



THE DRUM CIRCLE

A communicative gathering of people coming together into the light with their own natural human-beat

The L.A. County Asian American Employees Assoc. Newsletter



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A Rising Tide Lifts All Boats

Truc Moore, Director of Public Relations for LACAAEA

Happy Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month!

Like others of Asian heritage, I spent May reflecting on how far I and other Asians have come, where we are now, and where we still need to be. I am proud to call LA County, home. For me and other Asian immigrants like me, there is no other home. As a refugee born after the Vietnam War, my family and I fled from communism by fishing boat to Hong Kong and ultimately, to LA County. We rode the rising tide of freedom out of Vietnam and followed our dreams to the U.S., where we settled in LA County in the 1980's largely due to the diversity of the region and the Asian populations that lived here.

LA County is so unique and special because of the many Asian immigrants that have positively shaped the region. Some, like the Chinese, have been here since 1850. The fabric of LA County is weaved with many Asians, including the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Filipino and Thai, and is dotted with areas like Chinatown, Little Tokyo, Koreatown, Historic Filipinotown, and

Thai Town. Asians also expanded outside of these areas and created strong cultural enclaves in Monterey Park, Cerritos, Rowland Heights, and San Gabriel. With the strength of community (and voting bloc) created by these areas, Asians helped propel other Asians to local political seats, to the State Assembly, and to Congress. While we have had some limited success putting Asians into political office, this road has not been without challenges, and the road that remains ahead both in LA County and nationally, is riddled with the rise of AAPI hate.



It is against this backdrop that LACAAEA embarked in planning its AAPI Heritage Month celebration. We wanted to celebrate all that is wonderful and diverse about the Asian ethnicities that have helped shape LA County and its government work force, while also speaking out against AAPI hate. LACAAEA was proud to partner with the LA City Employees Asian American Association (LACEAAA) for the event, "Embrace and Empower: Uplifting the AAPI Community." We

went virtual with the event on May 22, 2021, and featured AAPI Heritage Month welcome messages from each of our five County Supervisors, the Undersheriff, and our Assessor. Check out their messages [here](#).

The event celebrated the diversity of the AAPI community with a traditional Chinese lion dance and cultural messages/performances from Los Angeles County's Cambodian, Chinese and Filipino employee associations. We heard from keynote speaker, Michael Woo, the first Asian American and first trained urban planner elected to the LA City Council. We were empowered by a special presentation from Asian Americans Advancing Justice on how to combat the rising AAPI hate, and learned of the numerous resources available to the AAPI community. LACAAEA and LACEAAA past presidents also shared their collective 39 years of experience leading Asian employees inside County and City government, including from our own Jackie Guevarra, who is now the Executive Director of the LA County Quality and Productivity Commission. If you missed the Embrace and Empower event, you can still view it [here](#).

In this May issue of Drum Circle, we feature a great Op-Ed piece breaking down the origins that led to the racism and sexism of AAPI women. We also highlight Yuri Kochiyama, an American civil rights icon, and County leader Robin Toma, Executive Director of the LA County Human Relations Commission as well as our committee chair bios. Let's also lend our support to the featured local business, Wolfie's Hot Chicken, a plant-based hot chicken sandwich joint in Highland Park.

As AAPI Heritage Month draws to a close, we should all continue to celebrate throughout the year the uniqueness of our Asian cultures and our indelible impact on LA County. We should also continue to rise up and unite against the wave of AAPI hate, for it is true, "A rising tide lifts all boats!" With the rising tide of voices speaking in unity against AAPI hate, we can lift all of our AAPI residents and LA County to an even better place.



Truc has been employed with the County for the last 14 years. She is an attorney with County Counsel and advises the County on information technology, intellectual property, contracting, procurement and government law matters. Truc is an avid traveler, foodie, cook and USC fan.

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Op-Ed: Breaking Down Racism and Sexism

The recent targeted shootings in Atlanta brought to light the objectification of Asian women, which is a seldomly discussed topic that cuts at the heart of AAPI women both personally and professionally. While public coverage of the #MeToo movement focused on high-profile celebrities, the objectification and the abuse that AAPI women face is all too familiar an experience for many. Like many stereotypes that aren't true, it's difficult to trace their origins. In this op-ed, we attempt to trace the history behind why AAPI women have become hypersexualized and objectified.

