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#### **California Asian-Pacific American Judges Association**

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## **July 2024 CAPAJA Newsletter**

Dear CAPAJA Member:

CAPAJA Members have been enjoying summer and keeping our courts running! Here is the CAPAJA newsletter for July 2024.

## **HELLOS and GOODBYES:** **Appointments, Swearing Ins, and Retirements**

### **Two CAPAJA Endorsees Appointed to the Superior Court!**

On June 18, Gurjit Singh Srail of San Joaquin County and Cynthia Chen of Santa Clara County, both of whom were endorsed by CAPAJA for appointment, were selected by Governor Gavin Newsom to their respective Superior Court benches. We look forward to their strong involvement in CAPAJA's activities in the future and congratulate them on their appointments!

### **Judge Sophia Choi Celebrates her Swearing In**

Judge Sophia Choi was sworn in as a judge of the Riverside Court in June. Her event was at the beautiful Riverside Historical Courthouse. In attendance were CAPAJA members from neighboring counties of San Bernardino and Los Angeles!



From left to right: Corey Lee (SB), Jerry Yang (Riverside), Sophia Choi, Terry Truong (LA), Ann Park (LA)

### **CAPAJA Past President Featured on ABC News**

Former CAPAJA President Judge Mel Recana is retiring this year after almost 40 years of judicial service. ABC news did a feature on the accomplishments of Judge Recana which includes interviews of Judge Mel Recana, and his son, Judge Julian Recana. The interview shows the humor, kindness, and humility of Judge Mel Recana and ends with some words of encouragement and inspiration for the next generation of Filipino Americans. Please enjoy watching the feature at: <https://abc7.com/post/40-year-career-superior-court-judge-mel-red/14887066/>

### **Swearing-in Ceremony of Judge Bryan Clavecilla**

. . . . And speaking of the next generation of Filipino American leaders, Judge Bryan Clavecilla was sworn in as a judge of the Orange County Superior Court on June 28, 2024. The new judge gave a moving speech which he agreed to share with our CAPAJA members. He compared his life to redwood trees and wove in stories about suffering from imposter syndrome and the hardships he faced. His speech clearly exhibited the skills he picked up during his college Speech and Debate experience. Please enjoy reading his speech which is attached to the email.



From left to right: Johnny Gogo, Ben Reyes, Cheri Pham, Bryan Clavecilla, June An, Debbie Servino, Terry Truong, Julian Recana.



From left to right: Coast Guard Chief Trial Judge (retired) Benes Aldana, Andrew Kim, Johnny Gogo, Bryan Clavecilla, Ben Reyes, Julian Recana.

### **MAKING AN IMPACT**

#### **Highlighting the Work of CAPAJA Members**

#### **CAPAJA Member Re-Appointed to Judicial Council**

Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero re-appointed CAPAJA Member Associate Justice Carin Fujisaki of the First District Court of Appeal to another three-year term as a member of the Judicial Council of California. The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, The Council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. Congratulations, Carin!

#### **CAPAJA Member Initiates Innovative Program for Inmates**

Commissioner Phil Peng of the Los Angeles Superior Court started a running program at NORCO State Prison at the beginning of June. The prison reached out to him and a friend, who is Professor of Education, and asked if they would help them create a running program for 20 inmates. They go every other Saturday and run for 1 hour and then have another hour of classroom instruction where they have assigned reading and discussion. The inmates were selected by the prison and upon successful completion of the 12-week program they will run a 6.2 mile race on their track.

They also bring in guest coaches to teach about every aspect of running and development as a learner. For example, Dr. John Su, a sport medicine doctor ran with them and discussed injury prevention and nutrition.



Commissioner Peng can't bring a cellphone inside the prison, so he provided us with a photo of him and another coach outside the prison. Bravo and thanks for this wonderful work, Phil; you make us proud!



### **CAPAJA Members Attended International Criminal Law Conference**

On June 15, 2024, the Korean Prosecutors Association's hosted an International Criminal Law Conference in Orange County. Judges Tammy Ryu, Bryan Clavecilla, and Susan Jung Townsend attended this event.



### **CAPAJA Member Speaks at Investiture of Federal Court Judge**

On June 13, U.S. District Judge Hernan Vera was sworn in to his position on the Central District Court bench. One of the speakers at the event was CAPAJA Member Judge Akemi Arakaki, who spoke about Judge Vera's time on the Dependency Court of the Los Angeles Superior Court. Her speech about Judge Vera's compassion and humanity brought tears to the new federal judge's eyes and to those of the large audience.

### **CAPAJA EVENTS**

### **CAPAJA SoCal Members Enjoy Dinner**

On June 29, CAPAJA and CAPAJA-PAC held a Dinner for its Members, honoring APJ Cheri Pham (Orange County), former San Bernardino County Superior Court PJ Glenn Yabuno and former Orange County Superior Court PJ Kirk Nakamura, and all API judges in leadership here in Southern California. About 50 CAPAJA members and their families (including Judge Johnny Gogo, who came all the way from Santa Clara County and ALJ Annie Greenleaf who drove up from San Diego!) enjoyed a beautiful summer evening at the gorgeous home in Anaheim of the parents of Judge Michelle Ahnn, with **amazing** Korean food (made by Michelle's mother!) and excellent company. The night also included a golf chipping contest, Korean kayagum (traditional Korean instrument) music played by a Seoul National University-trained artist and even fireworks (not planned by CAPAJA -lit by some neighbors - but it added to the festivities)!



Group shot of some of the attendees.





Adrian Roxas (LA) (left) and Bryan Clavecilla (OC) (right)  
showing off their prizes from the golf chipping contest.



From left to right: Rob Villeza (LA) and guest Tracy, Annie Greenleaf (ALJ), Terry Truong (LA),  
Michelle Ahnn (LA), and Rick Ocampo (LA)



Guam was well represented by these four who have all lived on that island:  
From left to right: Mark (guest), Jenny Cheung Marino (LA), Johnny Gogo (Santa Clara),  
and Tammy Chung Ryu (LA).  
Hmmm, perhaps a CAPAJA organized trip to Guam is in order?

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

**MAKE A SCHOLARSHIP DONATION:** The CAPAJA Student Scholarship is only made possible thanks to your generous donation. If you are a judge, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to our Scholarship Fund via our website at [www.capaja.org/student-scholarship](http://www.capaja.org/student-scholarship). Thank you for your support!

Our Best Wishes For a Wonderful July!  
Terry Truong, CAPAJA President  
Jayne Lee, 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.*