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#### California Asian-Pacific American

##### Judges Association

11138 Del Amo Blvd #453  
Lakewood, CA 90715-1103

[www.CAPAJA.org](http://www.CAPAJA.org)

[capaja2020@gmail.com](mailto:capaja2020@gmail.com)

## May 2025 CAPAJA Newsletter

Dear CAPAJA Member:

We hope everyone had a great April as we head into the middle of the year! Here is the CAPAJA news for May of 2025.

## UPCOMING CAPAJA EVENTS

### LASC CAPAJA Members' Meet and Greet with the Court's PJ and APJ

(Sent on behalf of Judge Chris Lui and Judge Christine Gonong, 2<sup>nd</sup> District Reps for CAPAJA)

Dear Fellow APA Bench Officers,

CAPAJA invites you to join us at the LASC Meet and Greet featuring Presiding Judge Sergio Tapia and Assistant Presiding Judge Ricardo Ocampo. Come chat with our new leadership team, meet new bench officers, and reunite with old friends. Your invitation is below. We hope to see you there!

CAPAJA's LASC Meet & Greet

Date: Thursday, May 15, 2025

Time: 5:30 – 7:30 PM

Location: Taste of MP, 415 W. Garvey Ave., Monterey Park

**RSVP to Judge Chris Lui @ [CLui@lacourt.org](mailto:CLui@lacourt.org) and Judge Christine Gonong @ [CGonong@lacourt.org](mailto:CGonong@lacourt.org) by 5/1/25.**

Cost: \$55, includes 10-course meal. Please let us know if you have any specific dietary requests.

Payment: Direct all payments to Judge Christine Gonong by 5/1/25.

By Venmo: @Christine-Gonong (See QR code below)

By Zelle: 213-645-0323

By Check (Payable to CAPAJA): Mosk Courthouse, 111 N. Hill Street, Dept. 63, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

Christine Gonong

@Christine-Gonong



venmo



**CJA and CAPAJA Present 5/21 Program on Japanese American Internment**

Unscripted Conversations on Diversity and Inclusivity: What it means to us on and off the bench -  
CONVERSATION #21: Lessons of the Japanese American Internment

On February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 which authorized the forced exclusion of men, women, and children of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast. The government confined more than 110,000 of them in internment camps for the duration of the war.

To commemorate Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander Heritage month, please join CJA for CAPAJA's presentation of "Lessons of the Japanese American Internment." This program features different perspectives of the Japanese American internment experience as discussed by four CAPAJA Superior Court Judges: Charles Kobayashi, Sacramento Superior Court (retired), Mike Madokoro, Los Angeles Superior Court, Johnny Gogo, Santa Clara Superior Court, and Mark Hanasono, Los Angeles Superior Court.

Date: Wednesday, May 21, 2025

Time: 4:30pm - 6:00pm

REGISTER HERE:

[https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/phjteWbXRKCxM3Amk\\_6NkQ#/registration](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/phjteWbXRKCxM3Amk_6NkQ#/registration)

PLEASE NOTE, this conversation is only open to CJA members. Sharing the registration link is prohibited. All participants must register in advance of the meeting.

Education: 1.5 hours of JBEC General Education credit will be available.

**Judges – Please Give Generously to the CAPAJA Scholarship Fund!**

Dear CAPAJA Judges,

CAPAJA is pleased to foster the growth of students who share our goals of promoting diversity in the bench and bar, improving the administration of justice, and ensuring access and fairness for all who use the courts.

CAPAJA will once again be awarding scholarships to two deserving law students who currently or intend to serve as a judicial clerk, intern, or extern in a California court. Thanks to donations from CAPAJA members like you, we are able to increase the amount of each scholarship to \$2,500.00. Our partner organization, the Robert M. Takasugi Public Interest Fellowship, fully funds a third scholarship, and has committed to matching this increase. There will also be a FOURTH scholarship this year.

