

National Asian Pacific American Bar Association

The logo for the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) features a stylized globe in shades of blue, centered behind the acronym 'NAPABA'. The globe shows the outlines of continents and is set against a background of a light blue sky with soft, white clouds. The acronym 'NAPABA' is rendered in a large, white, serif font with a black drop shadow, making it stand out prominently.

NAPABA

Celebrating Our Progress in the Federal Judiciary

A Report on the 15-Year Anniversary of the NAPABA Judiciary Committee

November 2009

THE NAPABA JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Since its founding in 1994, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee has pursued one primary objective: to help increase the number of qualified Asian Pacific Americans serving in our judicial system.

NAPABA and the Judiciary Committee are proud of the progress that has been made in the past 15 years. As with any effort, the early years were spent developing relationships and the organization necessary to be effective. Particularly with respect to the federal judiciary, the project is a long-term one that requires sustained energy. Although the Judiciary Committee can take pride in several early successes, it is especially proud of the successes of the past three years: three new Asian Pacific American federal district court judges have been confirmed, and one circuit court judge and three additional federal district court judges have been nominated in 2009. In addition, numerous United States Attorneys, state court judges, and other high-level appointments have been supported by the Judiciary Committee. The Committee is therefore not only succeeding in helping to diversify the federal bench, but it is also diversifying state courts and creating a pipeline for future federal and state court judicial appointments.

The past 15 years of experience have taught us that leading officials of both parties, and in federal and state government alike, all believe in the need for greater diversity on the bench. The problem is not convincing them that the goal is important. It is providing them with the tools they need to achieve it—a task that is far easier said than done. This report highlights the steps that NAPABA and its Judiciary Committee have taken to diversify the judiciary, the successes to date of their efforts, and the relationships that the Judiciary Committee have built to ensure that the federal and state judiciary continues to become more reflective of the rich diversity of America.

“NAPABA is critical to the mission of getting more Asian Americans on the bench. Through my own experience, I’ve learned that NAPABA does have a voice. It does count. Its recommendations are considered carefully by the Administration. NAPABA is essential to the mission of having more APA lawyers appointed to the bench.”

—Hon. Dana M. Sabraw (S.D. Cal.)

THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE'S EFFORTS

"Since its inception, NAPABA has worked tirelessly and effectively to ensure adequate representation of Asian Pacific Americans on the Federal Bench. I am thankful for all the support I received from NAPABA when I was being considered for appointment. As we can all see, NAPABA's continued work has resulted in many more appointments to the Article III bench, including the much deserved nomination of Judge Denny Chin to the Second Circuit."

—Hon. George H. King (C.D. Cal.)

The NAPABA Judiciary Committee has engaged in a comprehensive strategy to help increase the number of Asian Pacific American jurists. These efforts are not limited to a single letter or meeting. Rather, the Judiciary Committee has sought to become involved in every step of the judicial nomination and confirmation process. Toward that end, the Committee has devoted much of its energies to achieving the following three tasks:

Identify talented Asian Pacific Americans nationwide who are qualified, able, and ready to serve in the judiciary.

Our community can proclaim the need for more Asian Pacific Americans on the federal and state bench, but actually getting the job done begins and ends with one central function: identifying individuals who are qualified to serve.

Not everyone is capable of serving in the judiciary. Not everyone is willing to leave a thriving practice to enter public service. And not everyone has the necessary qualifications, intellect, personal and professional background, and relationships to obtain a judicial appointment.

Accordingly, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee has established a national network of attorneys and judges, both through its own efforts and through various NAPABA affiliates and chapters across the country, who share our goals and who can assist us in locating interested individuals and screening them for qualifications.

This effort has included the mentorship of young attorneys who may have judicial aspirations. As most people would agree, young attorneys should not build their careers around the hope of becoming a judge someday. There is no guaranteed roadmap for ensuring a judicial appointment. Nevertheless, certain steps can be taken to make an individual better qualified and better

"NAPABA provided invaluable support to me during a lengthy Senate confirmation process. I have seen NAPABA do the same for numerous other candidates. But NAPABA's role goes beyond the application process. NAPABA brings together veteran and new judges and lawyers from around the country to discuss and address matters of common interest and to form lasting friendships."

