

## Robert Eric Wone, Legacy Award Winner

Written by William Won, father of Robert E. Wone, recipient of the Legacy award for presentation at the OCA-NJ Holiday Ball.

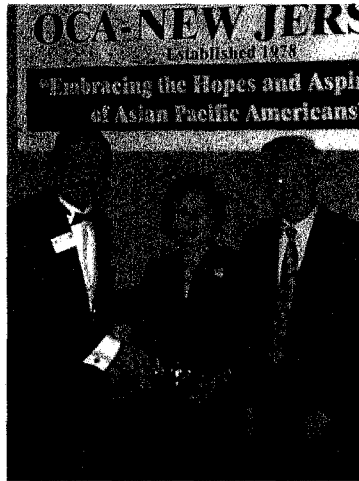
I would like extend my congratulations to the all the individuals that are being honored by OCA this evening.

It's been said "A journey of a thousand miles must begin with a single step." In August 1989 a 15 year old Chinese American high school student saw his essay "Asians and Politics - The Next Step" published in a San Francisco newspaper, Asian Week. He was so excited that he sent to the publishers a letter expressing his thanks and said:

*".. This was an important honor in my life. .. As a result of the publication of my essay, Mr. Bill Shek of the Organization of Chinese Americans-Long Island, New York contacted me and invited me to be his guest of honor at the eighth annual OCA-LI dinner. At this dinner I was exposed to a whole new world that I had little knowledge of before."*

This was the start of Robert's OCA Journey. In a different sense this was also the start of his family's journey with OCA.

Robert went on to be a recipient of OCA-LI's Presidential Classroom Scholarship, *Ginny - if my memory is right - you were President of OCA-LI at that time the award was given.* He was excited at the opportunities that this opened up for him.



In the winter 1992 issue of OCA Image, OCA published Robert's essay "Making a Silent Minority Into An Active Minority". In his opening paragraph, Robert spoke of: "... a continuing need of the Chinese community and the Asian American community as a whole, ... to

*expand our participation in the American political system... OCA can play a major and important role in this expansion"*.

It's important to remember that Robert was only 18 years old at that time. Like an earlier time, he was excited that one of his essays was published.

Robert Kennedy said: "Each time someone stands up for an ideal, or acts to improve the lot of others, or strikes out against injustice, he sends forth a tiny ripple of hope." Robert believed that he could make a difference, and that OCA could make a difference. Several months

ago I received a note from Ginny in which she said of Robert:

*"...Someone who gave OCA so much of his undivided attention. Robert was very dedicated to OCA's mission and told me how honored he was to be a part of the organization."*

The journey will continue. We have been part of the OCA family since that memorable OCA-LI dinner. We will continue to be part of the OCA family, and we look forward to helping OCA achieve their goals.

Thank you very much for honoring Robert.

## Robert E. Wone Memorial Scholarship

After Robert's devastating death, I knew that I had to do something to honor his passing. In the last issue I told you of his life's commitment to family, friends and OCA.

I knew that I wanted to do something to prolong Robert's memory and to continue carrying his spirit.

I knew that, in his youth, Robert had won an OCA scholarship. He took an active voice in promoting minority involvement.

Over time, I came to the conclusion that an annual scholarship in his memory would be a fitting tribute to him.

At the December 9<sup>th</sup> Holiday Ball, where Robert was honored as one of the Legacy Five, one of those most instrumental in bringing the dream of the National Center For APA Leadership to life, I presented OCA-NJ several checks to start an annual OCA-NJ scholarship in his name.



The hope is that the writing of an Asian themed essay will provoke a young Asian to become more involved in Asian issues and OCA.

Over time my family and I hope to make further contributions to create a fund that would be self-sufficient. Your help would be appreciated in fulfilling this dream and carrying on the memory and spirit of Robert.

I have included a line to make contributions to the Robert E. Wone Scholarship fund when renewing your membership.

Please help in our efforts to inspire and assist our Asian leaders of the future.

Thank you.

Dave Lai Len