Since 500 BC, the philosophical teachings of Confucius have been deeply imbedded in Asia, shaping the social, cultural, and political norms and way of life. It is institutionalized through conformity and reinforced as it passes from one generation to the next. Depending on the class or gender that you were born into, your place in this patriarchal society was predetermined with a set of expectations essential to ensure harmony within the society. Women were kept subservient to men, restricted to family obligations, seen from a young age as property to be sold or married off into a life of perpetual servitude, forced to conform to beauty standards attained through painful methods, such as foot binding, and viewed as replaceable by concubines. Maybe the most enduring part of these teaching is found today in widespread preference for boys in order to maintain the family legacy. This is exemplified by China's One Child policy, which during its implementation radically tipped the country's demographics in favor of men. It is very difficult to overcome the discrimination that AAPIs face, when systemic inequality comes not only from within our own Confucian ideals of civility and traditions, but also from stereotypes that were born out of and exist in the dominant Western cultures.

In addition to the overall oppression of AAPI women, a more specific hypersexualization and objectification of AAPI women as exotic sexual beings finds its historical foundation, in large part, in America. In 1834, the first recorded Chinese woman arrived in New York. Seen as oriental and exotic, she was put on display like a circus act to curious onlookers. Unfortunately, such treatment was only a sign of things to come. In the 1850s, the Chinese men and women alike saw the California Gold Rush as their opportunity to escape drought and political instability, make their fortunes, and return home. However, as gold supplies dwindled, they looked for other means to survive. The absence of women in mining or other manual labor-oriented environments, created a market for prostitution, proliferated by the luring, kidnapping, or purchasing and shipping of young Chinese girls to San Francisco to become indentured slaves. Those that succumbed to sexually transmitted diseases were quarantined and left to starve or die by suicide. America looked the other way as it was profitable.

To stem the spread of sexually transmitted diseases to white men by Chinese women whom had been forced into prostitution, America responded with the passage of the Page Act in 1875, which banned the immigration of East Asian women. It was the first restrictive immigration law based on race and gender, and it was based only on a perception that Asian women were hypersexual in nature. Although this perceived hypersexuality was originally attributed to Chinese women, the words "easy" and

"cheap" are still used in reference to all AAPI women to this day. This harmful stereotype has resulted in the solidification of a warped social lens, through which victims are viewed as having tempted the perpetrators that took advantage of the victim's vulnerable situation.

Although women have come a long way in the fight against gender inequality in post-industrial revolution America, AAPI women in the workforce are often placed in administrative support positions, either perceived as a submissive team players or the efficient "tiger mom." The seemingly complimentary view of AAPI women as hardworking employees, however in many cases may lead to the reinforcement of the "bamboo ceiling." Often back-handed compliments, such as references to the AAPI community as "the model minority," feed into the stereotype of AAPIs as "worker bees," with any form of denial explained as lacking the communication and leadership skills necessary for advancement to supervisory and executive positions. The lack of Asians, especially women, in executive-level positions reduces the opportunities for junior employees to seek mentorship from role models that have overcome personal and professional challenges that they may be facing.

We also must remember that not all Asians are "crazy rich" or successfully educated doctors or lawyers. Oftentimes, the most vulnerable that get targeted are those that face language barriers, fear of retaliation, and unfamiliarity with their legal rights. They need our help.

Let us educate ourselves and others about the dangers and disadvantages of the perpetuation of historical view of Asian women – ones which are not outdated but were never founded in truth to begin with. It's a known fact that expectations influence performance. If we are expected to be docile, insecure in our opinions, fearful to speak-up, and prone to keeping our heads down, when we dare to be ambitious and pursue leadership opportunities, we risk being seen as aggressive as having not stayed in our lane. When society sees us as a group of submissive "orientals," it creates an environment where we are targeted for those qualities instead of being valued as individuals. If we let the next generation grow up in an environment like this, they'll continue to be the stereotype that held AAPI women back in the first place. We need to be vigilant in calling out misconceptions and discriminations against us and break the cycle that for centuries had stifled our voices and limited our potential.



Missed a LACAAEA event?

Click [here](#) to subscribe to our youtube channel

Historical Timeline

America is the land of opportunity for a mixed salad of individuals with unique races and cultures. While there are many great things that make up America, there are untold history of brutal racism, exclusion, and violence against AAPI immigrants. To understand how we got here, we must first educate ourselves to understand the origins of where we came from. Check out our historical timeline in hopes that we don't repeat the ills of the past [here](#).



**AAPI
Contributions:**

**Meet Yuri
Kochiyama**

"Malcolm X and Yuri Kochiyama are both American civil rights icons," according to writer Sushmita Arora. "But while you probably learned about Malcolm X's lasting legacy in school, Kochiyama remains one of American history's unsung heroes."

"The daughter of immigrants, Kochiyama experienced the hardships of a World War II internment camp after public hysteria surrounding Japanese Americans erupted in the wake of the Pearl Harbor attack," according to journalist Elaine Woo. Before the war, she "was a model of assimilation," according to the Washington Post. "She wrote a sports column for the San Pedro News-Pilot and was a Sunday school teacher at the local Presbyterian church." However, after she and her family were sent to an internment camp and her father died shortly after being taken into custody, she began to have a different view of the world after the war.

