Journey to Equality
Hate and Hope

Federal Housing Finance Agency
Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
May 14, 2020

Jeremy Wu, Ph.D.
• 1979 First APA Heritage Week proclaimed

• 1990 First APA Heritage Month proclaimed

• 1992 APA Heritage Month made permanent

May 7, 1843 – First Japanese immigrants arrived in the U.S.

May 10, 1869 – completion of first transcontinental railroad in the U.S. with significant contributions by Chinese laborers
Outline

- One Asian American’s Journey
- On Reflection
- Life after Federal Service
- Stories on Hate and Hope
- Midland, Texas Story
- Summary
Beginning of Journey

The Immigration and Naturalization Act of 1965 raised Chinese immigration quota from 105 to 20,000 per year.

This Wu family of 4 came from Hong Kong to Washington D.C.
Within 4 years, my father passed away in his sleep. He was 59.

I was 19, in my third year of college.

My brother was 15.

My mother spoke hardly any English.

We struggled.

I delivered newspapers, worked as a part-time caterer, and a construction worker for two summers, while continued to study in college and eventually earned my Ph.D. in statistics.

I built L’Enfant Plaza!
I. M. Pei
April 26, 1917 - May 16, 2019

World-renowned American Architect, including the L’Enfant Plaza
My Federal Career

- Chief Statistician, Agricultural Marketing Service, USDA
- First Asian American career SES in USDA
- Deputy Director, Office of Civil Rights, USDA
  - Title VI Programs
  - Administration

Tilletia controversa kuhn (TCK)

“40 acres and a mule”
National Ombudsman, Department of Energy

Director, Departmental Office of Civil Rights, Department of Transportation

Acting Chief Statistician, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, DOT
Director, Longitudinal Employer-Household Dynamics Program, Census Bureau, Department of Commerce

Senior Advisor, Census Bureau, DOC
On Reflection

- A satisfying two-track federal career
- Federal workforce is among the best
  - Some colleagues become life-long friends
- Public service is filled with challenges
  - You serve the people with important work
  - Different sense of satisfaction and reward
  - Many learning opportunities
  - Mostly unrecognized and under-appreciated
- A journey seeing greater Asian American participation and both hate and hope
Norman Y. Mineta
Born San Jose, CA, November 12, 1931 –

Mayor, San Jose, CA
• First Japanese American mayor of a U.S. city

U.S. House of Representative (CA)
• H.J.R 1007 to proclaim the "Asian Pacific American Heritage Week“ of 1978
• Civil Liberties Act of 1988
• Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Secretary of Commerce
• First Asian American cabinet secretary

Secretary of Transportation
• 9/11 Grounded all flights
• 9/17 President Bush visited a Muslim mosque
• 9/21 letter to all airlines on no racial profiling
Norman Mineta’s baseball bat was confiscated when he was sent to a Japanese-American internment camp as a boy. As a Congressman, he was sent a $1500 bat, which he had to send back, as it exceeded a price limit on gifts. He was quoted as saying, "The damn government’s taken my bat again."
Hate Crime of Misidentity

Balbir Singh Sodhi, 1949-2001

A Sikh American, was shot and killed outside his gas station in Mesa, Arizona. His shooter reportedly told a waitress “I’m going to go out and shoot some towel heads,” and “We should kill their children, too, because they’ll grow up to be like their parents.” This was the first of 645 incidents of violent backlash against fellow Americans in just that first week after 9/11.
Vincent Chin, 1955-1982

A Chinese American, was killed by an unemployed father and son auto workers in Detroit, Michigan. Chin was mistaken to be Japanese when Japan was a rising economic power. The killers reportedly said "It's because of you little m**f**s that we're out of work!" Chin's head was cracked open by a baseball bat and he died 4 days before his planned wedding.

The killers received 3 years probation and $3,000 fine for the murder of Vincent Chin.
APA Justice

A series of innocent Chinese American scientists in academia, government, and private industry were wrongly accused of and prosecuted for spying for China and then had their cases all dropped between 2013 and 2015.

The APA Justice Task Force was formed to address racial profiling and related justice and fairness issues for the Asian American community in 2015.
Red Scare

Innocent Chinese scientists in the U.S. caught up in espionage dragnet

PLUS
Devastating Delay of Aid, p. 34
How the OMB Blocked Ukraine Aid, p. 38
A Fever in the Drug Industry, p. 42
2017 white paper on Prosecuting Chinese “Spies:” An Empirical Analysis of The Economic Espionage Act:

- Since 2009, the majority of defendants charged under the EEA have been people of Asian heritage
- Half of EEA cases alleged the of secrets for a USA entity, one third for China, and none for Russia
- Convicted defendants of Asian heritage received sentences twice as severe
- One in five accused “spies” of Asian heritage may be innocent
Core Values of American Justice System

- Punish the guilty appropriately with solid facts and evidence
- Protect the innocent equally regardless of race, ethnicity, or national origin
- Must not target or profile a group of people with suspicion, pretext, or guilt by association
Coronavirus and Hate

Coronavirus: Asian Americans across Bay Area, U.S. report 1,500 racist incidents in a month

Tatiana Sanchez  |  April 29, 2020  |  Updated: April 29, 2020 7:25 p.m.

