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ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
of the Greater Bay Area

June 2014 Newsletter

President's Column

By Ted Ting

itting_tnHey True Believers-

As many of you know from the Annual Dinner, I believe that we lawyers have powers and skills that effectively makes us “superheroes.” To truly harness our collective abilities, we need to band together – that’s where AABA comes into play. We need more people to join and we need every one of us to become involved.

In terms of membership, since the Dinner, we have added over 100 new members, so we’re off to an excellent start. But we need to continue that effort – if you know anyone who is not yet a member, especially government, non-profit, and in-house lawyers, please encourage them to join.

As for involvement, AABA offers opportunities galore. In April, we met with our sensational committee co-chairs to discuss our slate of events for this year. Thus far, our committees have already scheduled 23 incredible events – which is about one every other week – and they aren’t close to being done yet! Make sure you look at our regular email blasts (or the website calendar) for additional events that will be constantly added to the slate.

While our co-chairs and their committees are pretty amazing, we can use more help. Sign up and help and you’ll not only expand your experience and network, but you’ll have a good time to boot.

In the meantime, please take a look at the excellent articles that cover some of the events that we’ve already had!

Excelsior!

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President's Address at the Installation Dinner

Growing up, I can't say that being AABA President was necessarily on my mind. Instead – I was into comic books – sometimes wishing life was like a comic book. At the time, it was not very cool.

But thanks to Hollywood, comic book characters are mainstream now. Everyone knows the common elements for a character. And I think that I've experienced some of these elements.

For example, every comic book character has a...

1. Dramatic/Meaningful Life Event(s)

For me, it was growing up as the son of Chinese parents, who have been central to every chapter of my life – particularly early on.

They fled from troops during World War II, then the Communists after the War. My parents sought a better life in America, but it was a difficult road. As immigrants, they faced challenges and discrimination. My mother told me that the U.S. immigration official refused to give her a visa unless she paid \$2000 “because there were too many of her kind in the U.S. already” – So she and her family scratched, borrowed, and saved enough to send her.

My parents were not intimately familiar with all of their rights, whether it was being laid off or being in a car accident. They were not native English speakers and definitely not comfortable speaking up. So that hampered them. I remember helping them decipher and fill out various forms. But they worked hard and supported my brother, my grandparents, and me, and for several years, my aunt and 3 cousins too. I also struggled growing up because as I said, I was not very cool. When you are small for your size, have bad fashion sense, thick glasses, and terrible haircut, you get picked on. I also got picked on because I'm Chinese. Kids would ask if I spoke English. They'd make fun of me speaking Chinese. And they used the term “Chink.”

These events had a lot to do with my decision to go to law school, where I could...

2. Miraculously Learn Skills and Gain Powers

I wasn't bitten by a radioactive spider and I didn't build a utility belt, but I did learn about issue spotting, analysis, research, and how to work long hours. Then I joined the Crosby Heafey Roach & May law firm (which eventually became Reed Smith).

There, I learned from some of the best lawyers in the business. Taking a case from intake to trial, litigation strategy, legal writing, pro bono, client management, professionalism, how to be a lawyer and a parent. Many people helped me to become a better lawyer and inspired me to be a better person. In the movies, it takes 10 minutes give or take... for me, it

was a journey of over 16 years. It wasn't always smooth sailing. During that time, there were challenging moments and rough patches...

Same with any comic book character, even with the skills, face challenging moments or setbacks.

3. Encouraging Pep Talk

Whether it was because I: was developing a good trial strategy, was crafting the right legal argument, had lost a motion, gotten jammed up by an unreasonable opposing counsel, gotten jammed up by an unreasonable client, was trying to navigate firm politics or the partnership promotion process...

At those time, I turned to mentors at the firm – those who had been there before. Folks like Joan Haratani, Marshall Wallace, Terence Hawley. But also friends or mentors in AABA, folks like Dale Minami, Kevin Fong, Garner Weng. And those moments all represented turning points...

Which takes us to...

