



## NEWS RELEASE

Women's History Month

### **Chinese Historical Society to honor Janet Lee Chen with 2019 Phil & Sarah Choy Community Service Award**

SAN FRANCISCO, California – The [Chinese Historical Society of America](#) (CHSA) will feature **Janet Lee Chen** at their gala, "[The Past is Prologue: CHSA on the Move!](#)," on Friday, March 15, at The Hyatt Regency Embarcadero in San Francisco. She will be the recipient of CHSA's **2019 Phil & Sarah Choy Community Service Award** for her community contributions, including creating a culture of philanthropy and volunteerism. Passionate about collaboration and camaraderie, her work and support has benefited students, youths and immigrants for five decades.

"Like many women of our generation, Janet has not been widely recognized for all of her accomplishments. She is a mother, wife, sister, friend and tireless community volunteer. She has given generously of her time and family resources," said **Jane Chin**, CHSA Vice President and Interim Executive Director. "CHSA is proud to give our top community award this year to an unsung hero who represents women everywhere."

Chen is a founding member of the [Rotary Club of San Francisco Chinatown](#), which volunteers in local schools and funds polio eradication campaigns overseas. During and since her daughter's attendance at [Sterne School](#), she has helped secure two new sites, enabling the school to enroll more students needing personalized instruction. She remains on its board and strategic planning committee. Through the Rose T.Y. Chen Charitable Fund honoring her mother-in-law, the Chen family has given yearly grants to dozens of Chinatown organizations including CHSA.

"I enjoy working with people, giving back, working with a team, and volunteering with others," she said.

Chen grew up and attended public schools in San Francisco. Her teachers encouraged volunteering, while her father and uncle were active in their Chinese school alumni association. During high school, she created a program providing activities and field trips to Chinatown children, formed and led the Purple Pandas girls' club at Chinatown's YMCA, interpreted for seniors at doctors' appointments, and organized kids for the Chinese New Year Parade and Cameron House events. As a college and law student, she worked with Chinatown clients of the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation and Asian Law Caucus. Her JLC Boutique donated clothing in the late 1980s to Gum Moon Women's Residence. She has served on the boards of Asian Neighborhood Design and the Chinatown Youth Center.

Four hundred guests are expected to attend the benefit dinner with Master of Ceremonies Ben Fong-Torres (*Rolling Stone* magazine journalist, Chinese New Year Parade co-host). Guests will see a sneak peek of the documentary in production "LIKE A ROLLING STONE: The Life & Times of Ben Fong-Torres" by filmmaker **Suzanne Joe Kai**.

Attendees of CHSA's gala will celebrate the organization's mission to illuminate the pioneer past and inform the present while looking forward. CHSA will present a Special Recognition Award to former San Francisco Mayor Willie L. Brown, Jr., for his support of CHSA's acquisition of the historic Julia Morgan-designed Chinese YWCA building on Clay Street, which became a museum that welcomes thousands of visitors each year. His search for new talent has included appointments of Chinese and other Asian Americans to dozens of city departments,



**CHINESE  
HISTORICAL  
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boards and commissions, including Fred Lau as Chief of Police, the late Ed Lee as City Purchaser (who would become Mayor), and **Gorretti Lui** to the Board of Trustees of the Fine Arts Museums.

The CHSA gala begins at 6 p.m. with live jazz by Bay Area saxophonist Francis Wong at the Reception with a Silent Auction and Night Market featuring Chinese American culture, including a [China Live San Francisco](#) experience, Frank Wong miniature mah jong diorama, theatre tickets and meet-and-greet with actor B.D. Wong, Bruce Lee memorabilia, an original *Joy Luck Club* movie poster donated by costume designer **Lydia Tanji**, and vintage qipao. Other items include tickets on Hawaiian Airlines, a group ride on the San Francisco Fire Department's fireboat, an autographed Steph Curry basketball, five-foot linocut by Emmanuel Montoya, private cooking class for eight, group bead making class, Cuban cigars in a humidor box, and a [TOTO](#) washlet.

Among the women and women-owned businesses whose items will be part of the CHSA Silent Auction and Night Market include:

[b. Patisserie](#)  
[Benefit Cosmetics](#)  
[Ada Chen](#)  
[Joyce Chin](#)  
[DeLynda DeLeon Designs](#)  
[e&h Photobooth](#)  
[The Enchanted House](#)  
[Marisa Louie Lee](#)  
[Deborah Lao](#)  
[Purple Fire Gems](#)  
[Katie Quan](#)  
[Secret Agent Salon](#)  
[Sheba Piano Lounge](#)  
[The Wok Shop](#)  
[Wok Wiz Chinatown Walking Tours](#)  
[Grace Young](#)

Leading gala sponsors are Ed & Janet Chen, Buck Gee & Mary Hackenbracht, Charles McClain & Laurene Wu McClain, Hoyt Zia & Leigh-Ann Miyasato, Jane Chin & James Wong, Coblenz Patch Duffy & Bass LLP, Lui Foundation, Perkins Coie LLP, and Connie Young Yu. Media sponsors are ABC7, shades Magazine and Sky Link TV.

Since the organization's founding in 1963, CHSA has been dedicated to preserving Chinese American history and telling stories to enlighten a new generation. Made exclusively by CHSA on the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, a special gift will be given to guests to commemorate the significant historic role of Chinese laborers who built the railroads.

For more information on the gala, email [gala@chsa.org](mailto:gala@chsa.org) or visit [www.chsa.org/event/gala2019](http://www.chsa.org/event/gala2019).

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