



# AABA *Newsletter*

WWW.AABA - BAY.COM | JUNE / JULY 2011



## **President's Column**

By Malcolm Yeung

On May 6, 2011, the Ninth Circuit issued a little known but significant precedent setting opinion in *Zheng vs. Holder*. This opinion involved an appeal filed by local hero, activist, and AABA friend, Eddie Zheng. The Ninth Circuit held, for the first time, that in considering discretionary relief from deportation based on criminal charges under section 212(c), the immigration court must consider the petitioner's value and service to the community. That the Ninth Circuit would even consider this is a testament to the extraordinary story of Eddie Zheng.

Eddie and AABA go way back. In 2005, while Eddie was in prison in San Quentin, AABA members Peter Kang, then of Sidley Austin LLP, and AABA President Victor Hwang filed a civil suit against the state for violating Eddie's civil rights while in prison. Kang and Hwang settled the case favorably for Eddie. This case eventually helped Eddie secure his parole later that year. Unfortunately, Eddie was picked up two days later by ICE and detained pending deportation.

For Eddie and the Bay Area community, this was a blow. Eddie literally turned his life around while in prison. He finished his GED and taught ethnic studies classes to other prisoners. He communicated regularly with youth from the outside encouraging them to stay clean and out of trouble. Eddie was so effective and inspirational that he secured numerous job offers to work with at risk youth upon his release.

For the next year, Eddie fought his deportation case eventually losing at the immigration court and Board of Immigration Appeals. While waiting for travel documents from the Chinese government, Eddie was released from detention and filed his Ninth Circuit appeal. He accepted a position at CYC, a San Francisco community based organization that works with at risk Asian and Pacific Islander youth.

I can say without reservation that since joining CYC, Eddie has been one of the most effective and inspirational activists in the Bay Area. Eddie can reach youth in a way that few others can. And he commands their respect. Eddie has also played a critical role in restoring the "peace" between African American and Chinese American communities amidst the recent run of black/Asian violence in Southeastern San Francisco.

It is no wonder that Eddie was the ideal "test case" to expand the scope of factors to be considered under section 212(c). Few individuals have done more to serve the community. And by securing the Ninth Circuit opinion, Eddie has once again served the community.

Even after this recent legal victory, Eddie's struggle is not over. He awaits remand of his case to immigration court and/or the Board of Immigration Appeals. In the meantime, Eddie seeks a pardon from the Governor. If you want to reach out to Eddie or help in any way, please contact Ben Wang at [bmw3030@gmail.com](mailto:bmw3030@gmail.com).

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## JUDICIAL PROFILE:

# Judge Michael Isaku Begert, San Francisco County Superior Court

By Jenny Kang, Judiciary Appointments Committee Member

This month, we are pleased to present the profile of Judge Michael Isaku Begert, who was appointed San Francisco County Superior Court Judge in December of 2010. Judge Begert has been a member of AABA for over 20 years and received the Joe Morozumi Award for Exceptional Legal Advocacy at the AABA Installation Dinner in 2010.

Judge Begert, a native of Washington, graduated Phi Beta Kappa and received his Bachelor of Arts magna cum laude from the University of Washington in 1985, and his Juris Doctorate with honors from the University of Chicago in 1989. Prior to his appointment to the bench, Judge Begert practiced a broad range of complex civil litigation at Bingham McCutchen, LLP, where he began his legal career in 1989 and was elevated to partner in 1996. He has been involved in community service his entire career, through his participation in organizations such as the Asian Law Caucus and the Asian American Justice Center in Washington, D.C., for which he was Chair and on the Board of Directors. Judge Begert also actively participated in the American Bar Association and was on the Board of Directors for the Lawyer's Committee for Civil Rights.