4. Happy Ending! Good Defeats Evil!

I became a partner at Reed Smith. That ultimately led to my current position as in-house counsel at Bank of America. During this time, I got married to a talented, funny, beautiful and supportive woman, who works full time and still manages to cook dinner, attend Girl Scouts meetings, and keep our family from going off the rails. We had my daughter Kalea and my son Kyle – who fill our lives with joy...and questions that begin with "Can I have a <FILL IN THE BLANK>"

I'm blessed to be near my parents, my brother, his wife and their son, my mother-in-law and sister-in-law, and Terence, who is like a brother. So I think I did all right. Although I should formally and publicly apologize to my parents – sorry Mom and Dad, I know you wanted a doctor...

Okay – I know what you're thinking – some of this sounds like you. Because everyone in this room has an origin story.

All of us – as lawyers – we have been blessed with training and skills – opportunity and a helping hand – we've received that mentoring – which has enabled us to find success.

We're privileged with a certain power – and as everyone knows...

With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility.

We all have that responsibility.

To help our community, law students, young lawyers, in-house counsel, government lawyers, and law firm partners too.

Particularly since we all had help along the way. AABA is where we come together – a group of superpowered individuals – and our whole becomes greater than the sum of the parts.

We're sort of like the Asian lawyer version of the Avengers.

Without the uniforms.

Over the years, AABA – with the power of its members – has performed great work by:

Advocating for equality and diversity,
Educating,
Helping to build a professional network.

AABA has made a difference in the lives of its members and the community. We must continue those efforts to accomplish even more.

I'm asking every AABA member to get involved or stay involved. New members and even more so, experienced members, who have so much to offer. Participate in one committee or help out with one activity.

It could be a pro bono clinic, signing up as a mentor, planning or giving a CLE presentation with our Education Committee, helping us with our Legally Asian program, and build our high school student and college student pipeline, working on a community service project, or helping advocate on a civil rights issue.

Or if you have something new in mind that we haven't done before – let's talk and see what AABA can do to make that happen.

GET INVOLVED AND TOGETHER we can assist our community with neighborhood projects and pro bono clinics, especially those who need legal help and guidance the most.

GET INVOLVED AND TOGETHER we can advocate for diversity and civil rights. We can help those interested in a judicial career and ensure that the panel of judges accurately reflects our community. Then maybe this year, we'll finally see another Asian American justice on the First District Court of Appeal, and in the not-so-distant future...on the U.S. Supreme Court.

GET INVOLVED AND TOGETHER we can help educate and mentor students and young lawyers – which we all are or were at some point. We need to help them succeed to ensure there is a steady pipeline of successful Asian American leaders in the legal community.

GET INVOLVED AND TOGETHER we can develop the careers of all Asian American lawyers, especially yours.

With your support and involvement, we can DO IT TOGETHER. You will be making a difference in our local or legal community. You will have a good time. And you will help your career.

I look forward to partnering with you in the year to come.

AABA Assemble!

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Don Tamaki's Introduction of State Bar of California CEO, Joe Dunn and President of the State Bar, Luis Rodriquez at the Installation Dinner

3/14/14

Tonight, AABA recognizes the State Bar for its historic stand in recommending to the Court that Sergio Garcia, an undocumented immigrant, be admitted as a lawyer. That set the stage for a case of first impression, unprecedented action by the Legislature—and ultimately—a ground-breaking Supreme Court decision on immigrant rights in California.

Before I introduce State Bar CEO, Joe Dunn, and the President of the Bar, Luis Rodriguez, to accept this recognition, let me frame the issue.

As Asian Americans, we know something about immigration. Most of us in this room are only a generation or two removed from our immigrant ancestors. In fact, many of you are immigrants yourselves. The common denominator is that most of our families arrived here with nothing more than a belief in this country, and a desire to build a new life in America. We are the result.

Was our entry into the United States lawful? Not always. We'd like to think that we came here on the Mayflower, but we know that's not true. Many of us are descendants of "paper sons or daughters" who bought documentation identifying them—falsely—as children of American citizens, and who studied coaching books with detailed information on their "paper" families in order to pass grueling interrogations at Angel Island. My grandfather skipped Angel Island entirely—he was a stowaway, having paid a cook to hide him in the pantry of a steamer. And when that ship arrived in Eureka, he slipped out of that pantry into the confusion of the dock, and made his way to San Francisco as an undocumented immigrant.

