



Asian American Coalition of Chicago

www.aacchicago.org
aacchicago2025@gmail.com

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TO: Asian Pacific American (APA) Community Leadership; APA Community Media; Major Media; Corporate; Governmental, Political and Student Outreach Distribution Lists (Midwest Regional and National)
FROM: Irene Cualoping, Director of Communications, AACC 2025 Lunar New Year Celebration for AACC 2025 Lunar New Year Celebration Host Committee Leadership
FOR: Asian American Coalition of Chicago

**ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION OF CHICAGO
ANNOUNCES AWARDEES FOR 42nd ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR 4723//2025
CELEBRATION EXTRAVAGANZA
"...ONE..."**

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 22, 2025 AT HYATT REGENCY O'HARE

LINDA YU NAMED NAMED PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE

ILLINOIS STATE TREASURER MICHAEL FRERICHS NAMED GRAND ASIAN AMERICAN SANDRA OTAKA MEMORIAL AWARDEE

(N.B. MEDIA: FULL HOUSE OVER 1,000 GUESTS EXPECTED, EARLY SET AND BATTERY PACKS ADVISED)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: GENERAL: aacchicago2025@gmail.com
December 18, 2024 MEDIA: info@enericom.net
TICKETS: aacchicago2025@gmail.com**

CHICAGO, IL - - Ticket sales are on track to be sold out for the Asian American Coalition of Chicago's **42nd Annual Lunar New Year Celebration, "...ONE..."** to be held **Saturday, February 22, 2025**, at the **Hyatt Regency O'Hare, 9300 West Bryn Mawr Avenue, in Rosemont, Illinois!** The black-tie gala usually attracts over 1,000 people.*

Currently, tickets are available at \$1,500 sold per table of ten **when funded by December 31, 2024**, or \$2,000 per table of ten **if funded on or after January 1, 2025** for this popular star-studded event. No tickets will be sold at the door. **Cocktail Reception and Exhibits begin at 4:30 p.m.; Opening Ceremonies are at 6 p.m., with Dinner, Entertainment, and Awards Ceremonies following, until approximately 10 p.m.** Tickets are available on a **first-funded, first-seated** basis. Purchase information appears on the website www.aacchicago.org (Zelle and checks accepted.)

This year's Lunar Opening Ceremonies will feature not only numerous popular celebrities from TV, film, music and theatre (list expected to be announced next week), but also, a dazzling Malang Flower Carnival by Maestra Fashion Carnival, Dr. Agus Sunandar; and On del On del Betawi by Modero Co. featuring fantastical Indonesian costumes! The gala will showcase cultural entertainment, including a Unity Dance, "Rhythms of One" presented by Cultural Diversity Dance Arts and its creative director, Liah I. Tehan; the Nataliyaya Designs Couture Fashion Show, and a new segment featuring an "All-Star Singing Ensemble" of The National Anthem.

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Hosted by the Indonesian American Community
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CELEBRATION EXTRAVAGANZA
-- ADD ONE**

A new "In Memoriam" tribute video segment will also be introduced, honoring those who helped create the AACC legacy of the past. It will be set to original music by Chicago composer Cleofe Guangko Casambre, M.D. and narrated by longtime AACC board member Lourdes Mon. Original music composed by Chicago artist Tatsu Aoki will also be used for various live and recorded segments.

Every year a different Asian community takes turn playing host of the Lunar New Year gala. This year it is the **Indonesian American Community**, which has twice before (2006 and 2015) held the gavel for the Asian Pacific American community's most important event of the year.

*"The Indonesian American Community is honored to host for the third time the Asian American Coalition of Chicago's Annual Lunar New Year Celebration. We have chosen the interactive theme "... ONE ... " reflecting "E Pluribus Unum * Bhineka Tunggal Ika," to showcase Unity in ONE,"* said Martino Tangkar, 2024-2025 President of the Board of Directors of the Asian American Coalition of Chicago.

AACC... WHO WE ARE

An event held on this grand of a scale only once a year, Lunar New Year is traditionally the single largest organized annual event of its type in Chicago's Asian American community.

According to the latest U.S. Census (2020), the **Asian alone population in Illinois** numbers approximately **755,938, or 5.9%** of the statewide population. Approximately **119,672** Asians alone reside in **DuPage County**, comprising **12.8%** of DuPage County's population; with **413,271** residents of **Cook County**, comprising **7.8%** of Cook County's population.

Champaign County has 24,487 at 11.9% Asian alone population; Lake County has 59,390 at 8.3%; Will County has 42,849 at 6.2%; McLean County 8,142 at 4.8%; Peoria County 7,779 at 4.3%; Kane County 21,634 at 4.2%; Kendall County 4,700 at 3.6%.; McHenry County 8,803 at 2.8%; and Kendall County 4,700 at 3.6%.

2020 U.S. Census Info Source:

<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/state-by-state/illinois-population-change-between-census-decade.html#race-ethnicity>)

Asian alone population in Chicago includes communities including West Rogers Park, Albany Park, Uptown, Armour Square and Bridgeport; and in suburban Cook County in communities including Glenview, Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates, Niles, Carol Stream, Morton Grove, Des Plaines and Naperville..

