens - had been unfairly treated because of their ethnic Chinese background. The following are highlights of OCA's advocacy and public awareness activities:

- **May 2015** - OCA issues a press release announcing that it had sent a letter to the Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice to investigate whether racial profiling had occurred in the case of Sherry Chen. Chen was a hydrologist working for the National Weather Service under the U.S. Department of Commerce. Chen's case was dropped in March 2015, following a similar pattern as the cases of two former Eli Lilly scientists, Guoqing Cao and Shuyi Li in 2013, and Dr. Wen Ho Lee in 1999. CEO Ken Lee and Policy and Communications Manager Kham Moua attended the press conference hosted by Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA).
- **September 2015** – The case of Dr. Xiaoxing Xi, a physics professor at Temple University, is dropped. OCA issues a press release announcing it had signed on to a letter by Committee of 100. The letter is a second request to Attorney General Loretta Lynch for an investigation. C100 kicks off a series of speaker panels around the country to raise public awareness. OCA - Greater Philadelphia invites Xi's daughter Joyce as a guest speaker at its chapter picnic.
- **October 2015** — Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), Chair of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), and Rep. Ted Lieu (D-CA), convene a conference call of community leaders, including OCA staff and members, across the country.
- **November 2015** – OCA members attend a Capitol Hill press conference led by Rep. Judy Chu (D-CA), Ted Lieu (D-CA), Mike Honda (D-NY), and Grace Meng (D-NY). The Members of Congress publicly call for a



November 2015: Rep Judy Chu (D-CA) speaks at a CAPAC press conference with Dr. Xiaoxing Xi and Sherry Chen.

meeting with the Attorney General. Sherry Chen and Dr. Xiaoxing Xi also speak about their experiences, the impact of the investigations and prosecutions on their personal and professional lives, and the \$200,000 legal fees they have each incurred.

- **December 2015** – OCA - DC chapter member Aryani Ong and former statistician Dr. Jeremy Wu — both former community members who participated with the U.S. Department of Energy Task Force Against Racial Profiling during the Dr. Wen Ho Lee investigations — draft propositions for a new coalition comprising of community leaders who participated in the October conference call.
- **February 2016** – The coalition — including OCA and its DC chapter — reorganizes to focus on broader policy issues than the individual legal cases. OCA - DC creates a new civic engagement committee, and passes a resolution to involve the chapter in advocacy and community education around this issue.
- **March 2016** - OCA submits a letter to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) during the public comment period. OCA takes a stand against DHS request to exempt its system of data collection – called the insider threat program – from the Privacy Act. The insider threat program is considered to be implemented without sufficient civil rights and privacy protections, and the cause of Chen's investigation. C100, 80/20 and the Federation of American Scientists also submit comments. Chen is notified that she will be terminated from her job with the federal government.

- **May 2016** – OCA and OCA – DC chapter works with the coalition to strategize around a national campaign to coincide with the airing of a 60 Minutes segment on the Xi and Chen cases. They work on drafting a letter to the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of Justice requesting an independent investigation. Also, they release their own action alerts to support the social media campaign led by the Asian Americans Advancing Justice - Asian Law Caucus. OCA - Greater Philadelphia chapter hosts an Asian American Heritage Dinner with Xi as one of its featured speakers.
- **June 2016** – OCA is among the lead parties who send a letter addressed to the Department of Justice Inspector General Michael E. Horowitz and calling for an independent investigation. The other parties are the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA), National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), Asian Americans Advancing Justice, who are joined by 77 other Asian Pacific American, civil rights, and civil liberties organizations.
- **July 2016** – OCA invites Sherry Chen, Joyce Xi and National Asian Pacific American Bar Association attorney Navdeep Singh to speak on a national security panel at its annual convention in New Jersey.



OCA GPC members registering voters at Mekong Supermarket in Mesa.

the absentee ballot. Our committed volunteers logged hundreds of hours in community service by assisting in our civic engagement programs.