Fast forward to 1977. Sergio Garcia was born in Mexico. When he was a baby, his father, a lawful permanent U.S. resident at the time, brought Sergio into the United States without papers. Subsequently his father became a U.S. citizen and filed a petition for his son to adjust to lawful status. That petition was approved in 1995. Nevertheless, Mr. Garcia has been waiting, in an undocumented status, for the past 18 years for his visa to become available. During this time, he attended high school, college, and law school, and passed the Bar Examination on his first attempt. But for this backlog created by the immigration system, Mr. Garcia would have lawful, documented status today. Worse, it may be many more years before his visa finally issues.

Despite the obvious controversy, the Committee of Bar Examiners and the Board of Trustees took a very principled stand, rooted in the rule of law, concluding that Mr. Garcia's undocumented status should not disqualify him from becoming an attorney. In making its recommendation, the legal team in the State Bar's Office of General Counsel, in particular, Rachel Grunberg, Larry Yee, and Rick Zanassi, deserve special recognition. Under the now retired General Counsel, Starr Babcock, they did an enormous amount of work over a 2-year span to analyze the hugely complicated legal issues—not the least of which is a federal statute barring undocumented immigrants from receiving State benefits, including professional licenses, unless the State Legislature passes a law allowing it.

On January 2, 2014, in a case of first impression, the Court unanimously agreed with the State Bar and admitted Mr. Garcia. This important decision was the culmination of the unfaltering resolve of Sergio Garcia, but also the extraordinary efforts of the State Bar led by State Bar CEO Joe Dunn, and the support of the Legislature which passed in record time a law allowing the Court to admit qualified bar applicants who, notwithstanding their undocumented status, have met all of the requirements.

For the 11 million undocumented immigrants in the United States, including many young Americans who were brought here as children—who have known no other country, and who have excelled in grade schools, colleges, and even graduate schools including law schools—the Garcia case is highly significant and addresses—at least in California—one aspect of an otherwise broken immigration system.

Folks—it is a huge event when an institution as big and as influential as the State Bar of California, together with Sergio Garcia, the Legislature, and a unanimous Supreme Court, take a giant step towards integrating the children of undocumented immigrants—popularly known as “DREAMers”—into the fabric of our society. It gives hope to other aspiring DREAMers, that perhaps they too might one day be a lawyer—or for that matter, a doctor, or a teacher, or any other profession that requires a license.


Therefore, it is my great pleasure to ask that the CEO of the State Bar of California, Joe Dunn, and Luis Rodriguez, the President of the State Bar, accept AABA’s recognition.

Ladies and gentlemen, won’t you join me in welcoming Joe Dunn and Luis Rodriguez to the stage.

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The Honorable Tracie L. Brown: A Judicial Profile

By Rodney C. Villazor, Judiciary Committee member

 [traciebrown](#) The Honorable Tracie L. Brown was appointed to the Superior Court of San Francisco County on May 21, 2013 by Governor Jerry Brown, making her the first Japanese American woman to serve on the San Francisco County bench. Her meteoric rise, however, is hardly a surprise. As shown in her impressive credentials, the breadth of her legal experience, and the unanimous praise from the bar, Judge Brown was destined for success. In the midst of one of her typical full criminal calendars, she took time to answer questions for the AABA Newsletter.

Background

Judge Brown grew up in Massachusetts where she developed a love for the Boston Red Sox and New England Patriots and competitively ice skated, including at the U.S. National Figure Skating Championships. She earned her B.A. in English and American Literature, magna cum laude with highest honors, from Harvard University, and she was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. After Harvard, she attended law school at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law (Boalt Hall) where she was a Research and Topics Editor for the Asian Law Journal.

After earning her J.D., Judge Brown joined the financial services practice at Morrison & Foerster, LLP where she had been a summer law clerk. She then notched a coveted clerkship with the Honorable M. Margaret McKeown of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit. Afterwards, she returned to private practice at Cooley, Godward, and Kronish, LLP, where she practiced in the intellectual property and antitrust groups.

