AALAM NEWS

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AALAM Awards 2002 Scholarship to Steven Choi

At a reception hosted on March 12, 2002 by the Boston law firm of Goodwin Procter LLP, AALAM announced the recipient of its Fifth Annual Scholarship and also celebrated the success of its 2001-2002 Mentorship Program.

During the first part of the reception, the thirty-plus attendees – including Ho-il Kim, General Counsel of Cabot Corporation; Russell Chin, a Partner at Holland & Knight LLP; and Dame Catalan, President of Boston University School of Law APALSA – enjoyed casual conversations and a wide assortment of hors d'oeuvres, desserts, and beverages.

AALAM President Perry Wu opened the formal part of the program with brief welcoming remarks. After thanking the members of the Scholarship Committee, as well as the many attorney-mentors and law-student mentees who had participated in the Mentorship Program, Wu yielded the floor to AALAM Director Meerie Joung, who, after a one-year hiatus, had again quarterbacked the Scholarship Committee. Joung introduced Kevin Lam, a Harvard Law School 1L (and Co-Chair of this year's National Asian Pacific American Conference on Law and Public Policy). Lam in turn introduced his law school classmate – and the recipient of AALAM's Fifth Annual Scholarship – Steven K. Choi.

Choi graduated from Stanford University in 1998 with an A.B. in History and received an M.A. in Asian Studies in 2000 from the University of Hawaii – Manoa. While at the University of Hawaii, Choi founded the Korean Students Association. During the past few summers, he has worked as an Intern at the Korean Youth & Community Center in Los Angeles, California; as a Policy Fellow for the National Korean American Service & Education Consortium (NAKASEC) in Flushing, New York; and as an Election Campaign Coordinator for the Young Korean-American Service & Education Consortium (YKASEC), also in Flushing. Choi hopes to spend this summer working in New York City and/or Washington, D.C. as an intern for a public interest organization focusing on Asian Pacific American legal issues.

(L–R): 2001-2002 AALAM Director Sam Kim; AALAM Director and Scholarship Committee Chair Meerie Joung; AALAM Scholarship Recipient Steve Choi; 2001-2002 AALAM President Perry Wu.

AALAM members and law students at the 2002 AALAM Scholarship/Mentorship Reception on March 12.

In his gracious and eloquent acceptance speech, Choi noted that one of the key challenges confronting the Asian Pacific American community today is the generational divide between first- and second-generation Asian Pacific Americans. Choi said that he aspires to become a community leader who can help bridge this divide. Choi explored these themes at length in his Scholarship Essay, which is included here in its entirety. **(See article on page 4)**

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AALAM Appoints Representative to MBA Diversity Committee

AALAM Director Elaine Tung has been named to serve on the Massachusetts Bar Association's Diversity Committee. Elaine is a solo practitioner in Lexington and is the former Vice President of AALAM. She has also served previously on the Boston Bar Association's Diversity Committee. The Committee, which has been inactive in recent years, is prepared to convene to discuss ways to increase the diversity of MBA leadership and sections.

AALAM Teams with NAAACP on Social Events

In recent months, AALAM has hosted two joint social and networking events. On March 21, 2002, AALAM hosted a Happy Hour at Kitty O'Shea's on State Street for AALAM members. Several members of the National Association of Asian American Professionals (NAAAP) joined AALAM members for drinks and hors d'oeuvres. On May 17, 2002, AALAM and NAAAP co-sponsored a networking event at Boston Beer Works near the Fleet Center at which members of both organizations gathered for an evening of food, drink, and pool. AALAM is looking forward to future joint endeavors with NAAAP.

AALAM Opposes Legislative Bill 4840

***Summary of Bill 4840**: This proposed constitutional amendment would add to the state Constitution a provision that only the union of one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in Massachusetts. It would prohibit any other relationship from either (1) receiving the benefits or incidents exclusive to marriage from the state or from any of its authorities, cities or towns, or other political subdivisions; or (2) being recognized as a marriage or its legal equivalent. The proposed amendment would also declare the state's public policy to be that marriage is a unique relationship and is to be protected in order to promote the stability and welfare of society and the best interests of children. The proposed amendment would not impair any contract in existence at the time the proposed amendment took effect.*

The AALAM Board opposed the proposed legislation on the grounds that it would discriminate against one of the Commonwealth's minority groups and would deny that group equal protection under the law. In a letter addressed to Senator Brian A. Joyce, Chair of the Joint Public Service Committee, AALAM's Board reaffirmed its support of an open, diverse community that fosters tolerance regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, age, disability, religion, sexual orientation, or family status.

