CHSA Appoints Tamiko Wong as Executive Director

The Board of Directors of the Chinese Historical Society of America is pleased to announce the appointment of Tamiko Wong to the position of Executive Director, effective April 16, 2019. Jane Chin, who has been in a dual role serving on the Board and as Interim Executive Director since August 2017, will now serve as the newly elected Vice President of the Board.

A San Francisco native of Chinese and Japanese descent, Tamiko is recognized throughout the Asian and Pacific Islander American community for her creative work in leading and designing programs that have promoted and supported the community for over a decade. She most recently served as the Program & Engagement Director of the Chinese Culture Center where she oversaw art exhibitions, excursions, tours, festivals, and other activities. From 2013 to 2016, she was the Executive Director of the Oakland Asian Cultural Center while serving on the California Commission on Asian and Pacific Islander American Affairs. She was formerly the Program Director at AsianWeek Foundation where she worked on the SF Hep B Free project and on the Asian Heritage Street Celebration, the largest gathering of Asians and Pacific Islanders in the United States.

Tamiko has served on a number of boards, including the San Francisco Chapter of OCA-Pacific American Advocates (previously known as the Organization of Chinese Americans), the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, and Asian Business League–San Francisco. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley, with a major in American Studies focusing on law, politics and public policy, and minors in Asian American Studies and Education. She is a recent graduate of Coro's Women in Leadership program and is a former Asian Pacific American Women's Leadership Institute fellow.

After 20 months of volunteering as CHSA's interim Executive Director, I am stepping back and happily turning off my cell phone at night and not checking CHSA email 24/7. It’s been both a bumpy and exhilarating ride of stabilizing and boosting CHSA’s finances, working alongside staff to launch exhibits such as Chinese in the Sunset and Towards Equality: California’s Chinese American Women, while producing the Mayor Ed Lee documentary and contributing to City Hall’s memorial exhibit of Ed, recruiting new board members, attracting new CHSA partners and audiences, presenting two sold-out galas in 2018 & 2019 with Willie Brown’s wisecracks, and inaugurating the Phil & Sarah Choy Community Service Award in 2018.

I am more confident than ever about CHSA’s strength and potential, and with that I welcome Tamiko Wong as the new CHSA Executive Director. Tamiko, who brings her extensive community service experience and is a familiar face in Bay Area Asian American and Pacific Islander circles.

Please join me in welcoming Tamiko. I will remain an active and dedicated board member, taking on the position of CHSA Vice President. I look forward to continue seeing each and every one of you at CHSA’s many events and programs.

Warm regards,
Jane Chin
Four hundred guests attended the March 15 gala, “The Past is Prologue: CHSA on the Move!” at the Hyatt Regency in San Francisco, where the Chinese Historical Society of America showcased the untold stories of some of our community’s most highly accomplished.

CHSA President Hoyt Zia spoke of the organization’s role in teaching the lessons of the past, such as the Chinese Exclusion Act, to ensure that history does not repeat itself. Board member Doug Chan, who once served as an intern for Willie Brown, presented a Special Recognition Award to the former California Assembly Speaker and San Francisco Mayor for his support of CHSA’s acquisition of the historic building which became the museum and for his groundbreaking leadership in appointing Asian Americans to head city departments, boards and commissions. Former Chief of Police Fred Lau, appointed by Mayor Brown, shared the stage with Board of Supervisors President Norman Yee and addressed fighting discrimination, the prospects of future generations, and the importance of maintaining cultural pride, heritage and traditions.

2019 Phil & Sarah Choy Community Service Award winner Janet Lee Chen was introduced by husband U.S. District Judge Ed Chen. A founding member of the Rotary Club of San Francisco Chinatown and a board member of the Sterne School, Janet was recognized for creating a culture of philanthropy and volunteerism that has benefited students, youths and immigrants for five decades. She cited one of her favorite quotes: “If you want to go quickly, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.” Following an exclusive sneak peek of the documentary in production LIKE A ROLLING STONE: The Life & Times of Ben Fong-Torres by filmmaker Suzanne Joe Kai, gala Master of Ceremonies Ben Fong-Torres concluded with a sing along to the Summer of Love hippie anthem “Get Together.”

Towards Equality programs: engaging women’s resilience

By Monica Pelayo Lock, PhD
CHSA EDUCATION & PROGRAMS COORDINATOR

In conjunction with our exhibition Towards Equality: California’s Chinese American Women, the Chinese Historical Society of America has organized a series of ongoing public programs and special events that both feature women’s contributions to Californian society and engage audience members understanding of women’s history in Chinatown and beyond.

