

Q Enter search string



ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION
of the Greater Bay Area

AABA Newsletter - June 2018

In this issue:

President's Message

A Message from the LGBTQ Committee: Happy Pride!

So You Want to Be a Judge?: AABA's Judiciary Committee is Here for You

AABA Membership Spotlight: Catharina Min

AABA Membership Spotlight: Catherine Ngo

2018 AABA Law Foundation Scholarship - Joyce Sun

Event Photo Galleries

AABA and Community Events Calendar

If you are interested in contributing to a future newsletter, please contact the Newsletter Committee Co-Chairs **Kathy Aoki** (Kathyaok@aol.com) and **Candice Shih** (cshih@hansonbridgett.com).

President's Message

Dear AABA Family,

Happy Summer! Happy Pride! This month marks the halfway point of my AABA presidency, and I have been reflecting on all that we have accomplished together recently. Our community has a history of standing up for justice and uniting to amplify our voices. I am proud of our community's accomplishments in the last month, and what they mean for San Francisco and the community at large. We have a lot to celebrate.

With over 80 AABA members in attendance, we celebrated the life of C.C. Wing as the first Asian American lawyer member of the California bar, admitted 100 years ago in 1918. The City of San Francisco proclaimed June 1, 2018 as C.C. Wing Day!



We celebrate the recent San Francisco June 5th election results. We congratulate President of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, London Breed, on her being elected the Mayor of San Francisco. Supervisor Breed is San Francisco's first African American female mayor, assuming the office of our late Mayor Ed Lee. We congratulate San Francisco Superior Court Judges Andrew Y.S. Cheng, Curtis Karnow, Cynthia Ming-Mei Lee, and Jeffrey S. Ross for being reelected. AABA endorsed each of these highly skilled judges, who have also demonstrated a strong commitment to the diverse communities they have served for years. By voting for their re-election, the people of San Francisco chose to uphold an independent judiciary and the integrity of those appointed to the bench.

We celebrate the appointment of AABA Treasurer John Hamasaki as one of the two newest San Francisco Police Commissioners.

We celebrate the renaming of the Julius Kahn Playground in the Presidio. AABA supported a campaign to rename a San Francisco playground named after a U.S. congressman who wrongfully advocated for the Chinese Exclusion Act. AABA Member Allan Low and his firm Perkins Coie LLP spearheaded the renaming campaign on behalf of AABA and other organizations. The San Francisco Supervisors were convinced by Mr. Low's arguments and voted in support of changing the name of this playground from one rooted in racism and hate to one that will better reflect the diverse immigrant community of San Francisco.

As June comes to a close, I hope you are able to celebrate Pride and the many accomplishments made by our diverse AABA community. But there is still much work to do, and I look forward to uniting with you to make it happen. If there are issues you care about that you think AABA should support, or have any thoughts or feedback on what else AABA can do, please don't hesitate to let me know at president@aaba-bay.com. We are better together, stronger united!

In solidarity,
David Tsai
President

[Back to top](#)

A Message from the LGBTQ Committee: Happy Pride!



On behalf of the AABA LGBTQ committee, we would like to wish everyone a Happy Pride. We thank AABA and its membership for creating a supportive environment for all, and look forward to seeing familiar faces at this weekend's festivities. Be safe and have a great time!

[Back to top](#)

So You Want to Be a Judge? AABA's Judiciary Committee is Here for You

By Tina Hsu

AABA Operations Director

If you have ever considered becoming a judge, AABA is here to help! Our Judiciary Committee works tirelessly to evaluate judicial candidates from our community and recommend an endorsement rating from AABA.

The Judiciary Committee has sixteen members this year, led by three co-chairs, Alice Liu Jensen, Catherine Lui, and Mark Punzalan. It works to promote the appointment of Asian Americans to the federal and state judiciary and other governmental positions, evaluates potential candidates, and identifies and encourages Asian Americans to apply for judicial positions.

To seek AABA's endorsement, judicial candidates should submit an endorsement request letter to the committee, and include a complete judicial application form or Personal Data Questionnaire (PDQ), plus pertinent writing samples. A pair of committee members is assigned to evaluate the candidate including an in-person or phone interview of the candidate and reference checks.

After interviewing and checking references, the committee members make a recommendation as to whether the committee should recommend endorsement to the AABA Board of Directors with the following ratings used by the Commission on Judicial Nominees Evaluation:

- **Exceptionally Well Qualified:** Possessing qualities and attributes considered to be of remarkable or extraordinary superiority so that, without real doubt, such person is deemed to be fitted to perform the judicial function with distinction

- **Well Qualified:** Possessing qualities and attributes considered to be worthy of special note as indicative of a superior fitness to perform the judicial function with a high degree of skill and effectiveness.
- **Qualified:** Possessing qualities and attributes considered to equip a person to perform the judicial function adequately and satisfactorily.
- **Not Qualified:** Possessing less than the minimum qualities and attributes considered necessary to perform the judicial function adequately and satisfactorily.