Numerous dignitaries traditionally attend the festivities, including the Asian consular corps, elected and appointed governmental officials, political candidates, top business and corporate leaders, decision-makers at Chicago's major media press outlets, and everyone who considers himself or herself a mover and shaker in and around, or for, the Asian Pacific American national movement.

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-- ADD TWO**

AWARDS

The Coalition plans to award the recipients of its 2025 Exemplary Community Service Awards, its Youth Who Excels Awards, and its prestigious Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Award that evening. The Coalition renamed its Pan Asian Award in 1996 after the late legendary Chicago civic leader Ping Tom. Ping Tom was also one of the original founders of the Asian American Coalition. The Coalition's Grand Asian Award, the Sandra Otaka Memorial Award, is also periodically presented to a friend of the Asian Pacific American community of non-Asian descent. The 2025 Entrepreneurial Award will also be presented this year.

The Coalition is pleased to announce that the following people have been named this year's award recipients:

The Coalition is thrilled to announce that this year's **Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial** honoree, its highest award, is trailblazing anchor and legendary TV broadcaster **Linda Yu**, currently Principal, Linda Yu Media. Attorney **Darryl Tom** **nominated Linda Yu for the award and will again participate** in this year's award ceremonies, representing **The Tom Family**.

"Thanks to all of you," said Linda Yu in her acceptance statement to AACC. "I'm very honored. Ping Tom meant so much to me and to our community. I'm humbled that you would choose me. See you February 22, 2025!"

LINDA YU

Linda Yu arrived in Chicago in 1979, making her the first Asian American on-air journalist in the city. In 1984, she appeared at the First Asian American Coalition of Chicago Lunar New Year Celebration, and she has played a role in numerous Coalition annual productions since then through 2016, when she retired as anchor/reporter after over 32 years at ABC 7 Chicago TV News (WLS-TV). She began her career in Chicago in 1979 at NBC 5 Chicago (WMAQ-TV.) She is the winner of five local Emmy Awards. She retired from TV news after 46 years in news and 37 years in the Chicago market.

This will be Linda Yu's approximately 29th time participating in this event, (four by video). Since the Coalition created the Pan Asian American Award in 1992, she has introduced this prestigious segment 11 times. In 1989, Yu was a founder (with David Ibata) of the Asian American Journalists Association, Chicago Chapter. In 2005 she was a Silver Circle inductee for the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, Chicago/Midwest Chapter. She served as the longtime Advisory Board Chair for the Chinese American Service League, for 30 years, when under the leadership of the (now late) and also legendary Bernard Lo Wong. Yu was also a volunteer and supporter of Common Threads, the Juvenile Protective Association, and the March of Dimes.

In 1988, **Joanie Lum** became the second Asian American on-air journalist in Chicago. The 2025 live portion of the presentation to **Linda Yu** will be introduced by **Joanie Lum**, now a Reporter at FOX TV Chicago.

The 2025 recipient of the Coalition's Grand Asian American Sandra Otaka Memorial Award, is **Illinois**

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-- ADD THREE**

State Treasurer Michael Frerichs. This award is periodically presented to someone of non-Asian descent, who has made significant contributions to the Asian Pacific American community. The Coalition renamed its Grand Asian Award in 2010 after the late Cook County Circuit Court Judge Sandra Otaka.

A new award, the **2025 Entrepreneurial Award**, will be presented this year to **(Mr.) Jae Chul Chang**, President, Ribbon Webbing Corporation, Chicago, Illinois.

The Coalition announces its **2025 Exemplary Community Service Award** recipients as follows

- 1. (Mr.) Johnny Zheng**, Owner, Afusion Restaurant, Chicago and Matteson, Illinois; Owner, Zheng Construction Company; President, Mid-America Restaurant Association, **Chinese American Community Awardee**;
- 2. (Ms.) Cleo Aquino**, President and Co-Founder, SPIRE Real Estate Education Inc., 2024 President, AREAA-Greater Chicago; **Filipino American Community Awardee**;
- 3. (Mr.) Tejas Shah**, Partner, Barnes & Thornburg LLP; President, South Asian Bar Association Foundation of North America, **Indian American Community Awardee**;
- 4. (Ms.) Ira Sigar, Ph.D.**, Associate Professor, Microbiology & Immunology, College of Graduate Studies (CGS-Downers Grove), Northwestern University, **Indonesian American Community Awardee**;
- 5. (Ms.) Ikuko Nichols**, Goodwill Ambassador, Chicago Okinawa Kenjinkai, **Japanese American Community Awardee**;
- 6. (Ms.) Kiran Kim**, Chairman, Board of Directors, Korean American Association of Chicago (KAAC), **Korean American Community Awardee**;
- 7. (Mr.) Chee Keong (CK) Tan**, Chief Executive Officer, Supermax Healthcare Inc.; **Malaysian American Community Awardee**;
- 8. (Mr.) Asif Malik**, Assistant, Circuit Court of Cook County; **Pakistani American Community Awardee**;
- 9. (Mr.) Hon Bannapradist**, Senior Graphic Designer, Allured Business Media, Carol Stream, Illinois; **Thai American Community Awardee**; and
- 10. (Ms.) Teresa Tran**, Claim Specialist, Social Security Administration; **Vietnamese American Community Awardee**.

