

INSPIRATIONAL STORIES

**YOU
CAN
ACHIEVE
IT**



Civic Education Alliance

A motivational poster with a green and yellow color scheme. The background features a bright sunburst effect in the upper right, with rays of light extending across the sky. On the left, a dark silhouette of a tree stands against the light. The text 'YOU CAN ACHIEVE IT' is written in a bold, green, sans-serif font, positioned in the center-right of the image. The overall mood is inspirational and hopeful.

**YOU
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A STORY OF SUCCESS AND GIVING BACK

C.C. Yin

China-US / Chinese Community Leaders

By QIDONG ZHANG in San Francisco (China Daily USA) Updated: 2014-05-30

C.C. Yin immigrated to the United States in 1964 when he was 28. He had \$100 in his pocket, barely spoke any English and knew practically nothing about America. What he did have was entrepreneurial spirit.

Now, half a century later, he and his family own 32 McDonald's in 12 California cities, and he is the founder of the Asian Pacific Islander Public Affairs Association (APAPA), a grassroots non-profit organization that aims to empower Asian and Pacific Islander (API) Americans in civic and public affairs through education, active participation and leadership development.

When he landed in the US, Yin had a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Taiwan Cheng Kung University, which he soon found insufficient in seeking a career. He pursued a master's degree in civil engineering at the University of Washington, married his wife Regina and settled down in the San Francisco Bay Area in 1969.

After working as an engineer for 18 years, that entrepreneurial spirit led him to purchase his first McDonald's in 1984 in Oakland. It was a rough start because the restaurant was in one of the toughest neighborhood in the Bay Area. The experience, however, gave him a "jump start" in understanding American politics.

"As a business owner in a tough neighbourhood, I realized I had to connect with local community, city government, the police staff and individuals, whether they were African Americans, Hispanics, Caucasians, Vietnamese, Korean, Chinese or Filipino. I also sought help whenever needed from local Chamber of Commerce, city planning department, and the police, which was really an eye-opening experience for me to get to know American society," said Yin.

The founding of APAPA was triggered by a call in 2000 from 40 Asian-American leaders in Sacramento, asking for Yin's advice about their concern that after 150 years of Asian-American history in California, there were no API state-elected officials.

"I was very much alarmed by the fact that Chinese and Asian community population was growing at such speed, but there was no leadership representing us in the US government, let alone no decision-making participation," he said. "So I jumped in with the idea of founding APAPA, which was aimed at providing a platform and pipeline to empower Asians Americans for political power. By 2009 we had 15 Asian Americans elected to legislative and constitutional offices; now we have 17, seven in constitutional, two in senate and eight in assemblies."

Describing his life in the last 50 years as covering three segments — an engineer, McDonald's owner and a political movement promoter — Yin said he has dedicated himself to promote the importance of political awareness and civic engagement for Asian Americans and new Asian immigrants in the last decade.

"In order to promote civic engagement to build political empowerment for Asian Americans, the first thing we did was calling for unity: whether it was people from Korea, Vietnam or China, as long as you are Asian, you belong to our group. The second thing we did was to connect grassroots across the nation. We tried to change the culture of Chinese American immigrants from being good workers to also being good civic government candidates. We built our grassroot from city to city, town to town for political network, since all American politics start in every town and every city," he said.

APAPA focused on three areas to reach this goal: voter registration, voter education and voter support.

Yin said that APAPA founders and board members have been teaching Asian Americans how to vote, whom to vote for and why, and organizing them to vote. Leadership programs are offered at high school, college and professional levels.

"American democracy is very complicated, but if you look at it closely, the political and economic power is all local. The 50 states are like 50 countries; their laws are independent and different. If we want to participate in American politics, we have to follow laws locally to place our candidates into the system, whether it's a school board, commissioner or state assembly member," he said.

"We educate them through town hall meetings, media and interns that go out to educate them. Now from universities to local communities we have voter pipeline, appointment pipeline, leadership pipeline. We are still learning, but three pipelines have provided the essential foundation for the entire Asian-American political movement," said Yin.

APAPA has three chapters in Southern California, three in Northern California, one each at UC Berkeley and UC Davis and one each in Florida, New York and Texas.

In the 13 years since its founding in 2001, APAPA has more than 20,000 volunteers and 200 active leaders across the country. In the San Francisco Bay Area, the leaders include Albert Wang, Bay Area region chair; Joe Wong, Henry Yin, Cheng Liao and National Honorary Chairs Hsing Kung, Sandy Chau, Ken Fong and Johnnie Giles.

"We support C100 (Committee of 100) which deals with the high level US-China relationship. We work with 80-20, the voting group which mainly reaches educated people, and we also work with numerous other organization for alliance," said Yin.

Yin was born in Renshou County, Sichuan province in China, and he moved to Taiwan when he was 12 in 1949. He said his passion has always been being an organizer for people with common interest. Next month, an estimated 300 APAPA members will gather at his home in Vacaville, California, for an annual gathering.

"My mother died when I was only six months old. I experienced WWII, the Japanese invasion of China, a broken family, and relocation from place to place in my childhood and youth," he said. "My survival skill was to network with friends and work with people of differences. I consider myself very lucky being where I am at today, and I am very thankful to this country. I want to give back to the society by helping other Asian Americans with similar backgrounds become successful in this country."

Yin said that today's Chinese immigrants are very different from his generation.

"They are well prepared and educated. A platform like APAPA can help put everyone together through its network, since the young generation of immigrants are really the brightest and best. The world will become a better place if we can all work together to build a better country here and have more influence in decision making in both US and China."

Yin, however, predicts that the road to a more prestigious political stage for Asian Americans is still years ahead. Asians have to learn to work on a common ground, he said.

"I believe Chinese can learn well. One hundred years ago, we didn't believe in science. Look at us now. Chinese are among the best scientists and engineers in the world. If Chinese learn about the American political system, they will become the best, too. We already have many successful political professionals in America: former Labor Secretary Elaine L. Chao, former US Secretary of Energy Steven Chu, former Washington State governor and US Ambassador to China Gary Locke, and now Judy Chu, the first Chinese-American woman elected to Congress."

