

NOVEMBER 2022

## Culture of the Lion Dance in America

Join the CHSSC November program when David Lei  
presents lion dancing with a focus on its history,  
cultural significance, and symbolism

November 2, 2022 7:00pm-8:00pm



David Lei

Free to attend.  
RSVP via Eventbrite on  
CHSSC website:  
<https://chssc.org>

 Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會





NOVEMBER 2022

## Letter from the Membership Secretary

As a 4th generation Chinese American in Los Angeles, I would hear stories about the history from my ancestors, close relatives or even complete strangers. I had wished that they would talk for hours. After my grandparents passed, I would wonder where I could obtain more of their great information and regretted not asking them more when they were around. I wanted to be more connected with the history of Chinese in Southern California and beyond, but had no clue where to go. I found that the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was the place for me! Not only were my grandparents members, but the Society had a library of information on them as well as many of their close friends and relatives and I felt that I had hit the jackpot!

Outside of incredible information on Chinese Americans in Southern California, I saw that the Society had many other presentations and meetings enabling me to obtain an immense amount of information and gain some meaningful friendships as well!

To highlight just some of the CHSSC 2022 programs and events:

- Monthly meetings discussing Chinese American families, updated CHSSC website, Five Chinatowns book project, Chinese in Riverside, and Grandview Gardens Restaurant.
- 2022 Activities: Annual Yosemite Sing Peak Pilgrimage, 17th Annual Archives Bazaar, Chinatown Walking Tours, CHSSC picnic, and Faith, Hopes and Dreams Yard sale.
- Continued collaborations: UCLA: The Five Chinatowns: A Community History; Institute of California and the West; and UCLA: Southern California Oral History Project.

If you want to see/hear about Chinese historical and legendary figures, sign up for a membership or renew your existing for 2023 ASAP! With your membership, you will receive a monthly newsletter and our yearly Gum Saan Journal. Please check out our website to start your membership or renew for 2023! Membership form is also included on page 6 for your convenience.

Thank you all for your continued and hopefully future support for 2023 and beyond!

Caitlin Bryant

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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## MISSION STATEMENT

The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California was organized in November 1975. The purposes of the Society are:

1. to bring together people with a mutual interest in the important history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in southern California;
2. to pursue, preserve, and communicate knowledge of this history; and
3. to promote the heritage of the Chinese and Chinese American community in support of a better appreciation of the rich, multicultural society of the United States.



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## November Program - Cantonese Lion Dance in the American Context

### Our Featured Speaker's Biography



David Lei co-founded the Chung Ngai Dance Troupe in 1966 and started lion dancing in 1969. After retiring from active lion dancing in 1976, he started to do research on Chinese lion dance resulting in co-publishing the 400 page "*Chinese Lion Dance Explained*" with Dr William Hu in 1995.

In 1965, David participated in his first Chinese New Year parade by organizing his friends to perform the dragon -by 1977, David became the San Francisco Chinese New Year parade and Festival director. He is still active as the parade's cultural advisor. Currently, David is the chair of the Chinese Performing Arts Foundation and a board member of the USA Dragon and Lion Dance Sports Association.

In recent years, David has given talks on Chinese American history and culture at The Commonwealth Club, California Historical Society, Asian Art Museum, Chinese Culture Center and was a commencement speaker to UC Berkeley's class of 2019 at Memorial Stadium. David feels it is imperative to Interpret Chinese American history and Chinese art/culture/rituals in the American context for future generations.

### A Tribute to Gilbert Hom

By Marie Chung



If you walk down LA Chinatown's Chung King Road today you'll see yesterday's gift shops that have long given way to the art galleries and studios of gentrification. Rewind 50 years and arriving at 971 Chung King Rd you might see a youthful Gilbert Hom wielding handyman tools, working on the renovation of a gift shop that would become the home of Chinatown Teen Post.

A summer program called the Neighborhood Youth Corps received funding in 1970 from Lyndon Johnson's "War on Poverty" to provide jobs for 100 youth at the Chinatown Teen Post center. With no funding for supervisors, Gilbert assisted in recruiting volunteers from local colleges (UCLA, USC, CSULA) to work as supervisors. These students started other projects, and Gilbert played a key role in establishing the Chinatown Youth Council as an organization of organizers.

Those projects included a bilingual newspaper, a film series showing films from China, a Castelar Elementary School project, food co-op, and youth work (Teen Post). Organizers also supported the community's opposition to the de-funding of services at the Resthaven Mental Health Center.

*(continued on Page 4)*



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*(Marie Chung continued)*

Gilbert's organizing efforts went beyond the local Chinese community. He organized volunteers with plumbing skills to go to Agbayani Village in Delano to help the Filipino farmworkers build retirement housing, a project begun by Cesar Chavez. As a member of Local 131 United Rubber Workers Union at Goodyear Tire and Rubber, he raised awareness and support for the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Wherever there was injustice, Gilbert was ready to get involved and make a difference.

Gilbert left UCLA during his second year to become a dedicated community organizer in Chinatown. In his soft-spoken manner, he was the behind-the-scenes "influencer" patiently learning from experiences of recent immigrants, seniors, youth, business owners and many others. He avoided fame and fancy titles, taking no credit for himself and would often give credit to others. His generosity was beyond measure, whether it be giving of his time, technical skills, finances, shelter, his knowledge and wisdom.

Gilbert leaves a giant legacy. This gentle giant will be greatly missed by all those whose lives he touched.

