

NATIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION

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NAPABA ANNOUNCES 2005 TRAILBLAZER AWARD HONOREES

Washington, D.C. – The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) announced the recipients of its highest honor, the NAPABA Trailblazer Award, for 2005.

The Trailblazer Award recognizes the outstanding achievements, commitment and leadership of NAPABA lawyers who have paved the way for the advancement of other Asian Pacific American attorneys. As part of its annual convention, NAPABA honors a member from each region who meets these criteria. The honorees are selected by the regional governors and the affiliates in their region. Thus, the paths and achievements of the awardees are often very different. However, they all have had careers and otherwise made contributions that demonstrate vision, courage and tenacity, and which have resulted in a substantial and lasting contribution to the Asian Pacific American legal community, as well as the broader Asian Pacific American community. For their extraordinary accomplishments and for serving as role models and inspiration for other Asian Pacific American lawyers, NAPABA honors these trailblazers.

NAPABA Trailblazer Award Recipients:

- Hon. Jeannie J. Hong and Hon. Brian G. Kim – Southeast Region
- William D. Hoshijo – Northwest Region
- Wing F. Ong (1904-1977) – Southwest Region
- Hon. Sandra R. Otaka – Central Region
- Hon. Tammy Chung Ryu – California Central Region
- Hon. Dana Makoto Sabraw – California Southern Region
- Floyd D. Shimomura – California Eastern Region
- William R. Tamayo – California Northern Region
- Linda Wong – Northeast Region

Biographies of the awardees follow this press release and are also available on the NAPABA website at www.napaba.org in the “News” section.

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The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors and law students. NAPABA represents over 40,000 attorneys and 47 local Asian Pacific American bar associations. Its members represent solo practitioners, large firm lawyers, corporate counsel, legal service and non-profit attorneys, and lawyers serving at all levels of government. NAPABA continues to be a leader in addressing civil rights issues confronting Asian Pacific American communities. Through its national network of committees and affiliates, NAPABA provides a strong voice for increased diversity of federal and state judiciaries, advocates for equal opportunity in the workplace, works to eliminate hate crimes and anti-immigrant sentiment, and promotes professional development of minorities in the legal profession.

The NAPABA Trailblazer Award

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2005 NAPABA Trailblazer Award Recipients

The Honorable Jeannie J. Hong

Southeast Region

The Honorable Jeannie J. Hong is an Associate Judge of the District Court of Maryland for Baltimore City. With her historic appointment to the bench in July 2002, she became the first Asian Pacific American judge in the State of Maryland. Prior to her appointment, Judge Hong served as an Assistant State's Attorney for the Baltimore City State's Attorney's Office. In 1999, she was appointed by Governor Parris Glendening to serve on the Maryland Advisory Commission on Asian American Affairs and was also awarded the Women in Government Service Award of Excellence.

William D. Hoshijo

Northwest Region

William Hoshijo is the Executive Director of the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission (HCRC). In the late 1980's, he played an active role in support for the legislation which established the HCRC. In 1995 he was appointed as an HCRC Commissioner and was appointed Executive Director in 1997. In 2001, Mr. Hoshijo was recognized as the State of Hawaii Department of Labor and Industrial Relations Manager of the Year. Mr. Hoshijo is also a co-founder of Na Loio No Na Kanaka -- The Lawyers for the People of Hawaii, a non-profit, public interest law office that provides legal services to the immigrant poor.

The Honorable Brian G. Kim

Southeast Region

The Honorable Brian G. Kim is an Associate Judge of the District Court of Maryland for Montgomery County, a suburb of Washington, D.C. Judge Kim was appointed to his current position by then Governor Parris Glendening in August 2002, making him only the second Asian Pacific American judge in the State of Maryland. Prior to his appointment, Judge Kim served in the County Attorney's Office for Montgomery County and the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland. He also serves as an adjunct professor at the University of Baltimore School of Law where he received the Adjunct Professor of the Year Award for the 2004-2005 academic year.

Wing F. Ong (1904-1977)
Southwest Region

Wing F. Ong was the first Chinese American to serve in a state legislature in the United States. Despite barriers to his education by language and statutes in the early 1900's, Mr. Ong, as a young immigrant, enrolled in elementary school at the age of 15. He went on to high school and the University of Arizona. Financial difficulties interrupted his education, and Mr. Ong started a grocery business that helped sustain his family. He later enrolled in Phoenix College and went on to law school at the University of Arizona. He graduated in 1943 at the top of his law school class, and became one of eight Chinese American lawyers in the United States. He lost his first bid for elected office in 1941, but won a seat in the Arizona House of Representatives in 1946 where he served until 1950. After a period in private practice, Mr. Ong served a term in the Arizona State Senate in the 1960s. Mr. Ong was also appointed as the goodwill ambassador to the Republic of China by Governor Sam Goddard in 1965.

