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**California Asian-Pacific
American**

Judges Association

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October 2023 CAPAJA Newsletter

Dear CAPAJA Member:

Can you believe it's the Final Quarter of the year? Here is the CAPAJA newsletter for October.

NEWS

CAPAJA Makes Great Strides At the CJA Annual Conference!

CAPAJA and its members had a very successful weekend with many well attended events, members visible throughout the conference and at the swearing in of **Santa Clara Superior Court Judge Erica Yew** as the new CJA President.



CAPAJA had several members on the annual meeting committee, and we want to thank those members: **Judges Jacqueline Duong, Audra Ibarra and Rohanee Zapanta**. In addition, we had several members speaking on panels including **Judge Upinder Kalra** sitting on the CJA Talks panel, **San Bernardino Superior Court Presiding Judge Glenn Yabuno** sitting on the Criminal Law Update panel and Past-President **Judge Sonny Sandhu** sitting on the panel hosted by CAJAC- Wait! We're Not Done! What the Branch Can and Should Do to Support the Judicial Council's Top Priority of a Diverse and Inclusive Judiciary.

The CAJAC reception was extremely well attended on Friday evening and the reception honored Judicial Appointments Secretary Luis Céspedes for his commitment to diversity on the judicial bench.



CAPAJA once again thanks the San Diego judicial officers who hosted our welcome dinner on Friday! Thanks to **Judges Selena Epley, Kelly Mok, Rohanee Zapanta** and **Jinsook Ohta**. The dinner and festivities were exceptional! With nearly 70 attendees and the restaurant at full capacity, this dinner was one that will be remembered for many years to come! From trivia contests, amazing gifts to judicial officers and even some karaoke, everyone had a great time!



Thank you to all the members that attended the CAPAJA annual meeting. Nearly 60 members attended the event in person and remotely and we welcomed our new Board. CAPAJA wants to once again thank CJA President **Judge Erica Yew** for hosting lunch for the meeting!

CAPAJA Member To Lead California Judicial College

CAPAJA Member **Contra Costa Superior Court Judge Joni Hiramoto** has been named as the first Asian American Dean of the California Judicial College for 2025-2026 and Associate Dean for the 2024-2025 year. Many of our members have been lucky enough to receive the guidance of Judge Hiramoto when they were at Judicial College, and we know that she will do an amazing job leading the College in the future. As CAPAJA President Elect Jayne Lee noted to the incoming Associate Dean, “I remember

how kind you were during my judicial college experience. I am glad that you get to share your generosity, your love and your experience with everyone else now.”

API Judge Confirmed to the Federal Bench

On September 19, the United States Senate confirmed CAPAJA Member San Francisco Superior Court **Judge Rita Lin** to serve as a U.S. District Court Judge for the Northern District of California. Judge Lin was nominated for the position on August 1, 2022. Judge Lin fills the judgeship left vacant when CAPAJA Member **Judge Edward Chen** assumed senior status. It’s good to know that Judge Chen’s seat is in such good hands!

CAPAJA Member Honored by Korean Community Lawyers Association

On September 14, KCLA honored Past CAPAJA President **Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Tammy Ryu** with its Trailblazer Award at its Annual Judges’ Night Dinner at the Sheraton Grande Hotel in Los Angeles. Judge Ryu was honored for her deep commitment to the community and her longstanding support of KCLA. Many CAPAJA members were present to honor Judge Ryu and to applaud her well-deserved receipt of this award.



Judges Anne Hwang, Lisa Chung, Susan Jung Townsend, Tammy Ryu, Ann Park, Esther Kim, and Susanne Cho

LASC Research Attorney Appointed as ALJ

Kim Tran, a research attorney with the Los Angeles Superior Court, will become an Administrative Law Judge for the Department of Social Services beginning in October. Ms. Tran graduated from UCLA with B.A. degrees in English Literature and Political Science and received her J.D. from Loyola Law School. She joined the LASC in 2004. Welcome to CAPAJA and to the ALJ Committee, Kim!

