



The Legal Connection

Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC)

Winter 2006

Greetings from Executive Director Jayne Park

Dear Friends:

In reflecting upon APALRC's impact over the years, I am extremely proud of the important role we have played in building creative and effective collaborations within the Asian American community, with other immigrant communities, and with other nonprofit legal providers. We know from experience what can be achieved when diverse communities, leaders, and organizations come together to organize around common issues of concern, and to embrace a bold, collective vision for justice.



Among the numerous examples of collective impact are a few highlights worth noting from 2006. One of the most exciting achievements is the DC Access to Justice Commission's victory in securing over \$3 million from the DC City Council to significantly expand civil legal services to the poor. A portion of these funds will be dedicated to the creation of a shared legal interpreter bank, which will help open doors to many legal programs for low-income immigrants. APALRC led efforts to convene a year-long process that brought together legal providers, judges, community organizations, immigrant leaders, and experts in the field of interpretation who collaborated to formulate the vision for this exciting new initiative.

Within the Asian American community, APALRC supported a coalition of Asian American organizations to organize a series of civic empowerment activities, including the first-ever Asian American DC Mayoral Candidates' Forum, and voter registration drives through which 100 Asian Americans became first-time voters.

The APALRC also continued building alliances with other immigrant communities through its ongoing leadership in the multi-ethnic DC Language Access Coalition. Four years after its founding, the Coalition remains active and strong. Through the generous support of the Public Welfare Foundation, APALRC recently hired a full-time community organizer to further strengthen the Coalition's organizing and policy impact. And lastly, a new joint initiative between APALRC, Ayuda, and the African Resource Center has begun to take shape, through which a seamless legal services system will be created for the Latino, Asian, and African immigrant communities.

Over the next several years, we expect to see the impact of our efforts multiply as many of these important initiatives get firmly under way. We look forward to keeping you abreast of our progress as we continue the work of creating a truly inclusive community where all people—regardless of race, ethnicity, income or language—can access justice.

With warmest regards,

2006-2007

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*AmeriCorps*VISTA
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Meyer Foundation Names Jayne Park Winner of First Exponent Award for Visionary Leadership

APALRC's Executive Director Jayne Park received the 2006 Exponent Award from the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation. The Foundation created the Exponent Award this year to celebrate visionary nonprofit leadership. Hosted by WAMU 88.5 FM's Kojo Nnamdi, the ceremony on November 13 at DC's Woolly Mammoth Theatre was attended by an invited audience of more than 200 elected officials and business, philanthropic, and nonprofit leaders.

Jayne was one of five winners selected from among 40 nominees for the award. "Identifying five winners from a strong field was not an easy task, and has only increased our appreciation of the enormous skills, creativity, and passion of our nonprofit leaders," said Julie Rogers, President of the Meyer Foundation. "They are truly the heart and soul of our community, providing critical services every day. With the award, we hope to celebrate their accomplishments, raise their visibility, extend their tenure, and increase their leadership skills." Established in 1944 by Eugene Meyer, owner and publisher of *The Washington Post*, and his wife Agnes E. Meyer, the Meyer Foundation is one of the Washington area's oldest and most experienced private grantmaking foundations.

The selection process included interviews with each nominee and board leaders and an extensive review of financial statements and other documents. The Foundation considered each nominee's track record as a manager and leader, including his or her success at increasing the quality and impact of the organization's work, instituting sound financial management, working in partnership with his or her board, and taking on leadership roles in the broader community.



Jayne Park celebrates the Exponent award with Meyer Foundation President Julie Rogers (4th from left) and other award recipients.

The award includes a \$100,000 grant to APALRC. Earlier this year, Jayne was selected as a 2005 Washingtonian of the year by *Washingtonian* magazine, and appeared in the January 2006 issue.

WAMU Features 2006 Exponent Award Winners

In November, APALRC was featured on WAMU 88.5 FM's *Metro Connection*. Listen to the broadcast by visiting APALRC's website at www.apalrc.org.

AU Law Clinic Works to Strengthen DC's Language Access Law

During the 2006-2007 academic year, a group from the International Human Rights Law Clinic at the American University Washington College of Law will be representing APALRC and the DC Language Access Coalition on a project to amend and strengthen the *2004 D.C. Language Access Act*. The team includes third-year law students Drew Thompson and Frislanda Goldfeder and faculty members Jayesh Rathod and Muneer Ahmad.