Last year's Takasugi Fellowship recipient, Sauntharya Manikandan shared her thoughts:

"I am honored to be a recipient of the CAPAJA Scholarship and deeply grateful for the support it provides in furthering my legal education and career aspirations....I am inspired by CAPAJA's dedication to fostering the growth of law students who share these values, and I am committed to carrying forward these principles in my legal career. The generous support of CAPAJA and the Takasugi Foundation is instrumental in helping students like me access opportunities that shape our future in the legal profession, and I am profoundly grateful for their investment in my journey."

For 2025, please consider making a contribution of \$150.00 to the CAPAJA Scholarship Fund, 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 the following ways:

By PayPal: [Donate \(paypal.com\)](https://www.paypal.com)

By Check: Make check payable to “Robert Takasugi Fellowship - CAPAJA Scholarship” and mail the check to CAPAJA, 11138 Del Amo Blvd. #453, Lakewood, CA 90715-1103.

We appreciate your support and generous donation to the CAPAJA Student Scholarship.

Sincerely,

ALJ Dorothy Chou Proudfoot  
Co-Chair CAPAJA Student Outreach and Scholarship Committee  
San Francisco Rent Board



### **CAPAJA Member Speaks Out in Support of the Rule of Law**

On April 1, Chief Judge Dolly Gee of the Central District of California gave a stirring speech in support of the independence of the judiciary at the Los Angeles County Bar Association Litigation Section’s annual Bench Meets Bar luncheon. Her speech, which was reported on the front page of the Daily Journal’s April 2 edition, was “an unflinching critique of political attacks on the courts” and on the “dangerous erosion of respect for judicial independence.” Well done, Dolly!

### **CAPAJA Member Honored with President’s Award**

Judge Alan Honeycutt was honored at the Criminal Courts Bar Association on April 5, 2025 with their President’s Award for his exceptional service to the criminal justice system. Over 600 people came out to celebrate Judge Honeycutt and the other awards recipients. Assistant Presiding Judge Ricardo Ocampo was present and also did a video introduction of Alan. (All photos published with the permission of the Criminal Courts Bar Association)



*APJ Ricardo Ocampo and CA Supreme Court Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero dressed in their finest to celebrate Judge Honeycutt's achievements.*

*APJ Ricardo Ocampo and Judge Johnny Gogo (Santa Clara) at the Criminal Courts Bar Association Dinner to honor Judge Alan Honeycutt.*





## **CAPAJA Mentors Law Students**

On April 9, the CAPAJA Student Outreach and Scholarship Committee, led by CAPAJA Members Comm. Jenny Cheung Marino, Judge Tim Saito, Judge Tiffany Tai and Judge Mark Singleton, put on an amazing Speed Mentoring Program for Los Angeles area law students at Loyola Law School. Twenty-three judicial officers, including judges from Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties, signed up to meet with law students to give advice on law careers and to offer themselves as mentors. Judge Tim Saito then introduced a Law Clerk Coordinator from the Los Angeles Superior Court who explained how the students could apply to become externs with the Court for this coming summer. Following the program, CAPAJA provided delicious food from Porto's – always a local favorite. Another successful and impactful program for CAPAJA!



*Left to Right: Karen An, Loyola Law School student and the student organizer of the event, Judge Mark Singleton, Commissioner Jenny Cheung Marino, Judge Tiffany Tai, Judge Timothy Saito*



### **CAPAJA Member Honored by Chapman Fowler School of Law**

On April 10, the Public Interest Law Foundation of the Chapman Fowler School of Law gave its Inaugural Alumni Scholarship Reception in which it honored CAPAJA's own Judge Brian Clavecilla of the Orange County Superior Court. Congratulations, Brian!



