

Robert Eric Wone, OCA General Counsel



On August 4th, I got heart-wrenching news via an OCA National E-mail. My closest cousin's eldest son was killed in Washington DC. Robert Wone 32, a respected lawyer, General Counsel for OCA National, volunteer counsel for the Museum of the Chinese in America, President Elect of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association and General Counsel for Radio Free Asia. Robert leaves behind his wife of four years Katherine Ellen Yu, his parents Aimee & Bill Wone, and brother Andrew David Wone.

I remember visiting his family when he was a child in Brooklyn, him quietly playing hours on end with his Leggos or having disagreements with his younger brother Andrew. Robert attending the Junior United Nations in High School. His attending William and Mary. The year he was to get his first paying job, but then accepting an unpaid internship at the White House instead. His heading off to law school at the University of Pennsylvania. His wedding several years ago to Kathy in

Chicago, where the judge he clerked for in Virginia flew up to Chicago to preside at the wedding and all his friends from William and Mary sang their school song.

I went to his memorial service and found out so much more about Robert. His taking cookies to friends cramming at the library at W&M. His visiting the ex-President of W&M and bring the magic elixir that he needed, the voice and company of youthful students. It was just the thing to revitalize the man's life. His finding time as a senior attorney for the new associates at his law firm, providing mentoring for the new attorneys. His going to his new job at Free Radio Asia on a Saturday to see how the organization operated on weekends and bringing ice cream for all.

The past several years, I've been making trips to Washington during the Memorial Day weekend, and dinner with Robert was a yearly tradition. This year was no exception. Dinner downtown and dessert at his new home with his wife Kathy.

After the memorial service, I wasn't looking forward to the OCA convention the following week. Originally I was to join Robert, Kathy and his parents Aimee and Bill at the Saturday Gala. But it was refreshing, talking to our fellow OCA members who knew Robert and had fond stories to tell of their relationships.

This December 9th, at the OCA-NJ Holiday Ball we will be honoring the Legacy Five, George Cha, Claudine Cheng, Ginny Gong, Michael Lin, and Robert Wone, those who did so much to make the new OCA National Center for APA Leadership a reality. I'm proud that Robert was there to help. Ginny Gong, the OCA National President, said that the purchase would not have happened without Robert and that she spoke to him daily about the transaction, in fact she received an e-mail from him at 10:15 PM his last day. Ginny said that she met Robert when she was President of OCA-LI and he was a scholarship winner. I'm proud that he will be honored for his efforts. Robert, we will carry your caring spirit with us.

Dave Lai Len

OCA BECOMES FIRST NATIONAL APA ORGANIZATION TO ACQUIRE PERMANENT SITE FOR HEADQUARTERS IN NATION'S CAPITAL

Washington, DC – September 21, 2006 will be forever noted as an historic day in the annals of OCA. At 1 p.m., in the law offices of Covington & Burling in Washington, DC, OCA National President Ginny Gong signed the settlement documents for a building located in the heart of the nation's capital. Surrounded by members of the OCA National Center Campaign Committee, other officers and members of the organization, and national office staff, Gong's signature on the purchasing documents culminates more than a decade of fundraising efforts to fulfill the organization's vision and quest to secure a permanent home.

"The acquisition of a permanent home for OCA has been a true grassroots effort and heartfelt testament to the vision of our founders, KL Wang and Alex Mark, 33 years ago," said Gong. "It has been an incredible journey - one that has been daunting, exhausting, humbling, and above all, inspiring. The last nine months have been a demonstration of the passion and the commitment of our members and chapters across the country. It is our belief in OCA's destiny to have a presence in Washington, D.C. that this vision is now finally a reality," she added.

The purchase of the building also fulfills OCA's vision of establishing the OCA National Center for Asian Pacific American Leadership become reality as well. With permanent

headquarters, OCA will be able to focus on expanding and adding programs that will nurture and develop the leadership potential and skills of the APA community's future leaders.

"This is a significant occasion not only for OCA, but for the entire APA community, said OCA National Center Campaign Chair Claudine Cheng. "In 1973, OCA was the first national APA organization to incorporate and establish headquarters in Washington D.C. With this purchase, OCA will be the first national APA organization to establish a permanent presence in our country's capital. The concept of permanency is very important as OCA has dedicated itself for over 30 years to be an effective national voice for the APA community and advocating for civil rights, and political, social and economic empowerment," she added.

The new OCA National Center is located in the prestigious Dupont Circle area in the heart of Washington, D.C., and consists of three adjoining buildings totaling over 12,000 square feet. In addition to administrative and programming functions, the new OCA headquarters will also have a Community Room, Library, Technology and Media Center, and a gallery, as well as board and conference rooms.

A ribbon cutting ceremony is being planned in early January after renovations have been completed.