"By the 1960s, Yuri Kochiyama actively advocated for civil rights causes like Black integration, the anti-war movement, and reparations for Japanese Americans from the government," according to writer Natasha Ishak. She and her husband "moved to a low-income housing project in Harlem, New York," according to Brown University. "There, the Kochiyama family spent time at the Harlem Freedom School (part of a grassroots organization advocating for safer streets and integrated education, which Kochiyama took part in) learning about Black history and listening to Black speakers, writers, and activists."

The family "shared a community with renowned black activists such as Sonia Sanchez, Bill Epton, and Paul Robeson," according to Ishak. They "lodged advocates who needed a safe place to sleep," and their apartment in Harlem was soon dubbed 'the grand central station' by local activists, according to Ishak. Known as "Sister Yuri" in a wide circle of African American activists, which included poet Amiri Baraka and activist Angela Davis, Kochiyama continued to speak out even more against racism, according to Woo. She and her husband even used a summer vacation in 1963 to visit Birmingham, Alabama "to see charred houses and storefronts left behind by racial protests," as well as the 16th Street Baptist Church weeks before a bombing there killed four black girls, according to writer Hansi Lo Wang.

On October 16, 1963, at a worker's rally, Malcolm and Yuri's paths would cross. By that time, Malcolm X was already a household name in the civil rights movement. Kochiyama at first "was hesitant to approach him, unsure how he would respond to an Asian-American woman," according to Arora. "Eventually, Yuri gained the courage to approach Malcolm." Kochiyama described the scene in a Democracy Now! interview in 2008, according to NPR: "I felt so bad that I wasn't Black, that this should be just a Black thing," she recalled. "But the more I see them all so happily shaking his hands and Malcolm so happy, I said, 'Gosh, darn it! I'm

going to try to meet him somehow.' " Eventually, Kochiyama called out to Malcolm X, "Can I shake your hand?" When he asked why, she replied, "To congratulate you for giving direction to your people." "Malcolm X smiled and extended his hand," wrote Wang. "She was immediately "overwhelmed by his charisma and his warmth," wrote Arora. No one knew at that time that a long-lasting friendship was born.

"She began to study his ideas and joined his Organization of Afro-American Unity; she also became a Muslim for a short time," wrote Woo. "He opened my mind, like opening a door to a new world. He helped me to start thinking, studying, listening, and observing and seeing contradictions," Kochiyama recalled.

On June 6, 1964, Kochiyama hosted a meeting for Hiroshima atomic bomb survivors (Hibakusha) and peace advocates at her home. The group had toured a Black school and church in Harlem, but what they really wanted to do was meet the famous Malcolm X. That's when Malcolm X showed up at Kochiyama's door. Connecting civil rights with human rights, Malcolm X told the group: "You have been scarred by the atomic bomb. You just saw that we have also been scarred. The bomb that hit us was racism." "It was really just overwhelming and everybody was quite excited about him," Kochiyama said. "The Hibakushas asked that the translators not interfere once Malcolm got started...I think people were quite surprised at all the things that he said."

Malcolm and Kochiyama would continue their friendship, with Malcolm X even sending her postcards whenever he traveled outside the country.

On Feb. 21, 1965, Malcolm X would speak at New York City's Audubon Ballroom, according to NPR. "That Sunday afternoon, gunmen killed Malcolm X moments after he approached the podium." "Most of the audience in the ballroom fell to the ground after the gunfire, crawling away for safety," wrote Wang. But "one of the first people who rushed to his side was a petite Asian woman in glasses," wrote Woo. It was Yuri Kochiyama, who had attended the event, to support her friend. "I just picked up his head and just put it on my lap," Kochiyama said in the Democracy Now! interview. "I said, 'Please, Malcolm! Please, Malcolm! Stay alive!'"



The moment was immortalized in a photo in Life magazine in 1965. "She's the unidentified Asian woman peering worriedly through horn-rimmed glasses at a soon-to-be lifeless Malcolm X," wrote Wang.

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AAPI Contributions: Yuri Kochiyama

(continue on page 3)

"After the murder of Malcolm X, Kochiyama launched herself even further into political activism," wrote Arora. "Her NYC home became a weekly meeting place for Freedom Riders and other activists (eventually welcoming a young Tupac Shakur into the mix)." She remained close with his family after his death" wrote Ishak. Malcolm X's views "continued to heavily influence Kochiyama's own activism within the Asian American community long after."

