

THOMPSON HONORS SIX CITY LEADERS AT ASIAN AND PACIFIC ISLAND HERITAGE CELEBRATION



New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. with honorees at his Asian Pacific Island Heritage celebration at Surrogate's Court on Monday, May 9, 2005. Pictured (back, l to r) are: Susan J. Onuma, Esq., President, Japanese American Association of New York; Irwin K. Liu, Esq., Senior Partner, Liu & Choy, PLLC; (front, l to r) Mark Ming-Shing Lii, President, Ten Ren Tea and Ginseng Company, Inc.; Byong-In Choi, President, Milal Mission of New York; Aurora Nazareno-Ocampo, President, University of the Philippines Nursing Alumni Association of New York/New Jersey; Thompson; and, Thang Q. Thai, Chairman, Indochina Sino-American Community Center

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New York City Comptroller William C. Thompson, Jr. last night honored six city leaders at his fourth annual celebration of Asian and Pacific Island Heritage on Monday, May 9, 2005. The event was co-sponsored by Asian Americans for Equality, the Asian American Federation, the Chinese American Planning Council and the Korean American League for Civic Action.

Addressing more than 175 people gathered at the Surrogate Courthouse, Comptroller Thompson recognized the important contributions that New Yorkers of Asian and Pacific Island heritage have made to New York City .

“Since the city's earliest days, New Yorkers with roots in China, Thailand, Cambodia, Vietnam, Korea, Japan, the Philippines and many more Asian and Pacific Island nations have played an important role in the city's economic, civic, and cultural life,” Thompson said.

“Every year, this participation grows by leaps and bounds. As new families arrive, Asian communities throughout the five boroughs continue to grow. And every year, increasing numbers of Asian Americans rise to great heights in all professions and pursuits, playing an increasingly prominent role in all aspects of city life.”

“We need to honor the hard work and determination of the early immigrants, who broke down barriers and made it possible for the next generation to go a little further and reach a little higher. And we need to pay tribute to the role models of today, who are working hard to make New York City a better place for all of us.”

Thompson called the honorees role models who have provided outstanding community leadership.

The Comptroller presented the first award to Byong-In Choi, the founder of Milal Mission, a service organization that assists Korean Americans with disabilities. Since it was founded, Milal Mission has provided a wide range of programs, from after-school tutoring and vocational training to support visits at hospitals and homes. The organization also operates a home care facility for individuals with developmental disabilities.

“Byong-In Choi has shown extraordinary dedication to helping those in need, and has contributed greatly to the quality of life in our communities,” Thompson said.

The second honoree was attorney and community leader Susan J. Onuma. As a partner with the law firm of Kelley Drye & Warren, she serves as outside general counsel to U.S. subsidiaries of Japanese corporations in the manufacturing, trade, real estate, transportation, pharmaceutical, fashion, media and service industries. She also is President of the Japanese American Association of New York and acts as the Corporate Secretary of the Japan Society.

“Ms. Onuma has achieved great heights professionally, and has given generously of her time and support to a wide range of civic and community endeavors,” Thompson said.

The next honoree was Irwin K. Liu, senior partner at Liu and Choy, a law firm that serves a range of corporate, government, and private clients, specializing in real estate transactions. Mr. Liu is also Vice President and Chief Counsel of Summit Associates, a real estate specialty firm.

He also serves as President of the Pan Asian Leadership Caucus and Assistant Secretary of the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency.

“Over the course of his distinguished professional career, Mr. Liu has shown tremendous leadership and worked hard to strengthen businesses and communities,” Thompson said.

The fourth honoree was Aurora Nazareno-Ocampo, who has provided exemplary service to the elderly and the infirm in our communities. Ms. Aurora Nazareno-Ocampo was the first woman president of United Asian Lions Club of Staten Island. As Chairperson of the group's nursing home visitation program, a post she has held since 1988, she spearheaded efforts to bring music and dance entertainment to nursing home residents. Ms. Nazareno-Ocampo is also Vice President of the Asian American Coalition of Staten Island.

“Ms. Nazareno-Ocampo has provided dedicated community service and shown outstanding commitment to brightening the lives of senior citizens,” Thompson said.


The next honoree was Mark Ming-Shing Lii, a businessman who has earned much respect as a community leader. Mr. Lii is the President of Ten Ren Tea and Ginseng Company, an international company that operates four stores in New York . He serves as Director of both the Chinese Chamber of Commerce and the Taiwan Merchant Association.

“Mr. Lii has achieved great heights professionally, and has made tremendous contributions to the quality of life in our city,” Thompson said.

The final honoree was Thang Q. Thai, Chairman of the Indochina SinoAmerican Community Center , a not-for-profit organization that provides programs and social services to low-income refugees and immigrants from Southeast Asian countries. Mr. Thai works at New York Life Insurance Company in Insurance Sales, where he has been particularly successful in providing financial and insurance solutions to companies in the Southeast Asian market.

“He holds a distinguished record of providing extraordinary assistance to refugees, helping individuals and families find housing, navigate the school system, and overcome the challenges of cultural and language barriers,” Thompson said.

Students from the New York Chinese School performed at the event.



William C. Thompson, Jr.
Comptroller of the City of New York

Asian Americans for Equality
Asian American Federation
Chinese American Planning Council and
Korean American League for Civic Action

cordially invite you to join them in celebration of

Asian Pacific Island Heritage

Monday, May 9, 2005

5:30 - 7:30 PM

Surrogate Court House Lobby
31 Chambers Street
(corner of Chambers and Centre Streets)

DISTINGUISHED HONOREES

Byong-In Choi
President
Milal Mission of
New York

Mark Ming-Shing Lii
President
Ten Ren Tea and
Ginseng Company, Inc.

Susan J. Onuma
President
Japanese American
Association of New York

Irwin K. Liu, Esq.
Senior Partner
Liu & Choy, PLLC

Aurora Nazareno Ocampo
President
University of the Philippines
Nursing Alumni

Thang Q. Thai
Chairman
Indochina Sino-American
Community Center

SPECIAL PERFORMANCE

New York Chinese School

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