

Editors' Note

Each year, the editor's note is meant to both celebrate the scholarship produced by the *Asian American Law Journal* (AALJ) and reflect on recent issues affecting the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community. The articles and pieces that AALJ is publishing this year are certainly worthy of celebration. However, their publication cannot, and should not, be divorced from the context of the unprecedented events of 2019–2020. The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and protests for racial justice highlight questions that this journal has sought to answer since its inception: Where do Asian Americans find themselves in the fraught legal and political landscape of the United States? How can Asian American voices continue to contribute in important and effective ways?

This past year, the removal of the name “Boalt Hall” from the law school's building demonstrated the power of AAPI voices here at Berkeley Law. John Henry Boalt, the building's previous namesake, supported the Chinese Exclusion Act in a speech he delivered in the late nineteenth century, entitled “The Chinese Question.” With the support of AAPI organizations around the country, Berkeley Law struck his name from the building in January. We are proud that many members of the journal were able to contribute their own voices to this moment, and we are grateful to Professor Charles P. Reichmann for publishing his pivotal piece on John Boalt in our 25th Volume.

However, our work is not yet over. From the rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans following the pandemic's inception in China to the political uncertainty of a community that is neither Black nor White, perhaps it is no surprise that all of the pieces published this year seek to clarify and empower the AAPI political identity. The mandate of this journal is to speak truth to power. The authors this year demonstrate that Asian Americans speak this truth from a whole host of social, economic, and cultural positions. As this country continues down what seems to be an ever-rockier road towards inclusion and freedom from oppression, the work this journal does to amplify important, but often unheard, legal scholarship becomes more and more crucial.

Volume 27 consists of three articles, an interview, and an artwork, all representing obstacles that Asian Americans historically had, and presently have, to overcome. In the first article, *Two Recent Supreme Court Decisions and Changing Demographics Underscore the Importance of US Citizenship*, Professor Elizabeth R. OuYang analyzes two recent Supreme Court cases to argue that these decisions indicate the importance of naturalization and citizenship in the United States in enhancing AAPI's political, economic, and social power. Professor OuYang implores immigrant communities to urgently seek naturalization in an increasingly anti-immigrant climate in

order to maximize Asian American voices.

The second piece is an adapted transcript of an interview by Professor Edward J.W. Park, who discusses the history and present implications of the Los Angeles Civil Unrest of 1992. *The Political Formation of Korean Americans, 1992–2019: From Ethnic Politics to Managing Transnational Lives* explores the origins of conflict between the Black and Korean American population in South Central Los Angeles. In doing so, this interview explains the detriments of Asian Americans being labeled the “model minority” as it continues to hinder Asian Americans from finding their voice in a society that is seen to be either Black or White.

In the third piece, *The Inscrutable SHSAT*, Chris M. Kwok provides commentary on and critiques the proposed elimination of the Specialized High School Admissions Test, a standardized exam required for admission into specialized high schools. The author sheds light on the concerns of important policy decisions that, in an attempt to promote racial equality, actually render the Asian American community invisible because Asian Americans are often not considered when developing these proposals.

Fourth is Professor Peter Nien-chu Kiang’s *Exploring Boston’s Nisei Sources and Contributions to the Japanese American Redress Movement*, which underscores the importance of preserving Asian American legacy and identity, particularly in the context of Japanese American redress. Professor Kiang recognizes the strong coalition and much-needed activism by Japanese Americans in the Boston area and aims to provide more scholarship surrounding the under-studied post-war Japanese American experience.

Finally, we have artwork created by Trinh Mai, entitled *From the Snare of the Fowler*. The artist depicts the Vietnamese refugee and immigrant experience in her art. The piece reflects the intergenerational trauma of refugees and aims to turn these experiences into a source of courage and empowerment to communities who have similar experiences.

This year, AALJ also organized a variety of social and educational events. At the Thirteenth Annual Neil Gotanda Lecture, the journal hosted Professor Kathleen Kim of Loyola Law School. Professor Kim spoke on the failure of the Thirteenth Amendment and current immigration laws to protect victims of race-based labor subordination. She traced this failure from the chattel slavery of Blacks to the modern-day exploitation of Asian migrant workers. Further, she discussed her own difficulties and successes in representing victims of forced labor and how the AAPI experience affects her research and work.

The journal was also able to introduce a new undergraduate mentorship program in coordination with the Asian Pacific American Pre-Law Association (APAPLA) under the stewardship of our external affairs team, Rachel Wu and Alex Mabanta. Our hope is that AALJ carries forward its legacy of introducing up-and-coming AAPI voices not just through publication but also by fostering relationships with Berkeley’s undergraduate AAPI community. Many of our members participated in a

variety of networking, panel, and mentorship events over the year, and we expect those relationships, and the journal's relationship with APAPLA, to continue to flourish.

Due to COVID-19, the journal faced its fair share of difficulties, all of which it overcame through the hard work and generosity of its members. We had to cancel our annual symposium just a few hours prior to its start in response to COVID-19 concerns. We cannot thank our symposium team, led by Shreya Santhanam and Melanie Kim, enough for their hard work in not only planning the event but also for their masterful handling of these unfortunate and unforeseen circumstances. We also want to thank our members who were able to attend and help usher in a new generation of AAPI lawyers at AALJ's meet-and-greet during Berkeley Law's virtual admitted students week. Despite these new challenges arising out of unprecedented times, our journal has demonstrated its ability to adapt and effectively respond to change.

We look forward to seeing where our new Editors-in-Chief, Stephanie Tilden and Shreya Santhanam, take AALJ this upcoming academic year. The impressive competence with which they have both approached their previous roles allay any and all concerns we may have about AALJ in this remarkable period of human history. We thank them and the rest of the new editorial board for what they have already done for this organization and the strides we are confident they will continue to take.

There are many other parties to the success of AALJ this year we could thank in detail, including our sponsors, event partners, various faculty and staff of Berkeley Law, and each and every member. However, as law journal editors, we have often asked our authors to remain concise and efficient, and we would be remiss to not take our own advice. Instead, we will leave this note with our oft-quoted line from Japanese-American poet, Janice Mirikitani: "We give testimony. Our noise is dangerous."

In solidarity,

Grace Lee, Ryan Sun, and Wesley Tiu
Editors-in-Chief and Managing Editor
2019-2020, Volume 27
Asian American Law Journal