"Collaboration, alliance and grassroots are the key words we need to keep in mind when it comes to American politics for Chinese and Asian Americans," said Yin.





**Supreme Judicial Court
Justice Fernande R.V. Duffly**

**Remarks of Supreme Judicial Court Justice Fernande R.V. Duffly
American Bar Association's Commission on Women in the Profession
Annual Meeting 2015 Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement
Award August 2, 2015**

When I immigrated to this country at the age of six, I spoke no English, which was challenging for a talkative child. Talk of America permeates my earliest memories growing up in the Netherlands, my parent's first stop as refugees fleeing an anti-Chinese political regime in Indonesia, where I was born.

My parents came to America because they believed that, here, anyone who worked hard enough could achieve their dreams. As author Claire Messud writes, where we came from "there ceased to be room, or words, or air; only here was breathing possible." I stand here because of my mother Kiong Tien Vandenberg, who is here, and my father Bastiaan. I also thank Paul, my husband of 46 years, who never questioned my choices.

Our daughter Kate arrived after speaking about diversifying college theater programs; Mieke and Tom also promote diversity, through performance, education and food. My nephew Bastiaan, a rising 3L, is committed to equal justice, as is Kate's husband, attorney Zack Duffly. This is for them and for all our children.

My parents left most of what they had behind, they expected that my father would find work when they arrived in Oregon in 1956. They did not expect to arrive in a deep recession or that he would lose his job at the lumber mill, which soon closed. My father bought a bus ticket with their last few dollars and traveled down the California coast until he found a job in Oxnard, at a frozen food plant. But there was no money left and my parents had no way to travel to that town. Mary Eastman ran a nursery school from her home, where my younger siblings stayed free of charge. Mary was a member of the church that sponsored us, locating housing and providing food; she later became a missionary to Indonesia. Mary gave us her car so that we could continue our journey.

We traveled at night, stopping at a park by day so my father could sleep, until we reached the small agricultural community that would remain our home until his death.

After years of hard work and financial struggle, my family achieved modest success. We moved across the tracks to a house with four bedrooms, which we shared with my mother's parents who had recently joined us.

For me, the measure of our success came in the form of a car my father bought for my use when I turned 16. I drove friends to school and the beach in that car, and you can imagine how much I loved it.

One day, the local paper reported that a family traveling through town searching for work became stranded when their car broke down. The next day, the paper reported that an anonymous donor had delivered a car - my car - with the title and an encouraging note.

I did not then fully appreciate the lesson of this act of generosity, an act that would be repeated in many forms by my parents over the years, but I came to understand and eventually embody their principles:

Follow your dreams, be willing to work hard to achieve them; if you don't succeed, try again, and again; accept help when you must; when you do succeed, remember that no success is achieved alone, and the help you received is a debt that must be repaid.

I could stop here. My father lived long enough to see me sworn in as a judge on the trial court, and my mother was present when I became the first Asian American Justice of our Supreme Judicial Court. I saw what a powerful tool for change a law degree could be, and thank my partners at Warner & Stackpole for giving me good assignments and supporting my interest in becoming a judge. I am grateful to them for the opportunity to serve as a judge and act as a role model to young lawyers. Without these mentors, and teachers before them, I would not be receiving this most humbling recognition.

But the story cannot end here, because despite my personal success, our profession remains stubbornly immune to our individual and collective efforts to diversify it.

Although my law school class was over 80% white male, I believed it would be only a matter of time before our profession would be fully diverse, and law partnerships, public interest positions, law schools and the judiciary would reflect our nation's diversity. In well over three decades since graduating from law school, and despite increasing percentages of women and people of color who have earned law degrees since then, there has been only glacial progress. NALP's June Bulletin reports that only 17% of equity partners are women and only 5.6% are racial and ethnic minorities. Last month the New York Times reported on a study that showed 95 percent of elected state and local prosecutors across the country are white, and 79 percent are white men.

I have an immigrant's love of this country and an American lawyer's deeply felt obligation to protect the individual rights and responsibilities our Constitution guarantees. What I am therefore most grateful for are the opportunities I have had to use the power of my role, as lawyer and judge, to speak out, mentor and teach, and to collaborate with others, including those in this room, to change these unacceptable statistics.

I thank the American Bar Association for honoring me with the Brent award, and each of you for your commitment to this work, for every time you have hired and advanced a woman and person of color; considered whether implicit bias may have caused you to overlook a candidate; for your mentoring and participation in programs that teach leadership skills; for changing your firm's employment practices.

I thank my colleagues on the Supreme Judicial Court for their support. I especially thank my friends at the National Association of Women Judges, National Asian Pacific Bar Association, the ABA's Commission on Women in the Profession, Catalyst and the Consortium for Advancing Women Lawyers, for using your collective voices and for never, never, never giving up.





Connie C. Dai, JD, MBA

I was born in Shanghai to parents who were both teachers. I grew up in an environment where disciplines, responsibilities and passion to help have been instilled as the utmost personal value. When I was in the middle school, one day I heard on the radio that a former soldier from the countryside was seeking donation from others to rebuild his humble house destroyed by flood. I was just awarded 300 Chinese Yuan (at the time the average monthly wage in Shanghai was about 500 Chinese Yuan) for winning a writing competition. Not giving it a second thought, I went straight to the radio station to donate the money to the soldier. The following day, the reporter came to interview me. He asked what motivated me to donate that money, my answer was "he really needs it, and I have it".

Thanks to being a child of parents who would educate others all day long, I have developed a desire and ability to advocate and speak for others. I was once the chief-in-editor for the student newspaper in Shanghai University where I attended undergraduate program. This newspaper, served the population of 20,000 students, was solely operated by a team of volunteer students with no involvement of any faculties. For the newspaper was to be the voice for our constituents, I urged all the volunteer reporters to identify and write about what were on students' mind and what positive changes they would like to see. As a result, subscription to the paper had significantly increased, and that school had also changed some of its policies which would be more accommodating and welcomed by students. And it was the time that I began to realize my potential to touch people's life and help make it better.