The committee then drafts a memorandum with the candidate's background and recommended endorsement rating to be presented at a board meeting. The Board determines whether to approve the endorsement recommendation. If approved, a letter of endorsement and support is mailed to the appropriate office, i.e. Governor's Office and/or the Judicial Appointments Secretary (for state judgeships) or to Senators and/or other appropriate review committee (for federal judgeships).

We asked the Judiciary Committee Co-Chairs, Alice Liu Jensen, Catherine Lui, and Mark Punzalan about their process, challenges, and successes in the last year:

How many candidates did AABA endorse since the beginning of 2017?

22 (this includes those candidates who we have considered but may not have endorsed but this is the total number we have evaluated and more are in the pipeline!)

What is challenging about the process?

The Committee is comprised of senior attorneys in both private practice and government, all of whom have very demanding workloads. The process to vet each candidate is a labor-intensive process that involves researching each candidate, interviewing each candidate, calling and/or meeting references, and preparing written reports back to the committee. The committee members work diligently to complete this process amidst their extraordinarily busy day-to-day client matters, but the committee members enjoy this challenge and find it an important part of AABA's mission.

Tell us about a success in the last year or so as a result of AABA's endorsements.

We are always extra proud when one of our own Judiciary Committee members is elevated to the bench. The Honorable Danny Chou of San Mateo Superior Court recently began his judgeship in February 2018. Judge Chou previously served many years on the Judiciary Committee including serving as co-chair of the Committee. We were proud and excited to have supported Judge Chou's application to become a judge, and look forward to seeing him on the bench for years to come.

Why should AABA provide these endorsements, particularly for API candidates?

While Asian Americans have made great strides in attaining judicial positions, the number of Asian American judges remains quite low given the number of Asian American attorneys in our community. AABA's Judiciary Committee not only focuses on endorsements, but also serves as an important resource for Asian American attorneys, or non-Asian American attorneys who support AABA's goals and aspire to serve on the bench.

How can a member of AABA apply for an endorsement, and how can others get involved in the endorsement process?

AABA members can submit application materials including request letter, PDQ, and writing samples to committee co-chairs at least three months prior to the required date of endorsement. You can find their contact information [here](#). All names and application materials will be kept confidential to the Judiciary Committee and AABA Board of Directors.

Additionally, we encourage all AABA members to introduce any attorneys that aspire to be judges to our committee. Our committee serves as an important resource in assisting attorneys to navigate the judicial endorsement process in both federal and state courts.

If you would like to learn more about the judicial candidate endorsement process and criteria, visit our webpage [here](#).

[Back to top](#)

AABA Membership Spotlight: Catharina Min

One of the most influential cross-border transaction lawyers in California, Catharina Min is a Partner with Covington & Burling LLP based in the Bay Area. Ms. Min represents both U.S. and international clients in mergers and acquisitions, private financings, joint ventures, strategic alliances, corporate-partnering, securities-offerings, and other corporate transactions. She also represents emerging companies in general corporate matters and venture-capital financings. In addition, Ms. Min has extensive experience representing Asian clients doing business in the United States.

Ms. Min is a frequent speaker at many organizations, including the Practising Law Institute, Association of Corporate Counsel, SV Forum, the Korean IT Network, and a number of Korean incubators covering topics related to cross-border transactions and venture-capital financings. She also regularly shares her insights at events for California Women Lawyers, Asian Pacific American Bar Association, Asian Business League, and others on mentoring and advancement of women and minority lawyers.

Over the years, Ms. Min has been recognized by many organizations for her trailblazing work, including the National Diversity Council's "Top 50 Multicultural Leaders In Technology," Diversity Council's "Most Powerful and Influential Women," Silicon Valley Business Journal's "Women of Influence 2015," the Debra Zumwalt Pioneer Award, as well as the Recorder's "Top Women in Technology Law," and "California Women Leaders in Law" awards.

Ms. Min is actively involved in many community organizations, serving as the Founding Director and past Chairwoman for the Council of Korean Americans, as well as Director and past Overseas President of Korean-



American Chamber of Commerce. A native of South Korea, Ms. Min received her J.D. from the University of Virginia Law School.

What are some of the most memorable moments from your childhood? I came to the U.S. with my family from Korea when I was 12. I did not speak any English, which was tough at first, but I went on to become president of the Student Council at my high school. I also played basketball in high school and am a rabid Warriors fan!

