



**Asian American Women's Coalition**

**2025 Annual Meeting**

*Continuing Our Legacy...*



*Embracing Change*

**In partnership with PECO**

**Asian Bank | Asian Mosaic Funds | Diana Liu  
Methodist Hospital Foundation | Parke Bank**

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*Saturday, February 22, 2025; 10:00 am - 1:30 pm PECO  
Energy Hall, 2301 Market Street, Philadelphia*

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## *Asian American Women's Coalition*

The ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S COALITION (AAWC) is a multicultural organization with a mission to advance the interests of Asian American women through leadership and mutual support. Founded in 1987 by the Honorable Ida Chen and Cecilia Moy Yep, AAWC has initiated numerous activities for the Asian community and collaborated with various organizations to raise awareness and provide support on issues of interest to the Asian American community. AAWC also provides scholarship assistance to graduating Asian American female high school seniors interested in pursuing a college degree.

### BOARD OFFICERS

Grace Wu Kong, *President* | Marife Domingo, *Vice President*  
Margaret Chin, *Treasurer* | Anita Li, *Co-Secretary*  
Rona Magno Navera, *Co-Secretary*

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Suzanne Young

*Join us and be an AAWC member* →



# *Annual Meeting Program*



- 9:00 AM INFORMAL MEETING WITH AAWC SCHOLARS
- Hosted by **Sophie Xu & Dr. Wendy Le**

REGISTRATION

- 9:30 AM ZUMBA
- Margarita Wilson, *Zumba Fitness Instructor*

- 10:00 AM WELCOME & GREETINGS
- **Grace Kong**, *2025 AAWC President*
  - **Carniesha Kwashie**, *Director of Corporate Community Impact, PECO*
  - **Hinal Vaghela**, *AARG Treasurer, PECO*

- 10:03 AM 2025 AAWC RECOGNITION
- **Dr. Keeya Branson-Davis**, *Corporation Contributions Manager, PECO*

- 10:05 AM "ABOUT FACE"
- An interview and exclusive screening with:
- **Nydia Han**, *Consumer Investigative Reporter & Co-Anchor, 6ABC*, and
  - **Jennifer Lin**, *Producer, Director, & Writer*

Q & A Session

- 10:40 AM 2025 HEALTH UPDATE
- **Rhona Cooper**, *Public Health Preparedness Clinical Coordinator, Philadelphia Health Department*

IS LEARNING TO BALANCE A SURVIVAL SKILL?

- **Victoria Ngo Cox**, *Physical Therapist, Select Rehabilitation*

Q & A Session

- 11:15 AM EMBRACING CHANGE  
Moderator: **Dr. Belinda Huang**, Celadon Consulting LLC  
Panelists:
- **Kim Nguyen**, *Proprietor of Medicare & Money*
  - **Anna Zhang**, *Manhattan School of Music*
  - **Romana Lee- Akiyama**, *Building Movement Project*
- Q & A Session and Wrap Up
- 12:10 AM 2025 AAWC RECOGNITION
- **Alpha Sigma Rho**, *Epsilon Chapter, Temple University*
  - **Andrew Featherman, Esq.**
- 12:15 PM AAWC SWEARING-IN CEREMONY
- Presided by **Cecilia Moy Yep** and **Judge Ida Chen**, *AAWC Co-Founders*
- 12:25 PM COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECT: "BREAKING BREAD ON BROAD STREET" – THE FOOD PANTRY OF CONGREGATION RODEPH SHALOM
- Ellen Poster, *Board Member*, **Congregation Rodeph Shalom**
- 12:30 PM LUNCH & NETWORKING
- 1: 15 PM AAWC ANNUAL MEETING
- **Grace Wu Kong**, *AAWC President*
  - **Margaret Chin**, *AAWC Treasurer*
  - **Gloria Yu**, *AAWC Board of Directors*
- 1:26 PM DISTRIBUTION OF DOOR PRIZES
- **Katherine Ngee**, *AAWC Board of Directors*
  - **Wendy Smith**, *AAWC Advisory Board*
- 1:30 PM ADJOURNMENT

# 2025 AAWC RECOGNITION



**Dr. Keeya Branson-Davis** has more than 30 years of experience in leading programs and projects, producing special events, developing and implementing diversity initiatives, grant management, and facilitating community partnerships. As the Corporate Contributions Manager in the Corporate & Community Impact Department at PECO, Dr. Branson-Davis is responsible for managing PECO's relationships with nonprofit partners, organizing community outreach activities, and coordinating employee engagement opportunities. Dr. Branson-Davis also manages the annual PECO Employee Giving Campaign, which has raised more than \$4.2 million dollars in employee donations for non-profit charities during her leadership tenure.

Dr. Branson-Davis began her professional career in the office of the former Mayor of Philadelphia, Edward G. Rendell and moved on to become the Director of Programming at the Delaware River Waterfront Corporation where she managed programs and produced special events at Penn's Landing. Dr. Branson-Davis has also consulted as a marketing strategist and served as an adjunct professor of Tourism at Drexel University.

Dr. Branson-Davis is a member of the PHLDiversity Advisory Board which honored her with the organization's Industry Appreciation Award. In 2023, Dr. Branson-Davis was recognized by the City Council of Philadelphia and the African American Children's Book Project for her support of children's literacy, and that same year she was honored with the inaugural Teenshop Community Leadership Award.