The Soko Bukai Case

Judge Brown’s time at Cooley, however, was not limited to complex civil litigation. Judge Brown points to her pro bono work in *Soko Bukai v. YWCA of San Francisco* as one of her finest career achievements. Bill Ong Hing, a law professor at the University of San Francisco School of Law, detailed the landmark civil rights litigation in “Rebellious Lawyering, Settlement and Reconciliation: *Soko Bukai v. YWCA*,” 5 Nev. L. J. 172 (2004). Putting the case in historical context, Professor Hing hails the *Soko Bukai* case as “a vindication for a community victimized by alien land laws in the early 1900s and internment during World War II.”

In this ambitious civil rights case, a dispute arose between *Soko Bukai*, an organization of Japanese Christian Churches whose members formed the original Japanese YWCA, and the San Francisco Young Women’s Christian Association (SF

YWCA) over ownership of the YWCA building in Japantown. In 1912, the Issei (first generation Japanese) women formed an independent Japanese YWCA, but were unable to acquire property for a permanent home because of the 1913 Alien Land Law, which prohibited Japanese immigrants from owning most types of property in their own names (which was not repealed until 1956). Having raised the money to purchase the building, the Issei women turned to the SF YWCA, which agreed to hold the property in trust for the Japanese YWCA. After internment, the Japanese YWCA was disbanded and much of the evidence of the land trust was lost.

When the SF YWCA attempted to sell the building in 1996, attorneys, including noted civil rights attorney Donald Tamaki, Esq., and the community rallied to uncover evidence of the trust and filed a lawsuit in 1997. After the SF YWCA successfully disqualified one of the pro bono law firms, the Soko Bukai was left in dire straits. Enter Cooley associate Tracie Brown, according to Mr. Tamaki, to rescue the case. She approached Mr. Tamaki offering the full pro bono support from Cooley. In an interview with Professor Hing in April 2002, Judge Brown explained that, although she was not from the San Francisco Japanese American community, she felt a connection because her mother was a Japanese immigrant, and she was moved by the “inspirational community base and showing of support.” 5 Nev. L. J. at 184.

Mr. Tamaki lauds Judge Brown with having provided the day-to-day “heavy lifting.” Indeed, with Cooley partner Ben Riley and associate Beatriz Mejia, Judge Brown devoted over 2000 pro bono hours to the case. She spearheaded the pretrial discovery phase and coordinated and took or defended over 40 depositions. She also performed the majority of the legal research and argued most of the pretrial motions. Professor Hing praises “her tireless, painstaking research and community outreach [that] help[ed] strengthen the case on behalf of Soko Bukai, making the plaintiff’s position much stronger as they entered into final negotiations.” In February 2002, the case settled favorably with the Nihonmachi Little Friends (NLF) purchasing the building from the SF YWCA.

For her remarkable effort, Judge Brown received the Jack Berman Award for Achievement of Distinguished Service to the Profession and the Public from the California Young Lawyers Association. The State Bar of California called her “a role model for young lawyers in applying her skills not only to the business of the firm, but also to important issues in the community.”

The Soko Bukai case also had a personal impact on Judge Brown. In her interview with Professor Hing, she explained: “It really opened my eyes to a totally different type of litigation that was unbelievably rewarding. I’ve met a bunch of people in this community who are really incredibly strong people and very committed to the work that they do and that was wonderful to see.” Professor Hing observes that the case enabled her to make a strong and lasting connection with the Japanese American community. Indeed, Judge Brown volunteered for NLF for more than 10 years after the case settled.

“Tracie Brown for the United States”

Reflecting on Soko Bukai, Judge Brown credits the rewarding experience as a driving force behind her decision to do more public interest work. In late 2002, Judge Brown opted to leave private practice and started what would become a distinguished career in public service as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California. Judge Brown wistfully recalls her first to last court appearances stating “Tracie Brown for the United States” as among her proudest career highlights.