**You have been dedicated to community service throughout your legal career. What has been the most rewarding project or case you have been involved in?**

Community service has given me so many rewards that it's a difficult question to answer. I have had some impact cases with the Lawyers' Committee over the years that provided tremendous opportunities for professional growth. I worked on a case with the Minami Tamaki firm that focused on the Japanese American community in San Francisco, the Internment, and the history of exclusion and discrimination against people of Asian descent generally. That case meant a great deal to me personally. Overall, however, I have to say that my association with the Asian Law Caucus has been the most valuable and meaningful experience I have had as a lawyer. As a member of the Caucus board, I had the privilege of working with an impressive array of progressive Asian Americans. They gave me an education in collaboration, community, generosity, passion, and patience.

**You have been involved with AABA for many years. What is the most memorable AABA event that you have attended?**

I can remember in the early 1990s, when the annual installation banquet was still held at the Empress of China, seeing Judge Kawaichi and Judge Sing on the stage presenting scholarships and administering the oath to the new officers. They were so genuine and approachable that they made the concept of being a judge imaginable.

**What inspired you to go to law school and become an attorney?**

My father grew up in a mill-town during the Depression. He was the oldest of six children, and he joined the military as a way to escape poverty. For a short time, he worked in the JAG Corps, and he always spoke of those days with great fondness. It was always clear to me that my father wanted to be a lawyer.

**What inspired you to pursue becoming a judge?**

I think that aspiration has always been there. I always felt that public service was what I should do and wanted to do. An honest, fair judicial system is what allows everything to function in our society. All of our rights and freedoms only mean something if there is a place where we can go to claim them, and the court is that place. I tell prospective jurors that all of the time, and I sincerely believe it. Being a judge is also something that I knew I would enjoy. As a lawyer I loved the courtroom. I also loved that process in every case where you distill the facts to a core concept that guides you to the fair result.

**What have you enjoyed most about being a judge?**

Everything. Really. It is the greatest career I can imagine. I love the variety of matters, the constant learning, the challenge of making the right call under pressure, and the collaboration with peers who are smart, interesting, and dedicated. Most of all, I appreciate the opportunity to interact with juries. It is hard to imagine another situation where a more representative cross-section of our community comes together to solve tough problems.

**On a lighter note, what sorts of leisure activities do you enjoy?**

I have an 8-year old daughter and boy/girl twins who are five. I like to spend time with them. We go to the zoo, play at the park, read books, and just generally have a great time. Two of our favorite activities are going to Giants' games and hanging out at the beach in Santa Cruz.

**What is the last book you enjoyed?**

I just finished *The Lacuna* by Barbara Kingsolver. The life of its multi-racial narrator intersects with Frida Kahlo, Leon Trotsky, and the House Committee on Un-American Activities, with a cameo by Richard Nixon. I found it relevant to today's political climate.

**What is your favorite film?**

That is a tough one. I have a lot of favorites. My favorite "law movie" is probably *Breaker Morant*, although Joe Pesci's grits cross-examination from *My Cousin Vinny* is classic (and surprisingly realistic.) *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Fargo*, *Slumdog Millionaire*, *Pulp Fiction*, *Philadelphia Story*. . . I can't decide.

**If you had not chosen the path of law, what other career could you envision yourself doing?**

At one point, I wanted to be an architect. I was attracted to the intersection between art and function. Truth be told, I think law is the only thing for which I have ever showed any aptitude.

**What advice do you have for attorneys who may be interested in pursuing a career on the bench?**

Find ways to establish and maintain a diverse network. When I started, law firm associates were expected to be generalists. Now, the pressure to specialize is immediate and constant. And as you develop expertise the scope of your work will continue to narrow. As a result, you might one day realize that you are relatively isolated, and your professional interactions are confined to a small, homogeneous set of peers. That isolation will make it difficult both to obtain a judicial position and to perform the duties of a judge. Public service and professional organizations like AABA can keep you connected to a broader community.