The students will be researching, analyzing, and recommending possible enforcement mechanisms that can be included in the Act. The goal of amending the Act is to protect the rights of limited English proficient individuals who are unable to access government services because of ongoing language barriers. One addition students are developing is a clear process for the filing and timely resolution of individual complaints. The Coalition will begin organizing and advocating for these amendments in early 2007.

(continued on page 7)



Students and faculty from the American University Washington College of Law: (l-r) Drew Thompson (3L), Frislanda Goldfeder (3L), and Muneer Ahmad (Professor, International Human Rights Law Clinic, American University Washington College of Law)

Direct Service Programs Provide Hope to Hundreds

APALRC has experienced tremendous growth in 2006, which has enabled us to reach out to broader segments of the Asian American population in Greater Washington and provide more in-depth legal assistance to more clients.

Our staff and volunteers provided services to the community through our multilingual hotline, legal clinics, “Know Your Rights” presentations, and community workshops. We distributed outreach materials in several Asian languages. Over the past year, APALRC has provided legal advice, representation, and referrals to more than 350 clients, legal interpreter support on 100 case assignments, and “Know Your Rights” presentations to more than 850 individuals. The cases we handled involved a range of legal issues, including family law, immigration law, employment law, consumer rights, public benefits, and landlord-tenant law. The following are a few of our clients’ stories. Details have been altered to protect client confidentiality.

Ms. R, a South Asian woman, suffered physical and emotional abuse from her husband. He would berate her for hours when she did something that displeased him, and often hit her with a belt. Ms. R’s husband also used her immigration status as a means of intimidation and control; he would tell her that he would not file the papers for her green card, and threatened to have her sent back to her home country. The abuse culminated in an incident where he punched and kicked her repeatedly. Fearing for her life, Ms. R fled from her husband and sought help. APALRC helped her to obtain a protective order against her husband and file an immigration self-petition under the Violence Against Women Act, which allowed her to obtain legal permanent resident status independent of her husband.

Ms. L, a Chinese woman, had started working for a family—cleaning, cooking, and providing child care. After some time, Ms. L decided that the employment arrangement was not going to work out, and she informed the family of her decision to leave. The family refused to pay her for the days she had worked. APALRC advised Ms. L of her right to get paid for the work she had performed, and helped her begin the process of claiming her unpaid wages.

Ms. T, a Vietnamese woman, had taken and passed the US citizenship test in July 2004, but two years later, had not heard anything from the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services. When she called APALRC’s hotline for help, she was assisted by a Vietnamese law student volunteer who investigated and determined that Ms. T’s case had slipped through the cracks at USCIS. The volunteer advocated on behalf of Ms. T to ensure that her case would proceed smoothly through the next steps in the naturalization process. As a result of this volunteer’s efforts, Ms. T recently became a naturalized citizen.

APALRC provided legal interpreter services for five Korean female victims of a human trafficking and prostitution ring, enabling them to communicate with the attorneys who were assisting them in a federal criminal investigation.

A group of Vietnamese tenants in Northwest DC were in danger of losing their homes when the landlord wanted to renovate the building to attract new, higher paying tenants. The tenants sought assistance from one of the law clinics in DC, but could not effectively communicate with the attorneys. APALRC provided Vietnamese legal interpreters who facilitated communications between the attorney and the tenants throughout the process, which resulted in the tenants ultimately buying the building and creating a cooperative. Through the assistance provided by our trained interpreters, the tenants were able to understand the bylaws that were being drafted, the meetings that were being convened, and the votes that were taking place.

New Legal Service Staff Members

Kathy Kwak oversees the domestic violence project in Northern Virginia, and is fluent in Korean. Kathy has worked for the Legal Aid Society in New York City and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights in Washington, DC. Kathy received her undergraduate degree from Wellesley College and her J.D. from Columbia Law School.



Jason Lagria is a first year associate at Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy LLP, and is working on a three-month pro bono rotation at APALRC until December 2006. Formerly a hotline volunteer and a summer law clerk, Jason currently provides assistance in domestic violence, employment, and immigration matters, as well as hotline operations. Jason received his undergraduate degree from Johns Hopkins University and his J.D. from The George Washington University Law School.



