



A California not-for-profit membership organization

### Executive Board

#### President

**Hon. Jana Seng**  
Los Angeles County

#### President-elect

**Hon. Nhan "Nathan" Vu**  
Orange County

#### Immediate Past President

**Hon. Jayne Lee**  
San Joaquin County

#### Secretary

**Hon. Michelle Ahnn**  
Los Angeles County

#### Treasurer

**Hon. Sunil Kulkarni**  
Santa Clara County

#### Judicial Appointments Committee

**Hon. Benjamin Reyes**  
Contra Costa County

**Hon. Terry Truong**  
Los Angeles County

#### 1<sup>st</sup> District Representative

**Hon. Glenn Kim**

#### 2<sup>nd</sup> District Representatives

**Hon. Christine Gonong**  
**Hon. Christopher Lui**

#### 3<sup>rd</sup> District Representative

**Hon. Kara Ueda**

#### 4<sup>th</sup> District Representatives

**Hon. Vibhav Mittal**  
**Hon. Stephanie Tañada**

#### 5<sup>th</sup> District Representative

**Hon. Jeff Mangar**

#### 6<sup>th</sup> District Representative

**Hon. Hanley Chew**

#### SJO Representative

**Hon. Christine Dehr**

#### Admin. Law Judge Representative

**Hon. Dorothy Chou Proudfoot**

**California Asian Pacific American  
Judges Association**  
11138 Del Amo Blvd #453  
Lakewood, CA 90715-1103  
[www.CAPAJA.org](http://www.CAPAJA.org)  
[capaja@capaja.org](mailto:capaja@capaja.org)

## October 2025 CAPAJA Newsletter

Dear CAPAJA Member:

It was great to see so many of you at CAPAJA's 2025 Annual Meeting in Pasadena and at the wonderful dinner! Here is the CAPAJA news for September of 2025.



### The CAPAJA Annual Meeting at the CJA in Pasadena

CAPAJA's General Meeting was an opportunity for our members to hear what CAPAJA has planned for this year and for the Board to hear from our members. This was one of the best attended CAPAJA meetings we have had - thank you to everyone who participated in person and on zoom!



asdf

*Our 3 Presidents - Outgoing President Judge Jayne Lee, Incoming President Judge Jana Seng, and President Elect Judge Nathan Vu.*



CAPAJA had an incredibly successful and fun dinner on Sept. 13. It was like a multi-generational family reunion. We had the babies (**Maggie Yang** (San Bernardino) who had just taken the bench 1.5 weeks before the dinner and **Osman Abbasi** (LA) who will be sworn in this month). We had the elders (**Elwood Lui**, CAPAJA's first President, and the retired judges/justices - **Kathryn Doi-Todd, Howard Halm, Rose Hom, and Lance Ito**). And we had all the unruly teenagers and adults in between (you know who you are!).

Outgoing President Jayne Lee was gifted with a "class" photo of all the Board members who worked alongside her this past year. The new Board was sworn in by **Judge Ruth Kwan** who was also the gracious host for this event. We were able to honor two upcoming retirements - **Judges Holly Fujie and Erica Yew** - with moving and funny speeches by **Judge Wendy Chang** (for Holly) and **Judge Audra Ibarra and Jacqui Duong** (for Erica).



*Outgoing President Jayne Lee with her gift from the 2024-25 CAPAJA Board.*

*From left to right: Judge Christine Gonong, Judge Terry Truong, ALJ Dorothy Chou Proudfoot, Judge Ben Reyes, Judge Nathan Vu, Judge Jayne Lee, Judge Chris Lui, Judge Michelle Ahnn, Judge Jana Seng, and Judge Kara Ueda*





*Judge Holly Fujie*



*From left to right: Judge Jacqui Duong, Judge Erica Yew and Judge Audra Ibarra*

The dinner was magical and featured delicious food (Sushi! Spring rolls! A whole roast pig!) and specialty cocktails, great music, a balloon artist (yes, a balloon artist), and the mother of all gift bags - 7 pastries from various Asian countries, a cookie with the CAPAJA logo, a personalized cookie with the face of the judicial officer, a CAPAJA pin, and a CAPAJA sticker. We have heard from many people who missed out on the dinner that they want to come to the next dinner just for the gift bags!