*From L to R: Judge Ben Azar, Judge June An, Judge Terry Truong, Judge Brian Clavecilla, Judge Randy Ladisky, Judge Cheri Pham, Judge Richard Lee, and Commissioner Lydia Kim.*

### **CAPAJA/CJA Past President Speaks on Ethics for ALJs**

On April 15, Judge Erica Yew spoke on “Ethics and Emotional Intelligence for Handling Hearings with Exemplary Demeanor” – a webinar presented by CJA. The presentation focused on comparative California judicial ethics and was designed for ALJs and Tribal Court judges. What an important and impactful program, Erica!

### **CAPAJA Members Participate in KABA-SoCal Gala**

CAPAJA Member Judge Anne Hwang of the CDCA gave the keynote address at the Korean American Bar Association – Southern California Gala on April 17. The Board and officers of KABA-SC was sworn in by CAPAJA Member Judge Esther Ro of the LASC. Many CAPAJA Members were present to support them.

### **CAPAJA Members Speak on Judicial Diversity**

On April 25, the LA County Bar Association held a Diversity Conference at Loyola Law School. Speaking on a panel on Diversity in the Judiciary were Judge Bryant Yang and Judge Akemi Arakaki of the LA Superior Court.



*From left to right: Judge Akemi Arakaki, Judge Sergio Tapia II, Attorney Karina Stermán, Judicial Appointments Secretary Luis Céspedes, and Judge Bryant Yang.*

### **Past CAPAJA President Speaks on BBC Panel**

On Monday, April 28, the Bench Bar Coalition hosted a panel discussion on “Innovative Pathways to the Law: Capturing Students’ Attention from Elementary to College,” featuring CAPAJA Past President Judge Sonny Sandhu of the Stanislaus County Superior Court. Immediate Past CAPAJA President Terry Truong was one of the organizers of the event.

The panel discussed existing pipeline programs across California, emphasizing early intervention in legal career pathways, and providing practical ways for attorneys and judges to get involved or replicate programs at the local level.



# OTHER UPCOMING EVENTS

## Special event to remember the Japanese Internment

Judge Glenn Yabuno brought this upcoming event to our attention. There will be a pilgrimage from May 21-24 to learn and process the aftermath of the Japanese Internment. Below is the flier for more information.

**Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage**  
May 21-24, 2025

**Connection,  
Education, Healing**

**Learning and open conversation lead to understanding and healing.**

The Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage allows survivors, descendants, and others to learn about and discuss the legacy and aftermath of WWII era concentration camps in the USA. One day of the Pilgrimage is a trip to the concentration camp sites in Jerome and Rohwer, with a program in McGehee, AR, that includes taiko drummers and a short obon festival to honor the spirits of our ancestors. There will be two full days of programming in Little Rock, including intergenerational and generational discussions, historical sessions, survivor perspectives, social activities, and opportunities to stamp the sacred Ireichō (a book with names of more than 125,000 innocent Japanese and Japanese Americans imprisoned during WWII) and to research family histories.

**Registration** <https://tinyurl.com/JRPilgrimage>

**We look forward to seeing  
you in Little Rock**

**Support the Jerome Rohwer Committee  
and 2025 Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage**

**Thank you  
for your support**

**Organized by**  
Jerome Rohwer  
Committee



**May 21-24, 2025  
Little Rock, AR  
Preliminary Program  
Highlights**

**WED, MAY 21**  
Optional pre-pilgrimage tour of Little Rock Central High School  
Registration  
"Six Families" exhibit about the six Japanese American families that remained in Arkansas, courtesy Plantation Agriculture Museum  
Ireichō Stamping to honor incarcerated  
Welcome Dinner with Keynote Speaker Duncan Ryuken Williams  
Optional, Every evening social activities will be available in separate rooms, for more intimate interactions amongst pilgrims

**THU, MAY 22**  
Site visits to Jerome & Rohwer; Program at WWII JA Internment Museum in McGehee, AR, including mini-obon and Central AR Taiko Group  
Ireichō Stamping to honor incarcerated  
Taiko Workshop, Central AR Taiko Group  
Optional, Artifact Digitizing, John Youngblood, University Arkansas Libraries

