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**Judges Association**

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## January 2024 CAPAJA Newsletter

Dear CAPAJA Member:

Happy New Year! Can you believe it is 2024 already? Here is the first CAPAJA newsletter for 2024.

### NEWS

#### CAPAJA Member Challenged for Election in San Francisco: CAPAJA Members Co-Host Re-Election Campaign Event On January 10

CAPAJA Member Judge Michael Isaku Begert is being challenged in his re-election race for San Francisco County Superior Court. CAPAJA Members Judge Margaret Fujioka (Alameda County) and Judge Joni Hiramoto (Contra Costa) are co-hosting a "Re-Elect Judge Michael Begert Campaign Kick-Off Reception" on Wednesday, January 10 at 5:30 pm at the Harborview Restaurant and Bar, located at 4 Embarcadero Center, Street Level, in San Francisco. Judge Begert, who was appointed in January of 2010, is being supported by numerous API community leaders. See the attached flyer for the reception.

#### Governor Newsom Appoints Five New API Judges

On December 7, Governor Gavin Newsom appointed five new API California judges: Commissioner Christine Gonong and Stephanie Santoro to the Los Angeles Superior Court and Commissioner June Jee An, Huy Nguyen (who was endorsed for his appointment by CAPAJA!) and Commissioner Kunthavi Watson to the Orange County Superior Court. All have received congratulatory emails from CAPAJA, and those not previously serving on the bench have been informed of their free membership in CAPAJA and given the opportunity to be assigned mentors and to serve on one of CAPAJA's many active committees. Congratulations, Judges Gonong, Santoro, An, Nguyen and Watson!

#### CAPAJA Members Invited to Celebration of API Judges

AABA Bay Area President Lin Chan cordially invites each CAPAJA member to a celebration of APA Judges on January 24 from 5:30 to 8:00 at the Harborview Restaurant (which has excellent dim sum) in San Francisco. Flyer attached and RSVP here: <https://www.aaba-bay.com/event-5508690>.

#### The Voice Highlights CAPAJA Member Honors

The December 14, 2023 issue of the California Judges Association publication "The Voice" featured, besides CAPAJA Past President and current CJA President Judge Erica Yew's informative and thought-provoking "Message From the President," an acknowledgment of former CAPAJA District Rep. Judge Joni Hiramoto's being named Judge of the Year for Contra Costa County by the Alameda-Contra Costa Trial Lawyers Association (the "A-CCTLA") and her election as Associate Dean of the Witkin Judicial College for 2025 and 2025. The Voice also noted Judge Jo-Lynne Q. Lee's selection as Judge of the Year for the County of Alameda by the A-CCTLA. Looks like the A-CCTLA gave a clean sweep to CAPAJA Members on their awards this year! The Voice also noted the selection of CAPAJA Member Justice Shama Mesiwala of the 3d DCA

as the recipient of the Asian Bar Association of Sacramento's President's Award. It is great to see so many CAPAJA Members honored by their local bar associations!

### **CAPAJA Member Welcomes Chief Guerrero Justice to His Court**

Imperial County Superior Court Presiding Judge and CAPAJA Member William D. Quan welcomed Chief Justice Patricia Guerrero to the dedication of the newest courthouse in his County at El Centro on December 18. Presiding Judge Quan is yet another in the ever-growing list of CAPAJA Members who have served or are serving as Presiding Judge in their counties. The article and a picture of PJ Quan with the Chief at the ceremony can be found at: <https://newsroom.courts.ca.gov/news/california-chief-justice-helps-dedicate-new-imperial-county-courthouse-el-centro>

### **REMINDER! CAPAJA Members May Seek CAPAJA's Endorsement for Elevation to the California Court of Appeals**

We mentioned this in the May 2023 Newsletter, but it bears repetition: CAPAJA's hardworking Judicial Endorsements Committee, ably headed by Judges Rick Sueyoshi of the Sacramento Superior Court and Lee Tsao of the Los Angeles Superior Court, has graciously taken on responsibility of vetting candidates for the California Court of Appeal for endorsement by CAPAJA. At the April 12, 2023 Mid-Year Meeting, the membership of CAPAJA voted unanimously to approve the board's proposed Guidelines for Endorsing Superior Court Judicial Officers for the Courts of Appeal. These Guidelines build upon the success we've enjoyed in endorsing candidates for the superior court, and they advance our core mission of promoting excellence and diversity in the judicial branch. The endorsement process for the Courts of Appeal is limited to candidates who are superior court judicial officers.