"Kochiyama's friendship with Malcolm X fascinated playwright Tim Toyama, who wrote a one-act play called "Yuri and Malcolm X," according to NPR. "Malcolm X's movement was probably the last thing you would imagine a Japanese-American person, especially a woman, to be involved with," he says. But, according to Van Jones of CNN, their friendship wasn't unique. There is a long history of the Asian-American and Black communities supporting one another.

Jones lists Frederick Douglass advocating for Chinese and Japanese immigration; Ida B. Wells empathizing with Filipino freedom fighters during the Philippine-American War; Chinese American activist Grace Lee Boggs mentoring generations of young leaders, especially African American ones; Muhammad Ali speaking out against the Vietnam War; Gloria Lum and other Asian Americans working to free Black political prisoners; Jesse Jackson joining Asian American activists demanding justice for the murder of Vincent Chin; and Asian Americans supporting Black Lives Matter.

Yuri Kochiyama remained a "lifelong activist, fighting for social justice and human rights from the 1960s until her passing in 2014," according to Brown University.

"She remained active into her 90s, often encouraging youths to become politically involved," wrote Woo. "After meeting her, the hip-hop duo Blue Scholars wrote a song about her. 'When I grow up,' the lyrics go, 'I wanna be just like Yuri Kochiyama. And if she ever hear this it's an honor.' She "fought against the racial profiling of Arabs,

Muslims, and South Asians post- 9/11," and in peace vigil rally in 2001, she spoke about how Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians were increasingly becoming the "newest targets of racism, hysteria, and jingoism."

In 2005, she was one of 1,000 women collectively nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize through the "1,000 Women for the Nobel Peace Prize 2005" project. On June 6, 2014, the White House honored Kochiyama on its website for dedicating "her life to the pursuit of social justice, not only for the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community, but all communities of color." "She was not your typical Japanese American person..." said Toyama. "She was definitely ahead of her time, and we caught up with her." But, she will be forever remembered for her friendship with Malcolm X.

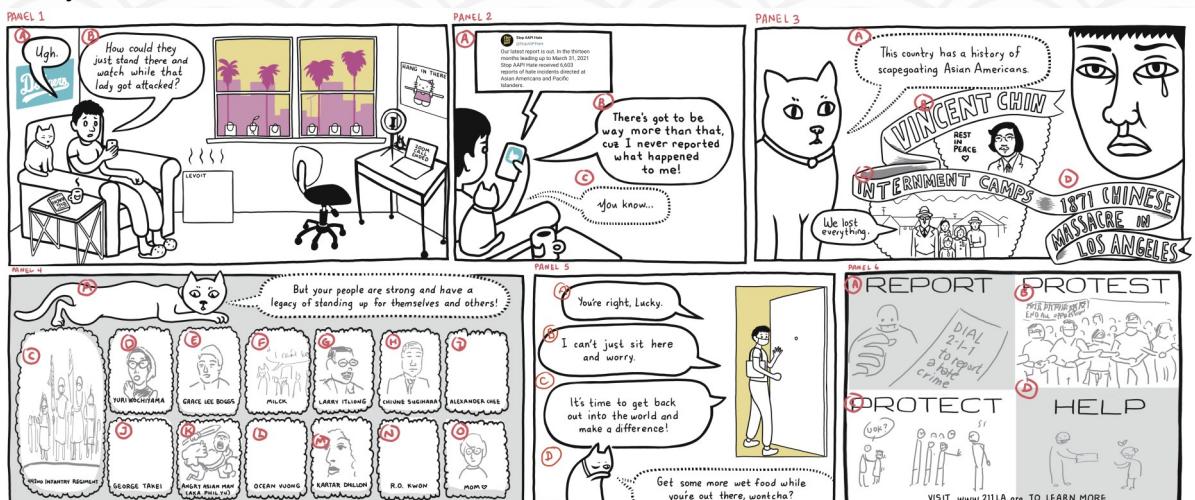
"Yuri and Malcolm's unique bond forever changed the course of history," wrote Arora. "Despite [their] differences, their friendship transcended the boundaries of race, class and public recognition." "He certainly changed my life," Kochiyama said in a 1972 interview for KPFK radio.

"Kochiyama's lifetime illustrates her dedication to solidarity and understanding, as she says, the 'togetherness of all peoples,' according to Brown University. "Kochiyama pushes us to 'fight against racism and polarization [and] learn from each others' struggle'." Her "dedication to social causes, in the Asian American community and in support of other groups who have been discriminated against, will continue to inspire younger generations of activists long after her death," wrote Ishak. When she was asked what legacy she hoped to leave behind, she responded, "Build bridges, not walls."

