

OAKLAND CITY COUNCIL

RESOLUTION NO. _____ C.M.S.

INTRODUCED BY COUNCIL PRESIDENT NIKKI FORTUNATO BAS AND
COUNCILMEMBER JANANI RAMACHANDRAN

**RESOLUTION IN CELEBRATION OF MAY 2023 AS ASIAN AMERICAN
AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH AND HONORING
ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS WHOSE SERVICE
AND LEADERSHIP IN OAKLAND CONTRIBUTE TO A MORE
VIBRANT AND JUST CITY**

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have made essential and enduring contributions to the history of Oakland, California, and the nation, helping to build, defend, and strengthen our nation – as farmworkers and railroad laborers, entrepreneurs and scientists, soldiers, public sector workers, health professionals, artists, community activists and leaders of government; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have endured hardships, including unjust working conditions, prejudice, and discrimination in some of the darkest times in our country's history, including the Chinese Exclusion Act, naturalized citizenship ineligibility, the Alien Land Law, anti-miscegenation laws, and Japanese internment; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans continue to cultivate and advance innovative knowledge, economic growth and unique cultural vitality in the fields of art, fashion, business, technology, medicine, science, education, government, law, humanities, sports, and entertainment; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans have led and joined a long legacy of activism and organizing in the United States in the movements for civil rights, immigrants' rights, women's rights, workers' rights, LGBTQ rights, racial justice, and environmental justice, much of which took root in Oakland and the surrounding Bay Area during the 1960s and continues today; and

WHEREAS, Oakland is home to nearly 70,000 Asian and Pacific Islander Americans, and Asian and Pacific Islander Americans are one of the fastest growing ethnic populations in California and the United States; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Pacific Islander Americans comprise more than 17 percent of Oakland’s population and represent diverse ancestries that include, but are not limited to, Asian Indian, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Burmese, Cambodian, Chamorro, Chinese, Taiwanese, Filipino, Hmong, Indonesian, Iu-Mien, Iwo Jiman, Guamanian, Japanese, Korean, Laotian, Malaysian, Maldivian, Mongolian, Nepalese, Native Hawaiian, Vietnamese, Okinawan, Pakistani, Samoan, Singaporean, Sri Lankan, Thai, Tongan, and other Pacific Islander; and

WHEREAS, there are many challenges that predominantly Southeast Asian and Pacific Islander members of the diverse Asian and Pacific Islander American community are facing, including higher rates of poverty, incarceration, health disparities, and limited English proficiency; and

WHEREAS, the federal government and the State of California officially designate May as “Asian Pacific American Heritage Month” and the theme for 2023 is “Advancing Leaders Through Opportunity”; and

WHEREAS, the celebration of Asian and Pacific Islander American Heritage Month offers Oakland residents an opportunity to recognize the achievements, contributions, challenges, and history of Asian and Pacific Islander Americans; and

WHEREAS, the Oakland City Council would like to honor the following individuals for their contributions to a more vibrant and just Oakland; and

WHEREAS, District 1 is honored to recognize Archana Nagraj, the Executive Director of Destiny Arts Center. A 35 year old anchor organization in Oakland, Destiny Arts Center uses movement-based arts to ignite and inspire social change, uplift youth voices, advocate for justice and equity, and build a community where everyone feels seen, valued, and free. Originally from Boston, by way of New York City, Ms. Nagraj has been with Destiny Arts Center since 2015. Ms. Nagraj holds a Masters in Public Health from Columbia University and a Masters in Social Work from Rutgers University. She believes that the arts are fundamental to positive social change and community health. Ms. Nagraj has been in the youth development field for over twenty-five years, honing her holistic expertise in programs, administration, development, and executive leadership. Destiny Arts Center currently engages over 4,500 young people each year in arts practices at its North Oakland center and 38 public schools and community centers throughout the East Bay, with over 80% of participants identifying as Black, Indigenous and People of Color; and

