

DECEMBER 2021

## The Ningpo Legend - December Monthly Meeting



Catalina Island has a nautical celebrity: the wreck of a traditional Chinese merchant ship from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, a vessel which survived the Opium Wars, the Taiping Rebellion, the Chinese Revolution, and ended up as a speak-easy anchored off California's southern coastline. This presentation will look at the origins, history and context of the Ningpo ("Peaceful Wave"), and what we might learn from the site in the future.

**Hans Van Tilburg** is a historian and maritime archaeologist for NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries in the Pacific Hawaii to Jamaica and elsewhere. Chinese maritime history and nautical technology are some of his specialty interests in the in the field of underwater cultural preservation in the Asia Pacific area.

**CHSSC Meeting will be online on Zoom:**  
Program: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 at 7:00 PM  
**To register, go to [chssc.org](http://chssc.org)**



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## President's Letter

COVID-19 caused CHSSC to pivot, to rethink our possibilities. Once again, due to the pandemic, CHSSC members, their families and friends will be unable to gather for our annual holiday potluck. Instead, I hope that you join us for another interesting monthly program. These Zoom programs allow us to reach a wider audience and attract speakers outside our local area.

The pivot to using Zoom allowed us work towards our mission in unexpected ways. Earlier this year Linda Bentz worked with UC Riverside interns and taught them how to use a wide variety of sources to research Chinese American history. The resulting presentations, which we have put online, reflected new knowledge that they discovered. Likewise, summer interns taught by Will Gow and Kelly Fong this past summer, worked remotely from other states to research topics useful to our upcoming book project.

Now that CHSSC needs to have an online presence, our grant requests and donation requests have changed. Fortunately, our donors have supported our expanded vision. Cathay Bank awarded a grant that allowed us to hire a collections manager. Other major donations helped us hire interns who are working to make online exhibits and make our archives accessible online. The Louie Family Foundation is funding an online exhibit for our website about Grandview Gardens.

Our biggest success of the year had great online coverage in the news and on the Internet. Nine years ago, CHSSC began conducting a yearly Pilgrimage to Yosemite in an effort to make the contributions of the Chinese to the development of Yosemite known. On October 1, 2021, CHSSC members attended the ribbon-cutting of a new exhibit of Chinese American history which is in a former Chinese Laundry in Yosemite. When the exhibit, now closed for the winter, reopens to the public in April, visitors will be able to learn about Chinese American history in that area every year. In the meantime, you can experience the ribbon cutting ceremony and take a virtual tour by visiting these sites:

<https://fb.watch/9lst7Xhkz4/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=84DHmOFFtTg>

Moving forward requires community support of CHSSC. Please consider a donation to CHSSC that will help fund our collections manager, our interns, and our monthly facility operations. Don't forget to join CHSSC or renew your membership.

Susan Dickson

## 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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## Congressional Gold Medal Presentation Ceremonies

On November 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>, CHSSC was a community partner for C.A.C.A. ceremonies in Los Angeles and Simi Valley. At the four ceremonies, living Chinese American WWII veterans or their families received bronze replicas of the Congressional Gold Medal which was enacted in 2018. A special thanks to Major Generals Robert Lee, Suzanne Vares-Lum and Ted Wong as well as C.A.C.A. National President Melanie Chan.



Kathryn Kwok receives medal for  
her husband John J. Kwok



Mei Ong receives medal and Bronze Star for  
her father Fook Doon Tuey



Cathy Tom receives medal and Bronze Star for  
her father George O. Soo Hoo



Dorothy Schoon receives medal for  
her husband Robert Schoon Jr.



## The Five Chinatowns Project Needs Your Support!

As part of an on-going effort to document Chinese American history in Los Angeles, we seek community support in our research on Old Chinatown, New Chinatown, Chinatown, China City, City Market, and East Adams.

### Research:

- Do you know someone who resided or worked in the China City, City Market, or the East Adams neighborhood prior to 1965 who would be willing to share their experiences in an interview?
- Do you have photos of life in the five Chinatowns that we could scan?
- Do you have a copy of the DVD made from the interviews conducted in Cerritos in October 2009 during the “Heritage of Faith Reunion” of people who had gone to the “True Light” historically known as “Chinese Presbyterian Church”?

### Fundraising:

The CHSSC is now actively fundraising for our project. Funds will be used to support youth internships, research, and oral histories. For more information about this project, see the recording of the September Monthly Meeting at <https://tinyurl.com/CHSSC5Chinatowns>.

