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#### California Asian-Pacific American Judges Association

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## September 2023 CAPAJA Newsletter

Dear CAPAJA Member:

Can you believe it is already Fall? CAPAJA members did not take the summer off, so there is lots of news. Here is the CAPAJA newsletter for September.

### NEWS

#### CAPAJA Member to be Sworn in as CJA President at Annual Meeting

CAPAJA Member Judge Erica Yew will be sworn in as President of the California Judges Association on Saturday, September 23 at 11:30 am at the Marriott Marquis Marina in San Diego. Congratulations, Judge Yew and Best Wishes for an extremely successful and productive year as President.

#### CJA CONFERENCE/CAPAJA GENERAL MEETING/ CAPAJA DINNER SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup>-24<sup>TH</sup>.

The weekend of September 22<sup>nd</sup> will be a terrific opportunity to join CAPAJA members at the CJA Conference. Many wonderful events have been planned for that weekend.

On Friday September 22<sup>nd</sup>, CAPAJA and San Diego APA judicial officers invite you to join us for a Welcome CAPAJA Dinner at 7:00 PM. The dinner will take place at Lotus Thai restaurant which is a short drive away from the hotel where the CJA annual meeting and conference will be held. Lotus Thai will be closed to the public during our event so there will be plenty of room for mingling. Judicial officers, significant others/spouses and family are welcome to join us. For \$34 per person, attendees will be provided with two kinds of soup (Tom Yum with tofu and Tom Kha with chicken), appetizer platters, papaya salad and an entrée of their choice (either a stir-fry, noodles, fried rice or a curry with protein options) and dessert (mango with sweet sticky rice). We will also have our world-famous APA judicial officers trivia contest and gift bags for out-of-town folks. Please RSVP by September 13, 2023 at: [RSVP for 9/22/23 Welcome CAPAJA Dinner](#). Please email Selena Epley at [selena.epley@sdcourt.ca.gov](mailto:selena.epley@sdcourt.ca.gov) if you have any questions! Attached is the flyer with the link for reservations!

Additionally, on Friday, CAJAC (California Affinity Judges Association) will have a reception and award presentation to Judicial Appointments Secretary Luis Cespedes from 4:45-5:45. This is a perfect opportunity to have drinks right before our CAPAJA dinner! Please see attached flyer for additional information!

On Saturday September 23<sup>rd</sup> CAPAJA will host its general meeting in person at the CJA Conference as well as on Zoom. The meeting will be from 12:30-2:00 p.m., Further information will be sent closer to the meeting!

#### Join CAPAJA's Interactive Online Program

Be sure to save the date for an interactive online program, "Due Process in the Trenches," currently scheduled for September 28, 2023, from 12:15 to 1:15 pm. This program is a presentation of the CAPAJA Administrative Law Judges Committee and will discuss best practices and compare strategies that can be utilized by both trial court judges and administrative law judges. Information on

signing up will follow or contact ALJ Committee Co-Chair ALJ Dorothy Chou Proudfoot with any questions.

### **CAPAJA Members Profiled in DJ**

On August 2, the Daily Journal published a profile of CAPAJA Member Orange County Superior Court **Judge Vibhav Mittal** in an article entitled “Supervising other prosecutors prepared Judge Vibhav Mittal for the bench.” The article discusses Judge Mittal’s commitment to the collaborative approach to the law which he experiences on the juvenile court. Judge Mittal is quoted as saying “It is, I think, the ultimate public service job, working in this courtroom, working with families and kids, and I don’t think anything can be greater than that.” Excellent sentiments, Judge Mittal!

On August 7, **Judge Ernest Hiroshige** of the Los Angeles Superior Court was profiled in the Daily Journal and announced that he would seek reelection next year. Judge Hiroshige was a Deputy District Attorney before his appointment to the South Bay Municipal Court in 1980 and his elevation to the Superior Court in 1982. Judge Hiroshige is now the most senior judge sitting on the Los Angeles Superior Court bench.

On August 10, CAPAJA Member **Judge Mark Singerton** was profiled in the Daily Journal under the title “Judge Mark Singleton invests in troubled minors’ lives.” The article chronicles how Judge Singerton became Riverside County’s first Japanese American judge in 2021. It describes how he mentored minors when he was with the Riverside County District Attorney’s Office and how he now helps administer the mentoring program as a judge. “Defense attorneys say their clients are on the path toward being productive members of society thanks to Singerton.”

### **CAPAJA Member Is New APJ of Orange County**

**Orange County Superior Court Judge Cheri Pham** was elected Assistant Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of Orange County. This selection by her peers puts her in line to become Presiding Judge in 2025. Congratulations, Judge Pham!