As an Assistant United States Attorney (AUSA), Judge Brown started in the Civil Division, moved to Major Crimes, and shortly thereafter, transitioned to white collar prosecution. The breadth of her docket was varied and included successful prosecutions for bank robberies, gun and drug cases, wire and mail fraud and Ponzi schemes. She tried many jury trials

and argued appeals before the Ninth Circuit. One of her more notable cases was securing the guilty plea of San Francisco Supervisor Edmund Jew for mail fraud, extortion, and solicitation of bribes; another was securing the guilty plea of the mastermind of a \$129 million Ponzi scheme that ensnared more than 1,000 victims. Looking back, Judge Brown fondly recalls the grateful victims in her cases, particularly an elderly victim of an investment fraud scheme who professed that Judge Brown had restored her faith in the criminal justice system.

As an AUSA, Judge Brown was also active in the legal community. She actively participated in the Bar Association of San Francisco moderating panels of judges and attorneys, such as the popular “Do’s and Don’ts for Newer Attorneys.” She has long been a member of AABA, mentoring students and young lawyers and working with the Judiciary Committee.

AABA honored her with the Joe Morozumi Award for Exceptional Legal Advocacy in 2003. As an AUSA, Judge Brown was also selected to be a Northern District of California Lawyer Representative, charged with assisting the improvement of the administration of justice and with helping to plan the annual Northern District Judicial Conference.

United States Attorney Melinda Haag calls Judge Brown “whip smart, extraordinarily conscientious, and someone dedicated to public service.” Judge Brown’s former colleagues echo Ms. Haag’s assessment. She is “extremely smart, a gifted lawyer, with an unsurpassed level of energy and intensity.” Drew Caputo, the Vice President of Litigation at Earthjustice and a former AUSA, was unabashed in his praise. Mr. Caputo credits her with teaching him how to develop and try a successful criminal prosecution. He adds that she is a brilliant trial strategist and is one of the finest trial lawyers.

It was of no surprise that then-AUSA Brown was tapped to teach trial advocacy with U.S. District Judge Jeffrey S. White at Boalt Hall, a course she will resume teaching with Judge White in January.

What is most missed by her former colleagues, however, is the judge’s terrific sense of humor. Many shared anecdotes of AUSA Brown in the hallways of 450 Golden Gate trading barbs and jokes. Indeed, there remains universal regard for her with only one exception. As Mr. Caputo explains, there is serious reservation regarding her unrelenting devotion to the New England Patriots and the Boston Red Sox.

“A Lawyer’s Lawyer”

Now presiding at the Hall of Justice at 850 Bryant Street, Judge Brown remains in the familiar setting of a criminal courtroom. But instead of standing as the prosecutor, she wears the black robe. She spent the first six months handling felony and misdemeanor trials and currently handles a docket involving preliminary hearings, arraignments/bail hearings, and suppression motions.

Although criminal proceedings remain second nature, Judge Brown admits that the learning curve has been steep, particularly with the California codes and rules. Whereas the United States Code, particularly with white collar crimes, is limited, the panoply of criminal charges brought in her courtroom presents challenges. Judge Brown was known for her mastery of the Federal Rules of Criminal Procedure and Evidence, but she is still adapting to the shorthand terminology of its California counterparts. Judge Brown points to the state felony sentencing scheme as her steepest learning curve, having been accustomed to the federal sentencing structure.

When asked for the “Do’s and Don’ts” in her courtroom, her advice is simple. Be prepared. She does not stand on ceremony, but informality should not be mistaken for lack of preparedness. The judge, known for her meticulous preparation for court as a prosecutor, expects attorneys to be prepared and to prepare their witnesses. Judge Brown has little patience for witnesses, who have been waiting for hours in the courthouse, to refresh their memories reviewing reports for the first time on the witness stand.


For those wary of any purported prosecutorial bias, Mr. Caputo is confident that every party appearing before Judge Brown will receive equal treatment and cases will be decided on the law and evidence. “She’s a lawyer’s lawyer,” explains Mr. Caputo, “who prosecuted all her cases with an objective eye and with no agenda but the truth.”

The First Japanese American Female Jurist for the County of San Francisco

Recognized as the first Japanese American female jurist to San Francisco Superior Court, Judge Brown calls it a “wonderful honor.” She aspired to become a judge in law school. However, she is also quick to point out that she joins a bench already filled with distinguished Asian American jurists, who warmly welcomed her with congratulations and helpful advice. She is very honored to join that group, and to call many of her new colleagues friends.

