



CAPAJA April 2026
e-Newsletter Vol I, Issue 6

President's Message



Ever wonder what a typical day looks like for a CAPAJA member? CAPAJA members are highly engaged and constantly on the move! This month is no exception. Our members are organizing high school career day, serving as keynote speakers and panelists, leading mock trials, mentoring law students on pathways to the judiciary, teaching lawyers through MCLE courses, running boot camps for new judges, and celebrating with the community at cultural events. In recognition of their service and dedication, CAPAJA members are awarded, recognized, and celebrated both within the

judiciary and throughout the community! The work of our members strengthens our judiciary and inspires us all to strive for excellence. We are grateful for your contributions and we salute you!

Jana Seng, CAPAJA President



Request from CAPAJA-PAC



The CAPAJA-PAC is actively working to defend the re-election of Judge Ami Sagel in Orange County and Judge Jesse Hsieh in Contra Costa County. For more information, please use your personal email address to contact Victor Hwang at apivictor@gmail.com. More information can also be found at the PAC website at www.capaja-pac.org.

Upcoming CAPAJA Events

CAPAJA Mid-Year Meeting and Dinner is almost here!

SAVE THE DATE - CAPAJA will hold its Mid-Year Membership Meeting at the CJA Mid-Year meeting, which will be from April 30 through May 2 at the Renaissance Esmeralda Resort & Spa in Indian Wells. The CAPAJA Mid-Year meeting will be held, in person and remotely, at noon on Thursday, April 30. CAPAJA is also planning another great dinner for its members and their guests for May 1, location to be announced.



CAPAJA Mentoring Committee has organized a Virtual Judicial Boot Camp

Join CAPAJA's Mentoring Committee on Thursday, May 28, 2026 at 12:15 p.m. for a virtual Judicial Boot Camp Meet & Greet designed especially for newer judicial officers. This interactive session features seasoned judges sharing practical guidance on navigating judicial ethics, maintaining strong bench decorum, and building a reputation as a collaborative team player within the court. Panelists will also discuss how to recognize and thoughtfully address microaggressions in the courtroom and courthouse environment. Beyond the practical tips, this is an opportunity to connect with colleagues, ask candid questions, and learn from the experiences of those who have successfully navigated the early years on the bench. Whether you are newly sworn in or still finding your footing, this event will offer insight, camaraderie, and tools to help you thrive in your judicial role. Please email questions for the panelists and RSVP to CAPAJA's Mentoring Committee (Judge Adrian G. Roxas, Judge Tiffany W. Tai, and Stephanie J. Tañada) at mentorship@capaja.org.

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join: CLICK FLIER BELOW TO JOIN THE MEETING

Meeting ID: 214 839 633 960 11

Passcode: XP2Y7Rx9



NEW JUDICIAL OFFICERS BOOT CAMP

Navigating Ethics • Bench Decorum
Being a Team Player • Identifying Micro -Aggressions

Join

**California Asian-Pacific American Judges Association
Mentoring Committee**

on

**Thursday, May 28, 2026
12:15 pm to 1:15 pm**

Virtual Meet & Greet and Practical Tips from Seasoned Judicial Officers



**Hon. Tam Nomoto
Schumann (Ret.)**
Orange County



Hon. Winston Keh
San Bernardino County



Hon. Benjamin Reyes II
Contra Costa County

Please Email Questions for the Panelists and RSVP to CAPAJA's Mentoring Committee

Hon. Adrian G. Roxas - aroxas@lacourt.org

Hon. Tiffany W. Tai - ttai@lacourt.org

Hon. Stephanie J. Tañada - stanada@sb-court.org



Upcoming Events Featuring CAPAJA Members



CAPAJA Members Invited to APALIE Dinner

If you are able, please join CAPAJA member Judge Glenn Yabuno at the Asian Pacific American Lawyers Inland Empire (APALIE) dinner on May 7, 2026. It will be at 5:30 pm at the California Citrus State Historic Park. Glenn will be the keynote speaker.
PLEASE NOTE THE NEW DATE!



YOU'RE INVITED TO:

APALIE's 8th Annual Installation Dinner

MAY 7, 2026 AT 5:30 P.M.