**What have you valued most about your involvement in AABA?**

AABA was the starting point for my connection to the community. Through AABA, I became involved in the Asian Law Caucus, which introduced me to many of the leaders of the civil rights community. My service on the Caucus board led me to the Asian American Justice Center. As president of the board of AAJC, I had the opportunity to see the breadth and scope of the new Asian America. Working on policy issues at the national level also enhanced my appreciation of our Bay Area community. We really have something special here.

# AABA SUMMER KICK-OFF HAPPY HOUR AT INFUSION LOUNGE

By Benjamin Uy,  
Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP

On Thursday, June 2, 2011, AABA held a summer kick-off happy hour at Infusion Lounge in the Union Square area. The event, which attracted over 60 AABA members and guests, was an exciting one with good food and great company enjoyed by the many attendees. Groups of 3L law students took study breaks from the Barbri review program to network and seek exam-taking tips from practicing attorneys. Practicing attorneys took breaks from their litigation cases and corporate deals to knock back a few strong ones with fellow colleagues and students. Old friends reconnected and many new connections were made – what a great way to start the summer!

The next AABA social event will be a Fundraising Networking Mixer co-sponsored with AABA's Civil Rights/Public Interest Committee on Thursday, July 28, 2011, 6pm at Carnelian by the Bay! Please mark your calendars and stay tuned for additional information about what promises to be a great event for a worthy cause. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding any AABA social events, please contact Benjamin Uy at [benjamin.uy@pillsburylaw.com](mailto:benjamin.uy@pillsburylaw.com). We look forward to seeing everyone again soon at the next event!



L-R: AABA President Malcolm Yeung, Charles Jung, Alston Lew, Quynh Chen and Quan Vu



L-R: Lisa Chow and Stella Kim



L-R: Gina Tsai and Ben Uy



L-R: Emily Tam, Danny Wang, and Stella Kim



L-R: Janet Li and guest attendees

## Employment Committee

By Christina Chong, 2L at University of California Berkeley School of Law, AABA Newsletter Committee Member

The Employment Committee's goal is to improve employment opportunities for law students and attorneys through coordinating an annual jobs panel and workshop, hosting a summer reception for law clerks and employers, publicizing job openings, and cooperating with community groups and local bar associations.

The Committee organizes one of AABA's most popular events, the **Annual Summer Law Clerk Reception**, which is an ideal social setting for attorneys, summer associates in firms and in-house positions, and law clerks in government and public interest sectors to get to know each other. The reception also recognizes each year's AABA summer grant recipients for their dedication to community service and client advocacy. This year the Summer Law Clerk Reception took

place on June 23, 2011 at Yank Sing Restaurant – Rincon Center location – in San Francisco. The main responsibilities of the committee members include organizing all logistical aspects, marketing the event to the Bay Area legal community, generating financial support from the API partner community, and finding volunteers for the event.

The Committee also coordinates **AABA's Career Day**, where attorneys help law students and young attorneys by facilitating mock-interviews, and discussing career planning and job search strategies. Last year over 100 attorneys and law students participated in the program. This year the event will take place at Golden Gate University School of Law on August 27, 2011. The committee members strive to ob-

tain an ample amount of attorney volunteers to provide the law students and young attorneys with one-on-one feedback on their interviewing skills, and to provide a diverse panel of attorneys to cater to the interests of all students attending the event.

In collaborating with local law schools, student organizations and local bar associations to improve employment for minority lawyers, the Committee publicizes job openings on the AABA website. To see our list of job openings, please visit <http://www.aaba-bay.com/aaba/showpage.asp?code=joblistings>.

If you are interested in joining the Employment Committee, please contact Jessie Ho ([jessieho@gmail.com](mailto:jessieho@gmail.com)) and Olivia Lee ([olee@MinamiTamaki.com](mailto:olee@MinamiTamaki.com)).