APAWLA Presents Justice Mori with Public Service Award

On September 7, the Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance presented **Justice Audra Mori** of the 2d District Court of Appeal, 4th Division, with its prestigious Public Service Award. Justice Mori spoke in a “Conversation” facilitated by Past CAPAJA President **Judge Holly Fujie**, discussing how Justice Mori’s family background and her work as a leader in the API bar has informed and supported her career.



(both photos by Steven Lam and published with the permission of APAWLA)

CAPAJA Members Profiled in DJ

On September 18, the Daily Journal profiled CAPAJA member **San Bernardino Superior Court Judge Aruna Rodrigo**. Under the headline “Judge Aruna Rodrigo wants to stay in family court forever,” Judge Rodrigo compared presiding over family law cases with refereeing a soccer match because “I am the person that can help people resolve an unfortunate situation.” Your dedication to a tough assignment is applauded, Judge Rodrigo!

On September 21, a Daily Journal article entitled “Los Angeles **Judge Gia Kim** reverences the power of words to bring justice” highlighted the accomplishments of Judge Kim. Judge Kim, who not only is a graduate of Yale Law School but also holds a PhD from UC Berkeley in English, clerked for Judge Willie Fletcher of the 9th Circuit, and then was an associate at Akin Gump before she joined the Federal Public Defender’s Office. She was appointed to the L.A. Superior Court by Governor Gavin Newsom in June 2022. Judge Kim also sits in a family law assignment, bringing her background and experience to this difficult assignment.

CAPAJA President Named Co-Chair of CJA Committee

As of the California Judges Association’s Annual Meeting last month, CAPAJA President **Judge Terry Truong** of the Los Angeles Superior Court has become a new Co-Chair of the CJA Elimination of Bias and Inequality Committee. The EBI Committee has been the driving force behind the new jury instructions on implicit bias and other anti-bias programs both in the Courts and in the community.

CAPAJA Members Meet with Assemblymember Low

On September 15, 2023, **Judge Erica Yew** coordinated a lunch with the Santa Clara County Judges and California Assemblymember Evan Low (Chair of the California Asian Pacific Islander Legislative Caucus) for a general

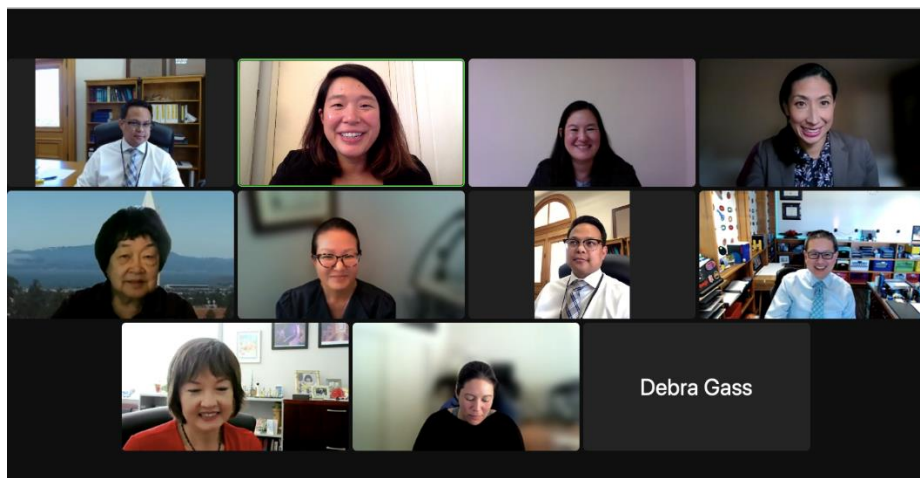
discussion regarding the California judiciary. Pictured in the photo attached (from left to right): **Criminal Presiding Judge Dan Nishigaya, Judge Vinita Bali, Judge Audra Ibarra, Judge Hanley Chew, Judge Carrie Zepeda**, Assemblymember Evan Low, **Judge Erica Yew, Judge Johnny Gogo**, Lucy Khuu (API Caucus Legislative Consultant) and Victoria Low (District Representative).

