

From: Yang Jennifer

Sent: Thursday, September 17, 2020 6:19 PM

To: Ethnic Studies

Subject: [EXTERNAL] A petition for including Korean American studies in the Asian American studies section of Ethnic studies curriculum

September 17, 2020

Dear California Department of Education,

While it is exciting to see that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum is moving forward and students will have the opportunity to learn about our diverse community, I am deeply concerned that Korean American studies have been excluded.

Susan Ahn Cuddy is a major Korean American figure that demonstrates why Korean American studies should be included in the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum. She broke gender and ethnic boundaries and became the first female United States Navy gunnery officer during World War II. She was a lieutenant and helped train pilots to shoot enemies during the war. Her brothers Philip Ahn and Ralph Ahn also joined the U.S. military during World War II. Philip Ahn was a well-known actor who starred in major films and television shows including the monk in *Kung-Fu*. He later earned a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame. Ralph Ahn, the youngest of the five Ahn children, also became an actor and is a Korean American community activist. He is the only surviving child of the Ahn children.

Susan was the eldest daughter of Korean independence activist Dosan Ahn Chang Ho and Helen Ahn. In 1902, her parents were the first married Korean couple to emigrate to the United States. Ahn and her family are well known in the Korean and Korean American community for their Korean Independence Movement activities. Dosan Ahn Chang Ho lived in California and founded the first organized-Korean American settlement in Riverside sometime in early 1905. The Ahn family house is also still standing and is located on the University of Southern California campus. Dosan Ahn Chang Ho and his family occupy a salient place in Korean American and American history and should not be left out of ethnic studies.

From the few examples listed above, it is clear that the Korean American community's presence, influence, and history are significant and an important part of ethnic studies education. To not include the Korean American community in the Ethnic Studies Model curriculum would be to ignore a major part of California and America's heart and soul. Thus, I firmly believe that the Ethnic Studies Model Curriculum should include Korean American studies in its Asian American studies section. To leave out Korean Americans would be yet another marginalization and discriminatory action. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,
Jennifer Yang
Irvine Onnuri Korean School