—Hon. Susan Oki Mollway (D. Haw.)

suitied to become a judge. NAPABA and its Judiciary Committee therefore attempt to convey that information to mid-level and younger attorneys who may someday have an interest in applying.

In many jurisdictions, state court judges and federal magistrate judges are considered prime candidates for Article III judgeships. Likewise, future judges often are former United States Attorneys, Assistant U.S. Attorneys, and other high-level government appointments. Part of the pipeline process includes NAPABA support for these individuals to help increase their stature.

Work closely with relevant officials to secure opportunities for appointing qualified Asian Pacific Americans to the federal and state bench.

Of course, it is not enough to simply identify an individual who is ready and qualified to serve in the judiciary. That individual must also be matched with the right vacancy, on the right court, in the right geographical area.

“NAPABA plays a critical role in ensuring the representation of Asian Pacific Americans in the judiciary. I am grateful for their strong support of my appointment as the first Asian Pacific American judge in the District of Columbia.”

—Hon. Florence Pan (D.C. Super. Ct.)

Moreover, the individual must learn about the opportunity in the first place—and in timely fashion. Judicial vacancies are almost always made public—eventually. But the process for choosing the next appointment may be largely completed well before then. Only those who are familiar with the most intimate details of the selection process—or have established strong relationships with those who possess

such information—may be able to identify real opportunities for appointment and the relative strength or weakness of the competition.

Accordingly, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee has also worked hard to establish a second network of relationships—contacts in both federal and state government who have influence over the judicial selection process, including the White House, the U.S. Department of Justice, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee, and the offices of key U.S. Senators, as well as state governments and nongovernmental judicial selection committees across the country. With the benefit of 15 years of experience, NAPABA now enjoys strong relationships with key officials in both parties and their staffs, individuals who are well positioned to inform the NAPABA Judiciary Committee of upcoming vacancies, opportunities, and chances of success or failure—and who are willing to learn about individuals identified by the Committee for potential judicial appointment. That relationship has been built in part through NAPABA’s willingness to provide useful and candid information to these individuals about statistics related to the Asian Pacific American population, the makeup of the federal judiciary, historic facts related to the Asian Pacific American community, and specific facts about individual applicants being considered. In addition, through these relationships, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee has developed a more sophisticated understanding of the kinds of individuals and qualifications that are most likely to be viewed favorably by key governmental officials, thereby allowing the Committee to use these insights to help those interested in seeking a judicial appointment.

“While many people know about the very important public role that NAPABA played in my nomination, few know of the private role that was so instrumental not only in my confirmation but my sanity. NAPABA’s Judiciary Committee walked me through the process, were constant counselors and provided me with great role models like Judge [Denny] Chin [(S.D.N.Y.)]. . . I am even more thrilled about the friendships I made along the way.”

—Hon. Amul R. Thapar (E.D. Ky.)

Support qualified Asian Pacific Americans through the judicial selection process.

When a person expresses interest and the Judiciary Committee determines that the person has the requisite qualifications, intellect, integrity, and community involvement for a particular position, the Committee works with that individual to maximize his or her prospect for obtaining a judicial appointment. NAPABA typically will write a letter of support for an individual it is endorsing. The Judiciary Committee also often will have candid discussions with a candidate about his or her strengths and weaknesses, work with the candidate to build the community support often necessary to attract the attention of decision-makers, and prepare the candidate for the interview process. The Judiciary Committee will provide insights into the process, based on the expertise that the Committee has accumulated over its fifteen-year existence.

“The active support and encouragement of NAPABA and its members was a key factor in my successful appointment to the federal bench in 1997. With its national network, influence and dedication, NAPABA proved to be a formidable ally in guiding and mentoring me in the appointment process. I thank NAPABA, the Asian/Pacific Bar Association of Sacramento and the many APAs who continue to provide support and friendship to me during my judicial career.”

—Hon. Anthony W. Ishii (E.D. Cal.)

