



SEPTEMBER 2023



## Chinese Americans Los Angeles in 1950:

FIVE  
CHINATOWNS

COMMUNITY HISTORY  
PROJECT

## Insights from the Census



Bilan Guan



Kiana Kim



Kylie Leung



Emma Zhu



Dr. William  
Gow



Celine Nguyen



Samuel Yee



Zhangyang Wu

Wednesday,  
September 6, 2023  
7:00 PM

Our Five Chinatowns research team shares their findings on Chinese Americans living in the East Adams neighborhood of Los Angeles, based on the recently released 1950 U.S. census.

Presentations by Five Chinatowns  
co-director Dr. William Gow and our 2023 summer research team.

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

Join us at our September general meeting as the CHSSC's Five Chinatowns research team shares their findings on Chinese Americans living in the East Adams neighborhood of Los Angeles, based on the recently released 1950 US census. The East Adams neighborhood was one of the most diverse in all of Los Angeles during this decade and included a sizable Chinese American population. CHSSC researchers extracted data from Chinese Americans living in the community and will share their insights on employment, gender roles, and business ownership among other topics.



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## President's message

It has been a busy summer at the Historical Society. We bid our long time archivist intern David Castro a fond farewell and we welcome new board members Calvin Cheng, Robert Chong, Annalise Harlow, Karen Jong and Albert Lowe. They will bring new energy and expertise to our organization.

If you missed our annual summer picnic, there are some pictures of this fun event in this newsletter and more on our website. A special thanks to Caitlin Bryant, our Vice President of Programs, for taking the lead on planning and setting up, Phoenix Bakery for donating their famous strawberry cr me cake, East Wind Foundation for their kung fu demonstration, and all the volunteers who made this a successful event. Caitlin even arranged to have a truck come and serve shaved ice. This was the perfect treat for a hot summer day. It was also a great time to see old friends and meet new people. I had the pleasure of meeting and talking to members with a long history with the Historical Society. It was great to put a face to a name.

We continue to have many visitors, including scholars, researchers and others interested in learning more about our Los Angeles Chinatown and about Chinese American history. Mamie Lew, the wife of the Honorable Ronald S. W. Lew, came to present a donation in honor of her late husband. You can see pictures of Mamie and the memorial for Judge Lew in this newsletter.

I think the word is getting out that we have a vast collection of archival material that we are diligently sorting out and digitizing so that they are available for research. We are currently looking for a community archivist to assist us. The job opening is posted on our website.

We are also working on many exciting projects, including the Five Chinatowns, an exhibition that will be on display at Union Station later this year and our building renovation. Our September program will feature Dr. Will Gow and the summer interns who have been working on the Five Chinatowns project. See the article in this newsletter for more details.

If you enjoy reading this newsletter, please let us know. If you are not a member, please consider joining. Your membership and donations will help us to accomplish our mission.

Ricky Leo

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS OFFICERS

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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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## Speaker Biographies



**William Gow, Ph.D.**, is a Sacramento-based community historian, educator, and documentary filmmaker. A fourth-generation Chinese American and a proud graduate of the San Francisco Unified School District, he holds an M.A. in Asian American Studies from UCLA and a Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies from UC Berkeley. He currently works as an Assistant Professor of Asian American Studies in the Ethnic Studies Department at CSU Sacramento. He has volunteered for the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California (CHSSC) for over twenty years and now serves as co-director of the CHSSC's Five Chinatowns Project.



**Bilan Guan** is from East Los Angeles, specifically Lincoln Heights (10 mins drive from LA Chinatown), where she graduated from Abraham Lincoln High School in 2022. Throughout high school, she was involved in many extracurriculars including being an active participant in Chinatown Teen Council, treasurer for Asian Community Empowerment club, and outreach coordinator for Math, Engineering, Science, Achievement club. She is an incoming sophomore at UCLA majoring in Human Biology and Society. She is currently an intern at Kaiser Permanente where she's gaining valuable clinical experience and patient care skills. She also serves on the Events Committee for Bruins for Business Health exploring her interest in the intersection of health and business. Alongside her interest in healthcare, she also enjoys college access and currently serves as an advising fellow for Matriculate, assisting first-generation low-income

students with their college applications. Outside of academic commitments, Bilan enjoys watching documentaries and movies, playing sports (badminton, tennis, ping pong, volleyball), and sightseeing. In the future, she hopes to pursue a career in the business side of healthcare or public health with an emphasis in serving under-resourced communities.