**FRI, MAY 23**  
Life at America's Temporary Detention Sites, Sharon Yamato & Evan Kodani  
Rising Above in AR, Angelina Payne, Kimball Erdman, & Joshua Youngblood  
Artifact Digitizing, Manon Davis and staff  
Jim Crow Virginia, Regina H. Boone  
Starting Over, film by Dianne Fukami, Q&A w/ survivor, Marielle Tsukamoto  
Research Genealogy—The Chimata Sumida Story, Marsha Endo Johnson  
Chicago—Life after Camp, Ross Harano, Patti Nakai  
Optional, *Not My Model Minority*, film by Jon Osaki, discussion follows

**SAT, MAY 24**  
Multicultural JA Identities, Rob Buscher  
Tsuru for Solidarity, Becca Asaki, Emily Yoshioka, KC Mukai  
JACL, David Inoue  
Generational & Intergenerational Discussion Groups  
Farewell Dinner with Survivor Tributes

**SUN, May 25**  
Optional post-Pilgrimage tour of National Civil Rights Museum and Lorraine Hotel, Memphis, TN (Please note: Private transportation required)



## **CAPAJA Members will be Featured in Program on Historic Female Firsts**

On May 22, CAPAJA Member Associate Justice Shama Hakim Mesiwala of the 3rd District Court of Appeal will moderate a panel discussion including Associate Justice and CAPAJA Member Audra Mori of the 2nd DCA. The program will cover the careers of many trailblazing women in the appellate courts, including the late Associate Justice of the California Supreme Court and CAPAJA Member Joyce Kennard. We are so proud of our pioneering API women judges! To attend this event, please RSVP to: <https://wlala.org/event/celebrating-7-historic-female-firsts/>

## **Celebrating 7 Historic Female Firsts on California's Courts of Appeal**

May 22 @ 12:00 pm - 1:30 pm PDT \$35.00 - \$45.00

May 22, 2025, 12pm  
\$35 govt/public interest  
\$40 WLALA members  
\$45 non-members  
1 Hour MCLE Elimination of Bias  
\*Lunch Included\*



Ronald Reagan Building  
300 S. Spring Street,  
Los Angeles, CA 90013  
\*Event held in Cafeteria

### **CELEBRATING 7 HISTORIC FEMALE FIRSTS ON CALIFORNIA'S COURTS OF APPEAL**



**Justice Shama  
Hakim Mesiwala**  
3rd District



**Presiding Justice  
Lee Smalley Edmon**  
2nd District, Division 3



**Justice Audra  
M. Mori**  
2nd District, Division 4



**Adam Hofmann**  
California Deputy Judicial  
Appointments Secretary

Join us for an inspiring presentation by Justice Mesiwala on seven trailblazing women in the California Courts of Appeal.

Justices Edmon and Mori will share their unique paths to the bench, offering personal insights and guidance for aspiring jurists.

Deputy Judicial Appointments Secretary Adam Hofmann will discuss the appointments process, the California Judicial Mentor Program, and the importance of a diverse applicant pool.

#### **SEVEN CALIFORNIA FEMALE FIRSTS:**

- First Female Justice: Annette Abbott Adams
- First African American Female Justice: Arleigh Woods
- First Jewish American Female Justice and Youngest CA Intermediate Appellate Court Justice: Sheila Prell Sonenshine
- First Hispanic Female Justice: Ramona Godoy Perez
- First Asian American Female Justice, First Immigrant Female Justice, First Non-native English-speaking Female Justice, and First Disabled Female Justice: Joyce Kennard
- First and Only Female Military Veteran Justice: Eileen Moore
- First Openly Lesbian Justice: Therese Stewart





