

DECEMBER 2023



## OPEN & HOUSE



December 9, 2023

1:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Chinatown Heritage Center

411 & 415 Bernard St

Holiday Treats, Hot Soup and  
Warm Fellowship



View our exhibits, browse our library

Free Event. Please RSVP to [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org)





# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

DECEMBER 2023

## President's message

It's hard to believe that another year is almost over. It has been an eventful year, Russia's invasion of Ukraine; the emergence of artificial intelligence; and the writers, actors and auto worker strikes.

At CHSSC, we have had an eventful year as well. We continue to have interesting speakers for our monthly program, including Dr. Russell Low, Dr. David Lowe, Hailey Soh, Ron Chew, our own David Castro and Albert Lowe, Professor Dudley Gardner, Jessica Chew, Dr Will Gow & his interns, Lisa See, and Michelle Bailey. I would like to thank Bob Lee of the China Society for allowing us to co-sponsor the programs with Lisa See and Michelle Bailey.

I was given the opportunity to serve as the president for 2023-2024. Our walking tour docents have led almost two dozen Chinatown tours since the year began. A StoryMap for Los Angeles Chinatown Walking Tour was created by Riona Tsai. We tabled at the Santa Barbara Asian American & Pacific Islander event, Our Summer Picnic was a great event that was planned and set up by our Caitlin Bryant. Eugene Moy and Susan Dickson were interviewed by KCET for an episode of Lost LA to be aired in 2024. Our 11<sup>th</sup> Yosemite Pilgrimage was completed in October with guest speaker Phil Sexton. The "Where You Stand: Chinatown 1880 to 1939" Exhibit at Union Station opened in October. Thank you Eugene Moy and Linda Bentz for doing the research and Grace Leo for providing some translations. Your hard work has helped to make the exhibit a success.

We continue to digitize our archival materials to make them available to the public. A team of scholars and professionals came to CHSSC to scan letters from our Sam Chang Collection so that they can be preserved and shared with others. The Five Chinatowns Project is still underway with a book release expected in 2024. We have made investments in upgrading our IT resources that support the work that we do. This includes both hardware and software. Progress has been made on our proposed building upgrade to include ADA compliant ramps and bathrooms.

We are extremely grateful to all of our donors who have enabled us to offer our programs and activities and to continue our research and processing of our collections. This year we will be launching a Giving Tuesday campaign and hope that you will continue to support us with your financial contributions.



Ricky Leo

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### OFFICERS

Ricky Leo, President  
Gordon Hom, Vice President  
Susan Dickson, Secretary  
Franklin Mah, Treasurer  
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Linda Bentz  
Calvin Cheng  
Robert Chong  
Cindy Fong  
Annalise Harlow  
Angela Lancaster  
Grace Leo  
Albert Lowe  
Felicia Tabing

## 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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## December Open House

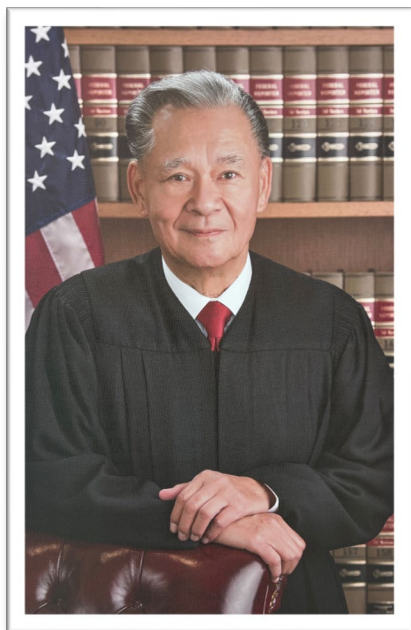
In lieu of our monthly program, we will be having an Open House at our Chinatown Heritage Center.

### Special Session of Court for Honorable Ronald S.W. Lew

By Grace Leo

On November 2, 2023, my husband Ricky and I were invited to a special court session celebrating the memory of Honorable Ronald S.W. Lew. Although I have never met Judge Lew, I first met his wife Mamie when she presented a donation to CHSSC this past summer. I met Mamie and her family again at the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association's 48<sup>th</sup> Installation & Awards Banquet in October. She gave us a personal invitation to the special session of court for her late husband. Listening to the speakers who talked about their personal experiences with Judge Lew, I gained a much deeper understanding of his powerful influence on the people around him and the legal profession.