I immigrated to Canada with my husband Phillip when I was 26 years old. With all our savings, which was about 10,000 Canadian Dollar, in our pocket, we landed in Calgary. Despite having decent white collar jobs in Shanghai – me as a legal assistant with Coca-Cola China and Phillip as a Finance Manager for Danone China, our first jobs were minimum wage retail help. I was a counter help at a Dairy Queen store in a mall. Phillip was a night shift hamburger flipper at Burger King. As we later would joke about it with Isabel and Charlie, our daughter and son, that daddy and mommy were once Queen and King in Canada. In a few weeks, I managed to get a temp job as an office assistant at Shell Canada. It didn't take me long to realize that without a higher North American education, I would not have had a job that required independent thinking, judgment and enabled me to use my knowledge to help others. I pursued an M.B.A. degree.

While studying at University of Calgary in Canada, I sought to be a freelance reporter with Radio Canada International's Chinese Language Department. I was free to select any newsworthy topics, frame questions, conduct interviews, write and broadcast stories. I was intimidated at first even to pick up a phone to make a cold call worrying people would not understand my English. But I forced myself to immerse in this exercise. I interacted more with people from a diversified ethnical and professional background in a more tactical and culturally adaptive way. I also enhanced my level of understanding of many social, economic, and political issues, particularly those that involved immigration and minorities.

After graduation, I became a business consultant with a Government of Canada's contracted company running entrepreneurship workshops and programs for minority youths. Majority of the clients had been African and Hispanic heritage. It was through that job that I saw how smart and ambitious these youth were, but how limited resources that were made available to them to make their dream come true. I designed the workshops, identified facilitators (and sometimes I presented at the workshop myself), interviewed startups, edited their business plans, and ran their financial projection. Government of Canada was satisfied with our statistics and most importantly had seen less youths drop out of high school and wonder on the street, and more youths joining our program and kicking off their business. The contract continued for many years.

While in Boston, I again saw disconnection between minorities' desire to grow business and corporate purchaser's need to engage more minority businesses. Having moved from Toronto to Boston in 2006, for two years, I was working as a project manager for a nonprofit named Initiative for a New Economy. This organization was to provide consulting services to minority owned businesses and facilitate business engagement of these companies with large corporations in Greater Boston. It was through this role that I discovered how underrepresented that minority companies were in Boston and how little of them were selling products and services to large companies. They had good quality products, they had excellent customer service, what they lack was a voice to be heard by the government and potential corporate purchasers of their existence, their capabilities and an opportunity to create value to their customers. I compiled a database of over two hundred minority owned businesses in Greater Boston, selected about thirty of them whose products/services were highly sought by our corporate purchaser partners, interviewed, visited and really got to know them, then facilitated their engagement with corporate purchasers. A large number of these companies are still doing significant volume of business with the corporate purchasers as of today.

My decision to become a lawyer was made when my daughter was about 2 years old. I wanted to be empowered by law to bring my intellectual, desire to help and sense of responsibility to a higher level that would make opportunities to succeed for minorities as equal as it would be for all Americans. I graduated from law school at 38, which was traditionally an age for woman to start shifting their time and focus from job to family. For me, it was a new chapter in life. I would not forget about reading the cases on the notorious slow Green B line when commuting to work in financial district, law school at Park Street and home in Brookline. I also would not forget calling a cab from law school to the hospital when I was in labor for my second child. I managed to pass Massachusetts and New York bar exams in the first attempt - rushing between Albany and Boston in the hot July weather when my mother and husband were fighting over silly things for my 5 year and 1 year old. I was extremely proud of myself and my family that we had overcome all the barriers for me to finally embark a career that would get to use all the skills I had developed from my past life experience, as an interpreter, a reporter, a business consultant, a project manager, a negotiator, and as a wife and a mother.

I am a lawyer, and more an advocate. Throughout my legal practice, I identified particular needs in minority population as to insufficient knowledge and understanding of U.S. laws. A lot of immigrants lack the knowledge of their rights and obligations in the society, which often led to unnecessary misunderstanding of others, insecurity and lost opportunity to stand up for their rights and defend themselves. Although my practice is largely centered business and commercial in nature, in recent years, I found myself become more drawn to and began to pay attention to civic engagement in the community, and have dedicated more time to pro bono legal work to the community. I volunteered for Volunteer Lawyers Project representing employees fighting for their unemployment benefit. I sat on the board of Sharon Chinese Association. I was fortunate to be given the privilege to be pro bono counsel for organizations like Civic Education Alliance, Sharon Chinese Association, and Belmont Chinese American Association.

My enriched life trajectory, passion to help, and high sense of personal obligation have enabled me, and will continue to motivate me to become a contributor of real impact on encouraging more people to vote, to engage in civic activities and help develop leadership program for the young generation. I want to approach this new personal goal with the same commitment, perseverance, and positive attitude that I have lived by.



Jimmy Liang



Jimmy Liang is the founder and CEO of the JP Fuji Group, a company which operates nine Asian restaurants in the greater Boston area and a construction company. Smart CEO has awarded Jimmy the serial entrepreneur Boston's Future 50; South Shore Living has named him one of the 110 Most Influential People You Should Know; The Patriot Ledger has deemed Jimmy one of the 40 Stars Under 40, and Converse has featured him in its Global Exhibition campaign published in the Boston Business Journal. To top it off, Jimmy is one of the top sushi chefs in the country. None of this came easily.

Jimmy moved to the United States from China with his family when he was four years old. They came with nothing except their intelligence, determination, ambition and their belief that hard work and honesty would allow them to prosper. These were the attributes Jimmy's parents and grandparents instilled in him and these are the attributes that have allowed Jimmy to succeed. He discovered his passion for the culinary arts at a young age. After graduating from North Quincy High School, Jimmy soon became the head sushi chef at a local Chinatown restaurant. Jimmy, who has always watched and learned, decided that he had what it took to open his own restaurant. At 19, Jimmy, along with his best friend, opened Fuji Restaurant in Quincy, Fuji became an instant success; such a success that Fuji had to move to accommodate the number of customers that had to line up for the chance to try Jimmy's food. Jimmy then parlayed the success of his first restaurant into eleven more restaurants, thereby making Fuji the largest and best known Asian fusion restaurant group in New England with over 300 employees.