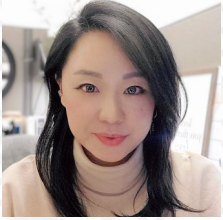
Jon S. Randal is a writer, whose "The Jon S. Randal Peace Page" on Facebook features stories which share awareness of events in history, pop culture, and literature and celebrates individuals, known and unknown, past and present, whose words and courage foster understanding and promotes peace. The mission of the Peace Page is to educate, inform, and bring people together. As he has done with Black History Month and Women's History Month, this month the page will honor Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month.

LA vs Hate to Unveil Anti-Hate Artwork by Asian American Artist

On May 27th, LA County Board of Supervisors Chair Hilda Solis (First District Supervisor) joined the LA County Human Relations Commission, anti-hate activists, and community organizations to unveil a large public art piece. This 10x20 foot graphic novel, designed by renowned local artist Mari Naomi, depicts the history and many contributions of the AAPI community to LA County, the contemporary targeting of AAPI residents due to COVID-related backlash, the journey from hate to healing, and the need for advocacy to ensure solidarity and inclusion for all.



Meet Our New Committee Chairs



ELIZABETH HAHN | CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Elizabeth recently joined Internal Services Dept. as the Accounting Officer. Prior to, she served as the Accounting Manager and Executive Management Analyst at the Office of the Assessor. She previously worked as a Budget Analyst for the Board of Supervisors, with 6 previous years of experience in Operations at the Public Social Services Dept. and 5 years at Wilshire State Bank.

Elizabeth is on the Advisory Boards with the LA County Economic Development, Center for a Competitive Workforce Regional Program-Accounting and the Citrus College Business Dept.-Accounting Program. She has a rich cultural background and is fluent in Korean and Russian. She was born an Angeleno to immigrant parents from South Korea but raised in Kazakhstan. She enjoys camping and road trips with her husband and three kids. Her passion is to help others in reaching their potential and meeting the needs of the community.

DIANE PARK | SOCIAL EVENTS

Diane is our Social Events chair. She has been with LA County for five years. Currently, she is a Management Fellow with DPSS. Though she hasn't been able to do so lately, she loves going on food adventures, exploring new bars and restaurants for fun. She also enjoys meeting new people, whether virtually or in-person.

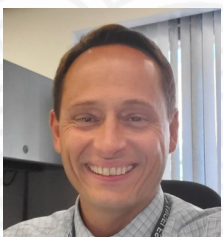


PETER LUONG | SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Peter is this year's scholarship chair. He is currently a management assistant in DPW and has been part of the Vietnamese youth group for over 15 years. Peter strongly believes in helping and mentoring the youth to be our bright future leaders.

ROBERT ISOZAKI | MEMBERSHIP RECRUITMENT COMMITTEE

Robert currently works as a Special Assistant in Public Affairs at the Assessor's Office. He started working in the Assessor's Legal Services Section in 2017, first as an Assistant Property Assessment Specialist and then later as a Property Assessment Specialist. Shortly after starting with the County, he joined LACAAEA as a general member. He currently serves as the Membership Recruitment Committee chair. He enjoys running and golfing, and is a big movie buff.



NEMANJA PAVLOVIC | WEB CONTENT AND NEWSLETTER CHAIR

Nemanja works for the Assessor Office's Legal Services since 2018. He has earned his LL.B. from the University of Belgrade School of Law and his LL.M. from University of San Francisco School of Law. A member of the New York State Bar, Nemanja is also a Veteran who retired from the US Army as Behavioral Health Non-Commissioned Officer with the penchant for team building, training and process improvement and optimization. Nemanja is an avid marksman, cyclist and chess player. He is married and has two children.

Supporting Local AAPI Businesses Doing Some Good!

Wolfies Hot Chicken

www.wolfieshotla.com

5050 York Blvd. Highland Park, Los Angeles



Owned by Chef Richard Chang, his wife Janelle Hu, and their friend Jason Eisner, Wolfies is a vegan fried chicken shop in Highland Park.

Richard grew up with three sisters, though he was the only kid in the kitchen helping his mother, who was proud of her eager rice maker and seaweed toaster. After stints in teaching and business, Richard's true fulfillment comes from becoming a father and enjoying how his sons devour the delicious meals he prepares for them. Their happiness encourages his journey to share his culinary passion with others, which has veered toward the vegan end of the spectrum after experiencing a life-threatening heart attack in 2017.



By day, Janelle serves as a Development Director for Asian Americans Advancing Justice, LA, one of the nation's largest civil rights and legal services community-based nonprofits. By night, she brings her 20 years of campaign, project management, policy-making, and fundraising skills to oversee the administration and operations of Wolfies, which is committed to partnerships with organizations like Support + Feed to positively impact the climate crisis and combat food insecurity by providing plant-based meals to underserved communities throughout Southern California.



