

## **36<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL LACAAEA INSTALLATION AND AWARDS DINNER**

A historic Installation Dinner took place at Ocean Star Seafood Restaurant in Monterey Park on an evening filled with much excitement and anticipation. The audience was treated to an Installation Dinner that began with the Mistress of Ceremonies, Janice Y. Fukai, Esq., welcoming everyone to the night's wonderful festivities. The speakers for the evening included: invocation from the Reverend Terry Keenan, swearing in of new officers from Judge Arthur M. Lew, comments from William T Fujioka, Association's history from Phillip T. Ow and Karl Nobuyuki, farewell from past president Henry Yee, introduction of new officers and special recognition awards from Irene Hamada, award of scholarship recipients from Wendy Watanabe, and a special presentation from Steve Kawamura. There were many awards presented to LACAAEA members, students, and a special recognition for a person who is the highest ranking women official in California. Another highlight of the evening was to recognize and honor members who started, and stayed active, with the organization for more than thirty years; and members who started several successful LACAAEA programs.

To begin with, many in the audience did not know that Janice's father, Mas Fukai, who served as a Board Deputy with Supervisor Kenneth Hahn, was the Master of Ceremonies at the Association's 11<sup>th</sup> Installation Dinner in 1983. Twenty-five years later, Mas' daughter, Janice, was our Mistress of Ceremonies for the 36<sup>th</sup> Installation Dinner. What an honor to have two generations of support by the Fukai Family.

Phillip T. Ow, who served as President from 1981-82, presented a brief history on the development of the organization. LACAAEA began with two groups seeking to form an association that would focus on: (1) improving the employment status of its Asian Pacific Islander members, (2) support the recruitment, appointment, and promotion of its members, (3) advocate for Affirmative Action and work against discrimination on the job, and (4) promote greater community and political involvement in the County and community.

The founding members of one group, the original LACAAEA, include Mas Fukai, Jim Miyano (Board Deputy for Supervisor Ed Edelman), Edward W. Lee (Director of Community Relations), Cynthia Kushi (Assistant Hospital Administrator), and Yoneo Yamamoto (Special Assistant to the Director of Health Services). The founding members of the second group from Mechanical Department include Ralph Hamada, Hisa Ono, Ken Nishi, Bruce Itami, and later Howard Takata. The two groups merged in the early 1970's.

Yoneo Yamamoto was present in the audience and was recognized as one of the distinguished founders of LACAAEA. These early pioneers helped to guide and develop our Association into an organization that has been serving and representing its members on many cases of employment discrimination and issues of advancement in the County through the years.

William T Fujioka, Chief Executive Officer, spoke of Howard Takata as one of LACAAEA's

most illustrious presidents, whose commitment and dedication serves as a role model to all new members. Mr. Takata actively promoted for increased membership through payroll deduction, worked diligently on increasing the networking ties between Asian Pacific Islander groups in the County of Los Angeles, City of Los Angeles, State of California, and the Federal Government. Mr. Takata's ideals, dedication, and passion are without equal. Although retired, his thunderous voice and command of an audience was once again felt at the evening's festivities.

Phillip Ow informed the audience of an important milestone discrimination case in the history of the Association. From 1979 to 1992, LACAAEA took part in supporting Dr. Carole Fujita in her race and discrimination case that was filed with the County's Civil Service Commission. At the time, all management and supervisory pharmacy positions were held by males. During numerous promotional exams, Dr. Fujita was repeatedly passed over, even though she was at the top of the Supervisor's Promotional Lists for advancement. With support from LACAAEA and other groups including the County and City's Women Commission and the Japanese Citizen's League, Dr. Fujita was finally able to obtain the pharmacy promotion that she was seeking. Dr. Fujita was in the audience and was recognized as a pioneer of women's rights and helped to ensure that women today have access to management and supervisory pharmacy in the County.

The outgoing officers worked tirelessly in carrying out the ideals and goals of the Association. Their outstanding service and dedicated service to the Association is without compare. With gratitude and deepest thanks, the Association commends each and every one of these dedicated members for a JOB WELL DONE!

Henry Yee	President
Wendy Watanabe	First Vice President
Ernie Takemoto	Second Vice President (retired)
Irene Ng Hamada	Second Vice President
Anna Imura	Treasurer
Catherine Mak	Correspondence Secretary
Mary Lam	Correspondence Secretary
Karen Lee	Recording Secretary

The new officers are committed to continuing with the ideals and goals of the past leadership. The swearing in of new officers was conducted by Honorable Arthur M. Lew of the Los Angeles Superior Court:

Irene Ng Hamada	President
Steve Kawamura	Vice President, Operations
Jackie Guevarra	Vice President, Programs and Events
Brian Lew	Vice President, Public Relations
Connie Yee	Treasurer
Akiko Tagawa	Corresponding Secretary
Bornia Nou	Recording Secretary
Jeremy Li	Web Master

Mason Fong

Editor-in-Chief

Dr. Judy Chu, chair of the State Board of Equalization received the Association's coveted George Ban Public Service Excellence Award. Steve Kawamura highlighted Dr. Chu's outstanding political accomplishments and her dedication to the API community. Karl Nobuyuki presented a brief biography on George Ban explaining why Dr. Chu clearly merits this award. George Ban worked for the County's Fire Department in the procurement office and warehouse. Although not required to be at the fire lines, George always showed up in his personal 1949 Chevy with goods and supplies to assist however he could, even pulling hose. George also invented the Brush Jacket that one sees exclusively on the fire lines during wild land fires. George retired from the Fire Department after 45 years of service, and the Department's Pacoima Warehouse was dedicated to this "giant of a man" who remained as a symbol of perseverance, dedication, and commitment to Public Service.

Irene Hamada presented LACAAEA Founders' Awards to Ralph Hamada, Phil Ow, and Howard Takata recognizing their continuous support and participation since its beginning over thirty years ago. Irene also presented Innovation Awards to Shig Kikkawa and Karl Nobuyuki for the Association's successful Meet and Greet Reception programs; and to Ralph Hamada, Phil Ow, and Henry Yee for the successful annual Fish Fry picnic. Irene and Henry presented the Association's Outstanding Service Awards to Mary Lam, Jeremy Li, Dulce Maycumber, and Ernie Takemoto.

Wendy Watanabe awarded the Shirley Bolinger Scholarships to Benjamin Chan, Albert Chu, Charlene Gomez, and Andrew Trinh. These students represented the ideals of Shirley Bolinger, whose career as a public servant was highlighted by a determination and drive to make the County a better work environment for all.

Our more recent past presidents Ken Fang, Esq., Shig Kikkawa, and Henry Yee helped to carry on Mr. Tanaka's legacy, yet developed their own unique presidential legacy. We are truly blessed to have such a group of dedicated presidents who helped lead the Association. As we begin a new presidency under Irene Hamada, may the goals and ideals of the Association continue to focus on helping our members become good ambassadors and spokesman for the Association.

The evening's event was made possible by the hard work and contributions of many dedicated members. Jackie Guevarra, Reception Committee Chair, was assisted with her committee members: Theresa Argonza, Carmen Chan-Fong, Libby Gong, Darlene Hoang, Anna Imura, Kimberly Jo, Steve Kawamura, Helen Lee, Brian Lew, Jeremy Li, Dulce Maycumber, Charlotte Miyamoto, Linh Mok, Borina Nou, Wayne Sasaki, Tevy Sithan, Akiko Tagawa, Dennis Watanabe, Jennifer Yang, Connie Yee, and Nancy Yu.