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California Asian-Pacific American Judges Association

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June 2023 CAPAJA Newsletter

Dear CAPAJA Member:

Summer is here, but the allegedly lazy days of summer haven't slowed down CAPAJA's Members! Here is the CAPAJA newsletter for June.

NEWS

CAPAJA Past President Elected President of the CJA!!!

On May 17, the California Judges Association announced that CAPAJA Past President and Santa Clara Superior Court Judge Erica Yew has been elected to be President of CJA for the 2023-2024 year. Judge Yew, who was President of CAPAJA in 2007-2008, will undoubtedly provide the same exemplary leadership she provided to us to the entire CJA membership in the year to come. We are so proud of you, Judge Yew - we will be there to cheer you on when you are sworn in at the CJA Annual Meeting in September!

CAPAJA Members Present Ethics Webinar

On Tuesday, June 13 from 12:15 to 1:15 CAPAJA Judges Frederick Chung and Erica Yew from Santa Clara County will present a webinar on **Judicial Ethics Online Research Tools and CJP Updates and Support**.

Do you find yourself after hours or on the weekends fretting about an ethics problem? Do you want to know more about the judicial ethics research tools available online? Do you want to be able to do your own ethics research? Do you want to know the current news about the efforts to change CJP procedures which would make the disciplinary process less favorable to bench officers? Do you have a friend going through a CJP investigation and do you want to access online support for them? If so, please attend this webinar.

This training will count towards one hour of elective ethics.

There is no need to pre-register. Just click on the link on June 13 at 12:15 pm:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83480798921?pwd=aEZoWXdyZUZtUWlueU5waHU2QnJlQT09>

Meeting ID: 834 8079 8921
Passcode: 462662

Dial by your location
+1 669 900 6833 US (San Jose)
Find your local number: <https://us02web.zoom.us/u/kb4EDcFtZ2>

LASC API Judge to Receive Berkeley Law Award

CAPAJA Member Judge Bryant Yang will receive Berkeley Law's 2023 Young Alumni Award at a celebration to be held on June 3 from 6-9 pm at the Claremont Hotel in Berkeley. According to Berkeley Law's website: The Young Alumni Award "is given to an alumnus/a who has graduated in the past 15 years

and has made significant contributions to his or her community through professional, charitable or other public service activities, extraordinary service to the law school and other achievements.” Tickets to the celebration are available at law.berkeley.edu/alumni/alumni-wards-2023/. Quite an achievement, Judge Yang!

Invitation to Judge Rivamonte's ceremonial investiture on June 22, 2023 at 5 PM.

Judge Ian Rivamonte (Monterey) will have his investiture on June 22, 2023. He has kindly extended an invitation to all CAPAJA members. The program will start promptly at 5 PM followed by a reception at Portabello's Restaurant. Please send your reply by June 9, 2023. Click here to RSVP <https://tinyurl.com/RivamonteJune22Invite>

Three API appointed to across California

On May 19, Governor Gavin Newsome appointed 27 Superior Court judges across California, and 3 of them are API. Diana Tsang (Los Angeles) is from the LA County Public Defender's office, Marsha Amin (San Diego) is the Managing Attorney for the Fourth District Court of Appeals, and Sweena Pannu (Stanislaus) is a Deputy County Counsel. Congratulations on your appointment and welcome to CAPAJA with your free membership until the end of 2023!

Eastern District CA Federal Judge, CAPAJA Member Anthony Ishii Retires

The May 10 Daily Journal reported that U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of California, CAPAJA Member Judge Anthony W. Ishii, retired on April 30 after twenty-six years on the federal bench. Judge Ishii, who served as a Justice Court Judge for ten years before being appointed to the state court bench in 1983 and the federal bench in 1997, noted in the article: “When I came to the federal bench, there were only four Asian American judges in the entire country. I didn't think of myself as a real trailblazer or anything, but to the extent that I can be a role model, I certainly tried to.” CAPAJA notes that NAPABA, which named Judge Ishii a Daniel K. Inouye Trailblazer in 2006, would beg to differ from his modest disavowal of trailblazer status. The article continues to quote attorneys who appeared before Judge Ishii, who “praised his attention to detail on every case, despite his heavy docket, and described him as someone who was knowledgeable, respectful, meticulous and funny.” CAPAJA is proud of Judge Ishii's long record of service and his longstanding involvement with CAPAJA. We wish him a long, healthy and happy retirement (and hope he will continue to attend CAPAJA gatherings)!

CAPAJA Member Confirmed to the U.S. District Court

On May 3, CAPAJA Member and former committee chair LASC Judge Wesley Hsu was confirmed by the United States Senate on a 53-43 bi-partisan vote to serve as a U.S. District Court Judge for the Central District of California. Judge Hsu, who was appointed to the Los Angeles Superior Court in 2017, was sworn into his new federal seat on May 19, with many CAPAJA members looking proudly on. Judge Hsu sends this message to all CAPAJA members: “I am incredibly grateful to CAPAJA for supporting me these last five and a half years. I hope to see you all at the next CAPAJA meeting!” Congratulations on your new, lifetime appointment, Judge Hsu!



(Left to right) Judge Corey Lee, Judge Wendy Chang, newly sworn in District Court Judge Wesley Hsu, and Judge Holly Fujie coming together to celebrate Judge Hsu's swearing in to the Central District of California.