While Jimmy is grateful for his commercial success, the most important thing to Jimmy is giving back to the community. He serves on the Board of Directors for the South Shore YMCA. He also works with Father Bill on his annual Food Fest, which raises money to benefit organizations that helped homeless. This collaboration earned Jimmy the honor to serve as Chairman for the Taste of South Shore in 2016. In his efforts to provide and give back to the community, Jimmy continues to work with the Asia Outreach August

Moon Festival to raise money for charity and is also an event co-chair and donor for the Quincy Asian Resources Lunar New Year Festival. He is also founding member of the Boston chapter of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance. In addition, Jimmy has directed the Fuji Group to donate to more than 50 charities on an annual basis. Jimmy even ran for public office in Quincy, with the express intent of increasing Asian voter turnout, which he did by 223 percent! Further, as a result of his activities as an entrepreneur and his work with the community, Jimmy was asked to be on the Board of Directors of Eastern Bank; a position he currently holds.

The construction company run by Jimmy is active in both residential and commercial development, and has done all the restaurants' interiors for each one of the restaurants in the group.

Starting with nothing, but the desire to succeed and the lessons taught to him by his parents and grandparents, Jimmy Liang has come a long way. His story is one that should motivate anyone with a dream.





**EVEN
THE SKY
IS NOT
A LIMIT**

Angel Wei

I always tell my friends, if I didn't come to America at the age of 16, I wouldn't be who I am today. I came to Seattle in 2011, the evergreen state, where I learnt appreciation. What differs American high school education to Chinese high school education is the emphasize on community volunteer engagement. Through volunteer work, not only can I as a high school student take apart in the social responsibility, but also learnt the sense of appreciation. Appreciation towards friendship, family, and opportunity. With the prestigious opportunity, I went to Boston to study bachelor degree in economics, where I learnt independence. While pursuing research, study and community services, I planned my academic schedule to graduate and coordinate school community events, such as volunteer in Haiti high school during spring break. With independence, I fulfill my promise to make the most out of the current stage. I studied and worked abroad in Germany and the U.K. During my last semester, I went to Washington DC for an internship with the Voice of America, where I witnessed the political network, where government impacts highly to the social environment. With the gained skills, international horizon and strong ability to learn, I devote to work on sustained action to meet the global challenge and to ensure a peaceful and sustainable future for all. In the Big Apple, I engage highly in the social network and promise myself to achieve the greater good. In the United Nations, I was lucky to be selected to support the General Assembly 2016. Being engaged in the world-changing conferences, I find my ambition and purpose in making a positive impact on the world's key issues. Women in the labor market on average still earn a quarter less than men globally. I value gender equality strongly and put efforts in studying economic growth and sustainable development. New York puts global engagement and international horizon in my DNA. I will study my master degree in international educational development at Columbia University in the city of New York. Tackling root causes and doing more to integrate the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development is my goal throughout my master study. Now, experiences have trained me and made me a competitive young individual in quantitative economic research, statistical analysis, proficiency in digital communication, and public outreach. The skills which I can apply to devote myself to peace, development and the greater good of mankind. It is an adventure from the west coast to the east coast, from the evergreen state to the empire state, but I stay as an ambitious dream chaser. Once you step on a higher stage, you see a broader view. Endeavor! The sky is not a limit, but the next stage.





Rob Sheppard

Senior Director of Adult Programs

I'm not really sure if my story is inspirational, or if there's anything to be learned from it, but here goes: I was born in Hull, a small town without much diversity and where opportunity was limited. My parents and grandparents hadn't gone to college but worked hard to give me the opportunity to do so. I hadn't been the best student in high school, but I was fortunate in college to find some friends who cared about academics and arts. I got involved in some extracurricular and found that I took a lot of satisfaction in creating things and working on creative projects with teams of like-minded people. Recognizing that was really important to me in the long run.

After college I did a gap year in Korea teaching English to kids in after-school programs. After that year and some backpacking, the plan was to come back and go to law school. That had been the plan for most of college. I came home, got another job teaching English, took the LSATs, got my recommendations, and was ready to click submit. But then I realized I was already happy. I was already doing something I loved, working with people from around the world, making a difference that gave me satisfaction. My friends were making more money than me, but I had the strong suspicion that few of them could say that they truly loved what they were doing.

So I stuck with teaching for a few more years, got my master's and eventually took on more responsibility and different leadership roles within the field. I've done some research and professional development, written some articles. I really love teaching, and have found that there's plenty of room in the general field to explore all the different facets without getting bored. I still don't make as much as my friends who are doctors and lawyers, but I also think that I'm happier than a lot of them. If there's any piece of advice I'd want to give, it's to conceptualize success not in financial terms, but in terms of happiness and satisfaction, surrounding yourself with people you care about and immersing yourself in work that you feel passionate about.





Vatsady Sivongxay

Hi, I'm Vatsady Sivongxay (VAT-sa-dee SI-VUNG-sigh), an attorney, community advocate, mother, and refugee immigrant. I'm a progressive Democrat running for Cambridge City Council with a commitment to increasing equitable access to opportunities for all Cambridge residents.

My passion to serve is rooted in my background. When I was two years old, my parents and I secretly fled Laos to escape unrest in the aftermath of the Vietnam War. We sought shelter at refugee camps in Thailand and the Philippines. I attended school on a dirt floor and lined up for food rations. Being forcibly displaced, not knowing our rights or whether we would be safe, and we felt so vulnerable. You can imagine our relief when we found out that we would get to come to the United States.

Life as a refugee immigrant family wasn't all easy though. In Laos, my father was a school principal and my mother was a nurse, but they were now janitors and factory workers, taking on side jobs to make ends meet. My earliest memory of how little we had was when I asked my father to buy me a three-dollar Scholastic schoolbook, and he said no. I vividly remember his torn expression, realizing that he was being asked to decide between buying a small book to fill his daughter's mind or putting food on the table to fill her belly. Truly understanding our financial situation for the first time, I cried myself to sleep, only to be later awoken by my father's warm hug and tearful apology. He had decided to buy me that book.