OCA - GPC was equally proud to have hosted OCA National Programs in Phoenix such as APIA-U, MAAAP, and two APA-Y seminars. The participants interacted with facilitators and learned about many of the issues that OCA works against each day. The audiences came out with greater confidence and a renewed sense of leadership that enabled them to have a positive impact in their circles.

The Greater Phoenix Chapter intends to build on its accomplishments and connect with even more of the APIA population this upcoming year.

Aryani Ong is a member of OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates' DC chapter and former staff at the OCA National Center.

Chapter Highlight: OCA Greater Phoenix

Making a difference in the Valley of the Sun

OWEN FITE | OCA - Greater Phoenix

SCOTTSDALE, AZ — OCA Greater Phoenix Chapter (GPC) dedicated the past year to civic engagement and educational programs for the betterment of the Phoenix metropolitan community.

Many of these efforts focused on voter registration, tabling numerous events including the AAAA Asian Festival, local Arab American Festival, Filipino Heritage Celebration, and Vietnamese Lunar Calendar Celebration to increase political participation. OCA - GPC also prioritized canvassing campaigns where volunteers walked neighborhoods to encourage residents to sign up for



APA-Y participants at StarShine Academy in Phoenix.

Owen Fite is an intern at the OCA - Greater Phoenix chapter.

Chapter Highlight: OCA Westchester Hudson Valley

Building bridges between Black and Asian communities

LINDA SLEDGE | OCA - Westchester Hudson Valley

HUDSON VALLEY, NY — In response to the racial tensions created by the tragic shooting of Akai Gurley, a young black man, by rookie NYC police officer Peter Liang, OCA-Westchester Hudson Valley (OCA-WHV) hosted a dialogue between concerned citizens from local Black and Asian communities to discuss common issues of social justice. Co-sponsor of the April 26, 2016 event was the Martin Luther King Jr. Freedom Center in White Plains, NY.

The forum was organized by Mark C. Fang, Westchester County Human Rights Commissioner and Counsel to the OCA-WHV Executive Board and Dr. Xin Zheng, past president of OCA-WHV. Bill Kaung, former chapter president, and Raymond Zheng, chapter representative from Young OCA, were also on the organizing team.

Fang noted that the purpose of the meeting was to engage the local Chinese and Black communities in an “extraordinary conversation on race ... following a blueprint originally set forth by President Obama in response to the Trayvon Martin verdict in July, 2014.”

Gurley’s death was, at the time, the third in a row of high profile police shootings of young black men nationwide. Tensions between the Black and Chinese-American communities after the Gurley shooting, exacerbated by intense media scrutiny, had built for over a year during which Liang was removed from the police force, tried, convicted, and sentenced. Black advocacy groups sought transparent review and just sentencing of all police officers. The Asian community was somewhat divided, with many Chinese believing that Liang was scapegoated. Interest in the case ran particularly high among the more than 50 participants at the OCA-WHV forum since Liang had been sentenced days before. However, the discussion at the Thomas Slater Center in White Plains, NY, was not simply to dissect the Gurley/Liang case. Instead, Fang, who presided



over the meeting, urged attendees to explore the racial dynamics between Black and Asian communities, build upon their history as civil rights allies, and find ways to work together in order to “generate better understanding between races.”

The dialogue that took place was personal, candid, and impassioned. Many attendees were surprised at the wide diversity within each ethnic community. Some in the Black community did not know the “difference” between a Korean judge and a Chinese police officer, expressing the fear of possible bias. Kaung, who lectures widely on Chinese-American history, emphasized to Black attendees that Asians are “not the same” but come from “different cultures, religions and geographic backgrounds” just as American Blacks do. The evening ended on an encouraging note. “While we did not feel that Westchester County has the same negative conflicts between Blacks and Asians,” as portrayed in some media accounts of the Gurley/Liang case, Kaung concluded that, “we all agreed there is a need to have more communication between the two communities in Westchester and more discussions of this type.”

In trenchant and compassionate closing remarks, the Hon. Kathie E. Davidson, Supervising Judge of the Westchester Family Court and a Black American, called for future meetings to address the common concerns of Asian and Black Americans arising from their mutual histories of racial bias and their shared vision of social justice. Echoing Judge Davidson, Peggy Chen, current president of OCA-WHV, called for greater chapter involvement with the local Black community, especially in the area of criminal justice reform.