“Because of NAPABA, Senators have spoken on the Senate floor about the need for diversity on the bench and in particular about the need to appoint more Asian American judges. We have gained political influence. We did so because NAPABA has become a voice for the Asian American community.”

—Hon. Denny Chin (S.D.N.Y.)

Even after an individual is nominated, NAPABA’s support does not end. Anyone who has spent any time watching the judicial selection process knows that it is not an easy process to endure. Some judicial selection processes ignite national controversies. Others get bogged down for more mundane reasons that are nevertheless very real to the nominee.

To help qualified Asian Pacific Americans survive the process, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee provides not only moral support but also the support of our national network of contacts. The Committee has frequently been able to obtain sensitive intelligence about the process in order to provide information and comfort to nominees. The Committee also helps judicial nominees by educating them about what to expect from the process, from those who know the process best—the governmental officials of both parties who administer the process, and past nominees who have successfully negotiated it. Using this network, the Committee formulates strategy for each judicial nominee to maximize the chances of a smooth confirmation process. Where necessary and appropriate, the Judiciary Committee will coordinate with national groups (both Asian and non-Asian), develop a coordinated media message, and mobilize individual supporters of the judicial nominee to support confirmation.

“I am grateful for NAPABA and AABANY for encouraging me to apply and providing such tremendous support and guidance. [Judge] Denny [Chin (S.D.N.Y.)] and John [Yang, NAPABA Judiciary Committee Co-Chair] were immensely helpful. They told me what I should expect, and were able to provide insights and information even when nothing seemed to be happening.”

—Hon. Kiyo A. Matsumoto (E.D.N.Y.)

SUCCESS STORIES

Over the past 15 years, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee has worked with countless attorneys and governmental officials across the country to identify and promote qualified Asian Pacific Americans for judicial appointment. As we reflect on various successes and failures since 1994, one theme comes firmly to mind: The judicial selection process requires enormous time and patience. It may take several attempts—and several different individuals—before someone is finally able to break through. In many instances, an individual may not get the appointment on his or her first try, but finds success months or years later—indeed, even over a decade later. And in still other cases, we continue to work with individuals who are enormously qualified for the bench, wait patiently for the next vacancy to appear and the next opportunity to arise, and remain ever hopeful that their time is yet to come.

We list below the various federal judicial appointments that NAPABA has worked to achieve. Each and every one of them is a source of great pride for our community. But three recent incidents are especially worth noting.

First, for the first time in our nation's history, two federal judicial districts are now led by Asian Pacific American jurists: Chief Judge Anthony Ishii of the Eastern District of California, and Chief Judge Susan Oki Mollway of the District of Hawaii. Becoming a chief judge is an esteemed honor, reflecting many years of high caliber service that they have provided to their court. NAPABA is proud to have supported both Chief Judge Ishii and Chief Judge Mollway when they were first nominated to their respective positions. Our congratulations and thanks go to each of them for the years of judicial service that has led them to these positions of leadership in our federal judiciary.

Second, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee celebrated a major landmark on September 23, 2009. On that date, the U.S. Senate Judiciary Committee convened a historic confirmation hearing, in which *three* Asian Pacific American nominees were considered for the federal bench: Edward M. Chen for the Northern District of California, and Dolly M. Gee and Jacqueline H. Nguyen for the Central District of California. NAPABA—along with the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC)—worked with the Senate Judiciary Committee to help ensure that this confirmation hearing took place promptly. The Senate Judiciary Committee suggested that it would be appropriate for NAPABA and AAJC to submit written testimony for this hearing, which the organizations provided. NAPABA also worked with Senators of both parties to highlight the historic significance of the hearing, and the individual qualifications of each nominee. We are grateful to the Obama Administration and Senators of both parties for making this historic day possible, and we look forward to their confirmation and future service on the federal bench.

Third, on October 6, 2009, Judge Denny Chin (S.D.N.Y.) was nominated for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. If confirmed, Judge Chin would become the first Asian Pacific American active circuit court judge in over five years, and the first Asian Pacific American circuit court judge nominated and confirmed outside of the Ninth Circuit.* Given his staunch support of this organization, NAPABA was proud to work with the Administration, Senator Charles Schumer (New York), and several organizations to highlight Judge Chin's outstanding record as a jurist and the superb qualities that he will bring to the appellate court. NAPABA looks forward to his confirmation.

