



A California not-for-profit membership organization

#### Executive Board

##### President

**Hon. Jayne Lee**  
San Joaquin County

##### President-elect 2024-2025

**Hon. Jana Seng**  
Los Angeles County

##### President-elect 2025-2026

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

##### Immediate Past President

**Hon. Terry Truong**  
Los Angeles 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. Corey Lee**  
**Hon. Vibhav Mittal**

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

**Hon. Jeff Mangar**

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

**Hon. Hanley Chew**

##### SJO Representative

**Hon. Chirstine Dehr**  
Placer County

##### 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)  
capaja2020@gmail.com

## February 2025 CAPAJA Newsletter

Dear CAPAJA Member:

The 2025 CAPAJA Year has started off with a bang (and not just from the fireworks for Lunar New Year on January 29!). Here is the CAPAJA news from the first month of 2025.

## NEW APPOINTMENTS

### Three New California API Judges!

CAPAJA Member Commissioner Bryan Kim of Solano County is now Judge Bryan Kim! Judge Kim has been sworn in as a judge of the Solano County Superior Court following his election in March of last year, which he won by a wide margin. Congratulations, Bryan!

Two new CAPAJA Members were also sworn in as judges: Monika Saini-Donabed to the Merced County Superior Court and Michelle Lauron to the San Bernardino County Superior Court. Monika is the first woman of Indian descent to serve on the Merced County Superior Court, and Michelle was a Supervising Deputy District Attorney in San Bernardino before they were elected to the bench.

Bryan, Monika and Michelle have all been welcomed to CAPAJA by Judge Michelle Ahnn on behalf of President Judge Jayne Lee. They have been invited to participate in CAPAJA's judicial mentoring program and introduced to their CAPAJA District Representatives.

Welcome to the ranks of California judges, Bryan, Michelle and Monika – We all look forward to getting to know you at future CAPAJA events and to working with you on our many committees and projects.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### CAPAJA Programming for 2025 Starting Strong!

CAPAJA is excited to announce that it will hold a zoom presentation – “**Judicial Pathways for ALJ and SJO**” – on **Feb. 28, 2025 from 12:15-1:15 pm**. This event will feature Judicial Appointments Secretary Luis Céspedes, Judge Raymonn DeJesus, and Judge Terry Truong. The moderators will be ALJ Dorothy Chou Proudfoot and Commissioner Christine Dehr. This will be a unique discussion on becoming a judge from the perspective of former ALJs/SJOs along with a presentation from the Judicial Appointments Secretary.

The flyer for this event is attached with the registration info, and the registration link is also below.

[https://events.zoom.us/j/7TDL0LoZg6yOI1eB8IWG8WDVhZRKdkVAhh9ZY7jBtqDjhiS5%7EAmgwZ57QN83C6S\\_F8\\_5FdCtwPWuclfq5ITRAvG1nIk1aV-HNeZ3DPv0olg](https://events.zoom.us/j/7TDL0LoZg6yOI1eB8IWG8WDVhZRKdkVAhh9ZY7jBtqDjhiS5%7EAmgwZ57QN83C6S_F8_5FdCtwPWuclfq5ITRAvG1nIk1aV-HNeZ3DPv0olg)

## **MAKING AN IMPACT**

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

#### **CAPAJA Members Help Start new Unity Bar**

At the beginning of the new year, CAPAJA Member Justice Shama Mesiwala met with CAPAJA Member Judge Johnny Gogo and other Santa Clara County Bar members to structure the new Santa Clara County Unity Bar. Thanks, Shama and Johnny for your reaching out to assist the bar in their efforts to diversify the judiciary!



*From left right: Sacramento Unity Bar cofounder Jerry Chong, Justice Shama Mesiwala, Chris Arriola, Jaya Reddy, Judge Johnny Gogo, Neyha Rajan, Jackie Judson*

