

Los Angeles confers honors to Asian Pacific Islander Americans at Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

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Miss Asia-USA contestants, including Genesis Walcher (left) and Philippine Consul General Mary Jo Bernardo Aragon (in barong shirt) grace the APAHM program.



Program host Denise Dador of ABC-7 (at podium) with APAHM honorees Emile Mack, Dominic Ng, and Tyrus Wong.

The mayor presented awards to Administrative Operations Deputy Chief of the LA Fire Department (LAFD) to Emile Mack; East West Bank President Dominic Ng, and renowned artist Tyrus Wong, whose achievements embody this year's APAHM theme of *Hope, Spirit, and Dreams Flow to the Future*.

"Angelenos come from every corner of the earth," Villaraigosa said. "We are the most diverse city anywhere in the world, and we are bound by a unifying force that is stronger than many of our differences."

After handing the awards to Mack, Ng, and Wong, the mayor said, "Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month pays homage to the rich cultural imprint of the Asian Pacific Islander community on the city's identity. We are honored to recognize Emile Mack, Dominic Ng and Tyrus Wong for their achievements in public safety, business and the arts. Their creativity and courageous spirit have made them models in the Asian Pacific Islander community and to all Angelenos."

Spirit of Los Angeles honoree, Emile Mack, who was born in South Korea and was adopted by an African family, had led a three decade-long career at the LAFD. He attended UCLA and then joined the LAFD on the suggestion of a friend.

Dominic Ng, received the Dream of Los Angeles Award. Ng transformed East West Bank from a saving and loan with \$600 million in assets into a full-service commercial bank with \$12.4 billion in assets and 71 locations in California, Texas and Hong Kong.

Artist Tyrus Wong received the Hope of Los Angeles Award for his prolific career in the arts. Still active after a 70-year career, Wong has painted, illustrated animated films (he is lead artist for "Bambi"), and designed greeting cards. At the age of nine, Wong came to the United States through the Angel Island immigration center.

The ceremony featured an eclectic array of art, music and food, representing the Asian Pacific Islanders' diversity. Fil-Am actress Tia Carrere, and Daniel Ho, Grammy award-winning artists, who had collaborated on two Hawaiian albums, performed at the program at the South Lawn of City Hall, which was hosted by ABC-7 health specialist and reporter Denise Dador. The program featured music from India, Thailand, and Cambodia. A group of beauty pageant contestants of the Miss Asia-USA was also on hand, including Mrs. Philippines, Genesis Walcher, Philippine-born singer-performer, who rendered a musical number. "I am so excited and happy right now," Walcher told *Asian Journal*. "There are a lot of nice people here, and I am representing our country, the Philippines." Consul General Aragon said, "We are happy to celebrate with Mayor Villaraigosa and the City Council in honoring members of the Asian-American community for their successes and for their contributions to the city of Los Angeles. This is a diverse and beautiful city, and Filipino-Americans have contributed a lot its development."

Two years ago, a Filipino-American, Apl. De. Ap., was one of the Asian Pacific Islanders honored during the celebration of APAHM. Master of Ceremonies Denise Dador, whose family roots reach back to the island of Cebu,



Actress Tia Carrere singing a musical number from the Disney movie, "Lilo and Stitch."



Grammy Award winner Daniel Ho rendering a musical number interpreted by a hula dancer.

AJPress Photos by Rene Villaroman

declared: "This is the year of the ox, a very strong year; and this year's theme is Spirits, Dreams, and Dreams Flow to the Future. We could use a little hope right now."

Mayor Villaraigosa and the Department of Cultural Affairs' "Music LA" will be hosting classes for elementary, middle and high school students beginning May until June. The program is free for young people up to the age of 18, and information is available at www.lacity.org/CAD/musicla/index.html. Mayor Villaraigosa is also hosting a poster contest for all Kindergarten to 12th grade students, sponsored by Wells Fargo, and a writing contest for all 6th to 12th graders in Los Angeles County, sponsored by Time Warner Cable. The contests will allow students an opportunity to study different movements in the Asian Pacific Islander Heritage community such as the road to public service, the Civil Rights Movement and the Voting Rights Act, and contributions to early American infrastructure, such as the Transcontinental Railroad. ■

Asian-Americans blast UC admissions policy

They say new standards are unfair, will reduce their numbers on campus

SAN FRANCISCO—A new admissions policy set to take effect at the University of California system in three years is raising fears among Asian-Americans that it will reduce their numbers on campus, where they account for a remarkable 40 percent of all undergraduates.

University officials say the new standards—the biggest change in UC admissions since 1960—are intended to widen the pool of high school applicants and make the process more fair.

But Asian-American advocates, parents and lawmakers are angrily calling on the university to rescind the policy, which will apply at all nine of the system's undergraduate campuses.

They point to a UC projection that said the new standards would sharply reduce Asian-American admissions while resulting in little change for blacks and Hispanics, and a big gain for white students.

Asian-Americans are the single largest ethnic group among UC's 173,000 undergraduates. In 2008, they accounted for 40 percent at UCLA and 43 percent at UC Berkeley—the two most selective campuses in the UC system—as well as 50 percent at UC San Diego and 54 percent at UC Irvine.

Asian-Americans are about 12 percent of California's population and 4 percent of the US population overall.

The new policy, approved unanimously by the UC Board of Regents in February, will greatly expand the applicant pool, eliminate the requirement that applicants take two SAT subject tests and reduce the number of students guaranteed admission based on grades and test scores alone. It takes effect for the freshman class of fall 2012.

President defends policy

Some Asian-Americans have charged that the university is trying to reduce Asian-American enrollment. Others say that may not be the intent, but it will be the result.

UC officials adamantly deny the intent is to increase racial diversity, and reject allegations the policy is an attempt to circumvent a 1996 voter-approved ban on affirmative action.

Yudof and other officials disputed the internal study that projected a drop of about 20 percent in Asian-American admissions, saying it is impossible to accurately predict the effects. "This is not Armageddon for Asian-American students," Yudoff said.

At San Francisco's Lowell High School, one of the top public schools in the country, about 70 percent of the students are of Asian descent and more than 40 percent attend UC after graduation.

Increased competition

One of the biggest changes is scrapping the requirement that applicants take two SAT subject tests. UC officials say the tests do little to predict who will succeed at UC, no other public university requires them, and many high-achieving students are disqualified because they do not take them.

The policy also widens the pool of candidates by allowing applications from all students who complete the required high school courses, take the main SAT or ACT exams and maintain a 3.0 grade-point average. Under the current policy, students have to rank in the top 12.5 percent of California high school graduates to be eligible.

Students still have to apply to individual campuses, where admissions officers are allowed to consider each applicants' grades, test scores, personal background, extracurricular activities and other factors but not race.

The policy is expected to increase competition for UC admission. This year the university turned away the largest number of students in years after it received a record number of applications and cut freshman enrollment because of the state's budget crisis. (AP)



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