Pooja A. Regmi is responsible for launching and expanding APALRC’s domestic violence project into Montgomery County, Maryland. Born in Kathmandu, Nepal, Pooja has been actively involved in community issues and public interest activities. Prior to coming to APALRC, Pooja worked at the Coalition to End Childhood Lead Poisoning in Baltimore where she advocated for the rights of children and their families. Pooja received her J.D. from University of Maryland School of Law.



APALRC Launches Challenge Campaign with Generous Gift

This summer APALRC co-founder and board member John C. Yang pledged a \$75,000 gift to the organization. A community activist and a partner at District law firm Wiley Rein & Fielding LLP, Mr. Yang has decided to make his donation a dollar-for-dollar challenge match over a three-year period to ensure that his contribution would make an even greater financial impact on the organization. Donors must contribute at least \$100 to qualify for challenge match funds.

APALRC hosted a reception on July 27 at Wiley Rein & Fielding LLP to honor Mr. Yang's generosity and to officially launch the *APALRC Challenge Campaign*. Guest speakers included Julie L. Rogers, president of the Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation; James J. Sandman, a partner at law firm Arnold & Porter LLP and president of the District of Columbia Bar; and Thomas W. Brunner, a partner at Wiley Rein & Fielding LLP and a mentor of Mr. Yang.

"John's gift is profound, and the gifts that all of you may be able to give will be equally profound. Individual giving in America is 80 percent of all giving," said Ms. Rogers. "Sometimes small community-based organizations like APALRC go first to institutional funders, foundations, and corporations, but in order to grow, they need individual support."

Mr. Yang is active in the Asian Pacific American community nationally and locally, and often speaks on issues involving race relations, diversity, and the law. Mr. Yang's legal practice involves the handling of commercial, toxic tort, and insurance law matters in appellate and trial court litigation. He also routinely counsels clients on transactional, due diligence, and regulatory issues affecting the business of insurance. Mr. Yang has published more than 15 articles and is a frequent lecturer on tort and insurance law issues.



John C. Yang

"What John has done is not just generous, it's very brilliant," said Mr. Sandman. "Through his challenge, we can reflect John's example no better than by emulating him and by stepping up to the plate and contributing ourselves."

To participate in the *APALRC Challenge Campaign*, please download and complete the campaign form at www.apalrc.org/media/Pledge_Forms.pdf. To obtain a copy of the form by fax or mail, contact Pauline Poh at 202-393-3572 x 11 or pauline.poh@apalrc.org.

A Special Thanks to 2006 Law Student Volunteers

Each year, the APALRC is truly fortunate to have a group of dedicated law student volunteers to help with a range of legal projects, including staffing the legal hotline. We would like to thank the following students for dedicating their time, talents and energy to helping the APALRC realize its mission:

American University Washington College of Law

Andrew Ghim
Frislanda Goldfeder
Abe Hahn
Mihee Han
Suh-Young Hong
Won-hee Hong
Parag Kandhar
Jieun Kim
Helen Lee
Philip Lee
Andrew Lim
Frances Ma
Suthima Malayaman
Wendi Moy
Keith Nguyen
Jinjue Pak
Eunjung Park
Amy Randhawa
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Drew Thompson
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Alice Dong
Karen Morao
Christopher Park
Vid Prabhakaran
Charles Shi
Todd Wheeler
Minjung Yu

The George Washington University Law School

Nichole Cadiente
Moonhee Cha
Jane Chen
David Chiang
Le'Ontra Greenspan

(GW cont'd)

Sharmili Hazra
Ting-Ting Kao
Phong Le
Steve Nam
Shaunik Panse
Nisha Shah
Mayur Saxena
Michelle Weigelt
Monica Yoon

Washington and Lee University School of Law

Akiko Nishino

University of the District of Columbia Law School

Yary Lim
Angela Oh
Donald Park

"I volunteer on the Chinese hotline and have taken calls about immigration, employment, and family law. I'm really learning a lot through this experience."

~Laura Whalen, a second-year law student at the American University Washington College of Law

"Volunteering at APALRC has increased my desire to help bring legal help to the Asian community in the metropolitan DC area."

~Suthima Malayaman, a third-year law student at the American University Washington College of Law

"The opportunity to come back to serve at APALRC played a large role in my decision to return to Washington, D.C. for my legal education."

~Phong Le, a first-year law student at George Washington and former undergraduate intern

APALRC Promotes Civic Engagement for Asian Americans Across the Region

This election year APALRC played a major role in leading and coordinating voter empowerment activities for the region's Asian American community, under the leadership of APALRC's Program Coordinator Wendy Lau. This year, APALRC:

Collaborated with community organizations to convene the first-ever DC mayoral candidates' forum for the Asian American community.