Renew, Be Positive, Stay Healthy: An Interview with Joan Haratani

By Charlene Chen

 **JoanHaratani_Cropped** Former president of the AABA and current Morgan Lewis Litigation Partner Joan M. Haratani graciously donated some of her valuable time to give her perspective on how the landscape for female attorneys has changed over time. In particular, how the Japanese Internment camps inspired her decision to become an attorney, important values that have carried her through to success, and how to confront challenges when they inevitably come:

Q: What inspired you to become an attorney?

A: When I was in 8th grade I visited an Oakland photography exhibit. This woman, Dorothea Lange, had taken all these pictures of the Japanese Internment Camps. I wondered how I had never heard about this before. When I got home, I asked my parents about it and they were both embarrassed and shocked; they had wanted to bury this history. Later, I found out that my family had been held in the camps and in fact some of my cousins had been born there—this was mind-blowing to me. My dad and my uncles joined the U.S. military to try to distance the perception that we were traitors based on our race. How and why did this happen? I didn’t have any models of attorneys in my family, but my uncle was friends with Dale Minami and Joe Morozumi. They would come over and tell stories; I got to hear about the Korematsu decision from the inside. Dale and Joe were both fighting the good fight and became my role models. I thought—I could do this, the law made sense for me. I was so lucky to graduate from UC Davis and then to work for Crosby Heafey. There were very few people of color and very few women of color at the time.

Q: What motivated you on your path to partnership?

A: I made my career the most important thing in my life. When I got my job at Crosby Heafey, I was all over it. Success was very important to me. At the time, I felt like I was representing all women of color and I didn’t want to disappoint them. My motto was “do the best you can, better than anyone else—represent everyone well.” By striving to be better than everyone else, you can make a positive impact on society. Take the challenge. People will be who they are, people are human, and you can’t make people change. You can, however, make a better world by doing an excellent job, by making people notice you. The law is a journey to excellence and self-confidence. For women of color, the law is great for bringing out the best in you, but you have to bring your best to your career.

Q: Who has inspired you on your way?

A. Well, now we have Hillary Clinton and Michelle Obama—we are so lucky to be living in a space and time where we have so many to admire and emulate. In my life, Jami McKeon and Dan Johnson have been tremendous sources of

admiration and inspiration. In October 2013, Jami became the first chairwoman of a Fortune 100 law firm. She has done so much for women in the law and is married with four children!

Q: Why are women failing to make the leap from senior associate to partner?

A: There has been a lot of progress, but if you want to have children and a family, it's not an easy life. It's been good for me, but you can't have it all, you must choose carefully. I think there are two very important things to remember—first, give back to the community. It makes you realize that being a lawyer is a tremendous gift, and that's humbling. Second, pay attention to your health. Stay healthy—take care of yourself—get exercise, institute a good diet. When you're physically tough, you're mentally tough. And another thing, find something that gives you joy. For me, that's my niece and nephew.

Q: Have you faced any particular challenges on your road to partnership?

A: Without question. I hope women today don't have the experiences I had. I remember I was first chair in a trial. Even though I was sitting right there, the Judge ignored me. He repeated himself as though I hadn't said anything. He finally acknowledged me when I noted that my partner's practice guide was on his bench in front of him. You can't dwell on the negative though; shake it off like water off of a duck's back. Life is too short and you can't control what others think about you. There's this saying, we must "make ourselves as grand as the mountains around us." Renew yourself, stay happy, and be positive.

Report: AABA Community Services Committee Volunteer Recognition Event

By John B. Lough, Jr., Community Services Co-Chair

The AABA Community Services Committee's work would not be possible without its volunteers. On March 6, 2014, CSC held its annual AABA Volunteer Recognition Event in Downtown San Francisco at Straits Restaurant. The Volunteer Recognition Event is an intimate gathering where volunteers from the Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach (APILO)/AABA clinics, Legally Asian conference, and other CSC events can meet their fellow volunteers and enjoy each other's company over light fare and drinks. This year was no different. About 25 volunteers, including AABA Director-at-Large Charles Jung, came out to celebrate the end of another successful board year. The volunteers were able to meet each other and build a connection over their shared interest in community service and AABA.