Linda Ching Sledge is an author and member of OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates' Westchester Hudson Valley chapter.

2015 - 2016 OCA Highlights

June 2015

OCA applauded the Supreme Court for rightful expansion of marriage equality.

July 2015

OCA hosted the 2015 National Convention in San Francisco, California, with an emphasis on “Unifying Asian Pacific Islander America”.

August 2015

OCA strongly condemned the use of anti-immigrant term ‘Anchor Baby’ by presidential candidates.

The National Center added a new Civic Engagement Associate position to staff, increasing staff size to its highest level ever.

September 2015

Asian American advocates called upon the Attorney General to investigate pattern of racial profiling against Chinese American scientists.

The National Center hosted three interns for the fall.

October 2015

OCA and OCA – New York memorialized the tragic loss of Private Danny Chen by continuing the fight against military hazing.

In collaboration with chapters around the country, OCA contacted over 39,000 individuals nationwide to increase AAPI voter turnout.

November 2015

Six AAPI leaders from the corporate world were honored at the 2015 OCA Corporate Achievement Awards in Crystal City, Virginia.

OCA passed a resolution at the National Board meeting in support of American Samoans’ right to US Citizenship.

OCA and immigration rights advocates strongly opposed the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals decision to delay Executive Action on immigration.

OCA denounced xenophobia and opposition to refugee resettlement in the wake of the Paris terror attacks.

December 2015

OCA stood in solidarity with Muslim, Sikh, and South Asian Americans against anti-Muslim hate and violence, and condemned calls for Muslim exclusion.

OCA strongly opposed the Supreme Court challenge to affirmative action in Fisher v. University of Texas - Austin.

January 2016

OCA was pleased by the Supreme Court’s decision to hear case on President’s immigration executive action programs.

February 2016

In the wake of the trial of Officer Peter Liang, OCA reaffirmed its support for increased oversight of police misconduct.

The JAACL/OCA Leadership Summit took place in Washington, DC, training 30 next generation leaders selected from JAACL and OCA chapter membership.

March 2016

OCA was a leading voice for AAPIs in successful coalition efforts to expand broadband access in low-income communities through the Lifeline Program.

OCA and partner organizations supported the reintroduction of the Reuniting Families Act to help fix the broken family immigration visa backlog.

April 2016

As a result of advocacy by OCA and many others, anti-hazing language was included in the 2017 National Defense Authorization Act.

May 2016

OCA joined others in calling for an independent investigation by the Department of Justice Inspector General on the apparent pattern of racial profiling in the arrests of scientists Dr. Xiaoxing Xi and Sherry Chen.

June 2016

The National Center welcomed its 27th summer intern cohort, a diverse group of 19 college students from around the country.

OCA, together with NCAPA, launched the #ImmigrationStoryIn5Words Campaign, gathering over 3 million impressions.

July 2016

The 2016 OCA National Convention is held in Jersey City, New Jersey.

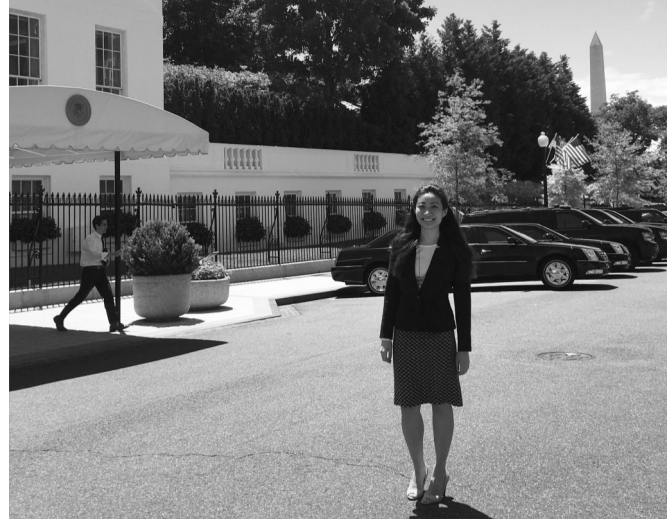
Ivy Teng Lei: An Undocumented Immigrant's Testimony to the White House