### **CAPAJA Member Subject of Los Angeles Times Article**

On August 20, **Judge Lance Ito** of the Los Angeles Superior Court (ret.) was the subject of an article entitled “Retired Judge Lance Ito’s weekly ritual – paying homage to his late wife.” The touching article discusses Judge Ito’s regular ritual of caring for the grave of his late wife, Peggy York, a “trailblazing LAPD detective who was the inspiration for the ‘Cagney & Lacey’ TV show.” The column was by Steve Lopez, who writes for the Times on aging in Los Angeles, and notes that Judge Ito and York met at a murder scene when he was a Deputy District Attorney and she was a Detective. The article is linked [here](#).

### **CAPAJA Member to be Honored by APAWLA**

**CAPAJA Member Justice Audra Mori** of California’s 2d District Court of Appeal will be given the Public Service Award of the Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance on September 7 at APAWLA’s 30<sup>th</sup> Annual Anniversary and Awards Dinner. This event will be held at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center at the Toshizu Watanabe Center, located at 244 San Pedro Street in Los Angeles. Justice Mori will be the subject of a Conversation about her life and career, facilitated by Past CAPAJA President Judge Holly Fujie. A large contingent of CAPAJA members contributed to an ad to celebrate Justice Mori’s award. This event is sold out. Congratulations, Justice Mori!

APAWLA also honored **incoming CAPAJA President Judge Terry Truong** by having her swear in its officers and Board in February of this year.

### **CAPAJA Members to Be Honored by Cal-APABA**

On Saturday, September 23, Cal-APABA will honor **Orange County Superior Assistant Presiding Judge Cheri Pham** as Trailblazer of the Year and also will honor **Judge Selena Epley** of the San Diego Superior Court as Judge of the Year at its Annual Conference and Gala. CAPAJA will be a co-sponsor of this event and hopes its members will consider attending to cheer on our illustrious members at the Omni Hotel, located at 251 S. Olive Street, Los Angeles. For details, go to [www.calapaba.org](http://www.calapaba.org).

### **New CAPAJA Member on LASC**

CAPAJA has welcomed to its membership **Judge Abraham Meltzer** of the Los Angeles Superior Court, who was appointed on September 3, 2021.

### **New API Commissioner Appointed in Alameda County**

On July 31, **Heather Chang** was sworn in as a Court Commissioner of the Alameda County Superior Court. Commissioner Chang follows in the footsteps of such active CAPAJA Members as Judge (formerly Commissioner) Pelayo Llamas, Jr. Welcome to the bench, Commissioner Chang!

### **New API ALJ in Central California**

**Jamie Xiong-Vang** became an Administrative Law Judge with the California Department of Social Services overseeing IHSS hearings as of August 14. ALJ Xiong-Vang has been welcomed to membership in CAPAJA and to the CAPAJA ALJ Committee.

### **CWL Hosts Conversation With Its Rose Bird Memorial Award Winner, Judge Erica Yew**

On August 28, California Women Lawyers hosted a webinar entitled: “**In Conversation with: Judge Erica Yew, Rose Bird Memorial Award Recipient.**” Judge Yew’s Conversation was facilitated by Past CAPAJA President Judge Holly Fujie and was part of the celebration of Judge Yew’s receiving the prestigious 2023 Rose Bird Memorial Award from CWL.

### **Want to Advance in Your Judicial Career?**

CAPAJA’s looking to improve how we can better serve you, the members, in your professional goals! To that end, we’d like to hear from you through this [survey](#) regarding your goals and what we can do to help. In turn, your participation will help the Mentoring Committee with its new focus on preparing members who are interested in moving up in their careers.

### **CAPAJA Member Publishes Article in DJ**

An article by CAPAJA Member **Judge Kenneth So** (ret.) of the San Diego Superior Court appeared in the August 30 edition of the Daily Journal, entitled “A lawyer’s reputation can be hard to untarnish.” The article advises lawyers that, “[a]lthough they may not realize it, attorneys have reputations that precede them. Whether they are reviewed on Yelp or disparaged on a ListServe, legal professionals must understand that – whether well-deserved or not – their reputations can come back to haunt them in the courtroom, a mediation or arbitration, or other important forums.” Well said, Judge So!

**CAPAJA Member sworn in as Judge**

CAPAJA Member **Judge Evan Kitahara** of the Los Angeles Superior Court was sworn in as a judge. He was previously a Commissioner and was appointed as a Judge on August 1, 2023. He was kind enough to share some pictures with our members. Congratulations Judge Kitahara!



Sonny Sandhu, CAPAJA President  
Terry Truong, 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 [HFujie@LACourt.org](mailto:HFujie@LACourt.org), and we will feature it in the next newsletter.*