Special thanks go to AABA CSC Co-Chair Jennifer Y. Lee for planning and organizing the Volunteer Recognition Event this year.

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Janet's Teahouse – Reflections on AABA's Annual Retreat

By Janet Li, Newsletter Committee Chair

Please join me as I invite AABA family and friends to share their riveting legal journeys, life triumphs, and war stories with me over a cup of tea.

JanetLiTeahouse2014UPDATE

In an idyllic and picturesque setting amidst cascading fountains and tranquil ponds, a fellow alumnus and I enjoyed a conversation over freshly brewed green tea. Our leisurely chat eventually turned to his blossoming practice and my involvement with AABA. He asked me about the benefits of serving on a committee at AABA.

One of the privileges of serving as an AABA committee chair is the unique opportunity to gather with the leadership team at our annual retreat to reflect upon the contributions we have made in the past year and to discuss our goals and events proposals for the coming year.

At this year's annual retreat on April 12, 2014, AABA officers, board members, and committee co-chairs gathered at Pillsbury Winthrop Shaw Pittman LLP in San Francisco. After hearty pastries and exchanges of greetings, Ted Ting, AABA President, welcomed everyone and presented his vision and expectations for the upcoming year. Mr. Ting invited suggestions to make AABA even better and instilled in us the importance of our effort to give back to the community, to promote career development, and to advance diversity in our profession. He also highlighted many of the worthwhile events we have organized and accentuated the great strides we have made through our concerted effort to foster a strong sense of community.

The leadership team offered many impressive ideas to further AABA's mission and goals, such as inviting friends to events, hosting events that would cater to seasoned attorneys and younger attorneys alike, and expanding events beyond San Francisco. Committee co-chairs also presented an outstanding roster of events for the coming year, from signature annual events such as the Summer Law Clerk Reception, to brand-new educational events such as the AABA Expert Series. I marveled at the infinite energy of our leaders and the panoply of events that AABA has in store to make a lasting difference in our community.

As always, I appreciated the opportunity to connect with old friends and to make new ones. I first became involved with AABA as part of the Membership Committee during David Chiu's presidency. Throughout the years, I have witnessed role models make history and leave behind footprints that enrich people's lives. Many have utilized their distinctive talents to serve the community and to pave the way for others. As is true for many members, AABA has allowed me to give back to causes closest to my heart and to be a part of something bigger than myself. Serving alongside fine leaders

has also expanded my horizons. And of course, I am enlivened by the inspiring conversations I have the occasion to enjoy and share at the Teahouse along the way.

I came away from the AABA retreat and our serene excursion refreshed and ready to take on another fulfilling new year.

Please stay tuned as we share more life-enriching stories and conversations at Janet's Teahouse.

AABA Spring Networking Mixer at Infusion Lounge

By Jill Lin

AABA's Social Committee hosted its annual Spring Networking Mixer on April 16th. Over 75 attendees, including law students, attorneys, and firm partners, came to meet the new Board members and Officers while catching up with familiar AABA faces and making new connections. The event offered attendees the opportunity to socialize and expand their network in the Asian American community and enjoy complimentary hors d'oeuvres and drink specials. AABA's President Ted Ting spoke briefly to discuss AABA's plans for the upcoming year, highlight AABA's presence and accomplishments in the Asian American Community, and introduce Tony Maddox and Jinah Conroy of Courtroom Sciences, Inc. ("CSI"), who graciously hosted the event.

CSI has been one of the leading global providers of litigation services for over twenty-five years. Originally co-founded by Dr. Phil, CSI was instrumental in helping Oprah Winfrey win her "mad cow" trial against the Texas cattle ranchers. CSI's services include deposition court reporting and legal videography, trial graphics and jury consulting. Their goal is to serve clients in any capacity that is necessary for all phases of the litigation cycle. For any inquiries regarding their services, contact fellow AABA member Jinah Conroy at 415.640.6336 or jconroy@courtroomsciences.com. The Social Committee thanks CSI, Tony, and Jinah for their support!

