



APAPA

Asian Pacific Islander American Public Affairs Association
Community Education Foundation (APAPA-CEF)
Empowering and Engaging Asian Pacific Islander Americans

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APAPA Mourns the Passing of Judge Michael Kwan



Sacramento, CA - The APAPA family was deeply saddened to hear of the death of Judge Michael Kwan on July 21, 2020. He was the first Chinese American judge for the State of Utah as the Taylorsville City Justice Court Judge. For a brief period away from his bench in 2019, he served as APAPA's General Counsel and then CEO. He was also the founding chair of APAPA's Utah State Chapter. Judge Kwan was instrumental in helping refine APAPA's operational structure and build a professional culture for a national nonprofit organization with the mission to inspire, engage and empower Asian Pacific Islander Americans.

Judge Kwan started one of the first DUI/Drug Courts in the nation in 1998. His DUI/Drug Program received the Utah Governor's Award for reducing drug and alcohol abuse and related crimes in 2008. His Domestic Violence Program was awarded the Peace on Earth Award from the Salt Lake Area Domestic Violence Advisory Council in 2002. He received the Utah Judicial Council's Quality of Justice Award in 2001. Judge Kwan received a law degree from Whittier College School of Law and was certified in Chinese law by the East China University of Politics and Law in 1993. He served as a pro tempore judge in the Third District Court from 1996 through 1998.

Judge Kwan was a descendent of Chinese railroad workers, who helped build America's First Transcontinental Railroad, which connected the East and the West and revolutionized the American economy. He was the president of the Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants Association and worked tirelessly to educate the society about the contribution of the Chinese railroad workers to America. He organized the Golden Spike Conference as part of the historical 150th Golden Spike celebration.

Judge Kwan was a past National President of OCA - Asian American Advocates and took leadership roles at a number of Asian American organizations as part of his endeavors to advocate for equality and justice.

APAPA leaders and members remembered Judge Kwan warmly and described him as calm, witty, knowledgeable and hard working. APAPA Founder and National Chair Emeritus, C.C. Yin, said Judge Kwan was "an API American giant, civic leader, a highly respected judge, a great human being and a friend. I am proud to be one of his friends and admirers, and would like to express my condolences, sympathy and support to his family. He will be remembered by all of us and history for his lifetime passion, efforts and leadership in advancing the principle of justice and equality set by our founding fathers."

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