I know first hand how a kind, supportive, and diverse community can break down barriers and open doors for the most vulnerable among us. My family certainly struggled with navigating an unfamiliar culture and system. But we were fortunate to be embraced by a community that included my American godmother who welcomed and supported refugees – people that certainly didn't fit the demographic profile of the country town where she was raised. It was not long after settling into our home in the United States that my parents led an organization to give back. Starting with very little, I watched them fund the reconstruction of the school in Laos where my father previously taught, as well as provide zero-interest micro-loans to Lao families facing financial hardship.

Community transcends ethnicity, faith, and geographical boundaries. My experiences, coming from a family and community that have shown a commitment to improving the lives of others in spite of our own difficult circumstances, have shaped my worldview. Because of this, I decided early on that I wanted to give back and so I earned a bachelor's degree from Creighton University and a law degree from Suffolk University Law School. Soon after passing the bar, I served as a community legal service pro-bono attorney, and then opened a law practice to help entrepreneurs realize their small business dreams and guide immigrants through the complex immigration system.

With a desire to ensure that all voices are heard, I later accepted the position as Director of Public Policy for Boston City Council District 7. In this position, I collaborated more directly with diverse communities on a number of initiatives such as Reclaim Roxbury – a community-driven effort that brought together over 150 community members to advocate for urban development that benefits all residents. I also fought to protect affordable housing – one of the most pressing issues in many Massachusetts cities and towns. Recalling the feeling of vulnerability from my youth and not knowing if we would have a roof over our heads, I organized legislative hearings and facilitated conversations among tenant, landlords, community advocates and legal service lawyers. Our work resulted in a landmark agreement that is a model for protecting the availability of affordable housing.

From my family's experience navigating the education system, I know first-hand that building partnerships among students, parents, and educators is key to educational successes and transforming lives. Collaborating with school administrators and education activists, I organized multi-lingual workshops to help parents better advocate for their children. I also advised students on how to push for legislative change by navigating government structures and more effectively making their voices heard. Beyond the tangible results, our efforts led to better working relationships and more positive outlooks from students, parents, and educators who all appreciated the opportunity to work together and meet the needs of our students and families. I'm committed to bringing the same hard work to ensuring that every child has equitable access to quality child care, education and training—from cradle to career.

The positive impact on the lives of individuals that benefited from the service work of my parents and godmother demonstrated to me the importance of volunteer service for building stronger communities. As a Trustee of the Harry H. Dow Memorial Legal Assistance Fund, I fundraise to provide grants to ensure access to the legal services for those who are deprived of justice. As a Director of the Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts, I promote diversity in the legal field by organizing career networking events and supporting scholarship opportunities. As a weekly volunteer at the Cambridge Women's Center, I serve to empower women – connecting them with a wide range of resources for overcoming social and economic obstacles. Through this work, I have gained an even deeper understanding of challenges faced by so many residents.

My life experiences drive my commitment to ensuring that all voices are heard and supported, and I believe that everyone should receive the same promise of opportunity that was shared with me. Together, we can protect and increase affordable housing, improve access to quality early childhood education and enrichment programs, make the minimum wage a living wage, strengthen local businesses, better connect city services and resources to residents, and to build an equitable, resilient, and sustainable future for all—especially for the most vulnerable among us.

My husband Stephen and I are proud to call Cambridge home and feel fortunate to be part of such a diverse community. We met in Cambridge, we got married at Cambridge City Hall, and in a few years we look forward to sending our son to Cambridge Public Schools. Like many of our neighbors, we not only embrace Cambridge's diversity, we embody it. We are a blended multicultural, multiethnic, and multiracial family, and our story comes from different chapters in the narrative of this rich, diverse country and community. Our family also represents a diversity of faiths and beliefs —Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam – providing a moral foundation to love and support Stephen's brother as a transgender man. Cambridge is a wonderful and dynamic mixture of ethnicity, culture, and history. It is my core belief that despite our differences, we still share many common values, and by working together we can achieve our common goals.



A portrait of Winona Zhao, a woman with dark, curly hair, smiling. She is wearing a blue and white horizontally striped blazer over a dark blue top. The background is a plain, light gray.

Winona Zhao 赵婷

**Senior Manager
Americas China Overseas Investment
Ernst & Young LLP**

大学的时候写过一篇短篇，叫《给我一把泥土》，中心的意思是凡事要依靠自己努力，于家于国还有个人都是如此。现在回想起来，我们一步一个脚印走到今天，确实总结了一些经验。今年初有幸遇到潘先生和余先生，在他们的鼓励下写出来和大家分享一二。

在个人奋斗的眼辛之中，如果能遇到几个贵人，几个导师，那真是人生的幸事。导师和贵人，可能是工作生活中对你要求非常严格、期待很高的人，同时又帮助你不断进步。对于现在的年轻人，我希望能给他们一些帮助、鼓励，成为给他们一把泥土的人。

我毕业于中国人民解放军外国语学院英语系，后分配到第四军医大学任教，所以我先后有八年的时间在军队里，先学习后教书。每个国家的军队，都讲“国家、荣誉、责任”，这种良民的意识，也深深扎根在我的意识当中。我来美国去拜访西点军校时，看到学员们在国庆日的礼炮中肃然站立，不禁热泪盈眶。

我是第一代移民，2002年来到美国。坦率说，这个国家赋予每个人的自由让我迅速获得事业上转变的机会。我用了两年时间，获得会计专业硕士学位。学习期间，我在纽约华尔街的一家律所做全职翻译和庭审准备，这个经历帮助我进入全球四大会计师事务所安永(EY)。

至今，在安永已经11年，多数和我一起入职的小伙伴们都另谋高就了。我喜欢这份职业，它要求我用知识和导引的能力获得客户的尊敬和信任，还要求我不断学习、开拓。随着中国经济的迅速崛起，我有越来越多的机会服务中国到美国投资的企业，结识众多优秀的企业家们。我的工作重心也在慢慢发生转变，从低头做好案头工作变成抬头看路，带领安永的美国团队为中国企业提供最优质的服务。