*The most delicious desserts from all over Asia. All the CAPAJA related swag in the gift bag. Each of these items has the new CAPAJA logo which was created by Judge Glenn Kim.*

Thanks again to Dinner Chair Terry Truong and her team members for all of their work: **Ruth Kwan** - location, hospitality, and Panda Inn food; **Tiffany Tai** – appetizers and whole roast pig; **Helen Yang** - gift bags; **Alex Sario** - sound equipment and DJ; **Chris Lui** - cocktails and wine; **Mike Madokoro** - all other drinks; **Christine Gonong** - flowers and photography; **Janet Hong** - tables and chairs; and **Michelle Ahnn** - RSVPs and finances.

CAPAJA's photographer **Christine Gonong** and others provided many photographs of the evening. The link to the photo album is provided in the email with this newsletter. If you did not receive the link and would like to see the photos, please contact [communications@capaja.org](mailto:communications@capaja.org).

### **CAPAJA Members Shine at CJA Annual Meeting**

The CJA Annual Meeting was held at the Langham Huntington Hotel in Pasadena. As always, CAPAJA Members contributed greatly to the success of this event. On the Annual Meeting Committee were CAPAJA Members **Judges Jackie Duong, Jeff Mangar and Erica Yew**. **Judge Elaine Lu** of the LASC co-presented the Qualifying Ethics 9 class; **Judge Rich Lee** of the OCSC co-presented the Civil Law Update; **Judge Vinita Bali** of the SCSC spoke on the CJA Talks; **Judge Jackie Duong** of the SCSC moderated and **Judge Wendy Chang** of the LASC spoke on a panel entitled "AI on the Bench"; and **Justice Shama Mesiwala** spoke on a panel on "Exploring the Next Frontier: The California Court of Appeal Through the Lens of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion." In addition, CAPAJA Members were sworn in as Officers and Directors of CJA, including **Judge Jeff Kauffman** as CJA President and **Judge Tony Cho** as Vice President along with **Judges Gery Wong Williams and Leonard Trinh**!



At the conference, CAPAJA member **Judge Johnny Cepeda Gogo** of Santa Clara received the 2025 Alba Witkin Humanitarian Award for his years-long effort to honor the legacy of the Japanese Americans who were subjected to internment by the US Government during World War II. He spearheaded the 48-Star American flag project where he has invited all survivors of the Japanese American concentration



camps to sign a World War II era flag. CAPAJA is so proud of Johnny for the work he is doing to honor these survivors!



### **CAPAJA Member Sworn in as President of California Women Judges**

At a reception held at the end of the CJA Annual Meeting, **CAPAJA Past President Judge Audra Ibarra** was sworn in as the new President of the California Women Judges. Audra has many exciting plans for her year, so be sure to join CWJ and provide some of that CAPAJA energy to this new organization!



### **Celebrating a Historic Milestone: ALJs Secure Membership in the California Judges Association**

By CAPAJA ALJ Committee Co-chairs **Chief ALJ Kristin Rosi** (Department of Insurance) and **ALJ Annie Greenleaf** (Department of Social Services)

CAPAJA is proud to celebrate a landmark achievement: Administrative Law Judges (ALJs) are now officially eligible to become members of the California Judges Association (CJA). This milestone marks not only a significant recognition of the important work ALJs do across the state, but also a powerful step forward in inclusion, representation, and unity within California's judicial community.

This moment would not have been possible without the bold and visionary leadership of CJA and CAPAJA Past President **Judge Erica Yew**, who spearheaded the effort by proposing the critical bylaw amendment to open CJA membership to ALJs. Judge Yew's long-standing commitment to equity and integrity in the judiciary set the stage for this groundbreaking change.

Equally instrumental were CAPAJA members **Judges Kristin Rosi, Kimberly Kim, Annie Greenleaf and Elizabeth Manassau**, who devoted more than a year to tireless, behind-the-scenes advocacy. Through countless meetings and thoughtful dialogue with CJA leadership, they helped build the understanding and support necessary to bring this initiative to fruition. Their persistence and diplomacy exemplify the very best of judicial leadership. Special thanks also go to **Judges Thomas Eagle Weathers** (Alameda County Superior Court), **Terri Mockler** (Contra Costa County Superior Court) and **Suzanne Gazzaniga** (Placer County Superior Court) who played a critical role in securing the vote by actively collecting proxies from supporters unable to attend, ensuring that every voice was counted. Their solidarity and commitment to inclusion made this milestone possible.

CAPAJA also extends its deepest gratitude to **Judge Dorothy Chou Proudfoot**, whose early vision and dedication laid the foundation for this success. As the founder of CAPAJA's ALJ Committee, Judge Proudfoot has long championed the full inclusion of ALJs within California's broader judicial family. Her unwavering support and steadfast advocacy have been a guiding light throughout this journey.