*Judge Shiro Kashiwa served on the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit from 1982-1986. He became a circuit court judge by designation of Congress—not by nomination and confirmation—when the Federal Circuit was created.

Clinton Administration Appointments



Denny Chin (S.D.N.Y.)
(Confirmed 1994)



George H. King (C.D. Cal.)
(Confirmed 1995)



A. Wallace Tashima (9th Cir.)
(Confirmed 1996)



Anthony W. Ishii (E.D. Cal.)
(Confirmed 1997)



Susan Oki Mollway (D. Haw.)
(Confirmed 1998)

Bush Administration Appointments



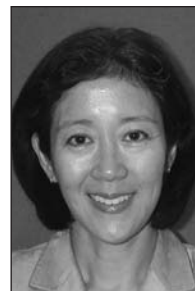
Dana M. Sabraw (S.D. Cal.)
(Confirmed 2003)



George H. Wu (C.D. Cal.)
(Confirmed 2007)



Amul R. Thapar (E.D. Ky.)
(Confirmed 2007)



Kiyo A. Matsumoto (E.D.N.Y.)
(Confirmed 2008)

Obama Administration Nominations (2009)



Florence Pan (D.C. Super. Ct.)
(Confirmed May 21, 2009)



Jacqueline H. Nguyen (C.D. Cal.)
(Nominated July 31, 2009)



Edward M. Chen (N.D. Cal.)
(Nominated August 6, 2009)



Dolly M. Gee (C.D. Cal.)
(Nominated August 6, 2009)



Denny Chin (2d Cir.)
(Nominated October 6, 2009)

Asian Pacific American Federal Article III Judges

Name	Court	Area	Nominating President	Service Start Date	Senior Status Date	Service End Date	Death	Notes
Herbert Y.C. Choy	9th Cir.	Hawaii	Nixon	4-21-1971	10-3-1984	3-10-2004	3-10-2004	First APA Art. III judge; first Korean American Judge
Shiro Kashiwa	Ct. Cl.	D.C.	Nixon	1-3-1972		10-1-1982	3-13-1998	Elevated to Federal Circuit (see below); first Japanese American Art. III judge; first APA Art. III judge outside Ninth Circuit
Dick Yin Wong	D. Haw.	Honolulu	Ford	4-24-1975		12-26-1978	12-26-1978	First APA federal district court judge
Robert M. Takasugi	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	Ford	5-6-1975	9-30-1996	8-4-2009	8-4-2009	First APA Art. III judge in California
Thomas Tang	9th Cir.	Arizona	Carter	10-7-1977	10-12-1993	7-18-1995	7-18-1995	First Chinese American Art. III judge
A. Wallace Tashima	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	Carter	6-26-1980		1-2-1996		Elevated to the Ninth Circuit (see below)
Walter M. Heen	D. Haw.	Honolulu	Carter	1-1-1981		12-16-1981		Appointed by recess appointment; service terminated because he failed to receive a Senate confirmation vote
Harold M. Fong	D. Haw.	Honolulu	Reagan	6-18-1982		4-20-1995	4-20-1995	Chief Judge (1984-1991); first APA Chief Judge
Shiro Kashiwa	Fed. Cir.	D.C.		10-1-1982		1-7-1986	3-13-1998	First APA federal appellate court judge outside the Ninth Circuit; became Federal Circuit judge by legislation
<i>Ronald S.W. Lew</i>	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	Reagan	5-7-1987	9-19-2006			First Chinese American to serve as federal district court judge on continental U.S.
Denny Chin	S.D.N.Y.	New York	Clinton	8-9-1994				First APA federal district court judge outside the Ninth Circuit
George H. King	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	Clinton	6-30-1995				
<i>A. Wallace Tashima</i>	9th Cir.	California	Clinton	1-2-1996	6-30-2004			
Anthony Ishii	E.D. Cal.	Fresno	Clinton	11-9-1997				Chief Judge (2008-Present)
Susan Oki Mollway	D. Haw.	Honolulu	Clinton	6-22-1998				First APA female Art. III judge; Chief Judge (2009-Present)
Dana M. Sabraw	S.D. Cal.	San Diego	George W. Bush	9-25-2009				
George H. Wu	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	George W. Bush	3-27-2007				
Amul R. Thapar	E.D. Ky.	London	George W. Bush	12-13-2007				First South Asian American Article III Judge
Kiyo A. Matsumoto	E.D.N.Y.	Brooklyn	George W. Bush	7-17-2008				First APA female Art. III judge on the continental U.S.