我觉得自己非常幸运，生活在一个和平发展的时代，为两个超级大国之间的经济繁荣做点事情。每天都是美好的，有无穷尽的事情可以去想、去做，只要我们不给自己划出界限。我愿送你一把泥土，和你共创新的未来。





黄定國 苦寒造就梅花香

作者：史超平 2017/5/18

1962年，中国广东开平市一个普通的农民家庭里诞生了一位平凡的男孩子，黄定国小时候就要下地种菜，下田割稻，养猪养鸡——等等。甚至读书也不是一件轻松愉快的事情，要每天走差不多一小时的路才能到学校。

黄定国小时候的生活实在令我找不出任何可以让这位出色的摄影家成才的遗传基因又或者是物质基础的理由。他靠的是勤奋努力的学习与刻苦耐劳的精神。

来到美国之后，黄定国在一家餐馆做BUSBOY（客人走后收拾餐桌的工作）每天上午10点开工，下午5点收工，马上去BUNKER HILL COMMUNITY COLLEGE以及NEW ENGLAND SCHOOL OF PHOTOGRAPHY进修摄影技术。并且跟随著名广告摄影师ZAN NG学习，提高摄影技术。因为没有钱，他只能买些便宜的照相机，有空就苦练摄影。在他的摄影生涯中逐渐走向成熟。

“曾经在纽约ZAN PRODUCTION广告摄影公司任职三年”的经历是一个人生路程崎岖不平的印证。黄定国先生不无感慨的告诉我：“我们当时是用胶卷拍照。客户要求的意境没法预先设计好让对方确认，而只能拍好了再让人家看，不满意了就要重新来。而最惨的是拍摄的背景板全部由自己几个人做，重新再做肯定是件谁都头痛的事情。我们只知道上班时间却从来不知道下班是天黑还是天亮，因为很多拍摄现场只能一次拍完。谁也不知道什么时候可以拍完吃饭，饥饿和疲劳时时刻刻在考验着我们每个人的意志。”

离开纽约回到波士顿，黄定国走到了人生一个转折点。要生存就要找到一份可以维持生活的工作，尽管餐馆工作十分辛苦疲劳，但是，工作之余，黄定国仍然没有放弃自己对艺术追求：摄影！既要工作生存，又要坚持摄影艺术，这宛如在经济学与生物学之间寻找一个平衡点。

例如，要拍摄一个主题有太阳刚刚出来做背景的作品，夏天就要在五点左右起床。但是，昨晚下班是晚上十二点啊！上午还要去上班啊！

皇天不负有心人！黄定国先生对摄影艺术的惊人意志和不懈努力的追求终于得到美国主流社会的公认。2013年7月，麻省摩顿市政府正式宣布收藏黄定国先生的作品（摩顿风光摄影）。同年，北美艺术家协会聘请黄定国先生为当年的北美艺术家协会主席。波士顿著名作家黄镜明先生在他的著作《春秋寄语》里专门有一篇重点介绍黄定国先生的摄影作品。而波士顿《ARTS COPE》艺术杂志专栏作家JAMES FORITANO也专门采访报道了黄定国先生的事迹与作品。麻省有一个专门介绍亚太地区移民的杂志《ASIAN BOSTON》也刊载了作者DONNA AGNEW介绍黄定国先生的作品。波士顿《世界日报》《星岛日报》和《明报》《侨报周末》以及《大纪元》等等中文报纸也常常报道黄定国先生的个人作品展览和获得的比赛奖。从2014年开始，黄定国先生每年都捐赠自己的摄影作品给麻州STONEHAM ZOO拍卖筹款。

近代哲学家，牛津大学教授斯温伯恩有句名言：“只有存在简明的自然定律，才能预期事物的因果关系。”

成功来自于努力。





黃國活
George G. Wong

LANDING IN NORMANDY

Brief History of Chinese American Veteran, George G Wong's Service in the Military

INTRODUCTION

This article transcribes George G Wong's narration regarding his experience serving in U.S. Military during World War II. It is documenting the civic participation of a Chinese American veteran and his contribution to the freedom, peace, and sovereignty of this country.

PREFACE

2017 is the 73rd Anniversary of the D-Day. Seventy-three years ago, Wong was serving in a torpedo boat under United States Army. He took a valiant part in covering the ally force in crossing the channel, marching towards Normandy for their mission.

THE BIGGEST LANDING BATTLE IN HISTORY — LANDING IN NORMANDY

Landing in Normandy unfolded on June 6, 1944; it was the largest scale among all the attack battles of the Western European battlefield during the Second World War. It was also the largest scale of landing battles in the world history.

HEROIC VETERAN: WONG'S SERVICE IN U.S. MILITARY

George G. Wong, 93-year-old, immigrated from Taishan, Guangdong province in 1939. In 1943, he registered for army service in Massachusetts.

Wong recalls to his feelings when enlisted: a red-blooded eighteen-year-old. His motherland-China has fallen into the hand of Japan and was forced to fight a bloody defense battle. On December 7, 1941, Japan's horrendous attack on Pearl Harbor enraged the country. With inspiration from his teacher, Wong made the decision to join the Army, join the effort of bringing peace and freedom to the country, and get the revenge for the innocent lives died under Japan's attack.

ENROLLMENT: EXCELLENCE IN TRAINING SESSION

After Wong enrolled, he first received rigid martial training. His English was not fluent at the beginning. Hence, he worked hard on improving his English while training for military. As his hard work paid off, he rounded up the martial training with good grades.

SERVING IN MILITARY: OPERATING TORPEDO BOAT

After the enrollment training for newly enlisted soldiers, he was deployed to serve in Number 33 Torpedo Boat Squadron of U.S. Navy (PT-459). Wong served three years on torpedo boat during World War II. As Wong knew really well how to operate the boat, his superior really commended him for being skillful at what he did. Wong said that he had a strong sense of attachment to his torpedo boat: "as if that's my girlfriend."