CALIFORNIA CITRUS STATE HISTORIC PARK

9400 DUFFERIN AVE, RIVERSIDE, CA 92503

Keynote Speaker:

Hon. R. Glenn Yabuno

Register @ APALIE.org



Two Santa Clara Judges to be Honored by the Santa Clara Trial Lawyer's Association

We are excited to announce that the Santa Clara County Trial Lawyers have selected Judge (ret.) Drew Takaichi for the Lifetime Achievement Award and Judge Roberta Hayashi for their Access to Justice Award. Both recipients will be awarded at the SCCTLA Judges' Night on May 7, 2026 from 5-7:30 pm at the San Jose Marriott. If you would like to attend, please click this link: [Santa Clara County Trial Lawyers Association – SCCTLA](#).

Santa Clara County Trial Lawyers Association – SCCTLA



Zoom Training on Early Childhood to be Moderated by CAPAJA Member

Please join CAPAJA Past-President Erica Yew on April 14, 2026 as she moderates a panel of experts on early childhood development. This program is for judicial officers in a Juvenile Dependency assignment but all judicial officers are welcome. Learn about best practices when presiding over cases that involve young children. It will be on zoom from 12:15 to 1:15. To register, please use the following link.



New CAPAJA Members



On March 23, 2026, Diana Kwok was sworn in as a United States Magistrate Judge for the Central District of California. Diana is a past-President of the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association and has had a distinguished career as a commercial litigator and white-collar defense attorney. She has also served as an Assistant United States Attorney in Los Angeles and a Staff Attorney at the United States Securities and Exchange Commission. She is a graduate of USC Gould School of Law and served as a law clerk to both US District Court Judge Percy Anderson and US District Court Judge Ronald Lew. Diana, welcome to the bench and CAPAJA!



Past events



CAPAJA Members Mentor Pepperdine Law Students

On February 25, Judge Mark Singerton and Judge Jerry Yang, both on the Riverside County Court, made the long trek from Riverside to Malibu to participate in a Q&A session at Pepperdine Law School. They were joined by LASC Supervising Research Attorney Ericka Burdovich to give advice to law students about future externships and careers. The students greatly appreciated the advice and inspiration that was passed on to them at this event which was organized by the CAPAJA Law School Outreach Committee. Thank you, Mark and Jerry, for being such dedicated mentors!



Judge Jerry Yang (2nd from right) and Judge Mark Singerton (far right) enjoy the view and the time spent with the Pepperdine law students.



FLOC Adobo Night Features CAPAJA Members

CAPAJA Members attended the Filipino Lawyers of Orange County Adobo Mentorship Night on February 27. FLOC invited judges, commissioners and lawyers to have dinner with its members and to provide mentorship to college students and law students from schools across Southern California. This event also welcomed Judge Ami Sagel as a key featured guest panelist to address the entire audience with a Q&A session.



Judge Ami Sagel leads a Q&A session to provide advice to the law students and college students.



Back Row: Judge Deborah Servino (OC), Administrative Law Judge Mingming Zhan (LA), Judge Michelle Lauron (San Bernardino), and Judge Ami Sagel (OC)

Front Row: Ret. Chief Trial Judge Benes Aldana (USCG Court of Criminal Appeals), Judge Sheila Recio (OC), Judge Bryan Clavecilla (OC), Judge Julian Recana (LA), and Judge Joseph Kang (OC)



SoCal CAPAJA Gathers to Celebrate API Leadership in the LASC!

On March 3, CAPAJA Members from all over Los Angeles County met for a sumptuous Chinese banquet at Broadway Restaurant to celebrate API leadership in the Los Angeles Superior Court. The CAPAJA Members who were lucky enough to snag seats (there was a considerable waitlist!) heard from LASC PJ Sergio Tapia II and from APJ Ricardo Ocampo, who will be the first API LASC PJ in its history starting next January. Both of them extolled the virtues of the Juvenile Division's Presiding Judge, CAPAJA's own Judge Akemi Arakaki. Numerous CAPAJA Supervising Judges, Site Judges and Committee Chairs were called out by CAPAJA President Judge Jana Seng, followed by a delicious lobster dinner planned by 2d District Reps Judges Chris Lui and Christine Gonong. A wonderful time was had by all, as you can tell from the many smiling faces in the photos below!