Also in attendance but not in the photo: **Judge Sunil Kulkarni** and Patrick Ahrens (District Director for Assemblymember Low).



ALJ Committee's Interactive Online Program

On September 28, CAPAJA ALJ Committee hosted a virtual program, "Due Process in the Trenches," which had over 25 trial court judges and administrative law judges in attendance. The program featured the following panelists and CAPAJA members - **Hon. Raymonn J. DeJesus** (Placer County Superior Court Judge), **Hon. Charles J. Lee** (Fresno County Superior Court Judge), and **Hon. Jennifer Gee** (Chief Administrative Law Judge, Department of Labor (ret.)). The program was an informative discussion on due process issues of mental competency, trauma and language interpretation. Thank you to the program's planning committee - **ALJ Dorothy Chou Proudfoot, ALJ Elizabeth Manassau, ALJ Annie Greenleaf** and **ALJ Debra Gass**, for organizing this well-attended event.



Law School Committee Holds Event at UCI Law

Orange County Superior Court **Judges Vibhab Mittal** and **Thomas Lo** worked diligently with UCI Law School's APALSA and Chinese Law Students Society to hold the first APALSA Law School Committee event of the school year on Sept. 26, 2023. Whether it was the Porto's baked goods or the delicious Chinese food that drew the 25+ students, they came to hear from 4th DCA Associate Justice **Joanne Motoike** and **Orange County Superior Court Judges Cheri Pham**, and **Nathan Vu** as the esteemed panel shared stories of their humble beginnings and their paths to the bench. The night ended with several rounds of speed mentoring between the judicial officers and students!



Pictured left to right: Judge Vibhab Mittal, Judge Nathan Vu, Justice Joanne Motoike, Judge Thomas Lo, Judge Terry Truong, Judge Cheri Pham, and Judge Joseph Kang.

Judicial Council Soliciting Nominations for Advisory Bodies

CAPAJA member **Justice Carin Fujisaki** sends this information about involvement opportunities available for CAPAJA members and their mentees:

The Judicial Council is soliciting nominations for current vacancies on Judicial Council Advisory Bodies. As you can see, the council is soliciting nominations for judges, attorneys, and others, due on October 17, 2023. I would encourage our CAPAJA members to nominate themselves or others if they are interested. Self-nominations are welcome and taken as seriously as when a person is nominated by another. This is an out-of-cycle nomination for current vacancies, so there will be other opportunities for other advisory bodies at the start of next year. An explanatory memo and nomination form are attached.

The Executive and Planning Committee of the Judicial Council of California is currently soliciting nominations to fill the following vacancies on council advisory bodies:

1. Advisory Committee on Providing Access and Fairness
 - Appellate court justice
2. Civil and Small Claims Advisory Committee
 - Appellate court justice

3. Court Facilities Advisory Committee
 - Superior court judge
4. Criminal Law Advisory Committee
 - Mental health professional with experience in criminal law issues
5. Information Technology Advisory Committee
 - Public member
6. Legal Services Trust Fund Commission
 - Attorney
7. Probate and Mental Health Advisory Committee
 - County counsel, public guardian, or other similar public officer familiar with guardianship and conservatorship issues
8. Shriver Civil Counsel Act Implementation Committee
 - Superior court judge

The nomination form can be completed online or downloaded from the California Courts website at www.courts.ca.gov/4650.htm. Alternatively, a fillable nomination form is attached. For each nomination, please complete and return a nomination form and the nominee's biography or curriculum vitae by **October 17, 2023**, to:
Judicial Council of California
Attn: Judicial Council Support
Email: jcsupport@jud.ca.gov

For further information, please refer to the attached memorandum.

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, and we will feature it in the next newsletter.