Next month the team will also be opening the first of its kind, vegan sports bar in LA (close to Wolfies).

If you know of another small business doing good that is worthy of mention so that we can feature them in our next newsletter, please email jchen.lacaaea@gmail.com.



Meet a County Leader:

Robin Toma
Executive Director,
Human Relations
Commission

Why did you choose to work for LA County?

I was recruited to the Human Relations Commission by the then-Executive Director, Ron Wakabayashi, and then-Asst. Exec. Director Carol Lu. At the time, I was an ACLU staff attorney and a Kellogg National Leadership Program fellow. They convinced me that my interest in human rights and organizing diverse communities to work together for their rights, civil liberties and common goals was something I could pursue at the Commission. And do it from the government side. I found out they were right. Protecting everyone’s human rights isn’t just what government should be forced to do; it should be a top priority.

What advice would you give to someone starting out?

Be open to unexpected opportunities and challenges, and recognize there is always room to learn more, to develop personally and professionally. Let your values and principles be your guide. Assume the best about people, resist snap judgments. Forgive, even if you can’t forget. And be aware of your implicit biases, your unconscious prejudices, and account for them before you make your final decisions.

What’s the biggest factor that has helped you be successful in your career? What are your success habits?

I’d say my ability to appreciate the privilege I enjoy in being able to have a job that is about my passion for justice and fairness, especially for the underdog, the disadvantaged. That puts things in perspective and not sweat the small stuff. As for success habits, the “7 Habits of Highly Effective People” and “First Things First”, have influenced me, although I’m still very challenged to have successfully incorporated all of them.

Whose career inspires you and why?

One example is David Janssen, former LA County CAO, who was impressive in the positive and deep changes he brought about as CAO...I was a new department head at the time, watching him do it, as he led the department head meetings and initiatives.

If you weren’t an Executive Director for LA County, what career would you like to explore?

I could’ve easily continued my short stint as a public school teacher (if I hadn’t decided to go to law school); a lawyer in the international court of justice; a sports instructor, or an astronaut (my childhood dream).

What personality trait should every leader have?

Being mission-driven, compassionate and a team-builder.

What was the hardest decision you’ve had to make?

To pursue the ethical path, even at the risk of my

job. How do you push through your worst times? With help from my work family, personal family, and trusted friends who care about me.

What mistakes have you made along the way?

Too many to state – like choosing Plan E and not D when I first started. But seriously, I have made many, sometimes not being courageous enough to speak the truth to those with a lot of power. If you could start all over again, what would you do differently? I would find a way to do that when it mattered.

Have you personally experienced any form of discrimination as an Asian American?

When I was a kid in elementary school, I was recruited to do commercials. But it took a long time to get a job, which I think is due to the fact that I didn’t fit the typical demographic of the kids they were looking for – white, and occasionally black. Asian kids were uncommon on TV commercials in those days, unless they were Chinese food chefs, martial arts masters, or another caricature. Of course, like most Asians, I’ve been told to “go back to where you came from!” by total strangers in public. And I was with my family getting out of the car to attend a PTA luncheon honoring my mother when a white kid on a bike rode by shouting “Japs! Get out of here!” reflecting the anti-Japanese/anti-Asian sentiment that resulted in the hate murder of Vincent Chin in the 1980s.

In light of the rise in AAPI hate crimes that are occurring in our community, what are some (or one thing) our community can do as a response?

Do something to help others who are targeted for hate and racism. If you are a victim, make sure you report it to 211 and/or 911, but don’t suffer in silence. But respond in a way that promotes respect, dignity and non-violence. We can’t fight hate with hate...it’ll only lead to more hate and violence. And join our countywide campaign: www.LAvsHate.org.

What is the best advice you can give LACAAEA and its membership?

My advice during this time of crisis, this test for our community, is to do what you’d be proud to tell your kids, grandkids, or just the next generation about how you responded to this historic period of racial violence and scapegoating of the Asian American and Pacific Islander communities.

Robin is Executive Director of the LA County Commission on Human Relations Commission, and Asst Director leading the Human Relations Branch of LA County’s WDACS. He also serves as President of the Int’l Assoc. of Official Human Rights Agencies, a Senior Fellow of UCLA’s Luskin School of Public Affairs, and is an appointee to the US Civil Rights Commission’s California Advisory Committee. A proud alumnus of Harvard’s Kennedy School of Gov’t’s Executive Session on Human Rights Commissions and Criminal Justice, as well as the Kellogg National Leadership program, Robin was honored to serve as an adviser/member of the 2010 Obama Administration’s delegation to the UN Human Rights Council in Geneva, and invited to serve on the official US Delegation to the UN World Conference Against Racism held in South Africa in 2001.