Candidates must initiate the endorsement process by submitting a written request to CAPAJA, together with all documents submitted to the Governor (including, but not limited to, a copy of the candidate's Personal Data Questionnaire). Unlike CAPAJA's process for endorsing candidates for the superior court, candidates for the Courts of Appeal are not required to submit a letter from a Judicial Sponsor.

The CAPAJA board will consider those factors applicable to evaluating superior court candidates generally, with an emphasis on factors relevant to an appellate court appointment (e.g., intellectual capacity, writing ability, scholarship, collegiality, Court of Appeal pro tem experience, teaching experience, etc.). After the CAPAJA Board votes to endorse a candidate, the CAPAJA President will deliver a letter of endorsement to the Governor's Judicial Appointments Secretary and to the candidate. The process of endorsing candidates for the Courts of Appeal is confidential. CAPAJA may endorse more than one candidate for a District Court of Appeal. Requests for endorsement, together with all documents submitted to the Governor, should be emailed to [capaja2020@gmail.com](mailto:capaja2020@gmail.com). If you have any questions, feel free to contact the co-chairs of the Judicial Appointments Committee, Judge Richard Sueyoshi (No. Cal) at [SueyosR@saccourt.ca.gov](mailto:SueyosR@saccourt.ca.gov) or Judge Lee Tsao (So. Cal) at [itsao@lacourt.org](mailto:itsao@lacourt.org).

### **NAPABA Judicial Council Announces Law Student Summer Internships**

NAPABA Judicial Council is asking CAPAJA members to circulate to their law student mentees the information about an amazing opportunity for them to intern with either: 1) Judge Denny Chin of the 2d Circuit; 2) Judge Jacqueline Nguyen of the 9<sup>th</sup> Circuit; 3) Chief Justice Robert Torres of the Guam Supreme Court; or 4) the Los Angeles Superior Court, specifically Judge Holly Fujie, Judge Curtis Kin and Judge Wendy Chang. Each internship comes with a \$1,000 stipend, and the internship with Judge Torres includes airfare and lodging in Guam. Pretty amazing!

Details can be found on the attached flyer. We would really appreciate it if you could circulate this information.

### **CAPAJA invites you to join the CAPAJA Community Engagement Committee**

The CAPAJA Community Engagement Committee invites members who are interested to join the committee. The mission of the CAPAJA Community Engagement Committee is to create opportunities to enrich the lives of CAPAJA's membership and improve the lives of those in the communities we serve. The committee meets remotely on the fourth Wednesday of the month at noon. The committee has scheduled a meeting for January 24, 2024 to discuss potential community engagement and public service programs and events, working with other community engagement organizations, obtaining the advice of an ethics expert, and creating subcommittees. Please contact committee co-chairs Hanley Chew (hchew@scscourt.org), Kawika Smith (ksmith@sb-court.org), or Nathan Vu (nvu@occourts.org) to learn more.

### **Amazing Opportunity to Travel to Korea with CAPAJA in September!**

From the CAPAJA Travel Committee, which organized the incredibly successful CAPAJA Trip to Japan in 2023, comes another fabulous travel and educational opportunity for you to participate in a one-of-a-kind trip to South Korea, designed specifically for judicial officers. The trip will be from Sept. 20-30, 2024. BE Abroad, who worked with us on our amazing trip to Japan, will coordinate this trip. The flyers attached include details of location, pricing, trip details, how to reserve your spot, and deadlines. Highlights include:

- 7 nights in Seoul, 2 nights in Busan, with stays in five-star hotels, and day excursions to famous palaces and local fishing villages
- Visit to Korean Supreme Court and Seoul District Court
- Legal seminars at the Seoul National University Law School and The Constitutional Court of Korea (JEC and MCLE credit)
- Visit to the Korean Demilitarized Zone at the 38th Parallel

Seats are "first come, first served" and we expect the program to sell out quickly. The Early Bird registration period, which was only for CAPAJA members, passed on December 31, 2023, so we will now be extending this invitation to all California bench officers. Please contact Judge Teresa Magno at [tmagno@lacourt.org](mailto:tmagno@lacourt.org) or (310) 761-4340 if you have any questions.

To All our Members, Both New and Old, We wish you a Healthy, Happy and Successful New Year!

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.*