What was your first job? I mowed lawns for people for \$6 – a huge bargain, but it was a long time ago! Then I worked at a very famous ice cream place in Fredericksburg, VA, where I grew up. I also waitressed every summer during college to help pay for my schooling.

What is your favorite food? Maryland spicy steamed blue crab.

What is your favorite book? I was an English major and love to read so I have many favorites, but a few at the top of my list are: “One Hundred Years of Solitude” by Gabriel García Márquez, “Midnight’s Children” by Salman Rushdie, and “Mama Day” by Gloria Naylor.

What do you like about your job? I found my passion for doing cross-border deals when I went to work in Seoul, Korea, for one of the leading firms there as a U.S. attorney back in the ‘90s. Korea was globalizing and doing deals all over the world and I worked for major Korean companies expanding overseas and for Western companies coming into Korea. I learned to listen, which is a very important skill, especially when people speak different languages. I love bringing people together, particularly at times when the deals seem so hard to get done, and to negotiate in the best interest of the client while helping the other side save face. In addition to my cross-border practice, I love my venture capital/emerging companies practice, through which I get to see some amazing entrepreneurs and savvy venture capitalists come together to turn ideas into products that help make this world a better place.

What is the one thing you feel most passionate about? I'm a founding member of the Council of Korean Americans. One thing that is really important for me and the other co-founders is to create a 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to increase the voice, visibility and influence of the Korean American community and to help advance our leadership in all sectors by mentoring and networking. This has been a labor of love and we have been meeting with the White House and congressional leaders on issues of importance and relevance to the Korean American community.

What have you been doing for fun lately? I have two beautiful daughters, Isabella (14) and Sydney (12), so anything with them is fun. Lately, we are playing racquetball and they are getting better and beating me and my husband routinely.

[Back to top](#)

Membership Spotlight: Catherine Ngo



Catherine Ngo, CIPP/US, is a business litigator at Nossaman LLP who partners with clients in resolving commercial disputes for private and public companies, as well as public entities. Her experience includes the representation of clients in complex litigation and investigations involving financial services, real estate, and public pension systems.

Ms. Ngo is experienced in all phases of litigation in both federal and state courts, including pre-litigation government investigations, pleadings, discovery and e-Discovery, dispositive motions, mediation, and trial preparation.

Prior to joining Nossaman, Ms. Ngo served as a judicial extern for the Honorable John T. Noonan, United States Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, and for the Honorable Fumiko H. Wasserman, Los Angeles Superior Court, Appellate

Division.

First job: For most of my life, my parents owned a donut shop in Southern California. I spent most of my weekends at the shop as a kid, and, when I was old enough, I helped serve customers and folded the pink donut boxes. My favorite donut is the chocolate devil's food cake donut.

What annoys you the most: The failure to use the Oxford comma.

Favorite food: Anything but donuts.

Why did you enter law: I was inspired to become a lawyer at a young age because I realized how essential understanding law was to being an American citizen. My parents came to the United States as refugees. They didn't understand the language, and they didn't understand the law. They were continually disadvantaged when dealing in business transactions, such as the commercial lease for their donut shop. As a part of my current practice, I represent clients in real estate lease disputes. It makes me feel like I have come full circle and reminds me of the importance of access to the law for underrepresented communities.

Dream job if you could do anything you wanted in the world: Outdoor guide.

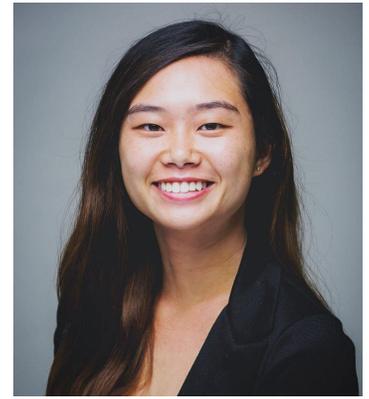
AABA is [mentorship] family. I joined AABA through the Mentorship Program back in 2010 when I was a second year law student at UC Hastings. I still do quarterly lunches with my first AABA mentor (shout out to Neill Tseng!) and have been extremely fortunate to have amazing mentors, formally and informally, through the years from AABA. It is rather fitting that I now co-chair the Mentorship Committee. One of the most satisfying parts of being an Asian American attorney is being involved in the diversity bar, and AABA is an integral part of that strong legal community.

[Back to top](#)

2018 AABA Law Foundation Scholarship - Joyce Sun

This month, we feature Joyce's personal statement submitted with her scholarship application:

“One day I know that many of you will sit in the same seats we sit in now.” These were the words spoken to me seven years ago by then President of the Board of Supervisors, David Chiu, during my swearing-in ceremony at City Hall. This was my first time being sworn into the San Francisco Youth Commission, as the District 4 Commissioner, representing the Sunset/Parkside. Growing up in San Francisco, I was surrounded by many inspirational Asian American politicians who vowed to represent the voices of the Asian American community, and make the changes we wanted to see. I was lucky enough to meet many of these leaders and realized that to be a successful leader, one has to exhibit characteristics that allow community members to feel comfortable expressing their concerns to you.