As part of this work, we have established a women’s artists series, which has included art workshops with dancer/choréographer Lenora Lee, graphic novelist Katie Quan, and visual artist Cynthia Tom, a concert with Hannah Hsieh, and two poetry readings. One reading was held during our Chinese New Year’s celebration and included Flo Oy Wong and Genny Lim, while the other reading ran in March and featured Kitty Tsui, Nellie Wong, and Canyon Sam. Workshop leaders will return on June 6th to showcase new works, inspired by their time at CHSA.

We also built a Chinatown walking tour, which features historic sites that address women’s history including Gum Moon Women’s Residence Center, the Chinese Hospital, and the Chinatown Telephone Exchange building. It addresses issues of violence, resilience, and activism, acknowledging the importance of Chinese American women to Chinese American, immigrant, and women’s history writ-large.

CHSA has also hosted book signings that feature Chinese American women’s history, such as Jeff Stealey’s novel Gum Moon and worked with several community organizations to launch Helen Zia’s latest book Last Boat Out of Shanghai.

Lastly, as part of Women’s History Month, CHSA held brown bag film screenings of Loni Ding’s Mamic Tape and the Fight for Equality in Education acknowledging the work and activism that women have played throughout California’s history. We also held a roundtable discussion with Jaclyn Lock (Senior Research Associate at Genentech), Felicia Lowe (Independent Television Producer, Director, Writer, and Filmmaker), Lauren Marshman (Academic Counselor at Galileo Academy of Science and Technology), and Helen Zia (Journalist, Author, Activist, and Fulbright Scholar) regarding their career choices.

Together these programs and special events have helped create a robust conversation of women’s legacies in the Chinese American community and the long road they still need to travel towards equality.

CHSA publishes Voices from the Railroad

Co-edited by CHSA Board Emeritus & community historian Connie Young Yu and former CHSA Executive Director Sue Lee, Voices from the Railroad reveals the stories of Chinese railroad workers and their descendants. These stories have never been told outside of their families: until now. No longer nameless, faceless workers lost to history, their stories will shatter misconceptions about the Chinese who helped build America.

Featuring first-hand narratives by railroad worker descendants Gene O. Chan, Montgomery Hom, Carolyn Kuhn, Paulette Liang, Russell N. Low, Sandra K. Lee, Andrea Yee, Vicki Tong Young, & Connie Young Yu. Available for $25 ($20 for CHSA members), the book launches May 18, 2019 at CHSA’s Chinese & the Iron Road Symposium. For more information and to reserve a copy, please visit chsa.org/voicesfromtherailroad

UPCOMING CHSA EVENTS

Black Death at the Golden Gate: Book talk & signing
WED. MAY 15 5–6PM @ CHSA
Book talk with author David Randall, telling how bubonic plague emerged in San Francisco & the race to contain the disease.

Chinese & the Iron Road Symposium
SAT. MAY 18 9AM–5PM @ CITY COLLEGE, 808 KEARNEY ST, SF
Celebrating the 150th anniversary of the US transcontinental railroad. Featuring Connie Young Yu. Gordon Chang, screening of Making Tracks: The Philip P. Choy Story film by Barre Fong, & florist Susan Ishkhanian who helped design the Rose Parade float paying homage to Chinese railroad workers.

Mayor Ed Lee Film Screenings
SAT. MAY 18 1–3PM @ DELANCEY STREET, 600 CLAY STREET, SAN FRANCISCO
“Mayor Ed Lee: Gate: Book talk & signing at the Golden Gate” talk by Susan Ishkhanian & florist that featured the Rose Parade float paying homage to Chinese railroad workers.

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Women’s Resilience in California’s Chinese American Community: A Roundtable Discussion
THU. MAY 16 6:30PM @ CHSA
Panelists: Mayor Ed Lee & Connie Young Yu.

CHSA EVENTS UPDATES

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TOWARDS EQUALITY: Women Artists Show & Tell
SAT. JUN. 8 2–4PM @ CHSA
Artists Lenora Lee, Katie Quan, & Cynthia Tom will discuss how leading workshops at CHSA inspired them to produce new works.

All events at CHSA, 965 Clay Street, San Francisco unless otherwise noted. For details & tickets, please visit chsa.org/events
2019 marks a new beginning for CHSA as we look ahead to the future while honoring our history. 2019 will also mark the 150th anniversary of the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, and we are commemorating this significant anniversary in multiple venues across the country.

Donate to CHSA today at chsa.org/support, or by calling (415) 391-1188 or emailing info@chsa.org. Gifts of $1,000 or more will receive special recognition in CHSA's Legacy Gallery. Employer-matches are welcomed; ask your employer or contact us about how to participate. All contributions are tax deductible (Federal tax ID #94-67122446).