WHEREAS, District 2 is honored to recognize Reverend Deborah Lee for her work at the intersection of faith and social justice for over 25 years in popular education, community organizing, and advocacy connecting issues of race, gender, economic justice, anti-militarism, LGBTQ inclusion, and immigrant rights. She has consistently sought to strengthen the voice and role of faith communities in today’s social movements. As executive director of the Interfaith Movement for Human Integrity, she has built up the Immigrant Justice program of the organization, engaging dozens of congregations in Northern California to become Sanctuary congregations and to respond to the wave of migrant youth and families and the detention and deportation crisis. Her work has been recognized as innovative and impactful with awards from the United Nations Association of the East Bay, East Bay Alliance for a Sustainable Economy, and the national United Church of Christ Justice and Witness Ministry. She is the daughter of immigrants and part of the Chinese diaspora that has taken her family through Southeast Asia,

Mexico and now the United States. Since the 1990's, she has worked with Council President Bas on immigrant and refugee rights, and more recently collaborated to stop unjust ICE detentions and deportations, and seek pardons for community members from Gov. Gavin Newsom. Throughout the pandemic, and as anti-Asian hate incidents have risen, Rev. Lee has been a powerful leader in creating cross-racial healing spaces and promoting Asian, Black and Brown solidarity; and

WHEREAS, District 3 is proud to honor Mike Cheng, Deputy Director of the Asian Prisoner Support Committee. Since 2002 Mike Cheng has helped to provide valuable services for the AAPI re-entry population including navigation, community immersion and peer to peer support. Recently, they partnered with local health organizations to provide food and PPE supplies at DeFremery Park in West Oakland. District 3 is truly grateful for the many years of service and dedication to our community; and

WHEREAS, District 4 is honored to recognize Dr. Rupa Marya, for her longtime community-driven work at the intersections of health, climate, economic, and racial justice in Oakland. Dr. Marya is a District 4 resident, physician, professor, activist, bestselling author, co-founder of the Do No Harm coalition, and founder of Deep Medicine Circle, which is a women of color-led organization focused on healing the wounds of colonialism through food, medicine, restoration, and storytelling. Dr. Marya is committed to the Deep Medicine of land return and uplifting the sovereignty of Ohlone communities, and to advancing the agenda of Universal Basic Nutrition where everyone has access to organic foods grown with care for the people and care for the earth. She also sits on the Healthy California for All Commission, and is the lead performer with her internationally-touring band. Dr. Marya is excited to support council leadership to further the development of agroecological farms in Oakland to end the health apartheid that currently plagues our communities; and

WHEREAS, District 5 is honored to recognize Mark Legaspi, owner of Three Seven Restaurant in the Fruitvale district, Mark and his family have been business owners in the Fruitvale district for 10 years and counting, they are hardworking, community driven, and committed to this city. Mark and his family have done multiple yearly donations giving back to the residents of Oakland such as, holiday food giveaways, annual block parties, providing free food and necessities for our youth. District 5 is grateful for all the support and leadership Mark Legaspi has provided to our community throughout the years ; and

WHEREAS, District 6 is honored and proud to recognize David Duong; David Duong's remarkable journey and lasting impact on the Bay Area's AAPI community and the city of Oakland deserve commendation. David migrated from Vietnam in 1979, he exhibited immense dedication, working during the day while attending school at night to learn English. In the early 1980s, David and his family discovered profitable opportunities in recycling paper, metal, and plastics from solid waste. In 1983, David founded his first company, CoGiDo Recycling, in Oakland. The company brokered large quantities of recycled materials for both domestic and Asian markets, enabling other entrepreneurs to establish their own recycling businesses. In the 1990s, David founded California Waste Solutions (CWS), which won a contract in 1992 to collect and process recyclables in Oakland. Since then, CWS has grown into a substantial regional company. In 2005, David was awarded a contract to design, construct, and operate the first integrated solid waste management facility in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The facility, wholly owned by CWS, is the largest landfill operation in Vietnam and adheres to US EPA

standards. Additionally, David founded the Vietnamese American Business Association (VABA) to foster collaboration among Vietnamese, other Asian, and non-Asian leaders in various sectors. VABA has expanded beyond California, strengthening connections between the U.S. and Vietnam, and promoting trade across North America and Asia. David Duong's dedication and entrepreneurial spirit continues to leave an indelible mark on Oakland and the AAPI community. His work in the recycling and waste management industry has not only contributed to environmental sustainability but also created numerous opportunities for aspiring entrepreneurs. As a community leader and founder of VABA, David has fostered collaboration and built bridges between cultures, creating a legacy that will continue to inspire future generations; and