API Judicial Leadership

CAPAJA proudly honors the eight Asian Pacific American Presiding Judges and Assistant Presiding Judges in California, who are at the forefront of a transformative moment in our judicial system. Pictured from left to right are Presiding Judge Paul Lo from Merced County, Presiding Judge Sonny Sandhu from Stanislaus County, Assistant Presiding Judge Jayne Lee from San Joaquin County, Assistant Presiding Judge Joni Hiramoto from Contra Costa County, Assistant Presiding Judge Ricardo Ocampo from Los Angeles County, and Presiding Judge Jerry Vinluan from Santa Cruz County. Notably absent from the photo are Presiding Judge John Lua from Kern County and Assistant Presiding Judge Von Deroian from Santa Barbara County. Each of these judges marks a historic milestone as the first APA PJ and APJ in their courts.

This remarkable increase in APA PJs and APJs signifies a vital shift in the leadership of California courts. Within a judiciary that serves one of the most diverse populations worldwide, APA judicial leaders who mirror their communities enhance the legitimacy and moral authority of our justice system.

Just as importantly, the rise of APA judges to these leadership positions signals that pathways to judicial leadership are expanding. PJs and APJs set the tone for their courts: they guide policy, mentor fellow judges, and shape the institutional culture of justice. When APA judges rise to leadership roles, they not only reinforce the integrity of the courts they lead, but also inspire future generations of lawyers who see in them a reflection of what is possible. Their leadership affirms a crucial principle: that the California judiciary is strongest when it draws upon the full diversity of the people it serves.



PJ & CEO Court Management Institute
Santa Rosa, CA
March 5, 2026

From left to right: Presiding Judge Paul Lo (Merced County), Presiding Judge Sonny Sandhu (Stanislaus County), Assistant Presiding Judge Jayne Lee (San Joaquin), Assistant Presiding Judge Joni Hiramoto (Contra Costa), Assistant Presiding Judge Ricardo Ocampo (Los Angeles), and Presiding Judge Jerry Vinluan (Santa Cruz).



CAPAJA Members Join in UC Davis SOL Celebration

On March 14, UC Davis School of Law's APALSA held a gala banquet and CAPAJA was there to add to the celebratory feeling! And with good reason, as the UCD SOL

APALSA Co-Presidents both have CAPAJA parentage! In the photo below, CAPAJA Member Judge Tim Saito of the Los Angeles County Superior Court is shown at right, beaming with pride next to his son, UC Davis SOL APALSA Co-President Matthew Saito, while Matthew's Co-President, Taylor Tran is with her equally beaming mother, CAPAJA Member Judge Jacqueline Duong of the Santa Clara County Superior Court! Also in attendance are CAPAJA Members Judge A. Javellana Fritzgerald of the Sutter County Superior Court, who sent the photo below and reported the event to the Newsletter, as well as Judge Rei Onishi of the Sacramento County Superior Court.



From left to right: Judge Fritzgerald Javellana (Sutter), Judge Rei Onishi (Sacramento), Judge Jacqueline Duong (Santa Clara), Santa Clara County Supervisor Betty Duong, two law students, APALSA Co-President Taylor Tran, APALSA Co-President Matthew Saito, and Judge Tim Saito (LA).



CAPAJA Member Participates in High School Career Day

CAPAJA Member Judge Johnny Gogo of the Santa Clara Superior Court was a speaker at Career Day at Evergreen Valley High School on March 8. Johnny was invited to attend by Boy Scout Troop 168.



CAPAJA Members Help Build Pathways to the Judiciary in San Bernardino

On March 9, the San Bernardino Superior Court hosted a Pathways to the Bench event with Judicial Appointments Secretary Cespedes and Deputy Judicial Appointments Secretary Hofmann. Justice Corey Lee and Judge Kevin Lee (SB County) were on the panel, which was held at the San Bernardino Courthouse. Please visit Riverside Superior Court's Instagram link for photos from this event.