IVY TENG LEI | OCA - New York Board Member

MY name is Ivy Teng Lei. My family came to the United States when I was seven years old. I was born in Macao, China, a beautiful Portuguese-influenced Chinese city where the foods are slightly sprinkled with a hint of Western culture. A traditional pork bun had orange-color dressing, and Chinese egg custard was covered in crême brulee. These are the stories I'd tell my friends whenever they asked me about Macao. It was my only way of "connecting" to the birth place that I had not visited in 18 years and felt very little connection to. I'd tell them about the casinos and how fast the city grew. I'd brag about the money coming in, and the opportunities, the bridges, the landmarks—all of which I read about but never experienced.

The truth is, it took a lot for my parents to uproot our entire family. We arrived at JFK on August 26, 1998. After our tourist visa expired, we continued to live in America. Being undocumented has been one of the biggest challenges—the phrase "living in the shadow" is a very accurate way of describing our way of life. We never caused trouble, never asked for more than what we were given, and were perpetually afraid to attract anyone's attention. We were very poor, and since my parents couldn't afford babysitters and we had very few relatives in the states, my siblings and I spent most of time in the garment factory where our mother worked. Everyone in the factory loved me, especially the sewing ladies who were alone and had left their family in China to make a living here and send money back to their kids. Our family, much like the aunts and uncles in the factory came here to work, and send money back to China where their family is struggling to bring food on the table. Some of them used the money to build houses and start businesses back home. Most of the time, they'd send more than half their paycheck back and keep the rest for living expenses, including my family who has supported my grandpa's medical bills for all the years we've lived in America. Even though we're not physically in China, our presence here further strengthened our family's opportunities back home. My cousin's education, including his laptop, is just a symbol of our sacrifice and hard work.

It was junior year in high school when the principal set up appointments with each student to ask about his or her college prospects. She laid out all the options that I learned very young would never be available to me. I considered saying thank you and leaving without telling her the truth—I didn't want to feel like a burden but eventually, I said, "I'm not supposed to be here." To my surprise, I was not the only



The author at the White House to present her testimony

one in school. She didn't tell me their names, but the fact that I knew there were classmates just like me made me feel empowered.

There were very few schools and scholarships that didn't require legal status at the time. I decided to apply for the best city university we could afford and was fortunate enough to be accepted. I worked random part-time jobs to pay for my tuition and expenses, and with the help of my family, I graduated with a BA in Communications minoring in Mathematics.

For immigrant youth who are brought to the U.S. at a young age, we've become integral parts of this country. But being undocumented and all of the consequences that come with being undocumented can make you feel like the wind has been knocked out of you. Like you might not have a future. But DACA has changed that.

Through the mentors who have taken me under their wing, I was able to intern to gain work experience and then was finally accepted to a full-time competitive rotation program at one of the largest advertising holding companies. I have since worked in various Fortune 500 companies and have assimilated to the life that I never thought I would have. A badge, a phone, and email address assigned just for me means so much more to me than the means to entering a building or a telecommunication tool—it's a constant reminder that I have a status, and my existence is meaningful. This would have never been possible without DACA, and I thank President Obama everyday for changing my life.

Ivy Teng Lei is a former board member for OCA - Asian Pacific Advocates' New York chapter. She presented this testimony in June to the White House and the Korean, Filipino, Mexican, Indian embassies in-person, as well as the Chinese embassy via a separate meeting.

Book Review: *The Making of Asian America*

STAN LOU | OCA Vice President of Education and Culture

When I first heard about this book, I thought to myself, “Do we need another book about the immigration stories of Asians to America?” Most of us who have been involved with the Asian Pacific American (APA) community are probably saturated with our history. Another book would be like preaching to the choir! I know I have read and am more than familiar with the excellent books from Ronald Takaki, Maxine Hong Kingston, Iris Chang, Peter Kwong, and others.