WHEREAS, District 7 is thrilled to honor and uplift the leadership of Sima Patel, Co-Founder and CEO of Ridgemont Hospitality, and Founder of the Renaissance Foundation, who proudly honors her AAPI roots! She has served District 7 and Oakland's greater community since the late 90's when she moved to Oakland, CA from her home country, India. As the owner of three family-operated hotels, including the first Holiday Inn built in District 7, she has always provided support to initiatives throughout Oakland, and lodging for displaced residents in their time of need. Sima serves on the Executive Committee of the California Chamber of Commerce, is Chief Fiscal Officer and past Chair of Visit California, and is a member of the California State University Hospitality and Tourism Alliance Advisory Board, the Oakland Rotary Club, and the California State University Hospitality and Tourism Alliance Advisory Board. She is a recipient of numerous awards including the Asian American Home Owners Association Award, Women Hotelier of the Year 2001, 100 Most Influential Women In Business SF Bay Area, 100 Most Inspiring Leaders In Hospitality And Industry, and The Richard L. Speece Leadership Award. Sima advocates for women's rights and the need to address the impacts of human trafficking through the work of her recently founded non-profit, Saaheli, and its partnerships with Girls Inc., which was inspired by her past work with AnnieCannons; an initiative that helps human trafficking victims secure sustainable careers in tech. We appreciate the visionary-driven leadership of Sima. It is a pleasure partnering with her entrepreneurial passion and deep love for Oakland as we progress opportunities that empower individuals and families in our community; and

WHEREAS, the At-Large Council Office is honored to recognize Nicole Lee for Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month. Nicole Lee is the founding Executive Director of Urban Peace Movement (UPM), a grass-roots racial justice organization in Oakland that builds youth leadership to transform the social conditions that drive community violence and mass incarceration. She has spent the past 25 years leading critical social justice work through coalition-building and youth organizing campaigns. In 2018, Lee was named on EBONY Magazine's prestigious Power 100 List as a "Community Crusader." Lee is a fourth-generation Oakland resident of Chinese American heritage whose great-grandparents came to Oakland from China in the 1880s; and

WHEREAS, the Mayor's Office is honored to recognize Sophal Yin for her contributions to the Southeast Asian refugee community with the Center for Empowering Refugees and Immigrants (CERI). Sophal was born and raised in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. She is a survivor of the Khmer Rouge genocide that took place in Cambodia from 1975-1979 and came to the US in December 1981 as a refugee. Sophal works at CERI as an Outreach Worker/Activity Coordinator, serving the Cambodian population throughout Alameda County since 2017. With her genuine compassion and leadership skills, Sophal has created a space in which all our elders who are the survivors of the Khmer Rouge genocide feel loved, cared for, and empowered.

Sophal is also a role model and an inspiration to all our Southeast Asian staff members; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED: That the Oakland City Council recognizes May 2023 as Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month and celebrates and honors the service and leadership of these individuals and organizations contributing to a more vibrant and just Oakland.

IN COUNCIL, OAKLAND, CALIFORNIA,

PASSED BY THE FOLLOWING VOTE:

AYES - FIFE, GALLO, JENKINS, KALB, KAPLAN, RAMACHANDRAN, REID, AND
PRESIDENT FORTUNATO BAS

NOES –

ABSENT –

ABSTENTION –

ATTEST: _____

ASHA REED
City Clerk and Clerk of the Council of the
City of Oakland, California

Date of Attestation: _____