Other Asian Pacific American Federal Judges Requiring Presidential Nomination & Senate Confirmation

Name	Court	Area	Service Start Date	Service End Date	Notes
Cristobal C. Duenas	D. Guam	Hagatna	12-11-1969	11-1-1990	Federal district court judges in Guam are not lifetime appointments
John C. Unpingco	D. Guam	Hagatna	10-9-1992	4-30-2004	See above
Frances Tydingco Gatewood	D. Guam	Hagatna	8-3-2006	Present	See above
Florence Y. Pan	D.C. Super. Ct.	D.C.	5-21-2009	Present	

Asian Pacific American Federal Magistrate Judges

Name	Court	Area	Service Start Date	Service End Date	Notes
Richard R. Komo	D. Haw.	Wailuku	2-1-1971	1-31-1979	First APA magistrate judge; part-time magistrate
Henry W.C. Wong	D. Haw.	Honolulu	1971	1975	Part-time magistrate (start/end dates unclear)
Thomas P. Young	D. Haw.	Honolulu	11-7-1975	11-6-1983	
Lawrence N.C. Ing	D. Haw.	Wailuku	2-21-1979	3-31-1991	Part-time magistrate
Richard T. Ishida	D. Haw.	Hilo	4-25-1979	4-24-1983	Part-time magistrate
Sylvester V. Quitiquit	D. Haw.	Hilo	8-4-1983	3-14-1996	Part-time magistrate
George H. King	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	4-1-1987	7-1-1995	Current U.S.D.C. Judge (C.D. Cal.); Chief Magistrate Judge (1995); first APA magistrate judge on the continental U.S.
Marilyn D. Go	E.D.N.Y.	Brooklyn	3-10-1993	Present	First APA female federal judge
Arthur Nakazato	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	8-13-1996	Present	
Francis I. Yamashita	D. Haw.	Honolulu	8-10-1992	11-30-2000	
Michael J. Watanabe	D. Colo.	Denver	2-12-1999	Present	
Leslie E. Kobayashi	D. Haw.	Honolulu	8-2-1999	Present	
Kevin S.C. Chang	D. Haw.	Honolulu	12-19-2000	Present	
Edward M. Chen	N.D. Cal.	San Francisco	4-1-2001	Present	
Jennifer T. Lum	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	7-2-2001	Present	
Kiyo A. Matsumoto	E.D.N.Y.	Brooklyn	7-1-2004	7-17-2008	Current U.S.D.C. Judge (E.D.N.Y.)
Joaquin V.E. Manibusan	D. Guam	Hagatna	2-9-2004	Present	
Tu M. Pham	W.D. Tenn.	Memphis	4-21-2003	Present	
Brian A. Tsuchida	W.D. Wash.	Seattle	5-13-2008		

Asian Pacific American Federal Bankruptcy Judges

Name	Court	Area	Service Start Date	Service End Date	Notes
Jon Chinen	D. Haw.	Honolulu	5-1-1976	7-31-1992	First APA federal bankruptcy judge
Brenda T. Rhoades	E.D. Tex.	Plano	9-1-2003	Present	
Robert N. Kwan	C.D. Cal.	Los Angeles	10-1-2006	Present	
Michael K. Nakagawa	D. Nev.	Las Vegas	9-1-2006	Present	

Bold: Active Judges

Italic: Senior Status Judges

NAPABA RELATIONSHIPS

Government Relationships

A critical component of the NAPABA Judiciary Committee strategy is to establish solid relationships with key players in federal and state government. In Washington, D.C., that means the White House, the Justice Department, and the United States Senate.