### **CAPAJA Members Present to 5<sup>th</sup> Graders on Careers in the Law**

On March 17, Judge Jerry Yang of the Riverside County Superior Court and recent appointee Helen Yang (to be sworn in on May 16) presented to approximately 150 fifth graders at Wedgeworth Elementary in Hacienda Heights (student population is 79% Asian) on pathways to being a lawyer and judge, what it is like to be a judge, separation of powers, and civics. During the presentation, they held two impromptu debates, and Jerry gave feedback to each debater afterwards. They also had a government trivia pop quiz, followed by a question-and-answer session. At the end of the presentation, they let any interested fifth graders put on Jerry's judicial robe. What a wonderful example of true community outreach – thanks for doing this, Helen and Jerry! (Interesting side note: Jerry and Helen are the only judicial couple we know who serve in two different counties!)



### **CAPAJA Member Nominated for CJA Executive Board**

CAPAJA Member Judge Alex Giza has been nominated to serve on the CJA Executive Board representing District 10 (Los Angeles). It's great to see CAPAJA Members' dedication to leadership in the California Judges Association continue with this year's nominees!

### **CAPAJA Members to be Awarded**

We are proud to announce that two of our members will be recognized for the hard work they do for the court and outside the court.

CAPAJA's President-Elect Jana Seng has been named "Judge of the Year" by the Los Angeles Criminal Bar Association. She will receive this award on June 5, 2025 at the Criminal Justice Awards Reception. Congratulations Jana - we are so proud of you! For more information on the event, please click this link: [2025 Criminal Justice Awards Reception - LACBA Events](#)

Judge Holly Fujie was chosen as one of 5 recipients of the Margaret Brent Award that will be given by the ABA at its convention August 10 in Toronto! This prestigious award honors up to 5 outstanding women lawyers who have achieved professional excellence and paved the way for other women in the legal profession. Holly, you deserve this award for all that you do! More information about the convention can be found at: <https://events.americanbar.org/event/35b87089-2464-4ff6-9181-300876724425/summary?RefId=aem>



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

It was no April Fool's joke, but Judge Stephen Lau of the Sacramento County Superior Court was profiled in the April 1 Daily Journal! CAPAJA Member Judge Lau's profile was entitled "Judge Stephen Lau brings global perspective, philosophical rigor to the Sacramento bench: Judge's path was shaped by migration, mentors, philosophy." The article chronicles Stephen's path to the bench, including a judicial clerkship, partnership at a firm and assistant general counsel at the Department of Business Oversight and general counsel to the Sacramento County Employees' Retirement System before his appointment in 2022. Congratulations on a great profile, Stephen!

And on April 22, the DJ profiled another CAPAJA Member, Judge Rei Onishi of the Sacramento County Superior Court under the title "Sacramento Judge Rei Onishi reflects on unlikely career." The article recounted Rei's experience after graduating from Harvard Law School, clerking for 11<sup>th</sup> Circuit Judge Beverly Martin, and how she commented to him when swearing him in as a lawyer: "Hey, maybe you'll be doing this one day and swearing in your own law clerk." At the time, he thought "Yeah, right, I have no idea what you're talking about." So clearly, judges know best!

### **CAPAJA Member Explains Character Evidence**

Do you know what a CORPSE, COD, and COW are? On April 18 in the Daily Journal, Judge (Ret.) Jackson Lucky broke down character evidence in a practical and helpful way. Read his article and not only will you have an easy way to remember the rules regarding character evidence, but you will never



look at the words CORPSE, COD, and COW in the same way. Thanks for always being the consummate professor Jack!



### **New CAPAJA Members Sworn In As Judges**

March and April were big months for Ceremonial Swearing in Ceremonies for CAPAJA Members, and their fellow CAPAJA members came in droves to support them!