Infusion Lounge April 2014 001

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Legally Asian 2014

By Jennifer Y. Lee, John B. Lough, Jr., Lisa P. Mak, Community Services Committee Co-Chairs

2014 marks the fifth year of Legally Asian, the annual pre-law diversity program sponsored by AABA and other local minority bar associations. On February 22, 2014, high-school and college students packed a fifth-floor lecture hall on a Saturday morning at Golden Gate University School of Law to hear distinguished Asian-American lawyers and local law students share their paths to joining the legal profession and the roads they have taken with their law degrees.

A common (and familiar) phrase from the attendees was “I don’t have any lawyers in my family,” so Legally Asian 2014 is intended to be that bridge: to introduce them to a possible career path and show that the doors to the profession are not closed.

Legally Asian attendees heard from lawyers who work in different areas of law and who have used their law degrees in a variety of ways.

The first panel of the day was the Private Practice/Firm Panel that Emi Gusukuma (AABA President, 2012–2013, and Special Counsel, Miller Law Group) moderated. This panel included T.H. Nguyen (Legal Counsel & Director of Policy, Artemis Internet), Kimberly Wong (Associate, The Veen Firm), Vincent Tong (Solo Practitioner, Tong Law), and Ben Hur (Partner, Kecker & Van Nest). The student attendees learned about the pace of work as in-house counsel, the need for diversity in plaintiff-side practice, the many hats that a solo practitioner wears, and the rewarding life at a law firm.

Moving from the private sector to the public sphere, the next panel was the Public Interest/Public Sector Panel moderated by Shaamini Babu (Associate, Saltzman & Johnson). This panel featured the Honorable Cynthia Lee (Presiding Judge, San Francisco Superior Court), Pelayo Llamas (Oakland Deputy City Attorney), Andy Huang (Assistant U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of California), and Nikki Dinh (Staff Attorney, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach). The attendees learned how the legal profession is more than just the traditional four walls of a law firm and how the law can personally impact people.

The final attorney panel of the day was the Alternative Careers Panel where the panelists showed that lawyers can have careers outside the traditional practice of law. Charles Jung (AABA Director-at-Large and Partner/Founder, Nassiri & Jung LLP) moderated this distinguished panel that featured Supervisor Jane Kim (San Francisco Supervisor, District 6),

Professor Eumi Lee (AABA Vice-President / President-Elect and Clinical Professor at UC Hastings), and Ki Yun Hwang (CEO & General Counsel, Black Letter Discovery).

Besides the panels, the day included a networking lunch for the attendees where a number of Asian-American guest attorneys came to speak with the students and share their experiences in an informal setting over delicious Thai food.

The day ended with a panel of law students who spoke about why they came to law school and their current law school experiences, including what it means to be a law student of Asian/Pacific Islander descent. The law student panel included Cherri Alcantara (GGU), Leo Cristobal (GGU), Khushil Naik (GGU), Tejal Naik (GGU), Kriti Rajput (Santa Clara Law), and Kim Whitlow (GGU).

Collaborating with the co-sponsors, the Filipino Bar Association of Northern California and the South Asian Bar Association of Northern California, the AABA Legally Asian 2014 planning committee included Community Services Committee Co-Chairs Jennifer Y. Lee, John B. Lough, Jr., and Lisa Mak, as well as attorney members Shaamini Babu, Claire Choo, Vanessa Evangelista, Jennifer Kishimizu, Christine Lee, Alston Lew, Michael Mercado, Jinnhua Su, and Robert Uy. In addition, the events of this conference would not have been possible without the law-student volunteers— Mo Iranmanesh, Louis Lee, Rachel Loh, Jane Ma, Kristie Neto, Dodi Paloma, Yunah Rha, Elisha Yang, and Stephanie Yee —and our wonderful photographer, Elvin Vu.


The co-sponsors, committee members, and volunteers made it possible for more than 125 people to convene and hear from leaders in the Asian-American legal community. The student attendees walked away from the program with a sense of what it means to be an Asian-American lawyer and leader and expressing enthusiasm in pursuing a law degree and the different career opportunities that would await them.

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