CAPAJA Member Judge Sworn in By CAPAJA Member Justice

Judge Julie Weng-Gutierrez had her ceremonial swearing in as a Judge of the Sacramento County Superior Court on April 30. The event was presided over by CAPAJA's own Justice Shama Hakim Mesiwala. Attached are great pictures of the ceremony, which included lion dancers!



Justice Shama Hakim Mesiwala (left) administering the oath to Judge Julie Weng-Gutierrez on April 30, 2023.

Lion dancers add to the fun at the celebration for Judge Weng-Gutierrez's swearing-in ceremony.



Former Chief Justice Profiled in ABA Judges' Journal

Recently retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of California and CAPAJA Member Tani Cantil-Sakauye was the subject of a wonderful profile in the Spring 2023 edition of the Judges' Journal, a publication of the American Bar Association's Judicial Division. Although the article was focused on the Chief's lifelong commitment to civics education, thanks to Judge Margaret Kuroda Masunaga's in-depth interview, we now also know that the former Chief's favorite song is "Fantasy" by Earth, Wind & Fire!

Judge Melissa D'Morias - DJ Profile

On May 11, 2023, Kings County Superior Court Judge Melissa D'Morias was featured in a Daily Journal profile. This article highlights what judges in small counties are challenged to do in presiding over multiple practice areas. Judge D'Morias handles a heavy case load and presides over criminal, civil, and mental health conservatorship matters. Congratulations Judge D'Morias on a glowing DJ profile!

LASC Commissioner Profiled in DJ

CAPAJA Member and Los Angeles Superior Court Commissioner Tiffany Tai was profiled in the May 12 edition of the Daily Journal. The DJ reported that Commissioner Tai "understands litigants in unfamiliar environment" and "listens with compassion, attorneys say." Congratulations on a great profile, Commissioner Tai!

CAPAJA Member Profiled in DJ

CAPAJA Member and San Diego Superior Court Judge Leonard N. Trinh was featured in a profile on May 17 in the Daily Journal. The profile, captioned "Judge Leonard Trinh listens for what's behind the words attorneys say" discussed Judge Trinh's work in the family law division of his Court. He requested a family law assignment despite his background as a deputy district attorney, saying "I knew there was a need for family law judges in our county" and "I am not shy from taking a challenge and learning

something new.” Judge Trinh discussed the need to do what is in the best interest of the child and to avoid trying to punish the other person. Congratulations on a great profile, Judge Trinh!

CAPAJA Members Speak on ABA/NAPABA/NJC Panel

On May 23, CAPAJA Members Senior District Judge Ed Chen (CDCA) and ALJ Dorothy Chou Proudfoot spoke on a zoom Panel for APANH Heritage Month, sponsored by NAPABA, the ABA and the National Judicial College. Judge Chen and ALJ Chou Proudfoot provided inspiration and wisdom to the audience, which consisted of law students and lawyers, on the importance of being role models and their paths to the bench.

Passing of Judge Ronald Lew

On May 19, Judge Ron Lew, who was a huge influence, mentor, and friend to many API bench officers, passed away at the age of 81. When he was confirmed by the Senate as a United States District Judge for the Central District of California on May 7, 1987, Judge Lew was the first Chinese American appointed to the federal bench outside of Hawaii. He assumed senior status in 2006 and continued to be an active and valuable member of the bench. CAPAJA extends their condolences to Judge Lew’s family and many friends who will miss him greatly.

Judge Aruno Rodrigo in the news!

Judge Aruno Rodrigo (San Bernardino) is recognized in this newspaper article as the first Sri Lankan American to be appointed to the bench in California. Judge Rodrigo was born and raised until age 9 in Sri Lanka and then came to the United States. CAPAJA celebrates this wonderful “first” and are proud of Judge Rodrigo’s accomplishments!

<https://www.hirunews.lk/english/277651/aruna-p-rodrigo-first-sri-lankan-american-to-be-appointed-to-the-judicial-bench-in-california>

CAPAJA Mentoring Circles

CAPAJA provides small group mentoring for new bench officers. Last year, there were five groups, each with 4-5 new bench officers and with one experienced judge to lead the discussion. For 2023, three new Mentoring Committees have formed, and each one is based on practice area. These small groups meet virtually once a month to provide a forum for the members to discuss common issues that all new bench officers face such as dealing with self-represented litigants, 170.6 motions, interactions with staff, and judicial security off the bench. So far, the 2023 Mentoring Circles members include:

- Judge Firdaus Dordi (Los Angeles) is leading a family law group with new bench officers Commissioner Jaya Badiga (Sacramento), Judge Pahoua Lor (Fresno), and Commissioner Phillip Peng (LA).
- Judge Corey Lee (San Bernardino) is leading a criminal law group with new bench officers Judge Joseph Kang (Orange), Commissioner Grace Kim (LA), Judge Pelayo Llamas (Alameda), and Judge Rei Onishi (Sacramento).

- Judge Sheila Recio (Orange) is leading a family law group with new bench officers Judge Adrian Roxas (LA), Commissioner Johanna Thai Van Dat (Santa Clara), and Judge Leonard Trinh (San Diego).

If you took the bench in the past year and would like to join a Mentoring Circle, please contact Judge Michelle Ahnn at mahnn@lacourt.org.

Sincerely,

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, please send an email to Newsletter Editor Holly Fujie at HFujie@LACourt.org, and we will feature it in the next newsletter.