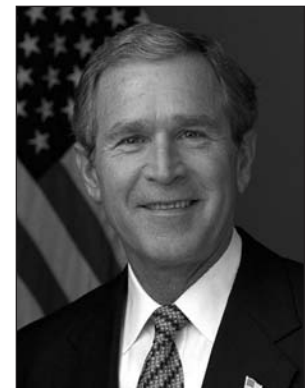
Because our goals are long-term, we have worked first to establish relationships based on trust and confidence—so that, when the time eventually comes and a qualified Asian Pacific American lawyer has been matched to fill a particular judicial vacancy, the NAPABA Judiciary Committee already enjoys goodwill with the relevant players.

Various government officials of both parties have now come to look to NAPABA as the nation's leading voice in identifying and promoting qualified Asian Pacific Americans for judicial appointment. These relationships work because we provide real value. We do not merely ask that government officials work to achieve diversity—we give them the tools to make it happen. The NAPABA Judiciary Committee does everything that it can to make the effort as easy and straightforward as possible for key players in government. We are grateful for the network of strong relationships that NAPABA now enjoys on both sides of the aisle.



“NAPABA is a terrific organization representing the interests of more than 40,000 Asian Pacific American attorneys nationwide. In the legal profession, the organization is an excellent resource for professional development and is an effective advocate for increasing diversity in federal and state judiciaries.”

President Barack Obama



“I commend NAPABA for your efforts to improve the administration of justice, provide legal education, and enhance access to our legal system. Your dedication to addressing issues important to Asian Pacific American communities helps ensure fair and equitable justice for all Americans.”

Former President George W. Bush



“You have contributed immeasurably to the strength and diversity of the legal profession in America. As attorneys, judges, law professors, law students, and leaders of the Asian Pacific American community, you can take great pride in the success of your efforts to promote the increased representation of Asian Pacific Americans throughout our nation's legal system.”

Former President William J. Clinton

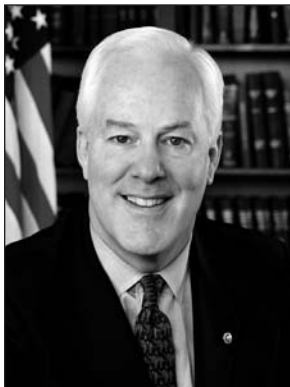


“Since 1988, NAPABA has been at the forefront of national and local activities in the areas of civil rights, combating anti-immigrant backlash and hate crimes, increasing the diversity of the federal and state judiciaries, and professional development. I applaud your work in advocating for the legal needs and interests of the Asian Pacific American (APA) community by promoting APA political leadership, advocating for equal opportunity in education and the workplace, working to eliminate violence against APAs, and building coalitions within the legal profession and the community at large.”

U.S. Senator Harry Reid (Nevada), Majority Leader

“I salute the long history of NAPABA’s service to the needs of Asian Pacific Americans in law schools, in the bar, and on the bench, and I urge your members to continue to serve and to give back to the community, in the best spirit of our profession.”

**U.S. Senator Richard Durbin (Illinois)
Assistant Majority Leader & Member, Senate Judiciary Committee**



“NAPABA serves the nation well. Not only is it the national voice of America’s practicing Asian-American attorneys and judges, fostering professional development and legal scholarship within this fast-growing community. It is also the leading champion for the Asian-American community when it comes to working with Senators and other officials on both sides of the aisle to identify and support qualified candidates for the federal bench. NAPABA doesn’t just talk about issues. It takes action and actually makes things happen for the Asian-American community. And we are all better off as a result.”

**U.S. Senator John Cornyn (Texas)
Chairman, National Republican Senatorial Committee
& Member, Senate Judiciary Committee**



“I appreciate NAPABA’s leadership regarding civil rights issues facing Asian Pacific American communities across the nation. In particular, I have worked with NAPABA to address the issue of diversity in the federal and state judiciaries.”

U.S. Senator Arlen Specter (Pennsylvania)

Member & Former Chairman, Senate Judiciary Committee

“Since its incorporation in 1989, the Association has provided leadership and advocacy for the legal needs and interests of the Asian Pacific American community. With over 3,500 members from 39 local bar associations, NAPABA continues to promote the advancement of the professional needs of its members. Such efforts are worthy of commendation.”

