

City of Albany

Proclamation

IN RECOGNITION OF ASIAN AMERICAN AND PACIFIC ISLANDER HERITAGE MONTH – MAY 2021

WHEREAS, the City of Albany is committed to providing comprehensive support to ensure an equitable, safe, and welcoming environment to all people; and

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month is observed during the month of May to recognize the contributions and influence of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders to the history, culture, and achievements of the United States; and

WHEREAS, AAPIs are comprised of more than 23 distinct Asian American (AA) and 19 distinct Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (NHPI) subgroups. AAPIs range from new immigrants to fourth generation or more descendants and have distinct stories of historical trauma and immigration/settlement experiences and is one of the fastest growing racial/ethnic minority groups in the US with California being the home to the largest AA population, and second largest NHPI population; and

WHEREAS, the first AAPIs to arrive to the US are Filipinos to Morro Bay, California in 1587; and

WHEREAS, the first Chinatown was established in 1848 in San Francisco, California; and

WHEREAS, 20,000 Chinese immigrants worked on the transcontinental railroad between 1863-1869 and Punjabis worked on the Western Pacific Railways in Northern California between 1903-1908; and

WHEREAS, the first Gurdwara was built in Stockton, California in 1912; and

WHEREAS, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin Roosevelt issued Executive Order 9066 authorizing the internment of US citizens of Japanese descent; and

WHEREAS, on Oct. 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a law that designated the first seven days of May as "Asian Pacific American Heritage Week," to acknowledge America's first Japanese immigrants to arrive in the U.S. in May of 1843 and the completion of the transcontinental railroad, much of which were built by Chinese immigrants, in May of 1869; and

WHEREAS, President George H.W. Bush issued Presidential Proclamation 6130 on May 7, 1990 designating May 1990 as the first "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month;" and

WHEREAS, the state of California celebrated Fred Korematsu Day (January 30), the first day named after an Asian American; and

WHEREAS, the term “model minority” originated from the “successful” re-integration of Japanese-Americans overcoming discrimination from Executive Order 9066’s World War II internment; however, this stereotype is problematic, and perpetuates the invisibility of AAPIs who are not successful and pits racial groups against one another; and furthermore, the perpetual foreigner image that contributed to the long history of Anti-Asian discrimination (e.g., 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act to the 2017 Muslim Ban) and recent violence towards AAPIs during the COVID pandemic; and

WHEREAS, for more than a century, Asian American and Pacific Islander men and women have made valuable contributions to all areas of life, including government, business, technology advances, arts and sciences, medicine, education, law enforcement, and the military; and

WHEREAS, these contributions were critical during the COVID-19 epidemic where AAPIs, in particular immigrant AAPIs, stood unwavering on the frontline as essential workers in healthcare (who make up 26% of all California healthcare workforce, and where a significant number of Filipino nurses bore a disproportionate burden of COVID deaths); in the food industry at farms, meat processing factories, grocery stores, and restaurants; in education as childcare workers and teachers; and in pharmaceutical and biomedical industry; and

WHEREAS, the City of Albany is proud of its Asian American and Pacific Islander population (~30% of the city demographics) that contributes greatly to the prosperity and enrichment of our City; and

WHEREAS, Asian American and Pacific Islanders have established a wide-range of services to shape the growth of the City of Albany through Education, Personal Services, Real Estate, Arts and Culture, Fitness & Movement, Retail and a host of Restaurants; and

WHEREAS, we recognize our AAPI elected/appointed officials Bob Chin -- school board, Owen H Jones (African American and AAPI), Jewel Okawachi -- city council, including one year as mayor, the person for which Jewel’s Terrace Park commemorates, Patricia Low -- former School Board Trustee, Val Williams -- former AUSD superintendent, currently servicing appointed officials -- Julia Chang Frank, Albany Parks, Recreation and Open Space Commission, Daniel Chen, Albany Climate Action Committee, Sarah Choi, Albany Climate Action Committee, Robert del Rosario, Albany Transportation Commission, Ben Fong, Albany Transportation Commission, and Mohammad Momin, Albany Planning and Zoning Commission; and

WHEREAS, diversity represents one of our greatest strengths, and by recognizing the contributions and accomplishments of Asian American and Pacific Islander men and women, our City celebrates the importance of inclusion to building a brighter future for all of our citizens

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, therefore, I, Ge’Nell Gary Mayor of the City of Albany, on behalf of the City Council, do hereby declare May 2021 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month and the City of Albany celebrates by calling upon its residents to honor Asian Pacific Americans and learn more about the history of Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.



GE’NELL GARY, MAYOR