Generational Divide:

by Steve Choi, AALAM Scholarship Recipient

I believe that the Asian American community needs more inter-generational leaders. The Asian Pacific American community is diverse, and the ethnic diversity is further complicated by the generational divide between 1st- and 2nd-generation Asian Americans. It is my goal to be a leader who can not only be fluent in both legal issues affecting the community and policy issues, but also a community leader who can represent both sides of the generational divide.

I have been working with the Korean-American community for much of the past four years. As I started as an intern in the Korean Youth and Community Center in Los Angeles and moved to work in New York Korean organizations as a Policy Fellow and an Election Campaign Coordinator, I began to realize that one of the biggest problems of the Asian American community is the generational divide. Most of the Asian American population is still either fairly recent immigrants or 2nd-generation. The clash in values, goals, and languages has been well documented, but it is especially apparent in community service organizations. In my experience with Korean community organizations in Los Angeles, Hawaii, and New York, I found that most organizations that serve the Asian-American community represent either the 1st-generation perspective or the 2nd- but rarely both.

I also observed how this generational divide was evident in the field of law. One of the reasons I entered law school was because I saw through my

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Praticing Attorneys Compare and Contrast Legal Career Paths

On April 29, 2002, AALAM convened a panel of experienced AALAM attorneys to provide insights into a diverse range of career paths. The panelists included Stephen Chow, a partner at Perkins, Smith & Cohen LLP; Vivian Tseng, General Counsel of Welch Foods; Zenobia Lai, Managing Attorney of the Asian Outreach Unit at Greater Boston Legal Services; and Hermen Yee, Assistant Attorney General in the Consumer Protection Division of the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office. The panel was moderated by current AALAM Director Flora Chan.

The panelists compared and contrasted careers in a law firm, in-house practice, legal services, and government practice. Among the similarities among the sectors is the fact that, although the particulars differ in each sector, financial considerations have a significant impact on the practice of law in every sector. As Chow noted, private law firm practice is increasingly driven by a bottom-line emphasis on profits. But economics may enter into other sectors in different ways. As Lai stated, legal services organizations are constantly struggling to maintain their funding, particularly in lean economic times. Likewise, the state budget situation has a significant impact on the morale of attorneys at the Attorney General's Office, Yee said. Currently, state government attorneys are feeling the crunch of a tight budget.

Among the differences among the sectors are the markedly different decision-making processes employed. According to Chow, law firm partnerships, in theory, are democratic institutions. As a result, decisions on firm policy are often made as a result of coalitions among partners, even across different branch offices, to gain approval of proposals not necessarily favored by all the partners. Although an individual partner has some control over matters, the process can be cumbersome and inefficient.

In a corporation, there is a much more clear hierarchy, Tseng said. Although attorneys provide advice and are frequently involved in decision-making, ultimately the business side of the corporation has the final say on matters affecting the corporation. Yee, who has spent a significant portion of his career as an attorney with the U.S. Navy Judge Advocate General, pointed out that in that role, the chain of command was equally rigid, if not more so.

(L-R) Panelists Stephen Chow, Vivian Tseng, Zenobia Lai, and Hermen Yee respond to questions from Moderator Flora Chan (far right)

When asked if they had encountered obstacles during their careers related to race, ethnicity or gender, the panelists did not identify any specific instances in which they believed that they fell victim to overt discrimination. Lai complained that earlier in her career, she perceived that judges did not take her as seriously as other attorneys because she appeared to be young. Tseng noted that regardless of whether race and ethnicity are factors, there are always differences with colleagues, whether they be differences of religion, political views, and social activities (such as affinity for golf) that must be overcome in order to succeed in the workplace.