Finally, to all the CAPAJA members who supported this effort—through signature gathering, outreach, or simply lending your voice—thank you. Your solidarity and commitment to inclusion have made this milestone possible.

Together, we celebrate not just a policy change, but a powerful affirmation: every judge deserves a seat at the table.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **CAPAJA Mentoring Committee Presents a Panel of Appellate Justices on “The Record”**

CAPAJA’s Mentoring Committee is excited to host “*Mind the Record: Appellate Justices Share What Matters Most*” on Thursday, October 9, 2025 from 12:15pm to 1:15pm. We hope you can join us - the link is below the flyer.

This event will provide CAPAJA’s members with an opportunity to hear practical tips and advice from **CAPAJA Justices Truc T. Do** (Fourth Appellate District), **Shama Hakim Mesiwala** (Third Appellate District) and **Danny Y. Chou** (First Appellate District) on various topics including:

- *what protecting the record actually means*
- *what is essential to your rulings and what you should leave out*
- *what a typical day is like in the life of a California Appellate Justice*
- *the path to elevation*

Unfortunately, this event will not be recorded. Please email any mentoring committee member (contact information below) with any questions or topics for the justices.



**MIND THE RECORD**  
*Appellate Justices*  
*Share What Matters Most*

Join  
California Asian-Pacific American Judges Association's  
Mentoring Committee on

**Thursday, October 9, 2025**  
**12:15 pm to 1:15 pm**

*Virtual Meet & Greet and*  
*Tips from Appellate Justices on Preserving the Record for a Successful Appeal*



Justice  
**Truc T. Do**  
Fourth Appellate District



Justice  
**Shama Hakim Mesiwala**  
Third Appellate District



Justice  
**Danny Y. Chou**  
First Appellate District

Please Email CAPAJA's Mentoring Committee to RSVP and Submit Any Questions/Topics You Would Like Discussed  
Hon. Stephanie J. Tanada - stanada@sb-court.org  
Hon. Tiffany W. Tai - ttai@lacourt.org  
Hon. Adrian G. Roxas - aroxas@lacourt.org

**Microsoft Teams [Need help?](#)**

**[Join the meeting now](#)**

**Meeting ID: 293 783 328 634 2**

**Passcode: GA7NM39h**

**Dial in by phone**

**[+1 323-488-2201,,346677289#](#) United States, Los Angeles**

**[Find a local number](#)**

**Phone conference ID: 346 677 289#**

**Join on a video conferencing device**

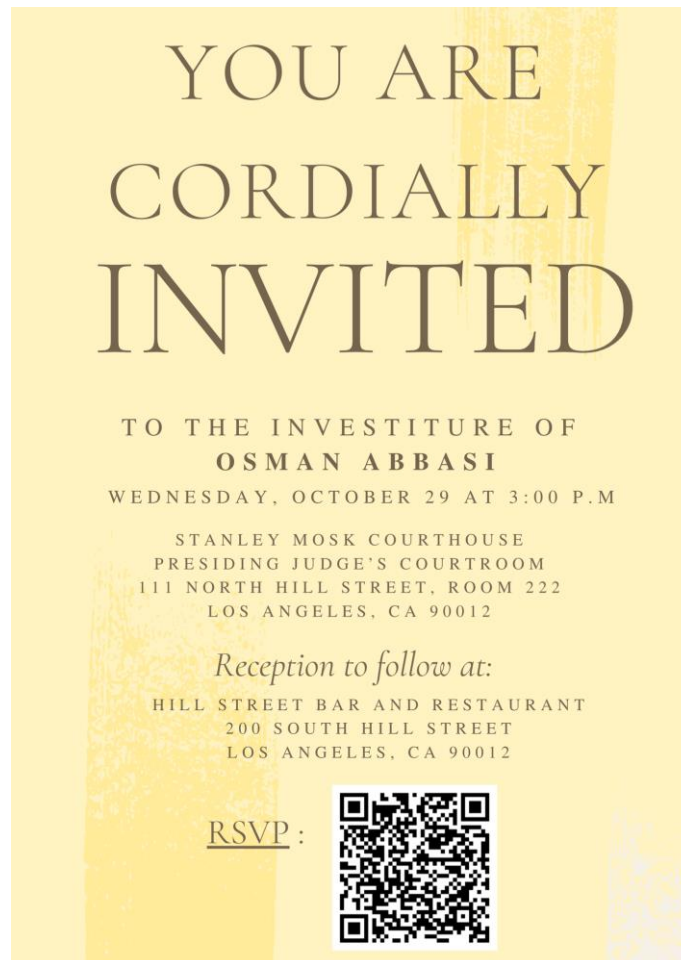
**Tenant key:**  
**[teams@cvi.lacourt.org](mailto:teams@cvi.lacourt.org)**