CORONAVIRUS NEW YORK CITY

Coronavirus News: NYPD report shows bias crimes against Asian Americans on the rise

By Lucy Yang  
Tuesday, May 5, 2020 9:39AM

Reports of Hate and Bias Incidents in Oregon in 2020
Source: Oregon Department of Justice

Over 30 percent of Americans have witnessed COVID-19 bias against Asians, poll says

The surge in anti-Asian bias may reflect a growing tendency to blame certain groups for the pandemic, the polling organization says.

Representative Judy Chu said that reports of bigotry and hate crimes against Asian Americans have surged during the coronavirus crisis.

FBI concerned about potential for hate crimes during coronavirus pandemic

By Josh Campbell  
Updated 4:48 PM ET, Tue April 21, 2020
Is There Hope?

Mass mobilization to donate PPEs and food nationwide

Hi everyone! Just wanted to shoot everyone an update- we’ve made our first order of 500 KN95 masks to be delivered here in the next few days. Will keep you updated on which institution they will go to. Thank you so much for your support! Please let us know if you have any questions or suggestions.
Figure 18. Percentage of all active physicians by race/ethnicity, 2018.

Chinese Americans' Connections With China Are Not the Threats; They Are American Assets, Especially During Covid-19

Published on Wednesday, May 06, 2020 by Common Dreams

Buried by the news cycles are stories of how Chinese-American doctors, researchers, and community members are standing on the frontline in America’s fight against Covid-19.

by Yu Zhou
Keeping All of Us Informed

- Free, real-time, online reports
- World, U.S., state and county level data
- Open, sharable data
- Maps, News, Supplies, Trends, Videos, Links, ... available
- In English and Chinese
- 190 million visits
Essay: Asian American is not a disease

MAHBUBA RAHAT | TUESDAY, MAY 05, 2020

Asia is one of the biggest continents in the world where many different ethnic groups live — not just Chinese. Yet, many Asian Americans are collectively being subjected to racism due to the novel coronavirus outbreak. "There's a longer history of blaming Asia and Asian migrants and, by extension, Asian Americans for outbreaks of disease. COVID-19 is just the most current example of this history," Cathy Ceniza Choy told the Berkeley News at the University of California.

Along with the fear of the spread, COVID-19 has also given rise to many racist remarks against and harassment of Asian Americans across the country. President Donald Trump categorized COVID-19 as the "Chinese virus." Trump stated at a White House press conference that it could have been stopped in Wuhan, China, where the first case of COVID-19 was discovered.

It is not ethical for someone with high authority to criticize a certain group of people.

Asian Americans are facing violent xenophobia during the coronavirus outbreak. Jews have a responsibility to speak out.

BY DYLAN ADELMAN | MARCH 18, 2020
Midland, Texas

October 1987
“Baby Jessica”
Midland, Texas – March 14, 2020

4 stabbed – including 2 kids – at Midland Sam’s Club; man charged with attempted murder

According to KOSA-TV, the four victims included two adults and two children; one of the adults was a Sam’s Club employee. All were hospitalized at Midland Memorial Hospital, with two of the victims listed in critical condition.

Midland police were still trying to determine a motive for the stabbing attack.
Report: Sam’s Club stabbing suspect thought family was ‘Chinese infecting people with coronavirus’

None of the individuals here is Chinese
The Asian American community plans to honor the heroes of the hate crime against the Cung family – Zach Owen and Bernie Ramirez – in Midland, Texas, in June on the 38-th anniversary of the murder of Vincent Chin.
2020 Andrei Sakharov Prize Recipient

Xiaoxing Xi
Former Chair, Department of Physics
Temple University
Victim of Racial Profiling

Urgent Need to Speak Up

“The greatest dangers to liberty lurk in the insidious encroachment by men of zeal, well meaning but without understanding.”
Supreme Court Associate Justice Louis Brandeis
Dissenting, Olmstead v. United States, 277 U.S. 438 (1928)

We have to stop the injustice of racial profiling.
We have to defend openness on university campuses.
We have to protect American competitiveness in science and technology.
Proud to be a Chinese American
Xiaoxing Xi
September 16, 2015

I was jogging on the National Mall and along Pennsylvania Avenue this morning. As the sun came out behind the iconic landmarks, my heart welled up with pride of being a Chinese American. I ran by the Washington Monument. It is the ideal that “all men are created equal” the Founding Father fought for that has attracted me and many others to become an American citizen. I passed by the Lincoln Memorial. Abraham Lincoln gave his life to preserve the Union and abolish a system that treated people differently based on their races.

Running past the Capitol Steps, my appreciation became so clear that in this country, people’s voice can be heard through a democratic process. I jogged in front of the FBI building. I commend the men and women who devote themselves to the protection of our country. In my case, however, they have used their might against an innocent citizen. What do these all mean to me? We need to get involved in the democratic process. If we see a bad policy, a bad practice, that hurt our country, we need to speak out and let our voice be heard. That we have the right to do so is what this country is so great about.

As a proud citizen, I pledge to do my part.
“America is great not because it is perfect, but because it can learn and correct itself over time.”

- Norman Y. Mineta

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, ...”

- Preamble to the U.S. Constitution
Thank You
Please Stay Safe and Healthy

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