On June 1, 2006 at All Souls Church in Washington, DC, mayoral candidates Michael Brown, Linda Cropp, Marie Johns, and Vincent Orange engaged in a lively discussion about issues important to DC's Asian American community. Approximately 175 community members, representatives from more than 30 community organizations, and reporters from 5 Asian media outlets attended. APALRC legal interpreters provided simultaneous interpretation in Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese.

Registered 100 new Asian American voters.

On the heels of the successful Mayoral forum, APALRC organized a series of voter registration drives in DC and Montgomery County. With the help of APIA Vote and the DC Mayor's Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs, we organized voter

registration activities at several apartment buildings in DC's Chinatown, through which we registered over 70 new Asian American voters in one day. APALRC convened a collaboration of Asian American organizations and leaders in Montgomery County to hold six additional voter registration events between August and October.

Protected Our Right to Vote. For the general elections on November 7, APALRC helped organize nearly 100 volunteers to monitor 12 polling sites in Maryland, DC, and Virginia as part of the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund's Voter Protection Project. Volunteers surveyed more than 500 Asian American voters to identify any difficulties or complaints they had with the voting process, and captured important data on Asian American voting patterns. Over the next few months, AALDEF and APIA Vote will analyze the survey results, which will be compiled into a report to be issued in March 2007.

Prior to joining APALRC in July 2006, Wendy Lau worked as a paralegal at the DC law firm of Cohen Milstein Hausfeld and Toll. Wendy received her economics and international studies degrees from the University of Washington, and is fluent in Mandarin Chinese.

"I firmly believe that both the Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center and its Legal Interpreter Project are among the most crucial and effective insurers of legal representation for Asian Americans who have not been able to develop English proficiency.

We literally could not serve the clients for whom an Asian language is their first, and often only, language without the work of APALRC, and its Legal Interpreter Project."

- DC Legal Provider

New Project Assists Asian American Crime Victims

This past July, APALRC added a new program initiative to our cadre of services: the Crime Victim Assistance Partnership. The services CVAP provides include helping individual victims who are limited English proficient with the process of reporting crimes, applying for crime victim compensation, navigating the criminal justice system, and working with law enforcement. CVAP also advocates for fair access by crime victims to district government services. CVAP provides these services in several Asian languages.

The Chinatown Service Center launched CVAP in 2001 and operated the program under the leadership of Lu Lan, who will continue to direct the project from her new office at APALRC. In the past five years, CVAP has provided case support to more than 600 Asian victims. Lu Lan was awarded the D.C. Mayor's Community Service Award in May 2006 for her pioneering spirit and commitment to community service. Lu Lan is a graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary and is fluent in spoken and written Chinese.

The following are a few examples of the most recent victims who have been assisted by CVAP:

Mr. N was killed in a homicide. CVAP worked closely with the US Attorney's Office and the family throughout the criminal trial, including interpreting for the family during court proceedings and helping the family to write a victim impact statement for the final sentencing. Through the support of CVAP, the family was received more than \$11,000 in victim compensation to cover medical bills and funeral costs.

Mr. C was assaulted with a deadly weapon by a group of young people in front of the Chinatown Metro station. CVAP helped Mr. C apply for and successfully receive more than \$16,000 from the victim compensation fund to cover lost wages and the cost of medical treatment.

Mr. Y suffered serious injuries from a gunshot. CVAP assisted Mr. Y in filing a police report and in applying for and receiving more than \$22,000 from the victim compensation fund to cover lost wages and medical bills.

Board Member Sunil Mansukhani Earns National Award



Sunil Mansukhani

The National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA) honored APALRC's long-time board member Sunil Mansukhani with its Best Lawyers Under 40 award for 2006. The award spotlights talented Asian American attorneys from across the United States who have achieved prominence and distinction in their fields and have demonstrated a strong commitment to civic or community affairs. NAPABA is the national association of Asian Pacific American attorneys, judges, law

professors, and law students, and represents more than 40,000 attorneys and 47 local Asian Pacific American bar associations.