Hailing from Sacramento, California, **Kiana Kim** is a second-year transfer student at Cornell University studying Industrial and Labor Relations. A second-generation Korean American, she is deeply passionate about the nexus of public policy, race, poverty, and education. Kiana formerly engaged with UCLA's community during her first-year, notably as a senior staff for their Model UN and a finance intern for Liberty in North Korea. Currently, amidst tutoring North Korean refugees and under-resourced communities through Teach for America, she prepares to advocate for the improvement of quality education and reduce the stigma of poor to nonexistent menstrual hygiene for North Korean refugees through her international non-profit organization. She is an eager scholar who seeks to pursue an interdisciplinary career in law and education policy.



**Kylie Leung** is a rising junior at the University of Southern California studying sociology and communications. Born and raised in a predominantly white city in Delaware, she is passionate about promoting racial diversity and loves learning about historical issues and theories through sociological lenses such as intersectionality. During high school, she volunteered for UC Berkeley as a video editor to create a documentary about important Asian American historical figures. As a second generation Chinese American, she found community on campus at USC in Los Angeles by working with the Asian American Tutorial Project to create a writing program for young students in Chinatown. Additionally, she created a student documentary about Anna May Wong that was featured in the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture. Moving forward, Kylie plans to attend law school in the future and hopes to work for a non-profit organization that upholds civil and human rights.



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## Speaker Biographies (cont.)



**Celine Nguyen** is a senior at the Orange County School of the Arts (OCSA) in Santa Ana, California, in the Creative Writing and Digital Media conservatories. From being a student ambassador of OCSA's AAPI Student Union to working with VietRISE— a non-profit that advocates for working class and immigrant communities in Orange County— Celine has engaged with her community in various ways. One of the most significant experiences of hers is participating in VietRISE's TỰ LỰC Social Justice Academy, where she was able to co-facilitate a political tour about Little Saigon. Other experiences include canvassing, fundraising for nonprofits, and teaching young girls how to code.



**Zhangyang Wu** immigrated from Enping, China. In 2019, he moved to Los Angeles, United States where he entered Downtown Magnets High School. Throughout high school, Zhangyang was involved in Chinatown in many different ways. He was the President of Chinatown Teen Council for 2 years, Youth Organizer for Chinatown Community for Equitable Development, and an intern at Chinatown Service Center. He developed and launched an oral history project about Chinatown and how gentrification has impacted the community. He is very into social justice and hoped to explore related topics in the next 4 years where he will enroll in Stanford University.



**Samuel Yee** is a rising senior at UCLA majoring in Asian American Studies and Economics. Originally from Oakland, California, he is committed to uplifting both his local community and the greater AANHPI diaspora. During his time at UCLA, he has engaged in both scholarship and community organizing in the Los Angeles area. Last summer, he was awarded the 21st Century Internship at UCLA's Asian American Studies Center, where he worked as an author researcher for their ongoing Multimedia Textbook Project. In the future, Samuel hopes to attend graduate school and research ways to expand the reach of ethnic studies outside the university and beyond.