**Video ID: 115 786 309 9**

**New CAPAJA Member Invites All of CAPAJA to Investiture**

**Soon-to-be-Judge Osman Abbasi** is inviting all CAPAJA members to his investiture on **Wednesday, October 29, 2025, at 3:00 p.m.**

Additional details are included in the flyer below. Please feel free to RSVP by clicking [here](#) or by scanning the QR code in the flyer.



**NAPABA JC Invites CAPAJA Members to its Annual Meeting Dinner**

NAPABA-JC (whose President is CAPAJA Member **Judge Curtis Kin** of the LASC) cordially invites any CAPAJA Member who will be at the NAPABA Convention in Denver in November to sign up for its annual dinner, to be held at the amazing Tamayo Restaurant ([tamayorestaurant.com](http://tamayorestaurant.com)) on Friday, November 7 at 7 pm.

As always, we are expecting a raucous (within the parameters of judicial ethics and decorum, of course) good time - with wonderful company consisting of API judicial officers and their guests from all over the globe (I can say that because of the expected presence of Chief Justice Bob Torres of the Supreme Court of Guam!).



Come join us for what is always the social event of the season!

In the past, this dinner has sold out, so do yourself a favor and RSVP as soon as possible. The cost of dinner will be \$125. Please contact Judge Curtis Kin ([CKin@LACourt.org](mailto:CKin@LACourt.org)) to RSVP and for payment options.

**Join CAPAJA for an Amazing Trip to San Francisco in November**

**CAPAJA wants to continue building connections between our members and has organized a weekend trip for Nov. 14-16, 2025 (Fri-Sun) in SF. Remember how quickly the Singapore/Malaysia trip filled up (it now has a significant waitlist!) so sign up for this great event NOW!**

Dear CAPAJA Colleagues,

Thank you to the several of you who replied immediately after the announcement went out about our upcoming CAPAJA SF Weekend. If you have not yet registered, please note that there is limited availability remaining for the full weekend package and the docent-led tour of Angel Island. **Please note that our Zelle and PayPal addresses have changed.** If you are sending money to CAPAJA via either of these services, please send it to [treasurer@capaja@org](mailto:treasurer@capaja@org). An updated registration form, with the corrected payee information is attached.

Even if you cannot attend the entire weekend, you can use the attached registration form to reserve your place for the CAPAJA NorCal Dinner on Friday, 11/14 at Abaca Restaurant, a Filipino-California fusion delight in San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf area, or for a Sunday dim-sum brunch in San Francisco.

Looking forward to seeing you in SF! Roberta

Roberta S. Hayashi  
Judge, Department 16  
Santa Clara County Superior Court  
191 No. First Street  
San Jose CA 95113  
[rhayashi@scscourt.org](mailto:rhayashi@scscourt.org)

## PAST EVENTS

### **CAPAJA Members Mentor the Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance of Southern California**

On September 6, CAPAJA Members **Judges Helen Yang, Christine Gonong, Hoa Hoang and Holly Fujie** attended an APAWLA Mentoring Tea with API lawyers and law students at Enchant LA in K-Town LA. CAPAJA Members offered advice and mentorship services to APAWLA members, who were thrilled to have so many great API judges in attendance.



*From left to right: Judge Hoa Hoang, Judge Christine Gonong, Judge Holly Fujie, and Judge Helen Yang*



**CalAPABA's Conference included a Presentation by CAPAJA members**

**Justice Joanne Motoike, Chief Judge Dolly Gee and Judge Jayne Lee** presented at the California Asian Pacific American Bar Association (CalAPABA) Conference on The Rule of Law and the Independence of the Judiciary on September 6, 2025. Thank you for speaking on a timely and important topic!



*From left to right: Justice Joanne Motoike, Chief Judge Dolly Gee, and Judge Jayne Lee*



### **CAPAJA Members Participated in PABA's Judge's Night**

CAPAJA members participated in a panel discussion at PABA's Judge's Night on Sept. 10. The judicial officers discussed their journey to the bench and their experiences on the bench. Their stories and valuable advice inspired the attorneys in attendance!