Pinay Powerhouse

CAPAJA members - Hon. Marlo Nisperos, Hon. Danette G. Brown, and Hon. Christine J. Gonong - attended the Pinay Powerhouse Conference IX, where the Keynote Speaker, Chief Justice Tani Canti-Sakauye (Ret.), received the Ruthe Ashley Impact Legacy Award for her distinguished leadership and dedication to mentorship. The conference was held in Sacramento, CA on March 20 & 21, 2026 at the University of the Pacific McGeorge Law School.



From left to right: Judge Christine Gonong, Chief Justice (ret.) Tani Canti-Sakauye, Judge Danette Brown, and Judge Marlo Nisperos



CAPAJA Members Participate in Mock Trial Finals

On Sunday, March 22, 2026, Lynbrook High School (San Jose/Santa Clara County) prevailed over Moreau Catholic High School (Hayward/Alameda County) in the Final/Championship Round of the California State High School Mock Trial competition that took place at the Alameda County Courthouse in Oakland, CA. In the first photo below, Santa Clara County Judge Johnny Gogo (third from right) joined the Lynbrook student champs and their coaches (attorney coach Mark Shem in blue jacket and teacher coach David Pugh in grey jacket). In the second photo below, Judge Gogo joined Stanislaus County Presiding Judge Sonny Sandhu and Sonny's son, Rajan, who also participated in the State HS Mock Trial Finals representing Stanislaus County. The Lynbrook champs will represent California in the National High School Mock Trial Championship in Des Moines, Iowa from May 7 to May 9, 2026.



CAPAJA Joins SCCLA to Hold Voir Dire Webinar

On March 25, CAPAJA Members Judge Deborah Chuang Servino and Judge Bryan Clavecilla of the Orange County Superior Court, together with recently nominated-to-be Presiding Justice Joanne Motoike spoke on a panel on Civil Voir Dire and CCP

231.7, the Racial Justice Act statute that recently became effective on January 1 for civil cases. This webinar, which was co-sponsored with the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association, was presented to a large audience interested in learning how to navigate this new statute.



CAPAJA Members in the News



On March 10, 2026, the Daily Journal discussed Judge Rupa Goswam's approach to justice - empathy and adherence to the law. The article noted Rupa's many contributions through her work on the bench which include a presentation on implicit bias and a temporary assignment on the Court of Appeal. In addition to teaching criminal procedure at USC Gould School of Law, she has lectured in Bangladesh on human trafficking and gender violence. The latter opportunity held special significance to Rupa because it was held about 11 miles from the village where her father was born, and her father had passed just 7 months prior. What a touching, full circle experience, Rupa!

Judge Alison Matsumoto's profile appeared in the Daily Journal on March 23, 2026. Alison is praised by the attorneys interviewed for her thoughtfulness and her preparation. The article notes the immense respect Alison has among the attorneys for her judicial work. Although the article states that her passion is golf, it neglected to mention that Alison's golf skills are also widely admired! Great article Alison!



Rupa S. Goswami

Los Angeles County Superior Court

Career Highlights: Appointed Los Angeles County Superior Court judge by Gov. Jerry Brown, July 2013; assistant U.S. attorney, Central District of California, 2001-13; clerk for 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Terence T. Evans, Chicago, 2000-01; clerk for U.S. District Judge Nora M. Manella, Los Angeles, 1998-2000; associate, Skadden Arps Slate Meagher & Flom LLP and Affiliates, 1996-98

Law School: UCLA School of Law, 1998

Los Angeles County Superior Court

Source: dailyjournal.com/judicial_profile/10966



Alison S. Matsumoto

Los Angeles County Superior Court

Career Highlights: Elected Los Angeles County Superior Court judge, June 3, 2014; deputy district attorney, Los Angeles County, 1998-2015; deputy district attorney, Sacramento County, 1997-98

Law School: University of San Diego School of Law, 1996

Source: dailyjournal.com/judicial_profile/10970

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

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



If you have news related to CAPAJA or our CAPAJA members, or if you have learned of a new potential CAPAJA member, please send an email to Newsletter Editor Holly Fujie at communications@capaja.org and we will feature it in the next newsletter. Photographs are encouraged!

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CAPAJA Student Scholarship



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