Wong introduced that torpedo boats were small in size, fast in speed, high in flexibility, quick in concealing, strong in attacking power; hence, it was also called torpedo speed boat. With these features, torpedo boat used torpedo as the main weapon, focused on fighting on water surface to assist other army force in approaching shores. According to Wong's analysis, torpedo boats had the advantage of short-distance closing up to shores. Therefore, torpedo boats were also used to convoy, fight submarine, releasing smoke walls, sending off scouts, searching and rescuing on the sea to accompany and assist the tasks of large warships. Wong explains as if everything were yesterday: every squadron unit had 12 torpedo boats while each boat could carry 10 navy soldiers. When tasks were distributed, four boats were usually sent off at the same time to coordinate with each other.

As he recalls to a battle, the Kriegsmarine (German Navy) attacked one of our boats. The attack damaged one of the four engines and opened up a leak on the bottom of the boat. With the support of only the rest three engines and the covering of ally ships, his boat was fortunate enough to not sink, safely sailed back to England for reparation.

RETURNING WITH TRIUMPH

The one moment that Wong is most proud of throughout his entire military life was returning home with triumph. His first stop back to the homeland was in New York. The welcome-back was overwhelmingly heart-warming and high-spirited. Wong felt proud as not only a veteran but also a Chinese American. He was proud to be part of the greater responsibility, part of the force to protect the land of freedom as a Chinese descendant, bringing more honors to himself as well as the Chinese American ethnicity.

HOMEWARD BOUND WITH HONOR: HAPPY EVER AFTER

Wong retired from the Navy at the end of the Second World War, he returned to his hometown Taishan as a proud United States veteran on 1948. Wong got married to LiShu Peng, sister of prominent Chinese artist TianAi Peng. George Wong settled in U.S. with his wife after the wedding. They have two sons and one daughter.



序言

今年是諾曼地登陸戰(D-DAY)73周年紀念。73年前的今日參與諾曼地登陸戰的華裔老兵黃國活,當時正在美國海軍魚雷艇服兵役,勇敢掩護盟軍橫渡英吉利海峽、大西洋,朝向法國諾曼地地區登陸任務。

歷史上規模最大的海上登陸戰 諾曼地登陸戰

諾曼地登陸戰役,於1944年6月6日展開,乃第二次世界大戰西方盟軍歐洲西線戰場的一場大規模攻勢戰役,迄今為止,是歷史上規模最大的一次海上登陸作戰。

二戰英雄：黃國活從軍記

現年93歲的黃國活,係於1939年自中國廣東省台山移民美國。於1943年,在地區軍方登記處報服兵役,辦理好服兵役手續。

至於為什麼參軍報服兵役?當年18歲,血氣方剛的黃國活回憶起當兵過程。他說日本正在侵略中國山河;並於1941年12月7日,不宣而戰,空襲夏威夷珍珠港事件,引起全國怒氣沖沖。同時深深地受到老師的 示,掀開起當兵報國,當仁不讓心志。他豪言壯語回憶當時日本偷夏威夷珍珠港,美軍傷亡慘重,下定決心,要“當兵打仗復仇”志願。

入伍訓練：優異成績結訓

黃國活入伍之後,首先接受嚴格的軍事專業訓練。他回想起當時英語言能力欠佳,所以在入伍訓練期間,也同時學習英文。在勤奮不懈學習技能和英文,抱持不受歧視、炎黃子孫不落人後心情,努力以赴,完滿完成軍事專業訓練,以優異成績結訓。

從軍記：操作魚雷快艇

結束入伍軍事專業訓練之後，奉國防部分派遣入海軍第33旅魚雷艇中隊，編號第459號(PT-459)魚雷艇服兵役。

在第二次世界大戰期間，奉令在魚雷艇服役長達3年的黃國活，對魚雷艇操作維修瞭若指掌，其專業操作技術支援作戰，獲得上司稱讚。他對魚雷艇的印象，有以其為家的親切感，他幽默地形容與魚雷艇的關係，比如對“女朋友”般的感情。

黃國活指出“魚雷艇”，具有體積小，航速高，機動靈活，隱蔽性好，攻擊威力大的特點，所以也稱為“魚雷快艇”。他進一步指出，魚雷艇是以魚雷為主要武器的小型高速水面戰鬥艦艇，多用於近岸海域協同其他兵力作戰。他分析魚雷艇最擅長的是：近距離近海岸攻擊，也擔當如：護航、反潛、佈雷，施放煙幕、遣送偵察兵登陸、以及海上搜索救援等重要任務，保障大型水面艦艇作戰功能。

黃國活記憶猶新解釋，當時每一單位“魚雷艇中隊”編組，擁有12艘魚雷艇，每一艘可乘搭載約10名海軍，一般情況下執行分派任務時，經常是四艘魚雷艇一齊出動，互相支援接應。

他回顧在一次戰役中，其魚雷艇被德國潛水艇砲火擊中，魚雷艇中一個引擎損壞、和艇底穿洞。他說述每一魚雷艇有四個引擎，當時就靠著三個引擎動力，和友軍艦艇掩護下，幸運沒有沈落，終於安全駕駛到英國搶修。

凱旋歸國

黃國活最引以為榮的軍事生涯--是第二次世界大戰結束後，凱旋歸國之曰。他回味無窮暢言，首曰凱旋歸國的感觸情與事，自戰地返回美國的首站是紐約，受到瘋狂般熱烈歡迎的感人肺腑場面，熱血沸騰；深深地體驗到自己的華裔背景，炎黃子孫永不落人後，以當兵為榮，捍衛國家是軍人的責任，為我們華人爭光的感受。

衣錦榮歸：娶得美嬌娘

第二次世界大戰結束，退除兵役，成為美國退伍軍人的黃國活，於1948年衣錦榮歸故鄉--台山，和中國十大名畫家之一彭天曉的妹妹彭麗姝結婚。婚後定居美國，育有一女兩子，出類拔萃，社會精英。