The Coalition announces its **2025 Youth Who Excels Award** recipients as follows

- 1. (Ms.) Katelyn Tran**, 17, Senior, Walter Payton College Preparatory High School, Chicago, Illinois; **Chinese American Community Youth Awardee**;

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- 2. (Mr.) Evan Mendiola**, 17, Junior, York Community High School, Elmhurst, Illinois; **Filipino American Community Youth Awardee**;
- 3. (Ms.) Maya Agrawal**, 17, Senior, Walter Payton College Preparatory High School, Chicago, Illinois; **Indian American Community Youth Awardee**;
- 4. (Mr.) Zachary Wong**, 16, Sophomore, Walter Payton College Preparatory High School, Chicago, Illinois; **Indonesian American Community Youth Awardee**;
- 5. (Mr.) Kanato Foley**, 18, Freshman, Florida State University, Tallahassee, Florida; **Japanese American Community Youth Awardee**;
- 6. (Ms.) Erica Kim Yoo**, 18, Senior, Glenbrook North High School, Northbrook, Illinois; **Korean American Community Youth Awardee**;
- 7. (Ms.) Kayleigh Lim**, 14, Freshman, Whitney M. Young Magnet High School, Chicago, Illinois; **Malaysian American Community Youth Awardee**;
- 8. (Mr.) Yaseen Ahmed**, 20, Sophomore, Joliet Junior College, Joliet, Illinois; **Pakistani American Community Youth Awardee**;
- 9. (Ms.) Nattapak Chankaew**, 18, Senior, Stephen T. Mather High School, Chicago, Illinois; **Thai American Community Youth Awardee**; and
- 10. (Ms.) Sylvia Dinh**, 19, Freshman, Loyola University Chicago, Chicago, Illinois; **Vietnamese American Community Youth Awardee**.

SPONSORS

Generous top sponsors this year include: Health Care Service Corporation (HCSC), Global Sponsor \$10,000; ABC 7 Chicago (WLS-TV), Continental Sponsor \$5,000; Nicor Gas; Continental Sponsor \$5,000; Asian McDonald's Operator Association (AMOA), Community Sponsor; \$3,000.

OH Foundation at the Zhou B Art Center in Chicago, Illinois was the generous venue underwriter for the AACC Kickoff Celebration in August; the Korean American Cultural Center of Chicago (KCCoC) in Wheeling, Illinois, was the venue underwriter for the AACC Holiday Meeting in November; and New Furama Restaurant in Chicago's Chinatown was venue and partial food underwriter for the AACC September and October planning committee meetings.

CHECKS

All checks should be made payable to: **Asian American Coalition of Chicago 2025**. Please e-mail for Zelle instructions. Pre-payment is required to take advantage of sponsor benefits, such as tickets, exhibit tables, and advertising space.

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-- ADD FIVE**

SPONSORSHIPS

Sponsorship rates and packages are priced as follows: \$25,000.00 Presenting Sponsor; \$10,000 Global Sponsor; \$7,000.00 Pan Asian Sponsor; \$5,000 Continental Sponsor; \$3,000.00 Community Sponsor and \$1,500.00 Coalition Sponsor. The Coalition is also seeking additional venue underwriters and Gift Bag Sponsors for Volunteers and Participants. To inquire about or to reserve sponsorship, please contact aacchicago2025@gmail.com.

ADVERTISEMENTS

In addition, advertisement space reservations in the Souvenir Program Book are available at \$500.00 for a full page (size 8-1/2" x 11"). Non-profit full-page ads (8-1/2" x 11") are available at a discounted rate of \$300.00. Insertion orders should be placed now. Checks, camera-ready color artwork creative for 2025 ads are due no later than January 15, 2025.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sponsor, ad and general inquiries should be directed to aacchicago2025@gmail.com (e-mail preferred).

MEDIA

ENERI Communications again has been named the charitable agency of record for the 42nd Lunar New Year Celebration, and has received the assignment to coordinate media relations, TV station/media company participation and celebrity presenters. All media requests may be directed to ENERI Communications at info@enericom.net.

MEDIA CREDENTIALS

Media wishing to cover from the press platform that evening must be credentialed and requests are due by **Friday, February 7, 2025 COB**. Media wishing to sit at dinner tables should pre-arrange purchase of dinner tickets directly or through the assistance of community organizations.

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* (Excludes Years with World Health Challenges)

PRESS RELEASES/THIS DOC TO BE POSTED (AFTER 12/21/24) IN PDF AT:

**www.aacchicago.org
www.enericom.net/privateaacc/press**

/e
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NOTE: If you wish to be removed from this list, just reply to aacchicago2025@gmail.com or info@enericom.net and state "REMOVE" in the subject line.

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