The Honorable Sandra R. Otaka
Central Region

The Honorable Sandra Otaka is the first Asian Pacific American appointed to the bench by the Illinois Supreme Court. Prior to her appointment in 2000, she spent a decade as an attorney at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and was awarded the Women Who Have Put Their Stamp on the EPA Award. As a Vice-Chairperson of the Cook County Commission on Human Rights, Judge Otaka helped draft the Cook County Human Rights Ordinance. Her efforts earned her the 1999 City of Chicago Human Relations Award and the 1995 Martin Luther King Community Leadership Award. In 1994, the Asian American Lunar New Year Coalition gave her its highest award, the Pan-Asian American of the Year, citing her "battles against discrimination." In November 2002, Judge Otaka became the first judge of Asian Pacific American decent elected to the bench in Cook County, Illinois.

The Honorable Tammy Chung Ryu
California Central Region

The Honorable Tammy Chung Ryu is a judge of the Superior Court of California for Los Angeles County. In 2002, she became the first Korean American woman to be appointed a judge in the State of California. From January 1988 until her appointment to the bench, Judge Ryu worked in the Civil Division of the California Attorney General's Office where she was a member of the Tobacco Litigation Section, the team assembled to prosecute California's case against the tobacco industry. The team obtained the largest civil litigation settlement in United States history and won the Attorney General's Team Award for Excellence.

The Honorable Dana Makoto Sabraw
California Southern Region

The Honorable Dana Makoto Sabraw is a United States District Court Judge for the Southern District of California. He is the first Asian Pacific American to serve on this court. Judge Sabraw was nominated by President George W. Bush in May of 2003, and unanimously confirmed by the Senate. Prior to his confirmation, Judge Sabraw served for five years as a California Superior Court Judge for San Diego County, and for three years as a Municipal Court Judge in San Diego's North County Municipal Court. Judge Sabraw has been recognized in the community for founding the Positive Impact Program in 1998, a court outreach program focused on lower socio-economic students, which is designed to give children a positive first impression of the justice system.

Floyd D. Shimomura
California Eastern Region

Floyd Shimomura serves as Executive Officer of the California State Personnel Board is one of the highest ranking Asian Pacific Americans in California state government. Prior to his appointment in 2004, he served as Chief Counsel to the California Department of Finance where he helped prepare the State of California's \$94.4 billion annual budget. He previously served as Chief Counsel of the California State Personnel Board and as the Senior Assistant Attorney General in charge of the Government Section. Mr. Shimomura also taught contracts and administrative law at the U.C. Davis, School of Law. During the 1980's, he served as National President of the 27,000 member Japanese American Citizens League where he helped lead the fight for redress for Japanese Americans interned during World War II.

William R. Tamayo
California Northern Region

William (Bill) Tamayo was appointed in 1995 as the Regional Attorney for the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, San Francisco District, where he directs the Commission's litigation and legal program in Northern and Central California, Hawaii, American Samoa, Wake Island, Johnston Island, Guam, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. Prior to joining the EEOC, he was the Managing Attorney for the Asian Law Caucus, a public-interest organization, where he emphasized the practice of immigration and nationality law and civil rights litigation and advocacy. While at the Asian Law Caucus, he was co-counsel for the intervener in EEOC and Castrejon v. Tortilleria La Major, which found that undocumented workers are protected under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and was on the legal team that developed the immigrant battered women provisions of the Violence Against Women Act.

Linda Wong
Northeast Region

Linda Wong is a shareholder of the law firm of Wong Fleming, A Professional Corporation, located in Edison, New Jersey. She concentrates her practice in employment law and founded the firm in 1994 with her partner, Daniel C. Fleming. Previously, Ms. Wong served as Assistant Director of Policy for New Jersey's Division on Civil Rights, and also worked as an attorney for the Division of Advocacy for the Developmentally Disabled in the Department of the Public Advocate and the Office of Legislative Services. In the May 2005 edition of New Jersey Monthly Magazine, she was named from a poll of 30,000 lawyers in New Jersey, as one of the Top 50 Female Super Lawyers in New Jersey.