During my time on the Youth Commission, I learned the importance of putting myself in the shoes of others and understanding where they were coming from. This allowed me to address the concerns I saw in my community with a different outlook and a stronger passion. I took part in working on starting the three-month pilot program for the low-income youth lifeline passes in San Francisco. Today this program has expanded to Free Muni for both low and moderate income youth. One of the largest populations that applied for the lifeline passes were actually the Asian Americans and I am proud to say that I fought for a cause that improved the lives of many students in my community.

During my internship at San Francisco Supervisor Katy Tang’s office, I was able to continue working on issues affecting constituents of the Asian American community. I did extensive research on the Language Access Ordinance of San Francisco and learned a lot about the resources the city currently provides for non-English speaking residents. The Asian American elderly population is growing in both in the Bay Area and nationally. It is important that we take steps in raising awareness in the elderly community to have some means of identification at all times, so they could receive help despite a language barrier.

In the future, I really hope to become a role model for other young people who come from a similar background as me and inspire them to pursue their passion regardless of how intimidating or difficult it is. I know that the education I am receiving now is the tool I need to make the changes I want to see. I really want to thank the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area for supporting me in pursuing my legal career. I am truly honored that AABA believes in my potential to continue serving the Asian American community, and I look forward to continuing addressing needs and advocating for change.

[Back to top](#)

Event Photo Galleries



May 17 - Thirsty Third Thursdays Happy Hour



May 22 - Negotiating Towards an Effective Resolution



May 31 - Celebrating Chan Chung "C.C." Wing: California's First Chinese American Lawyer



June 2 - Volunteer with AABA - SF Marin Food Bank



June 19 - Ethical Activism for Public Servants

AABA and Community Events Calendar

June

June 23 - AABA, ABL and Nakayoshi Young Professionals Joint Hike

10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. | California Coastal Trail at The Presidio

[Register here](#)

June 24 - Mentorship Family Reunion Picnic

11:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Off the Grid, Presidio, Main Parade Grounds

[Register here](#)

June 27 - The Ins and Outs of Voter Rights and Registration

5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | Perkins Coie, 505 Howard St #1000, San Francisco, CA 94105

[Register here](#)

June 28 - Summer Diversity Reception

5:30 - 8:30 p.m. | Fang Restaurant, 660 Howard St., San Francisco, CA 94105

[Register here](#)

June 30 - Education Committee Meeting

10:00 - 11:30 a.m. | Location: To be announced, phone conference will be available

[Check here for updates and register](#)

July

July 11 – How To Market To Corporations

6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Casetext, 330 Townsend Street, Suite 100, San Francisco, CA 94107

[Register here](#)

July 11 - AABA's Wellness Task Force Presents: Managing Workplace Intensity

6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Farella Braun + Martel LLP, 235 Montgomery St, San Francisco, CA 94104

[Register here](#)

July 12 – MBC Summer BBQ Mixer

6:00 to 9:00 p.m. | Everett, & Jones, 126 Broadway, Oakland, CA 94607

[Register here](#)

July 18 - Oakland APILO/AABA Clinic

6:00 - 8:00 p.m. | Oakland APILO/AABA Clinic, 310 8th Street, Suite 308, Oakland 94607

[Contact the co-chairs](#) if you are interested in volunteering

July 19 - Social/Public Law Summer Thirsty Thursday Mixer

5:30 - 7:30 p.m. | SomaR Bar, 1727 Telegraph Ave., Oakland, CA 94612

[Register here](#)

July 24 - What's #MeToo Got To Do With Me?: Sexual harassment as it impacts Asian American female lawyers

5:30 p.m. | Lief Cabraser Heimann & Bernstein, LLP, 275 Battery Street, 29th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111

[Register here](#)

July 25 - San Francisco APILO/AABA Clinic

5:30 - 8:00 p.m. | UC Hastings School of Law 100 McAllister Street Suite 300 San Francisco, CA 94102

Contact the co-chairs if you are interested in volunteering

July 26 - Minority Nonprofit Social Justice Community Dinner

6:00 p.m. | East Bay Community Law Center, 1950 University Ave, Suite 200, Berkeley CA 94609

[Register here](#)

[See more events here](#)

[Back to top](#)

© 2019 Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area.
All Rights Reserved

Please see our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#).

P.O. Box 387 San Francisco, CA 94104 | Email us at Info@aaba-bay.com