Since 2000, Sunil has led APALRC with distinction as a member of the board of directors, serving as chair of the board from 2003 to 2005. In 2005, Sunil was chosen to be the first Executive Director of the District of Columbia Access to Justice

Commission, which was established by the DC Court of Appeals to address the increasing unmet legal needs of DC residents. According to *the Washington Post*, "[t]he commission is an organization of considerable heft. . . . The commission's membership is diverse: It consists of judges from the D.C. Superior Court and the Court of Appeals, past presidents of the D.C. Bar, community leaders and other providers of legal services." In less than one year as its head, Sunil was instrumental in ensuring the Commission's success in securing over \$3 million from the DC City Council to significantly expand civil legal services to the poor.

Prior to his current position on the Commission, Sunil was a trial attorney in both the Educational Opportunities Section and the Coordination and Review Section in the Civil Rights Division of the US Department of Justice, where he litigated education-related federal civil rights cases across the country on behalf of the United States, assisted in the implementation of the Division's policy initiatives, and was a member of the Division's National Origin Working Group.

2006 Bowling for Justice

APALRC hosted its 5th annual *Bowling for Justice* Fundraiser on October 26 at Lucky Strike Lanes in Washington, DC. We wish to acknowledge the following 28 sponsors who made this year's event the most successful ever.

DIAMOND LEVEL

Kirkland & Ellis LLP
Wiley Rein & Fielding LLP

PLATINUM LEVEL

Alston & Bird LLP
Bancroft Associates, PLLC
Covington & Burling LLP
Crowell & Moring LLP
Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow,
Garrett & Dunner LLP
Latham & Watkins LLP
Legal Times

GOLD LEVEL

Arnold & Porter LLP
Howrey LLP
Lucky Strike
Powell Goldstein LLP
Spriggs & Hollingsworth
Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and
Dorr LLP

SILVER LEVEL

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LLP
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Kelley Drye Collier Shannon
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White & Case LLP
Willkie Farr & Gallagher LLP

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Asian American Justice Center
American University Washington
College of Law
Harris Wiltshire & Gramis LLP
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P.C.

The George Washington University
Law School

ADVOCATE

Stein McEwen & Bui LLP

FRIENDS OF APALRC

Nueva Vista Group LLC

Park Selected as 2007 Rawlings Fellow

APALRC Executive Director Jayne Park recently earned the title of 2007 Rawlings Fellow. The Rawlings Fellowship is a prestigious nine-month leadership program created to promote excellence in public leadership and to honor one of Maryland's most widely admired and powerful political leaders, former Baltimore Delegate Howard Peters "Pete" Rawlings. The Fellowship is unique in its emphasis on both the personal development and understanding of group process and provides an intensive series of experiential workshops.

Peter Shapiro, former chair of the Prince George's County Council and founder and director of the program, said "the training of the Rawlings Fellowship is hands-on and rigorous. There is no public leadership program like it in the United States."

Jayne joins a class of 26 Maryland leaders from the state legislature, municipalities, business, and the nonprofit sector. Faculty from the University of Maryland and leading national and international scholars and practitioners in the field of leadership development teach the courses.

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“We at the Clinic are excited to be working in partnership with APALRC in drafting and advocating for amendments to the Language Access Act,” said Mr. Rathod. “This project has allowed the Clinic to contribute to an important effort on behalf of the District’s limited English proficient population, while also exposing our student attorneys to multiple forms of community lawyering and advocacy.”

Also starting in January 2007 will be Jennifer Deng-Pickett, who will join APALRC’s staff as a full-time community organizer for the Coalition. The position is made possible through the generous support of the Public Welfare Foundation. Most recently, Jennifer was the Maryland Programs Manager at Asian American LEAD. Previously she served as events and communications manager for the Leadership for a Changing World Program at the Advocacy Institute, where she worked on grassroots fundraising, coalition building, communications and media, and policy advocacy. Born in Taipei, Taiwan, Jennifer received her undergraduate degrees in Spanish and international studies from Austin College, and her master’s degree in peace and development studies from the University of Limerick in Limerick, Ireland.