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (California)

Member, Senate Judiciary Committee



“For almost two decades, NAPABA has effectively advocated for the legal interests of the Asian Pacific American community and has been a strong force in both local and national arenas.”

U.S. Senator John Ensign (Nevada)

Former Chairman, Republican Policy Committee

“Your organization has continually provided important guidance and support to Asian Pacific Americans within the legal profession.”

Former U.S. Senator and California Governor Pete Wilson





“The members of NAPABA recognize the importance of law and order in our legal system. I applaud your efforts to promote the professional development of Asian Pacific Americans in the legal profession.”

Former Virginia Governor Jim Gilmore

“The Empire State is proud of the many organizations that play a positive role in the lives of our people and communities. NAPABA is one such organization, dedicated to enhancing the lives of Asian Americans across the Nation. As one of the local bar chapters of NAPABA, AABANY is committed to achieving the goals of the national organization: to promote active participation of Asian Americans in civic and national matters; to secure social justice and equal opportunity for all; to promote the professional development of its members; and to advocate for the needs and interests of the Asian-American community-at-large.”



Former New York Governor George Pataki



“On behalf of the City of New York I acknowledge those associated with the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association for their leadership and advocacy to address the needs of its members and the Asian Pacific American community. It is always gratifying to unite with those who are working to make a difference in the community and improving the quality of life for all.”

Former New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani

Organizational Relationships

Developing and supporting Asian Pacific American judicial aspirants across the country obviously requires a broad network of organizations and a nationally coordinated effort. No one organization can do it alone.

NAPABA is proud to have worked closely and cooperatively with a number of Asian Pacific American, legal, and community organizations nationwide in our common cause. Many organizations deserve credit, but none more than the Asian American Justice Center (AAJC). The AAJC has been a critical partner in this effort, and NAPABA is deeply grateful for their friendship and strong spirit of cooperation.

In addition, we have worked closely with the following leading APA organizations nationwide:

Asian Pacific American Women Lawyers Alliance	National Asian Peace Officers Association
Boat People SOS	National Council of Asian Pacific Americans
Committee of 100	OCA
Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus	South Asian American Leaders of Tomorrow
Japanese American Citizens League	Southeast Asia Resource Action Center
North American South Asian Bar Association	

We have also worked with other bar and community organizations:

American Bar Association	Leadership Conference on Civil Rights
Coalition of Bar Associations of Color	NAACP Legal Defense Fund
Hispanic National Bar Association	National Bar Association
Justice at Stake Campaign	National Native American Bar Association

A BRIEF NOTE ON 80-20

Some members and friends of NAPABA may be familiar with an organization called the 80-20 Initiative. In recent months, 80-20 has issued a series of sharp attacks on NAPABA for allegedly failing to improve diversity on the federal bench—only then to turn around and take credit for recent achievements in which NAPABA, and not 80-20, played a substantial role.

It is unclear what motivates 80-20. But at least two things seem clear to NAPABA leadership. First, as a victim of sharp criticism by 80-20, NAPABA finds itself in very good company. The recent Presidential campaign of Barack Obama suffered precisely the same pattern of behavior—baseless attacks on the President’s competence and qualifications for office throughout the 2008 campaign cycle, followed by attempts to take credit for President Obama’s efforts. Former Labor Secretary Elaine Chao was likewise the brunt of a harsh and meritless 80-20 e-mail campaign during the Bush Administration. Second, we are aware of no person who holds a position of authority regarding our nation’s judiciary—either in the White House, the Justice Department, on Capitol Hill, or elsewhere—whom 80-20 has assisted in a meaningful way to effect any measure of positive change.

Accordingly, NAPABA decided months ago not to engage with or respond to 80-20. There is too much work to do, and too little time, to worry about such parochial disputes. We will simply leave it to members and friends of NAPABA, and others who support the Asian Pacific American legal community, to reach their own conclusions.