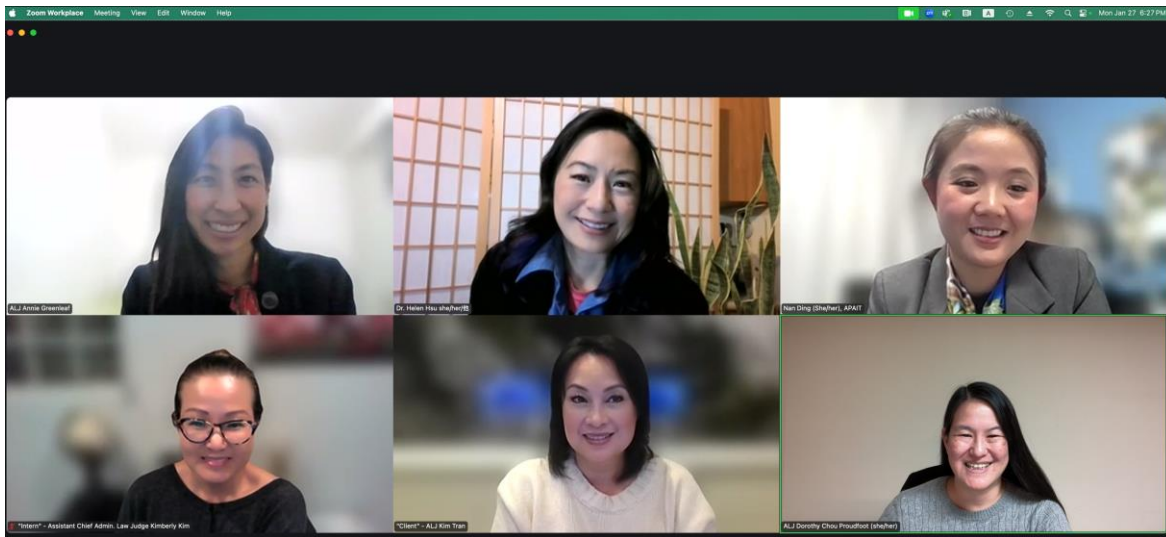
#### **CAPAJA Member Profiled in DJ**

CAPAJA Member and 2d District Representative Christopher Lui was the subject of an excellent profile in the Daily Journal on January 14. The article noted Judge Lui's actions to "ensure smooth navigation through the day's schedule of status conferences, case management conferences and motion hearings at one of the busiest courthouses in the county." Great profile, Chris!

## PAST EVENTS

### **CAPAJA's mental health webinar was a success!**

On January 27, 2025, the CAPAJA ALJ Committee hosted "Be Well and Excel," a mental health webinar for law students. Three mental health professionals discussed three common challenges law students and legal professionals face. The panel offered law students tips for identifying mental health risks and tips on how to overcome these challenges. A special thank you to the CAPAJA ALJ mental health program subcommittee's work to make this event a success!



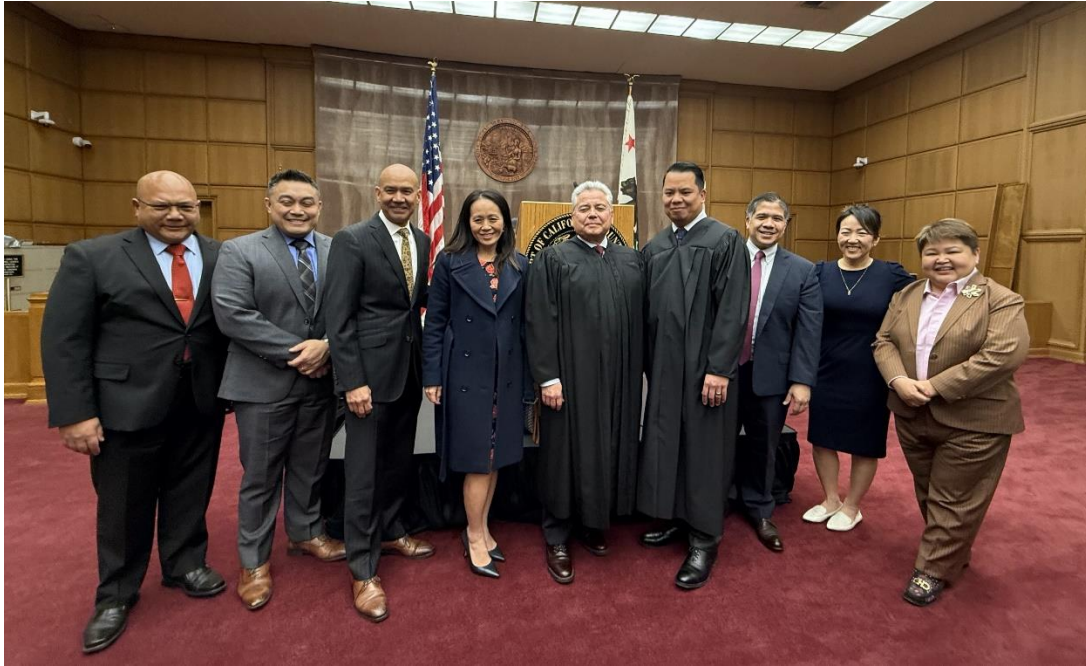
*From left to right top: Annie Greenleaf, Dr. Helen Hsu, Psy.D., and Nan Ding, LCSW, MPH.  
From left to right bottom: Kimberly Kim, Kim Tran and Dorothy Chou Proudfoot.*

### **CAPAJA Member Honored by Southeast (L.A.) District Bar Association**

On January 18, CAPAJA Member Lisa Tamashiro Coen was honored as the Judicial Officer of the Year by the Southeast District Bar Association. Congratulations, Lisa on this well-deserved honor!