## AABA Volunteering at Lands End September 17, 2011 from 1-4 PM

The AABA Community Services Committee is teaming up with the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy to restore the unique coastal native habitat at Lands End in San Francisco. This is a great opportunity to make a vital contribution in the efforts to protect sensitive natural habitat, sustain and improve our trail systems, and preserve important cultural resources while enjoying the company of your fellow attorneys and law students!

Details about the project can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/2fshp9c> and <http://tinyurl.com/3w6gvho>. Please contact Community Services Committee Co-Chair Jennifer A. Lee at [jalee@alumni.princeton.edu](mailto:jalee@alumni.princeton.edu) if you would like to participate or if you have any questions. Friends and family are welcome.

## **AABA / LARC Clinic 07/30/11**

Community Services Committee

Asian American Bar Association (AABA) is working with the Volunteer Legal Services Program's (VLSP) Legal Advice and Referral Clinic (LARC) on Saturday, July 30, at UC Hastings (198 McAllister Street, Louise B. Mayer Lounge) to provide 10-15 minute legal services to low-income client clients in varies areas of the law.

They are looking for experienced attorneys (attorneys with 5+ years of experience in an area) in the following areas: Bankruptcy, Business/Contracts, Civil, Collection Defense, Criminal, Employment/Labor, Family, General Consumer, Immigration, Landlord Tenant, Personal Injury, Probate, Real Estate, SSI, and/or Workers' Comp.

They are also looking for up to 8 people to conduct intake interviews and 2 interpreters each for Spanish, Cantonese, and Mandarin. If you have less than 5 years in the specific area or are new to the area, but are still interested in volunteering, please let Hung Chang know at your convenience so we can make a case-by-case assessment about your eligibility. Space is limited, so please let me know as soon as you can commit to the date.

Please email Hung Chang at [hungchangesq@gmail.com](mailto:hungchangesq@gmail.com) regarding your interest.



## **AABA Public Law/ Public Service Mixer**

**July 28, 2011: 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm  
Carnelian by the Bay  
1 Ferry Plaza, San Francisco**

Please join AABA for Happy Hour as we launch the new Public Law/ Public Service Committee of the Asian American Bar Association!! The Committee, led by former AABA President Celia Lee (Deputy City Attorney, City and County of San Francisco) and Neill Tseng (Assistant U.S. Attorney), aims to bring together public interest and government attorneys from around the Bay. Complimentary appetizers will be provided and all drinks will be 50% off during the entire event!

A \$10 cover charge will be collected from non-public law/public service attorneys to benefit the AABA Foundation, which provides scholarships to law students who demonstrate accomplishment and commitment to serving the Asian community.

Complimentary access to this event will be provided for Public Law/ Public Service attorneys and all law students, who are all encouraged to sign up with this new committee. Please come out and support a good cause and enjoy some great food and drinks at this gorgeous venue on the Bay.

Please email Ben Uy at [benjamin.uy@pillsburylaw.com](mailto:benjamin.uy@pillsburylaw.com) for more information.

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**AABA Annual**  **Oktoberfest Night!**



**Please join AABA for Oktoberfest Night at AT&T Park on Monday, September 26, 2011 to watch the Giants battle the Colorado Rockies (7:15 p.m. first pitch).**

For a mere \$30 (\$35 for non-AABA members), you gain admission to the game and score a Free Giant's Oktoberfest gift and choice of a complimentary beer/soda on the Giants at the ballpark. Don't miss this event that was sold out last year!

What could make this deal even better? Well we're even going to throw a free "tailgate" at Greenberg Traurig at 153 Townsend Street on the 8th Floor starting at 5 p.m. (conveniently located right near the Ballpark). Special Counsel will be providing us with an assortment of ball park food (hot dogs, chips, and burgers) and wine, and Social Kitchen and Brewery will be donating a keg just for us.

After the tailgate, we will be heading to the Giants' Seals Plaza from 6:30-7:00 p.m. for the Oktoberfest celebration so everyone can pick up their free gift and drink. We will then leave the festivities at 7:05 p.m. to catch the first pitch at 7:15 p.m.