### Donate \$250:

Receive one copy of *Linking Our Lives*, one copy of *Bridging the Centuries*, and one signed copy of *The Five Chinatowns* upon release.

### Donate \$500 or more:

Receive an acknowledgement in the book as well as one copy of *Linking Our Lives*, one copy of *Bridging the Centuries*, and one signed copy of *The Five Chinatowns* upon release

### Donate \$5,000 or more:

You can name the 2022 Summer Youth Internship after yourself or a person of your choosing. You will also receive one copy of *Linking Our Lives*, one copy of *Bridging the Centuries*, and one signed copy of *The Five Chinatowns* upon release.

If you can help, please email us at [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org).



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## Five Chinatowns

Help Us Identify These Historical Photos from East Adams  
Do you recognize anyone in these photos?



Graduates, Chinese Presbyterian Church in East Adams, circa 1940s.



The Chinese School in East Adams.



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## Wellington Yee Kwan (1922-2021)



CHSSC members Rick Eng and Eugene Moy  
presenting the CGM medal to Wellington  
April 18, 2021.

Wellington Kwan, older brother of CHSSC member Hiram Kwan, was stationed in China where he worked in the Signal Corps during WWII. Upon his return, he attended officer's candidate school and became a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant in the Army Corps of Engineers. Wellington worked as an immigration lawyer in Los Angeles until the age of 86. Wellington was active in the community, serving as a deacon in the Chinese Congregational Church, and president of the Lions Club and the Chinese American Democratic Party.

## Mary Yee Kwok (1936-2021)

Mary Huey, who was born in Brooklyn, NY, was the youngest of six children. After marrying Charles (Chuck) Yee, they moved to California so that Chuck could start his eventual work on the Apollo Space Mission.

In 1976, Mary and Chuck were Charter Members of the CHSSC. They believed in the importance of understanding our roots and heritage. In 1980, they helped organize the Lang Station Golden Spike Centennial Celebration to honor the Chinese workers who had built the railroad between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Four years later, Mary served as the Membership Secretary of CHSSC. Mary and Chuck helped to develop the LA Chinatown Walking Tour Map guide. During the mid-80s, Mary also served as Vice President of CHSSC as well as the chairperson of the CHSSC Progressive Dinner for two years. In 2004 Mary joined the Board of Directors for another two years. Mary continued to regularly attend CHSSC monthly meetings at Castelar Elementary School.



Although a mother of five who ran the family print shop, Mary was very active in her church as well as the community. She was on the board of the Friends of the Chinatown Library and tutored at the library every Saturday for many years.

Six years after the death of Chuck in 1987, Mary married Andy Kwok. Andy and Mary traveled and enjoyed their lives as grandparents. After Andy's passing, Mary continued to be active in her church.



## Grandview Gardens Exhibit: CHSSC NEEDS YOUR HELP

Thanks to a generous donation by the Louie Family Foundation, CHSSC will be launching an online exhibit in 2022 about Grandview Gardens, which was located in New Chinatown. Did you or a family member have an event there? We need interior restaurant photos and your remembrances of Grandview Gardens. We will scan and return any photos. Please contact us at [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org).

## November Donations

### ***In Memory of Wellington Kwan***

*Robert Kwan*

### ***In Memory of Mary Yee Kwok***

*Eugene Moy and Susan Sing*

*Bill and Marjorie Yee*

### ***In Memory of John Jung***

*Sylvia S. Minnick*

### ***Major Donors***

*L.A. Chinatown Firecracker Run Committee*

*Anonymous*

### ***Donors***

*Jane Anthony*

*The Blackbaud Giving Fund*

*Mabel Wong Hogle*

*Derrick Lim*

*Susie Ling*

*William Minderhout*

*The Allen Wong Family*

*Chuck Woo*



# 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).



## Membership Form

New Membership

Renewal

Membership levels:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Silver \$57

Address \_\_\_\_\_

100x100 Club \$100

City \_\_\_\_\_

Diamond \$300

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

Senior (60+) or student \$32

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to: Chinese Historical Society of Southern California  
411 Bernard St, Los Angeles, CA 90012

Please make checks payable to CHSSC.

To join or renew your membership by credit card  
visit our website at [chssc.org](http://chssc.org)

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newsletter mailed to your home.

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