### **CAPAJA Member Sworn In to LASC**

On January 30, 2025, members of CAPAJA attended the enrobing ceremony and reception of Hon. Alexander P. Sario, who was appointed by the Governor on November 21, 2024. Superior Court of Los Angeles Presiding Judge Sergio Tapia III administered the oath of office. (Picture on next page)



*From left to right: Judge Julian Recana, Judge Bryan Clavecilla, Judge Ricardo Ocampo, Judge Jana Seng, Judge Sergio Tapia III, Judge Alex Sario, Judge Adrian Roxas, Judge Janet Hong, and Judge Christine Gonong.*

### **CAPAJA Korea Trip Reunion**

This technically happened in February, not January, but is worth mentioning now. On Feb. 1, Judge Teresa Magno graciously hosted a reunion at her home in Los Angeles for the participants of the CAPAJA South Korea trip which happened last September. Twenty-seven of the 41 people who were on the trip came to this party where we enjoyed delicious Korean food and a gorgeous day. We watched a slideshow and had an opportunity to reminisce about our favorite and funny moments on the trip. Thanks Judge Magno for hosting such an amazing event! (Picture on next page)



*Top row L to R: Judge Teresa Magno, Arthur Choi, Judge Thomas Long, Judge Chris Frisco, Ellen Okamoto, Jia Xie (Program Organizer), Judge Michael Shultz, Judge Lynn Olson, Michael Keegan, and Commissioner Jeffrey Korn*

*Middle row L to R: Laura Lee, Judge Carol Najera, Robyn Chew, Judge Michelle Ahnn, Judge Tammy Chung Ryu, Judge Sharon Cho, Judge Ann Park, Commissioner Cecilia Joo, Judge Renee Korn, and Judge Diane Goodman*

*Front row L to R: David Edwards, Judge Harold Kahn, Judge Douglas Stern, Eileen Stern, Nicolasa Nevarez, Judge Keith Fudenna, and Lorraine Iida*

## **WAYS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE**

### **Volunteer for a Speed Mentoring Event:**

The Berkeley Law APALSA X AALJ is holding a speed mentoring event on Feb. 24, 2025 at 6 pm. They are seeking judges to participate in this event to motivate and inspire law students to aspire to become judges. Please consider volunteering if you are in the Bay Area. You can sign up to volunteer by using the QR code on the flyer (on the next page) or through this link:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfcif4GOLP8oxJGvr5ImbLhSWJaf04dRJmf554vuBrNzCeg/viewform>

# SPEED MENTORING

WITH BERKELEY LAW  
APALSA X AALJ!



**FEB. 24, 2025 | 6:00 PM**

A unique opportunity for Berkeley Law students to personally meet and mingle with judges like you in the Bay Area. Please fill out the Google Form if you're interested in volunteering for this event and chatting with students about your pathway to the bench!



**Volunteer Here!**

**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!

**IN OTHER NEWS...**

**Solicitation for Contributors for a Book about Judges' Tough Cases**

In 2018, Judge Michelle Ahnn was a contributing editor for a book titled “Tough Cases – Judges Tell the Stories About Some of the Hardest Decisions They’ve Ever Made.” The book was published by The New Press company and was well received across the country. It has been the subject of numerous positive book reviews, bookstore events, and bench-bar conferences and has been used as a coursebook for law schools at Georgetown Law and George Washington University School of Law. The publishers are interested in producing another book of stories for Tough Cases 2.0 to further generate a greater understanding and faith in trial courts. If you would be interested in writing a chapter about a “tough case” which you are permitted to discuss under judicial ethics rules, please contact Judge Michelle Ahnn at [mahnn@lacourt.org](mailto:mahnn@lacourt.org) for more information.

**Are you a UCLA Law School Alum?**

UCLA Law School and its APILSA group are looking for you! If you are interested in knowing about upcoming events or what's happening at the law school and would like to be included on their alumni contact list, please let Terry Truong know as soon as possible at [ttruong@lacourt.org](mailto:ttruong@lacourt.org).

**The National Judicial College invites you to check them out...**

If you've ever been interested in attending trainings in other parts of the country or world, on subject matters including Climate & Water: Droughts, Judicial Writing, or Evidence Challenges for Administrative Law Judges, then check out The National Judicial College (NJC) at [www.judges.org](http://www.judges.org). (Also see attached flyer). Classes are taught in virtual, webinar or in-person format. There are even scholarships available for CAPAJA members with your first class!

There are also opportunities to teach at The College. CAPAJA member, Judge Curtis Kin (Los Angeles) is a recent graduate of the weeklong Faculty Development Workshop! For more information about this opportunity, contact President and Retired Judge Benes Z. Aldana at [Aldana@judges.org](mailto:Aldana@judges.org).

Our Best Wishes to you all for a very Happy, Healthy and Productive 2025!  
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.*