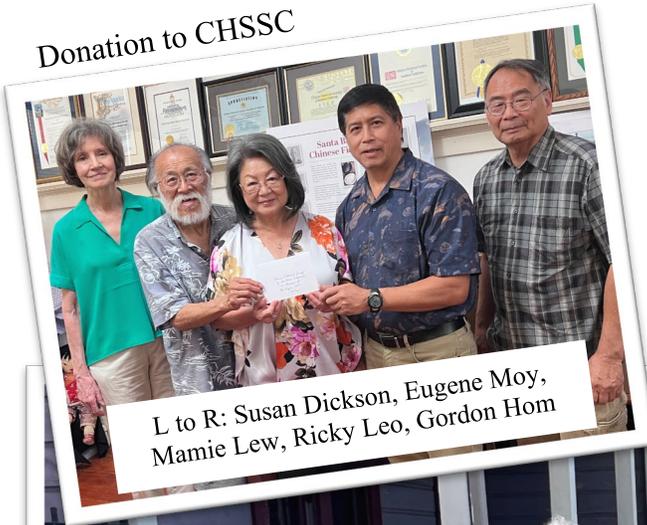


**Emma Zhu** is a Chinese American and rising senior in high school from Niantic, Connecticut who currently lives in Beijing, China. She has been a volunteer with CHSSC for a year, assisting in transcribing and clearing oral history and interview transcripts for projects like the Stanford Race Relations archive. Emma is also a fellow of the East Coast Asian American Student Union, and will be serving as the accessibility coordinator on the National Board for the 2023-2024 school year. She leads workshops on language loss, Asian American identity, and civic engagement. She is interested in studying Asian American studies in the future and hopes to further her knowledge about the historical context of the Chinese American experience through this internship.



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Donation to CHSSC



L to R: Susan Dickson, Eugene Moy, Mamie Lew, Ricky Leo, Gordon Hom

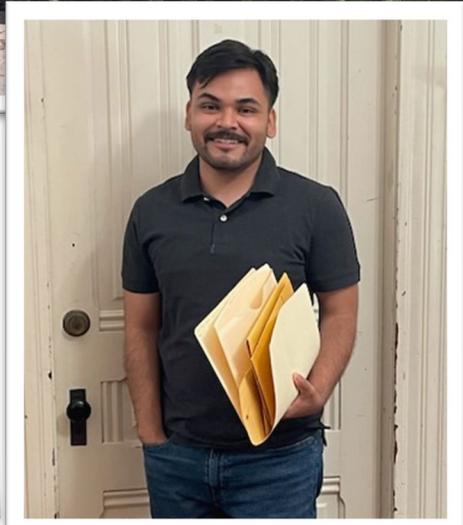
# Behind the Scenes at CHSSC



Ilena Moses & Linda Bentz



Anne-Marie Maxwell (KCET)



Last day for our Archivist Intern David Castro



Professor Di Luo from Alabama working with letters from our Sam Chang collection



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## Summer Picnic

See more pictures:  
<https://chssc.org/summer-picnic-2023/>





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## In Memoriam

### The Honorable Ronald S. W. Lew

September 19, 1941 – May 19, 2023

Judge Ronald Sing Wai Lew (劉成威) was born in Los Angeles, the third of nine children. His father was a Chinese launderer who operated the Mandarin Laundry in Downtown Los Angeles. Judge Lew worked his way through school in his father's laundry business.

After graduation from Loyola University, Judge Lew began Southwestern University School of Law. His legal education was interrupted by the draft into the U.S. Army where he served as a First Lieutenant. Afterwards, he returned to Southwestern and began practicing law in 1971. He worked as a deputy city attorney for two years before going into the private practice of law.

In 1987, President Ronald Reagan appointed Judge Lew to the federal bench for the Central District of California. He was the first Chinese American appointed as a United States District Judge in the continental U.S.

Judge Lew was involved in public service for a number of years. Also active in civic, community affairs, Judge Lew helped to establish the Chinatown Service Center, the Asian Pacific American Bar Association, and the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association. He is survived by his wife of 53 years, Mamie, 4 children, and many grandchildren.

## Donations for July / August

### *In Honor of Cindy Fong's Birthday*

*Susan Sing*

### *In Memory of Judge Ronald S.W. Lew*

*Mamie Lew*

### *Donations*

*Linda Bentz*

*Leona Lau*

*Winnie Lew*



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## Announcements

### **Docent training for Los Angeles Chinatown walking tours**

We have developed a training manual for walking tours of L.A. Chinatown. If you are interested in becoming a docent for CHSSC, please email us at [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org).

### **Yosemite Pilgrimage**

Plans for our Yosemite Pilgrimage in October are on-going. For more information, contact Eugene Moy at [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org).

### **Job Opening**

We are looking for a Community Archivist. For details, go to <https://chssc.org/community-archivist/>.