CONTRIBUTE TO THE AALAM NEWS

If you have an announcement or article for inclusion in the AALAM News, or would like to write articles or otherwise assist with the production of the newsletter, contact any of the following:

Theodore Chuang: 617-748-3173, chuang@post.harvard.edu
Onyen Yong: 617-619-4042, onyen.yong@state.ma.us

Committee Reports

Membership Committee

The AALAM Membership Directory was mailed to members in April 2002. All members who paid dues for the 2001-2002 year were included. To ensure that you are included in next year's directory, send in an updated membership form and payment of dues for 2002-2003. The membership form, which includes the dues schedule, is available at www.aalam.org. Any questions about AALAM membership should be directed to Eunice Kim Chapon at 617-248-5256 or echapon@choate.com. Questions about the AALAM Membership Directory should be directed to Myong Joun at (617) 742-4100, or at mjjoun@civil-rights-law.com.

Social Committee

Coming off of its first year of events, the Social Committee is planning a summer picnic for AALAM members and their families in August. Date and location are to be announced. If you would like to assist in planning this event, contact Flora Chan at (617) 320-6577, or at attorneychan@hotmail.com.

Student Outreach Committee

The Student Outreach Committee hosted the Scholarship/Mentorship Reception in March (see page one). This July, the Committee will host a reception for summer associates, summer interns, and summer law clerks. Date, time, and location will be announced via email and on the AALAM website. If you would like to assist in planning this event, or have any questions about it, contact Michelle Rhee at (617) 526-6064, michelle.rhee@haledorr.com.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee reminds you that AALAM is relying principally on email messages and the AALAM website to inform members about upcoming events. If you are a dues-paying member and are not receiving emails from AALAM, please notify Eunice Kim Chapon at 617-248-5256 or echapon@choate.com and submit a current email address. The Committee is also looking for members interested in assisting in the production of the newsletter, particularly in the area of reporting on AALAM events, serving as a photographer, or contributing substantive articles. For more information, contact Theodore Chuang at 617-748-3173 or theodore.chuang@usdoj.gov.

Community Service Committee

The Community Service Committee is organizing a Habitat for Humanity public service project on July13, 2002. See the "Announcements" section for more details.

Generational Divide – *continued from page 4*

policy work at NAKASEC how issues of immigration law and hate crime legislation deeply affected the very people I worked with and grew close to. I saw how the anti-immigrant legislation passed in 1996 put many of my friends and co-workers in danger of being deported and banned from re-entry. But immigration law for 2nd-generation Asian Americans isn't as interesting, and many find it difficult to provide direct legal service to the older 1st-generation immigrant community because of language barriers and cultural differences. At the same time, many immigrant-centered legal organizations have not had the kind of innate understanding of the American political process that is necessary to create change on a broader level. A clear example of this was NAKASEC's attempt to push through hate crime legislation in 1998, in response to several heinous racially motivated killings in the Midwest and California. Many 1st-generation organizations found it difficult to take the lead on these issues, because of these very same language and cultural differences.

I have resolved to be a leader who can bridge this divide. It is for this reason that I received my Master's degree in Asian Studies with a focus on Korea and spent a year in Korea, in order to try to more fully understand the 1st-generation perspective. I seek to be a community leader who can combine experience in direct service to the immigrant community and knowledge of their issues, and combine this with the vision for a future Asian America that will help me speak to those who were born on these shores.

Professional Opportunities

The following employment and professional opportunity announcements are posted on the AALAM website, www.aalam.org , under "Professional Opportunities":

- **Law Clerk, Superior Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts**
- **Staff Attorney, Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law of the Boston Bar Association**
- **Clinical Instructor/Attorney, Harvard Law School**
- **Family Law Attorney, Neighborhood Legal Services, Inc.**
- **Legal Network Manager, Health Law Advocates, Inc.**

If you have a job announcement you would like to have posted on the AALAM website, send the announcement, preferably by e-mail, to:

Elizabeth Nam, Esq., Choate, Hall & Stewart, enam@choate.com, Tel: 617-248-5241, Fax: 617-248-4000

AALAM
Asian-American Lawyers
Association of Massachusetts
P.O. Box 5655
Boston, MA 02114