*From left to right: Judge Alex Sario, Judge Christine Gonong, Commissioner Mahin Salehi, Moderator Cherrisse Cleofe, Judge Adrian Roxas, Judge Winston Keh, Judge Teresa Magno, and Judge Ricardo Ocampo.*

### **KCLA Honored CAPAJA Member as Judicial Trailblazer**

**Judge Anne Hwang** was named Judicial Trailblazer by the Korean Community Lawyer's Association on Sept. 11. CAPAJA members were out in full force to congratulate Anne for receiving this award. Thank you, Anne, for sharing your personal story with us during your speech!



*From left to right: Judge Curtis Kin, Judge Christine Gonong, Judge Tammy Chung Ryu, Judge Tim Saito, Judge Michelle Ahnn, Judge Anne Hwang, Judge Ricardo Ocampo, Judge Jana Seng, Judge Dolly Gee, Judge Esther Kim, Judge Ruth Kwan, Judge Amanda Park, Judge Mark Kim, Judge Tony Cho, Judge Ann Park, and Judge Tiffany Tai.*

### **CAPAJA Member Inspires Law Students at AABA's Pathways to the Law Conference**

On Sept. 20, Justice Tracie Brown was the keynote speaker at AABA's "Pathways to Law" conference yesterday. The purpose of the annual conference is to inform and inspire high school and college students regarding the process of getting into law school and the types of careers they might pursue upon graduation. It was held at UC Law San Francisco, and there were about 70 students there – which was pretty impressive considering it was a spectacularly beautiful Saturday afternoon!



*Justice Tracie Brown addresses the law students. On the screen is a photo of the former Japanese YWCA of San Francisco, circa 1932.*



*Justice Tracie Brown interacts with law students after her speech during an informal Q&A.*

**PABA's Gala was a fun evening where CAPAJA Members were featured and a Member was Honored**

**Judge Lisa Mangay Chung** received the Distinguished Jurist award from PABA on Sept. 23. This special evening began with Ava Recana, the daughter of **Judge Julian Recana** and granddaughter of **Judge Mel Recana**, singing the American and Filipino National Anthems. **Judge Adrian Roxas**



introduced Judicial Appointments Secretary Luis Céspedes, who was the Keynote Speaker, and **Judge Christine Gonong** introduced Lisa to the audience. It was a wonderful evening, and we are so proud of you Lisa!



*Judge Tim Saito, Judge Mike Madokoro, Judge Christine Gonong, Judge Teresa Magno, Judge Ann Park, Judge Tammy Chung Ryu, Judge Lisa Mangay Chung, Judge Ruth Kwon, Judge Ricardo Ocampo, Judge Brian Clavecilla, Judge Julian Recana, Judge Adrian Roxas, Judge Billy Shin, and Judge Alex Sario.*



### **CAPAJA Welcomes Newly Appointed Judges**

CAPAJA is grateful that we can add three new members to our group! In August, **Cara Sandberg** was appointed by Governor Newsom to the Alameda Superior Court. She was recently sworn in and started her judicial duties. Joining her on the Alameda court is **Meera Parikh** who was appointed on Sept. 18.

Also appointed on that same day was **Ai Mori** to the San Francisco Superior Court. All three have been welcomed to CAPAJA and invited to CAPAJA's San Francisco weekend on Nov. 14-16, 2025. Below are the profiles of each of them from Governor Newsom's website.



Cara Sandberg, of Alameda County, has been appointed to serve as a Judge in the Alameda County Superior Court. Sandberg has served as a Deputy County Counsel for the Santa Clara County Counsel's Office since 2023. Sandberg was Of Counsel at Conrad Metlitzky Kane LLP from 2022 to 2023. She worked as a Chambers Attorney at the California Supreme Court from 2018 to 2022. She held multiple positions in the Santa Clara County Counsel's Office, including Deputy County Counsel from 2016 to 2018 and Fellow from 2015 to 2016. Sandberg served as a Law Clerk in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California from 2013 to 2015. She served as a Law Clerk on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit from 2012 to 2013. Sandberg received a Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. She fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Ursula Jones Dickson. Sandberg is a Democrat.



Meera T. Parikh, of Alameda County, has been appointed to serve as a Judge in the Alameda County Superior Court. Parikh has worked as a Partner and Litigation Attorney at Poniatowski Leding Parikh PC since 2007. She worked as a Litigation Associate at Parish & Small PLC from 2003 to 2007. Parikh was a Patent Attorney at Hickman Palermo Truong & Becker from 2001 to 2003. Parikh received a Juris Doctor degree from Santa Clara University School of Law. She fills the vacancy created by the appointment of Judge Mark McCannon to the San Mateo Superior Court. Parikh is a Democrat.