**AABA Social Co-Chair David Tsai will have all the tickets for this event. Please contact him in advance at [dtsai@perkinscoie.com](mailto:dtsai@perkinscoie.com) to reserve your ticket as soon as possible. You must pre-pay for your ticket to reserve a spot.** In the event you are running late and can't pick up your ticket at Greenberg Traurig, you can email David, and he'll try to meet you at the ballpark to give you your ticket. If you have any questions, you can also contact the other AABA Social Co-Chairs, Danny Wang at [dwang@samlaw.net](mailto:dwang@samlaw.net) or Ben Uy at [benjamin.uy@pillsburylaw.com](mailto:benjamin.uy@pillsburylaw.com).

Thanks again Greenberg Traurig, Special Counsel, and Social Kitchen and Brewery for generously hosting this event!



# HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED WITH AABA

## 1 Join a committee!

We have 12 committees who would all love your help! Please contact one of our committee chairs to learn more.

### CIVIL RIGHTS/PUBLIC INTEREST

Asha Padania, [asha@padanialaw.com](mailto:asha@padanialaw.com)  
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 Danny Wang, [dwang@samlaw.net](mailto:dwang@samlaw.net)

## 2 Co-host a CLE with AABA!

AABA is a certified Continuing Legal Education (CLE) provider and if you want to join AABA to put on a CLE class, please contact our Education Committee!

## 3 Advertise with AABA!

Advertise in AABA's newsletter to reach out to our large membership base. Our newsletter is sent out to over 2,000 people each month.

## Calendar of Upcoming Events

### JULY

Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach (APILO) / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. **July 20.** 6:00pm - 8:00pm. 1305 Franklin Street, Suite 410, Oakland.

Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach (APILO) / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. **July 25.** 5:45pm - 8:00pm UC Hastings Civil Justice Clinic, 100 McAllister Street, Suite 300, San Francisco.

AABA Public Interest Fundraising Mixer, **July 28,** 6:00pm - 9:00pm Carnelian by the Bay, 1 Ferry Plaza, San Francisco.

Legal Advice and Referral Clinic. **July 30.** All-day legal clinic. AABA will collaborate with VLSP's Legal Advice and Referral Clinic to host an all-day legal clinic.

### AUGUST

Bar Association of San Francisco - Work Your Wardrobe: A Private Styling Fundraiser Event, **August 16,** 5:00pm - 8:00pm Banana Republic Store, Two Embarcadero Center, San Francisco.

APILO / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. **August 17,** 6:00pm - 8:00pm. 1305 Franklin Street, Suite 410, Oakland.

APILO / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. **August 22,** 5:45pm - 8:00pm UC Hastings Civil Justice Clinic, 100 McAllister Street, Suite 300, San Francisco.

KABANC Annual Dinner, **August 26.** TBD

Career Day. **August 27.** Golden Gate School of Law, 536 Mission Street, San Francisco.

### SEPTEMBER

AABA Volunteering at Lands End, September 17. 1-4 PM Lands End, San Francisco. Details about the project can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/2fshp9c> and <http://tinyurl.com/3w6gvho>.

APILO / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. September 21, 6:00pm - 8:00pm. 1305 Franklin Street, Suite 410, Oakland.

APILO / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. September 26, 5:45pm - 8:00pm UC Hastings Civil Justice Clinic, 100 McAllister Street, Suite 300, San Francisco.

AABA Annual Giants Oktoberfest Night. September 26. AT&T Park, San Francisco.

### OCTOBER

VABANC Annual Dinner, **October 7.** TBD

APILO / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. October 19, 6:00pm - 8:00pm. 1305 Franklin Street, Suite 410, Oakland.

APILO / AABA Pro Bono Legal Clinic. October 24, 5:45pm - 8:00pm UC Hastings Civil Justice Clinic, 100 McAllister Street, Suite 300, San Francisco.



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