But I also have read *Angel Island: Immigrant Gateway to America*, the excellent book that Erika Lee co-authored with Judy Yang. In fact, I wrote a review of that book for the *IMAGE* Fall 2010 issue! From that experience I know that Erika Lee is an exceptional historian and writer. Then I saw early reviews of her new book indicating that Lee updates the stories based on the new waves of Asian immigrants since the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965. This news led me to see what *The Making of Asian America: A History* had to offer.

As a “spoiler alert,” I will state that the book was as advertised – fresh new interpretations of old stories, updates to the experiences of the post-1965 immigrants, and bold opinions and conclusions. The first part of the book delves deep into the earliest histories of Asians coming to America; i.e., in the 1500s when Filipino sailors left their ships and stayed in America. After that initial foray, immigrants from Asia continually came to America for various reasons; to escape colonialism, to get away from poverty and famine, to work as indentured laborers or “coolies.” Lee systematically describes the immigrations by each ethnic group – Chinese, Japanese, Indians, Koreans, Filipinos, etc. Her writing is similar to the technique she and Yang used to tell the stories of Angel Island. It’s rather an academic approach; more so because *Making* did not relate personal stories of individuals, as the earlier book did.

The immigrants’ stories reach a critical stage in the latter part of the 1800s. Anti-immigration and nativist feelings caused Asians to become a “despised minority” and brought about the Chinese Exclusion Laws — which were later expanded to include most of the other Asian ethnicities. This

hate went on for decades, well through the first half of the 20th century. Many of the prejudices and atrocities experienced by the various Asian immigrants during this period that climaxed, so to speak, with the imprisonment of Japanese Americans during World War II by the US government. In recognition of the present-day consequences of those times, Lee concludes that the Chinese became the first “undocumented immigrants.”

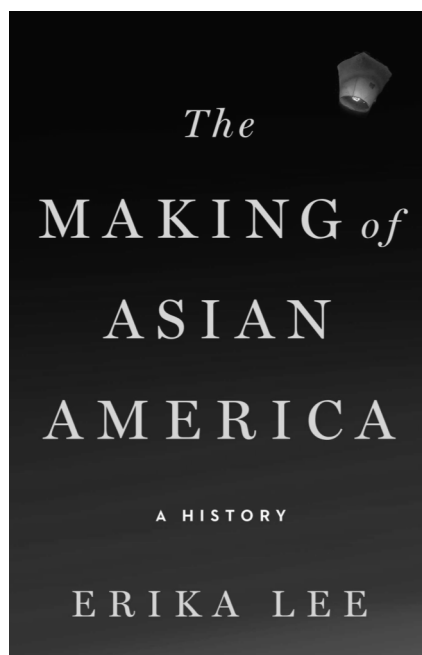
The passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 marked a turning point in the Asian American story. Many view the Act to reflect a change in America’s view of

Asian Americans from “despised” to “model minority.” However, Lee points out that the label associated with Asian Americans changed easily throughout the rest of the century and into the new one, depending on the issues at hand — cheap labor, anti-communism, overachievement, espionage, yellow peril, perpetual foreigner, etc. So the 1965 Act effectively divided the community into two: pre-1965 and post-1965. The earlier Asian America was formed of mostly blue collar types who knew racism, poverty, and hard times. The later Asian America mostly comes from more privileged and even prosperous backgrounds. This is where Lee diverges from others in her genre. She examines the impact of these new immigrants, and concludes that Asian America has evolved into these two distinct groups; one-size-fits-all labels cannot be applied to Asian

Americans as a whole. By extension, this means statistics and data must be disaggregated in order to meaningfully reflect the APA community.

In my mind, Erika Lee has now written the new definitive narrative of Asian America. I know our narrative is dynamic, is still being developed, and will certainly take on new twists. But for the latest rendition, I highly recommend that all students of Asian American history and heritage add this book to their library. I am personally very pleased that OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates chose to honor her for her outstanding achievements at the 2016 National Convention.

Stan Lou serves as OCA’s Vice President of Education and Culture. He is also an active member of OCA’s DC chapter.



OCA Lifetime Members

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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