Ai Mori, of San Francisco County, has been appointed to serve as a Judge in the San Francisco County Superior Court. Mori has worked as a Chambers Attorney to Associate Justice Martin Jenkins in the California Supreme Court since 2020. She served in multiple positions in the California Court of Appeal, First Appellate District from 2006 to 2020, including as Chambers Attorney to Associate Justice Ioana Petrou, Justice Pro Tem Rebecca Wiseman, Associate Justice Martin Jenkins, and Administrative Presiding Justice William McGuiness. She worked as an Associate at Minami Tamaki from 2002 to 2006, and as a Staff Attorney in the California Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District from 2000 to 2002. Mori received a Juris Doctor degree from UC Law San Francisco. She fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Suzanne R. Bolanos. Mori is a Democrat.

## CAPAJA MEMBERS IN THE NEWS

### CAPAJA Member Praised for her Work On and Off the Bench.

On Sept. 29, 2025, **Justice Shama Hakim Mesiwala** was profiled by the Daily Journal. The article aptly described Shama's impact on the bench - not only as the first South Asian and Muslim American woman on any appellate court in the US, but also through her continued willingness to mentor lawyers and law students. She is praised for her thorough knowledge of law, her openness towards listening to both sides, and her approachable personality on the bench. Thank you Shama for all that you do on the bench and for CAPAJA!

## CAPAJA SPOTLIGHT

Your donations to CAPAJA's scholarship fund make a real difference in the lives of law students. Recently, a scholarship recipient, Phiona Lu, wrote to CAPAJA and talked about her experience interning for **Judge Garrett Wong** and how the scholarship helps her.



CAPAJA awards scholarships to two deserving law students who currently or intend to serve as a judicial clerk, intern, or extern in a California court. In addition, our partner organization, the Robert M. Takasugi Public Interest Fellowship, fully funds a third scholarship. All three scholarships are for \$2500 per student. To learn more about our scholarships, you can email [scholarships@capaja.org](mailto:scholarships@capaja.org).

If you are a judge, please consider donating to our scholarships for next year via the Robert M. Takasugi Public Interest Fellowship, an IRC section 501(c)(3) organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

You can donate in any amount to the CAPAJA Student Scholarship by PayPal: [Donate \(paypal.com\)](https://www.paypal.com) or by check: payable to “Robert Takasugi Fellowship - CAPAJA Scholarship” and mail it to “CAPAJA, 11138 Del Amo Blvd. #453, Lakewood, CA 90715-1103.”

Dear CAPAJA Scholarship Committee,

My name is Phiona Lu, and I am grateful to be a 2025 CAPAJA Scholarship recipient. Now that I am in the first few weeks of my 2L year, I've been reflecting on this past summer and wanted to thank the committee for your generous support.

This summer, I had the wonderful opportunity to be a judicial extern for Judge Garrett L. Wong at the San Francisco Superior Court. I wrote memos, helped draft and research decisions on various motions, and observed both civil and criminal cases, including jury and bench trials. It was such an invaluable and eye-opening experience to witness the judicial process up close and to learn so much from Judge Wong.

Thanks to this scholarship, I was able to ease some of the financial strain that comes with externing, which allowed me to focus and make the most of this experience. It is something I will always hold dear as I continue on my legal journey.

Thank you so much again for your kindness and support!  
Best Regards,  
Phiona Lu



*Phiona Lu pictured 2nd from the right with Judge Garrett Wong.*



Would you like to be more involved with CAPAJA? Would you like to get to know more API bench officers throughout the state? CAPAJA is creating a new Membership Chair position and looking for a volunteer. The Membership Chair is responsible for identifying new members, maintaining and updating the membership records, and working with the Executive Board and Committee Chairs to improve membership engagement. If you are interested in applying for this position, please email Judge Jana Seng at [capaja@capaja.org](mailto:capaja@capaja.org) by November 5, 2025.

Our Best Wishes to you all for a very Happy, Healthy and Productive October!

Jana Seng, CAPAJA President  
Nathan Vu, CAPAJA President-Elect

*If you have news or know of any CAPAJA member who has been or will be honored, has spoken or will speak at an event, has written an article or is taking a new position, or if you learn of a new potential CAPAJA member or of an event that may be of interest to CAPAJA members, please send an email to Newsletter Editor Holly Fujie at [communications@capaja.org](mailto:communications@capaja.org), and we will feature it in the next newsletter.*