NAPABA LEADERSHIP

Joseph Juco Centeno, NAPABA President-Elect, 2009-Present

Andrew T. Hahn, Sr., NAPABA President, 2008-2009

Helen B. Kim, NAPABA Past President 2007-2008

Phillip F. Shinn, NAPABA Past President 2006-2007

Amy Lin Meyerson, NAPABA Past President 2005-2006

Michael P. Chu, NAPABA Past President 2004-2005

John C. Yang, NAPABA Past President 2003-2004

Ruthe Catolico Ashley, NAPABA Past President 2002-2003

Lisa E. Chang, NAPABA Past President 2001-2002

Howard L. Halm, NAPABA Past President 2000-2001

Laura K. Hong, NAPABA Past President 1999-2000

Peter M. Suzuki, NAPABA Past President 1998-1999

Margaret J. Fujioka, NAPABA Past President 1997-1998

Paul H. Chan, NAPABA Past President 1996-1997

Paul W. Lee, NAPABA Past President 1995-1996

Nancy P. Lee, NAPABA Past President 1994-1995

Brian A. Sun, NAPABA Past President 1993-1994

William C. Hou, NAPABA Past President 1992-1993

Peggy A. Nagae, NAPABA Past President 1991-1992

Harry Gee, Jr., NAPABA Past President 1990-1991

Hoyt H. Zia, NAPABA Past President 1989-1990

Tina R. Matsuoka, NAPABA Executive Director, 2008-Present

Les R. Jin, NAPABA Executive Director, 2005-2008

Grace E. Yoo, NAPABA Executive Director, 2000-2005

Nancy L. Choy, NAPABA Executive Director, 1997-2000

Wendy Wen Yun Chang, James C. Ho, and John C. Yang, NAPABA Judiciary Committee Co-Chairs,
2007-Present

John C. Yang, NAPABA Judiciary Committee Chairman, 2000-2007

Brian A. Sun and John C. Yang, NAPABA Judiciary Committee Co-Chairmen, 1998-2000

Brian A. Sun, NAPABA Judiciary Committee Chairman, 1994-1998

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Supplement to *Celebrating Our Progress in the Federal Judiciary: A Report on the 15-Year Anniversary of the NAPABA Judiciary Committee*

"As the first Chinese American appointed to the federal district court bench in the continental U.S., I am heartened to see so many other Asian Americans join me as a judge on the district court. Our successes in the federal judiciary are due to many factors but NAPABA has played a big role in our efforts to have more Asian Americans on the federal bench. I applaud NAPABA and am proud to be a member from inception."

—Hon. Ronald S.W. Lew (C.D. Cal.)

"NAPABA established a record early on of vigorous advocacy on behalf of Asian American judicial candidates. In my own case, leading up to my nomination for a circuit judgeship 15 years ago, not only the Judiciary Committee, but NAPABA's then-President, Brian Sun, actively lobbied the White House on my behalf. I'm happy to see that NAPABA's pro-active stance continues to this day."

—Hon. A. Wallace Tashima (9th Cir.)

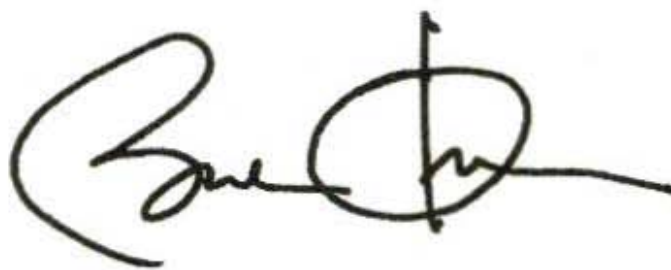
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

November 17, 2009

I send greetings to all those attending the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association's (NAPABA) convention, NAPABA at 21: The Revolution Continues.

Few professions demand a stronger sense of integrity and equity than a career in law. By giving a voice to Asian-Pacific American attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students, NAPABA provides members with opportunities for networking, as well as educational and professional development. I applaud the efforts of organizations like NAPABA which are committed to a more diverse Federal judiciary—a commitment I wholeheartedly share.

I wish you all the best for a productive and enjoyable convention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Barack Obama", written in a cursive style.