**Satellite Office Opens in
Montgomery County!**

APALRC is pleased to announce the opening of its satellite office in Wheaton, Maryland, conveniently located next to the Wheaton metro station:

**11141 Georgia Avenue, Suite 515,
Silver Spring, MD 20902**

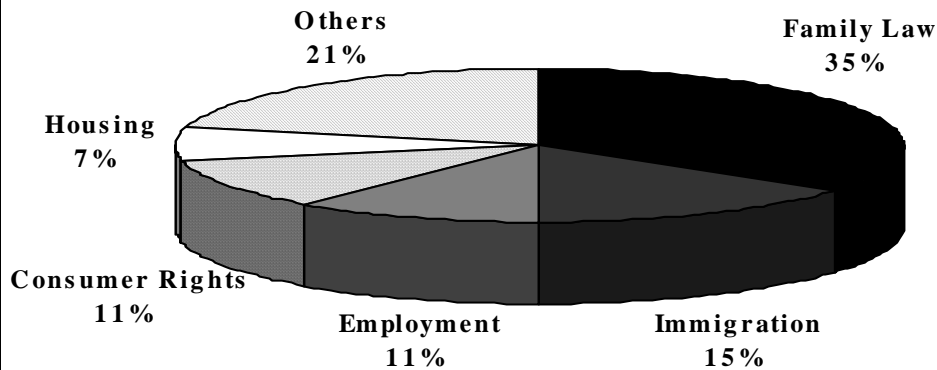
**Tel: 301-942-2223/2263
Fax: 301-942-9222**

Grateful Thanks to All of APALRC’s Funders

The generous support of our donors and funders ensures that APALRC can continue to provide much-needed legal services to Asian Americans in the Washington, DC metropolitan area. We are grateful to the many individuals who support our work through their generous contributions. In addition to our *Bowling for Justice* sponsors, APALRC would also like to acknowledge the following institutional funders for their continued support of our mission.

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| Altria Group, Inc./National Network to End Domestic Violence | Montgomery County Community Foundation’s Community Fund |
| Corporation for National and Community Service (AmeriCorps*VISTA) | Montgomery County Council |
| D.C. Bar Foundation | Montgomery County Department of Health and Human Services |
| D.C. Mayor’s Office on Asian and Pacific Islander Affairs | Montgomery County Maryland Department of Housing and Community Affairs, Division of Community Development |
| District of Columbia Office of the Deputy Mayor for Public Safety and Justice, Office of Victims Services | Morris & Gwendolyn Cafritz Foundation |
| Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation | Philippine American Foundation for Charities, Inc. |
| Exxon Mobil Corporation | Public Welfare Foundation |
| Fannie Mae Foundation | Starbucks Memorial Fund |
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| Korean Churches for Community Development | The Washington Post |
| Korean United Methodist Church of Greater Washington | Trellis Fund |
| Legal Services of Northern Virginia | Virginia Law Foundation |
| MARPAT Foundation | Vision of Peace Church |
| Maryland Legal Services Corporation | |

Breakdown of APALRC's 2006 Cases



Family Law: Child custody, visitation and support, spousal support and divorce. Many of the family law cases handled by APALRC involve victims of domestic violence.

Immigration Law: Naturalization, adjustment of status, family and employment, employment authorization.

Employment Law: Unpaid wages, discrimination, wrongful termination, unemployment benefits, and workers compensation.

Consumer Rights: Unfair sales practices, bankruptcy, and identity theft.

Housing: Landlord-tenant law, public housing.

SNAPSHOT OF SERVICES

- In 2006, APALRC helped individuals from over 10 different Asian countries, including China, Korea, Vietnam, India, Bangladesh, Burma, Mongolia, the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, Mongolia and Thailand.
- 43% of APALRC's clients who received legal assistance lived in Maryland, 40% in Virginia, and 11% in the District of Columbia.
- 45 law students volunteered on a weekly basis with the APALRC in 2006. The students staffed our hotline and provided legal support to APALRC attorneys. Our volunteers were able to assist clients in 11 Asian languages, including Mandarin, Cantonese, Korean, Vietnamese, Japanese, Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Marathi, Tamil, and Cambodian.
- 35 legal interpreters – all trained by the APALRC – provided interpretation and translation services in 100 cases.

We dedicate this year's newsletter in loving memory of our dear friend and cherished colleague, Robert E. Wone, who died on August 2, 2006.

A tireless activist and volunteer, Robert actively advanced the interests of many charitable organizations, including APALRC. Robert was the General Counsel of Radio Free Asia, a position to which he was appointed in July 2006. Previously, he was an associate at the law firm of Covington & Burling LLP.



We will always remember and cherish Robert's generosity, support and commitment to APALRC. His ideals, his values, and his most generous and giving spirit will forever remain with us, and continue to inspire all of us at APALRC to do our part in creating a better world.

Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center (APALRC)

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