One story that was near and dear to my heart was about his desire to help immigrants to this country. He presided over many ceremonies where he presented these immigrants with their American citizenship. I recall my own ceremony and how special it was when all of my fellow students, faculty, and even the President of the University of Wyoming came to watch me become a U.S. citizen. I needed my citizenship in order to get my teaching credentials. This opened the door for better opportunities for me and allowed me to contribute to my new country. I look back at this with great pride. One of the speakers told of a time when the U.S. Government considered replacing the citizenship ceremony with a clerk who would just issue a citizenship certificate. I learned that Judge Lew testified before Congress about the importance of the citizenship ceremony and the important role a judge served in it. I am grateful that his compelling testimony changed the minds of these Congressmen.



Honorable Ronald S.W. Lew



Judge Ronald & Mamie Lew's Grandchildren

Back row (L to R): Megan Eng, Brandon Eng, Zachary Sun, Timothy Eng, Connor Eng, Krista Eng  
Second row (L to R): Kaylee Eng, Taylor Sun, Jady Lew, Londyn Lew  
Front row (L to R): Brooklyn Lew, Mamie Lew, Parker Lew  
Missing from the photo are: Dylan Cohen, Tiffany Sun, Joshua Sun, and Noah Cohen.



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## Where You Stand: Chinatown 1880 to 1939 你所處的位置：唐人街 1880 年至 1939 年

By Linda Bentz

Union Station stands at the site of Los Angeles' original Chinatown. This once vibrant community of families, businesses, and associations with roots going back to the middle of the 19th century was a place where residents persisted, grew rapidly, and thrived. *Where You Stand: Chinatown 1880 to 1939* invites participants into the center of the vibrant community through a multi-dimensional experience. Installed in the Union Station Waiting Room Gallery, one can view the exhibit's historic photographs, listen to oral history recordings, and use augmented reality to see artifact materials superimposed within locations around Union Station. Audiences can explore the site's historic layers, formerly a collection of alleyways, streets, and buildings, and home to thousands of Chinese residents in the late 19th to early 20th century Los Angeles.

This temporary exhibition is part of a wider collaboration among Metro Art, The Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West, the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California, USC Cinema, and the Huntington Library that will culminate in an augmented reality (AR) experience and associated project website made possible in part with the support of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The translations and additional elements of the exhibit are accessible using QR codes with your mobile device or by visiting [whereyoustand.site](http://whereyoustand.site).





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## Ribbon Cutting at Vista Canyon Metrolink Station

By Ricky Leo

On October 21, 2023, I was honored to speak at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the newest Metrolink station in Santa Clarita, the Vista Canyon Metrolink Station. The historic plaque that CHSSC dedicated in 1976 at the nearby Lang Station site, which is no longer accessible, was moved to this new location. At that time, CHSSC had only been organized less than one year earlier. The 1976 dedication was for the 100th anniversary of the driving of the ceremonial golden spike representing the first rail connection between San Francisco and Los Angeles.



### My Speech

Mayor Gibbs, Supervisor Barger, Representatives from Metrolink and our other distinguished speakers and guests, it is a great honor for me to speak today on behalf of the Chinese Historical Society of Southern California.

As the current president, I would like to applaud the work of Metro to provide a new location for the historic plaques that my organization and the Santa Clarita Valley Historical Society had installed and dedicated forty seven years ago in September 1976. Our historical society had only been organized less than a year earlier in November 1975. We felt that it was important to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the driving of the golden spike at Lang Station, linking the rail line between Northern and Southern California. Our plaque commemorated the Chinese contribution to the building of the

Southern Pacific Railroad and the San Fernando Tunnel which linked San Francisco to Los Angeles. We returned on September 5, 2001 on the 125th anniversary ceremony organized by Metrolink. In attendance was Former California Secretary of State March Fong Eu. I would like to quote part of her speech:

*“We stand today on hallowed ground, consecrated by the blood, sweat, and tears of 3,000 laborers of Chinese ancestry... As with the building of the first Transcontinental Railroad, it was the vision of railroad magnate Charles Crocker, doing what others would not, or could not do. They battled solid rock, blistering heat, and desiccating winds. Cave-ins, boiler explosions and breaking cables claimed lives and limbs. As they cut their way through the San Fernando mountains, their daily progress was measured by fractions of an inch... The 7,000 foot long San Fernando Tunnel remains as one of the state’s engineering marvels. Chinese laborers had, once again, done the impossible, but they received no credit for their triumph. In fact, the final 1,000 feet of track was laid by Caucasian workers.”*

The Chinese Historical Society returns here today, for the re-dedication of the plaques at this new location, which will ensure their long-term preservation. Our plaque honors the Chinese laborers who not only helped to unite a nation, but the state of California as well. We need to keep their story alive so that future generations will know and appreciate their contributions.

Thank you to Metro and all those involved for this opportunity to join in the celebration today.





# Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

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## Events

November Dinner/Program with  
China Society and Michelle Bailey,  
Asst. Curator, Huntington Library

Front Yard Maintenance  
Landscape Crew:  
Alex Yang, Max Yang and Bill Yang (dad)  
Our Chinatown neighbors



CHSSC Table at Chinese American  
Museum Historymakers Gala  
Clockwise, Left: Cindy Fong, Betty Wong,  
Helen Lee, Anita Lee, Gordon Hom,  
Donna Lee, Ricky Leo, Shirley Chu Ng,  
Cindy Yee, Grace Leo



## Donations for November

### *Donations*

*Annie Siu*

*Ben and Doreen Nakayama*

*Anonymous*



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Chinese Historical Society  
of Southern California

南加州華人歷史學會

## 2024 ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

### YOUR 2023 MEMBERSHIP HAS SUPPORTED THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

Virtual walking tour of Chinatown and walking tour training manual.

Digitalized our Chinese language materials.

Processing the Paul Chace library donated in November 2021.

Three archivists working on our physical and digital archives and our library.

Organized and launched the online version of the Southern California Oral History project.

Summer intern research using 1950 census of the East Adams area for our  
"The Five Chinatowns" book project with partner UCLA Asian American Studies Center.

Augmented reality exhibit of Old Chinatown at Union Station.



### YOUR 2024 MEMBERSHIP WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS:

Begin renovation of our Chinatown Heritage Center.

Andrew Mellon UCLA Intern

Continuing partnership with Huntington-USC Institute on California and the West.

Finding aids for our archives on the Online Archive of California.

Grants from Cathay Bank & Louie Family Foundation.

☐

New Membership

☐

Renewal

Name

Address

City

State

Zip

Phone

Email

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

#### Membership Levels

☐

Regular

\$ 57

☐

100x100 Club

\$ 100

☐

Supporter

\$ 300

☐

Senior (60+) or student

\$ 32

Donation (tax deductible)

\$

TOTAL

\$

Please make checks payable to CHSSC

☐

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

☐

Check here if you would like our  
newsletter sent via email.

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

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



## Chinese Historical Society of Southern California

411 Bernard Street, Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Phone: 323-352-8824 Email: [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org)  
Website: <https://chssc.org/>

### Current and Upcoming Events

#### **“Where You Stand: Chinatown 1880 to 1939” Exhibit at Union Station**

The exhibit invites participants into the center of the vibrant community of families, businesses, and associations through a multi-dimensional experience of the Chinese community of early Los Angeles.

View historic photographs, listen to oral history recordings, and view augmented reality presentations superimposed onto other locations around Union Station.

#### **December 6, Inscrutable: Anti-Asian Violence, Racial Confusions, and the Proximity of History**

Gordon Chang, professor of history at Stanford University and this year's Los Angeles Times Distinguished Fellow, discusses the surge in anti-Asian violence during the pandemic and its roots in a long and often overlooked history. Free with registration. Wednesday, December 6, 7:30 pm – 8:30 pm, Rothenberg Hall, Huntington Library, 1151 Oxford Road, San Marino, CA

<https://huntington.org/event/inscrutable-anti-asian-violence-racial-confusions-and-proximity-history>

#### **Walking Tour Guides Needed!**

Join our walking tour training.

**Contact CHSSC: [info@chssc.org](mailto:info@chssc.org)**