Joseph T. Shannon
Attorney at Law

When I graduated from Boston College, with a major in political science, I was not sure what career path I should follow. Upon graduation, I accepted a position teaching science and American history in a middle school. While teaching during the day, I attended graduate school in the evening and earned an advanced degree in educational administration. Teaching was certainly challenging, and had its own rewards, I was still not sure that it was the career for me. While still searching for the right career, I was offered a position working for a large corporation. Working for a large corporation had challenges very different from teaching, still I was not satisfied. During this period, I was very active politically in the town in which I was living. I was elected by the voters as a member of a political town committee. Being on a political committee brought me in contact with people whom I came to admire; several of them were attorneys. One of the of them encouraged me to consider a career in law. After some consideration, I applied to law school at Suffolk University and was accepted. The three years I spent in law school were intellectually challenging, not just in learning various areas of the law such as real property, Uniform Commercial Code, or criminal law, but training to think critically. I had to learn to analyze the facts of a situation and apply the law. In the years since graduating from law school and passing the bar exam, I have never regretted my decision. The practice of law has been a constant learning experience, it has brought me in contact with real estate developers, medical professionals, and law enforcement. Every contact has increased my knowledge in that field. More importantly, it has allowed me to apply that knowledge to assist individuals in resolving problems. For example, it may be assisting a client in purchasing a business, such as preschool or a restaurant. Both situations involve purchase and sales contracts, leases, and governmental licenses. Another time, I may be assisting someone who has been injured in an automobile accident, making sure they are receiving compensation for their injuries. Other times, it may be assisting individuals buying their first home.

The several years I spent between college and law school were not wasted. For nearly ten years, I taught evening courses in business law to adult students returning to school. Also, I have been asked to speak to community groups on legal topics.

I would advise any young person, who is interested in helping other people to consider a career in the law. There is much satisfaction in being able to assist people in resolving their problems.





Beauty with a Purpose
Aizhou Liu

On Dec. 28, 2016, I was crowned as the winner of USA Miss Asia pageant. In 2017, I graduated with scholarships from Harvard University (M.A. in Information Management System). At Harvard, I was Editor-in-Chief at the Harvard Chinese Students and Scholars Association (HCSSA), and President of the Harvard US-China Economics Interaction Council (HUCEIC). I am committed to being an innovative leader in the fields of media who creating value for organizations, communities, and the world.

I came from Nanjing, China. Six years ago, I came to Boston to study my bachelor degree at Boston University after graduation from Nanjing Foreign Language School. I received a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration at Boston University Questrom School of Business, which sharpened my managerial perspectives and a core business foundation in finance, accounting, marketing, operations, information system, strategy, and organizational behavior. At Questrom School of Business, serving as both a Research Assistant and Teaching Assistant in the Marketing Department, I focused my research on digital innovation and technology. To leverage my knowledge and skills in digital technology, I got into a master's program in Emerging Media Studies at Boston University.

My passion for media and communication technology challenges my creative mind and

motivated me to take interns in China Broadcasting Corporation and MIT China Review. I did user experience research at Google Creative Lab. At Google Creative Lab, I collaborated with designers and engineers to work on a new product. My recent work examines the factors of influencing user experiences in Virtual Reality, and game-based media interventions for enterprise technology changes.

I am a lucky girl that I thrive in an academic environment that boasts a cutting-edge curriculum, world renowned faculty, and an address in Boston and Cambridge—national hubs in technology, healthcare, and entrepreneurship, which is why I was pursuing my second Master of Liberal Arts, Information Management System at Harvard.

Being admitted to Harvard has been one of the greatest honors of my life. At Harvard, I've drawn to the innovative technology and sustainable sides of business, developing new strategies through technology and focusing on social impact. The advanced studies provided me with not just deep exploration of media law, policy, and history from a social science perspective, but also competency in using cutting edge tools in data mining, data visualization from a computer science perspective. I explored HTML, CSS, JavaScript, C++ and Java. More importantly, combined academic coursework with research studies, and discussion with innovative leaders in the field of emerging media and technology.

Winning the title of USA Miss Asia pageant 2016, I appreciated organizers of 2016 USA Miss Asia for the intense training I and other contestants received over the past six months. During six months' training, I never gave up.

During my time as a USA Miss Asia titleholder, I led seminars to encourage leadership,

Education equality, and empowerment for girls. I have also made TV appearances, including for interviews and documentary feature films. I wish my story could enlighten other girls that never doubt that you are valuable and powerful and deserving of every chance and opportunity in the world to pursue and achieve your own dreams.

I am incredibly grateful for all opportunities I embraced and difficulties I overcame. I count my blessings every single day that I grew up in China and accomplished my education in the United States of America. I believe as deeply as I ever have that if we, as "citizen of the world," stand together and work together with respect for our differences, our best days are still ahead of us.





CLF FOUNDATION INC.

Anthony C. Ng | *Executive Director*
Civic Leadership Forum Foundation, Inc.
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ABOUT US

The Civic Leadership Forum Foundation is a 501(c)(3) incorporated in Washington DC in 2013. It was the vision of Mr. Sandy Chau, chairman of the board. It is headquartered in San Mateo California.

The principal activity of CLF is to sponsor Civic Leadership Forums aimed at training Asian Americans to participate in the political process and our civic life. The Forums are non-partisan and inclusive of all Americans regardless of ethnic group or country of origin.

After the inaugural San Mateo, California CLF in 2015, CLFs have been held across the country. Planning is underway for a June CLF in Boston and a major national meeting in Santa Clara this August. Future CLF programs will be announced on our website.

VISION

Our Vision is to create a pipeline for Civic Leaders for a fair and harmonious society.

MISSION

Our Mission is to train leaders and to promote civic engagement. We serve as a catalyst to engage multiple organizations and ethnic groups.

GOALS

Our Goals are to train and connect leaders across America. We sponsor CLFs to cultivate, nourish, and connect American civic leadership.

OBJECTIVES

Our Objectives are to establish a pipeline of civic leaders who intend to run for public office with service as their core mission; to build platforms in each community that groom and support local leaders; to build alliances of civic leaders.