As a native Angeleno and ‘Sansei’ of Japanese with Okinawan ancestry, Robin grew up in the Echo Park/Silver Lake neighborhoods, attending public schools. He holds a BA with highest honors in Sociology and honors in Economics from UC Santa Cruz, and a Juris Doctor degree and MA in Urban Planning from UCLA. Robin is fluent in Spanish, lived in Barcelona, Spain for 2 years, and later taught in LA public schools. Prior to his County service, Robin was an ACLU staff attorney in LA for almost 7 years, and litigated a wide range of human rights and civil liberties cases.



PAST HIGHLIGHTS
March Distinguished Speaker Summary



Bill Fujioka
Former Chief Executive Officer of LA County

On March 30th, former Chief Executive Officer of LA County, Bill Fujioka shared his life experiences growing up in LA County, how he became involved in local government and management, memorable stories from his time as the Chief Executive Officer, his tips and insights for employees seeking promotions in government, and his thoughts and insights on how to address the rise of anti-Asian sentiments, attacks and hate crimes in this country. Click [here](#) to watch the recorded event.

April Distinguished Speakers Summary



Dr. D'Artagnan Scorza
Executive Director, Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI)



Hyepin Im
President/CEO and Founder of Faith and Community Empowerment (FACE)

On April 27th, LACAAEA invited Dr. D'Artagnan Scorza, Executive Director of LA County's Anti-Racism, Diversity, and Inclusion (ARDI) and

Hyepin Im, President./CEO and Founder of Faith and Community Empowerment (FACE) to discuss issues of discrimination and racism around minority communities. To view the entire recorded event, click [here](#).

Dr. Scorza shared his insights about LA County's work to address the rise of hate and violence in the AAPI/NHPI communities and strategies on how to incorporate ARDI's work countywide to help move towards an anti-racist future and institution. From his experience while traveling and serving in the Navy, it has been abundantly clear to him that no matter where we are there are always social disparities. Even as it relates to COVID-19 in LA County, the mortality rate of minorities is much higher than White counterparts. The pandemic has also exasperated food insecurities and poverty not only among Black and Latino communities, but also among AAPI communities. These economical, educational, and health disparities are structural in nature, but we do not often understand how we got here.

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| Declare that racism is a matter of public health in Los Angeles County | Establish an eighth Board-directed priority to address the elimination of racism and bias in the County, develop a strategic plan & establish an organizational unit within the CEO | Evaluate existing County policies, practices, operations, and programs through a lens of racial equity |
| Assess existing policies, processes, and practices that may prevent African Americans from advancing within County departmental career ladders | Advance the strategies recommendations put forward by the Ad Hoc Committee for Black People Experiencing Homelessness | Commission an annual report on the State of Black Los Angeles County |
| Develop a funding plan in consultation with philanthropy and academia | Identify at least one Management Appraisal and Performance Plan (MAPP) goal each year that strengthens organizational capacity | Recommend and advocate for relevant legislative policies that improve outcomes and reduce racial disparities |

ARDI was established to help change the County's systems, organizational structures, policies and practices that exacerbate disparities and limit one's ability to make choices and manage their own lives. To learn more about ARDI's work, click [here](#).

As someone growing up in local churches, Hyepin witnessed how they are often called to the frontlines to serve in crisis intervention. Hyepin's experience

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LA County Board Motions in Support of AAPIs

As anti-Asian hate crimes are on the rise, It is now more important than ever for us to unite in solidarity and fight back against the issues endangering our communities. Actions from our leaders will bring awareness to the discriminations that AAPIs are suffering and educate the public on preventing hate crimes from happening. LACAAEA has written letters supporting all of the board motions put forth by the LA County Board of Supervisors:

July 21, 2020

Establish a county-wide Anti-Racist Policy

April 6, 2021

Direct ARDI to lead workgroup to recommend how the County can address the rise and continuation of hate and violence directed towards AAPI/NHPI communities and identify artistic and cultural opportunities

May 4, 2021

Stem anti-Asian hate during AAPI -Heritage Month and direct DHR to explore bystander intervention training