## Reflections on Gilbert Hom

By Will Gow

The passing of Gilbert Hom shocked and saddened those of us working on the Five Chinatowns project. Gilbert was one of the pillars of the CHSSC. His influence can be seen in so many of our projects. It was Gilbert who personally invited me to my first CHSSC meeting back in 2003. It would not be an exaggeration to say that I never would have joined the organization were it not for him. Above and beyond this, he played a pivotal role in our Five Chinatowns project. He attended our early project meetings as we were deciding on the scope of our project.

Gilbert believed that each of the Five Chinatowns in Los Angeles told a different part of the history of the community and that by looking at all five of them, we could make a larger argument about the development of Chinese American history during the Exclusion era. Gilbert maintained that these Chinatowns were not just individual neighborhoods or districts, they were windows into larger socio-historic themes that shaped Chinese American experience during the Exclusion era.

Gilbert's insights were certainly correct, and they have shaped the direction our project has taken. Gilbert was a true community historian. He may not have had the degrees or titles that some other scholars of Chinese American history have, but he knew as much about the history of Chinese Americans in Los Angeles as anyone. Even after earning my Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies with a dissertation focused on Chinatown, I would always learn new aspects of the community's history through my conversations with Gilbert. His passing leaves a hole in our project that cannot be filled by anyone else.

By Yi-Shen Loo

I had the privilege of interviewing Gilbert Hom, who passed away earlier this month. During his interview with me in July, he shared his memories of City Market and his childhood. It was a privilege to be able to record and document his story. He told me about his family with a great sense of humor and empathy, and I hope to honor his legacy by including his story in the Five Chinatowns book and archival project.



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The Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) has mounted a new documentation project about the five Chinatowns in Los Angeles before 1965. We are creating a rich archive of oral histories and family photos at the CHSSC, which we will share online and in a new book. The project includes a youth internship component to train the next generation of scholars of Chinese American history.

For more information contact:

**Dr. Kelly Fong**  
kelfong@ucla.edu

**Gene Moy**  
info@chssc.org

We hope we can count on you to help us fund, collect, and document these stories! Contribute to the project today. If you'd like to support, please identify your donation as going toward the Five Chinatowns project when donating to the CHSSC.

We need your support to continue archiving this history and training the next generation of scholars. If you'd like to contribute, please identify your donation as going to the Five Chinatowns project when donating to the CHSSC. You can use the form on Page 6 to make your donation.

## Meet Our Newest Intern



**Eliana Urizar** is a second year MLIS student specializing in archival studies at UCLA. She has special interest in community-based archives as well as public libraries. She received her bachelor's degree in Asian Studies from the University of Hawaii at Manoa focusing on East Asian History. She continued studies by exploring the histories of Mexico and Central America. She hopes to be able to work within community spaces to help preserve histories of and sharing stories. In her spare time, she enjoys reading on the history of food and languages



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Los Angeles, CA 90012  
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## Mission Statement

Established in 1975, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) unites people with a mutual interest in promoting the rich heritage of Chinese and Chinese American history. Our mission is to pursue, preserve and communicate the history and historical role of Chinese and Chinese Americans in Southern California.

## What We Do

- Conduct monthly meetings and public presentations on Chinese American History.
- Sponsor and participate in symposiums, exhibits and conferences.
- Conduct Chinatown walking tours for students and the public.
- Lead the annual Lunar New Year Golden Dragon Parade.

## Research and Publications

- Publication of multiple books by renowned scholars.
- The *Gum Saan Journal* is the Society's annual publication.
- Maintain a library with thousands of topics related to Chinese American topics.
- Maintain an archive consisting of oral histories, archaeological collections, photographs and family histories.



New Membership       Renewal

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Membership levels:

Regular      \$57

100x100 Club      \$100

Supporting      \$300

Senior (60+) or student      \$32

Donation (tax deductible)      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**TOTAL**      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

To join or renew your membership by credit card, visit our website at <https://chssc.org>.

We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, tax ID 95-3155357

Please make checks payable to CHSSC.

Check here if you would like the newsletter mailed to your home.

Check here if you would like the newsletter emailed to your home.



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## Behind the Scenes

Visitors to CHSSC



L to R: Carolyn Lee, President Eugene Moy, Carey Gelemter, Archivists Amanda Galvez and Andy Tan

## Donations for October

### *In Memory of Gilbert Hom*

*Annie Anderson and the Herrs*

*Ken Chan*

*Lily Lee Chen*

*Eileen Chong and Gary Brent*

*Eastwind Books of Berkeley*

*Harvey and Bea Dong*

*Cindy Fong*

*Li Wei Yang*

*Donna Young*

### *In Memory of Ruby Ling Louie*

*Cynthia and Jethro Carter*

### *In Memory of Milton and Peggy Quon*

*Anonymous*

### *Donations*

*General Lee*

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## Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 323-222-0856 Email: [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org)  
Website: [www.chssc.org](http://www.chssc.org)

*Please help us save paper and postage,  
email us to indicate your preference for an online newsletter at [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org).*

### Upcoming Events

# YARD SALE

RARE AND UNIQUE ITEMS!

Shop secondhand, vintage  
& new items of collected  
donations from the friends  
of CHSSC

**Saturday, November 5, 2022 9am-2pm**  
**620 Westboro Ave, Alhambra, CA 91803**

*Chinese/Asian items in addition  
to household, jewelry, clothes,  
accessories, etc.*



For more information: call (626) 576-8522 Anna Gee or  
Shirley Chu Ng (213) 840-2854 email [sshirley@gmail.com](mailto:sshirley@gmail.com)

All proceeds will support CHSSC, a 501c3 non-profit organization.