Recently, Doris Ng was sworn in as a judge on the Alameda Superior Court. On March 28, Billy Shin was sworn in by Judge Ann Park. Also in attendance were CAPAJA members Judge Lee Tsao, Judge Corey Lee, Judge Mark Kim, and Judge Tammy Chung Ryu. On April 11, Judge Phu Nguyen was sworn in as a Judge of the Los Angeles Superior Court, with many CAPAJA members including Judges Christine Gonong, Curtis Kin, Wes Hsu and President-Elect Jana Seng there to cheer her on. And on April 15, Judge Mike Madokoro of the LASC was sworn in by CAPAJA Member Justice Audra Mori, who also spoke at the event, together with CAPAJA Members Judges Tim Saito and Holly Fujie.

Thank you for the pictures Doris Billy, Phu, and Mike so that we can celebrate your achievement. We look forward to your participation in CAPAJA events!



*Newly sworn in Judge Doris Ng (Alameda County) with Alameda Superior Court Presiding Judge Tom Nixon*



*From left to right: Judge Lee Tsao, Judge Danielle Gibbons, Judge Margaret Bernal, Judge Corey Lee, Judge Ann Park, Judge Billy Shin, Judge Mark Kim, Judge Tammy Chung Ryu, Judge Keith Borjon, and Commissioner Paul Bruguera.*



*From left to right: Judge Wendy Chang, Soon-to-be Judge Helen Yang, Court of Appeals Research Attorney Hoa Hoang, Judge Tiffany Tai, Judge Curtis Kin, Judge Mike Madokoro, Judge Holly Fujie, Judge Ruth Kwan, Judge Terry Truong, Judge Christine Gonong, and Judge Upinder Kalra*





*Left photo - Judge Samantha Jessner administers the oath of office for newly sworn in Judge Phu Nguyen.*

*Bottom photo - From left to right: Judge Audra Mori, Judge Tim Saito, Judge Alison Matsumoto, Judge Sabina Helton, Judge Phu Nguyen, Judge Wendy Chang, Judge Tiffany Tai, Judge Bryant Yang, Judge Ruth Kwan, Judge Curtis Kin, Judge Holly Fujie, Judge Mike Madokoro, Soon-to-be Judge Helen Yang, Judge Jana Seng, Judge Linda Sun, Judge Christine Gonong, Judge Gary Eto, Judge Terry Truong, Judge Esther Ro, and Judge (Ret.) Fred Fujioka*





### **Belated Congrats to New Commissioner**

CAPAJA is thrilled to welcome as a new member Commissioner Tiffany Poncy. Tiffany was elected to the bench in February 2024. As an attorney, Tiffany had extensive experience in Juvenile Dependency. She currently sits in a Family Law assignment. Tiffany, welcome to CAPAJA and we look forward to getting to know you better!

### **New Judge Expresses her Thanks**

Judge Cecilia Joo was appointed in March to the Riverside County Superior Court, and she requested this note that she penned be included in the newsletter:

*My appointment would not have been possible without the help of so many friends who came alongside me and offered their invaluable advice and help.*

*I wanted to take the time to thank CAPAJA for endorsing and supporting me through the judicial application process. Since joining CAPAJA as a commissioner, I have met so many wonderful colleagues all over the state!*

*To my CAPAJA Korea 2024 friends: Each of you gave me words of encouragement and shared your own experience through the appointment process. Thank you to Judges Teresa Magno, Tammy Ryu, Ann Park, Keith Fudenna, Thomas Long, Upinder Kalra, Michael Schultz, Renee Korn, Sharon Cho, Lynn Olson, Amy Ashvanian, Carol Najera, Christopher Frisco, Diane Goodman, Douglas Stern, Harold Kahn, Kara Ueda, and Commissioners Jeffrey Korn and Sheryl Beasley-Waite.*

*A big thank you to my home court friends, Judges Corey Lee, Glenn Yabuno and Charles Umeda. And a very special thank you to Judges Michelle Ahnn, Holly Fujie, Wendy Chang and Grace Kim who went out of their way to help me through the process!*

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

Jayne Chong-Soon Lee, CAPAJA President

Jana Seng, CAPAJA President-Elect for 2024-2025

Nathan Vu, CAPAJA President-Elect for 2025-2026

*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.*