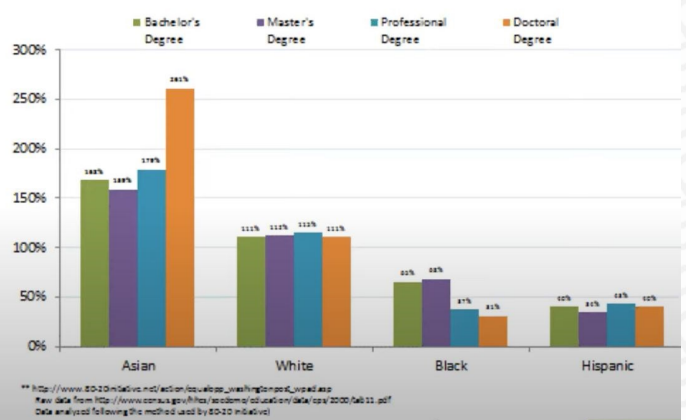
May 18, 2021

Recognize Asian Pacific American Heritage Month Honorees

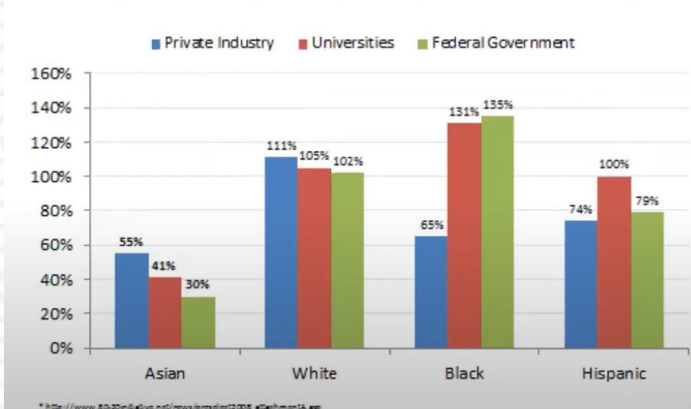
April Distinguished Speaker Summary *(continue on page 7)*

and involvement has led her to successfully establish FACE. Some of the organization's initiatives include advocacy work, provide training and networking to churches and other nonprofits, and financial literacy and homeownership programs. As a prominent community leader, she's also had the opportunity to be included in the decision-making room of The White House. Many times, Hyepin has found herself the only AAPI to be invited and has learned that AAPIs are always missing on stage, and in statistics figures, and talking points. Consequently, the lack of AAPI representation has others telling our stories.

Asians have the Highest Percentage of Population with the Highest Attained Degree, as Compared with the National Average**



Asians Have the Lowest Percentage Chance to Rise to Management Level, as Compared by the National Average*



Hyepin discussed the consequences of the model minority myth. Studies have shown Asians have the highest population with the highest attained degree; however, Asians have the lowest chance to rise to management level. This can be attributed to the model minority myth resulting in very little investment on mentorship/guidance and workforce development for Asians. Hyepin also shared other information that are contrary and consequential to the model minority myth, such as homeownership and the criminal justice system.

Partner with LACAAEA

LACAAEA will continue to work with leaders of the AAPI non-profits and the County to advocate for the AAPI community and the County's employees. Help us in our effort:

- Become an ally. Subscribe to our email notifications, connect with us on Facebook or LinkedIn to receive events announcements, and subscribe to our new YouTube channel.
- Whether you're a former or current County employee or an ally, join our membership so that you can provide your unique voice and perspective on AAPI matters.
- We're looking for help in event organizing, social media, writers, and graphic artists. If interested, please email jchen.lacaaea@gmail.com.

Targeted Racism Towards AAPIs

March 19, 2020 - August 5, 2020

- 3,800 as of 3/2021
- Race was the primary reason suspected for discrimination. Although Chinese were the ethnic group most targeted.
- 60% of the respondents were non-Chinese.
- One of seven of targets were under the age of 20 (14%)
- 7.5% of targets identify as elderly

www.asianpacificpolicyandplanningcouncil.org

Hyepin also addressed the growing hate crime against AAPIs due to the pandemic and the lack of government support. Based on a study from the Center for Study of Hate and Extremism, there has been a 150% increase in Anti-Asian discrimination throughout the US, 200% increase in LA County, and 833% increase in NYC. Consequently, the increase in Asian hate crimes has also negatively impacted Asian American's mental health, local businesses, and livelihood. AAPIs also have the highest COVID-19 Fatality Rate in LA County, which is four times higher than the overall population. Despite this alarming information, elected officials were not highlighting these issues or reaching out to the AAPI communities. The silver lining to the rise in anti-Asian hate has led to the passage of the COVID -19 Hate Crimes Act by both the House and Senate and signed into law by President Joe Biden.



LACAAEA'S Career Workshop

Back by popular demand, on April 17th, LACAAEA invited experts from the Department of Human Resources (DHR), Damian Cousin, Elia Cervantes, Gionne Bozzi presented on preparing for the County's civil service exams, building strong resumes and developing career through Career PathFinder. Click [here](#) to access this recording.

Welcome New LACAAEA Members

Jennifer De La Cuesta
Department of Mental Health

Julie Ogata Valles
Executive Office of the Board of Supervisors

Jun Yan
Treasurer and Tax Collector

Rachel Schmeidler
Auditor-Controller

Zhengyang Gong
Office of the Assessor