A proud native of Philadelphia, Dr. Branson-Davis is a graduate of Central High School (CHS 248, BA degree). Dr. Branson-Davis holds a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree in Philosophy from DePauw University, as well as a Master of Tourism and Hospitality Management (MTHM) degree and a doctorate in Educational Administration (Ed.D.) both from

Temple University. As a part of her service to the community, Dr. Branson-Davis enjoys mentoring high school students and first-generation college students. Dr. Branson-Davis resides in Philadelphia's Art Museum Area with her husband, Douglas, and enjoys visiting her daughter, Skylar, who resides in Tokyo, Japan.



### Alpha Sigma Rho of Temple University



**Andrew Featherman, Esq.** is a lifelong entrepreneur, and co-author of several books on entrepreneurship. Andrew ran multiple businesses prior to becoming a lawyer. He is an attorney in private practice with a focus in the metals industry and business succession planning. He lectures regularly on data, privacy and identity theft issues, especially those impacting businesses. Andrew is a Triple Owl with three degrees from Temple University, an undergraduate degree in economics, an M.B.A. in management, and a law degree. He also manages two charities in honor of his parents in Maine and in Philadelphia.

# *Community Service Project*

## **Breaking Bread on Broad (BBoB)**



*"Each person has the responsibility to do as much as they can to help repair a broken world."*

**Congregation Rodeph Shalom**

Photo: <https://rodephshalom.org/breaking-bread-on-broad/>

Breaking Bread on Broad (BBoB) is the food pantry of Congregation Rodeph Shalom. Located at 1339 Green Street in Philadelphia, BBoB provides milk, food, diapers, and feminine hygiene supplies to up to 200 food insecure families every Wednesday morning of the week. The majority of the neighbors served are from the Asian American, Hispanic and Black communities. BBoB undertakes its distribution process within the Rodeph Shalom synagogue, taking into consideration the safety and comfort of their guests. BBoB refrains from asking any identifying information to preserve the privacy of each guest.

BBoB partners with various non-profit organizations to obtain items for distribution. To supplement these donations, BBoB purchases milk, food and diapers with funds from Rodeph Shalom members and other BBoB supporters. BBoB also works with other agencies to provide services for guests. One such organization is the Philadelphia Department of Public Health, which provides masks and COVID test kits, including Mandarin and Cantonese translators twice a month. The Asian American Women's Coalition is BBoB's latest partner in this sacred work that Rodeph Shalom undertakes because it believes in the responsibility of each person to do as much as they can to help repair a broken world.

# SPEAKERS & PRESENTERS



**The Honorable Ida Chen** is a judge in the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas. She is the first Asian American female judge to serve in Pennsylvania and the first Asian American to serve on the Philadelphia Human Relations Commission. She was born in Hong Kong and migrated to the United States from Indonesia.



**Margaret Chin** retired from the School District of Philadelphia after 38 years of service. Prior to her retirement, she was the principal at Southwark School in South Philadelphia. She was among the first Asian American who held a high-level position at the School District. Margaret is also a highly respected leader in the Asian community, serving for multiple terms as President of the Asian American Educators and the Asian American Women's Coalition. She currently serves as Chair of Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, member of the Schoolmen's Club of Philadelphia, and Trustee of the Christopher Ludwick Foundation.



**Rhona Cooper** is the Clinical Coordinator on the Bio-Terrorism/Public Health Preparedness Team at the Philadelphia Department of Public Health's Division of Disease Control. She is an emergency planner involved in the development and implementation of the City's response to public health emergencies. She has been a leader in the planning and operation of the City's response to COVID-19, MPOX, and other biological emergencies. Rhona was involved in the City's management of the healthcare of 25,000 evacuees from Afghanistan at Philadelphia International Airport during Operation Allies Welcome, as well as the sheltering of asylum seekers who have arrived in Philadelphia by buses sent from Texas. Before joining the Department of Public Health, Ms. Cooper worked for



over 28 years as a certified school nurse and a nurse administrator for the School District of Philadelphia.



**Victoria Ngo Cox** is a physical therapist working with inpatient rehab at Select Rehabilitation. Through her four years of professional experience, Victoria has been committed to educating others – particularly the elderly – on the benefits of physical therapy. She was born and raised in Northeast Philadelphia as the eldest daughter of two immigrant parents from Vietnam.

She earned her Bachelor's in Health Sciences and Doctorate of Physical Therapy from the University of the Sciences in an accelerated six-year program. She enjoys traveling, hiking, reading, and exploring new restaurants with her fiancé.



**Nydia Han** is 6abc's Consumer Investigative Reporter, Troubleshooter, and co-anchor of Action News Sunday mornings and Action News at 10 A.M. She is also the creator of the documentary series, #ThisIsAmerica, a provocative, fresh look at who we are as Americans.

Nydia is an Emmy award-winning journalist, committed to getting real results for Action News viewers. She is dedicated to exposing scams, protecting consumers, and encouraging businesses and agencies to do the right thing. In her work related to #ThisIsAmerica, Nydia hopes to inspire us to get to know each other's unique American stories, check our own biases, and act as positive agents of change and unity in our communities. Nydia also covers general news as an Action News anchor and has traveled frequently to cover national stories.

Prior to joining Action News in October of 2002, Nydia worked for KTRK-TV, the ABC station in Houston, Texas, and KOCO-TV in Oklahoma City. Nydia started her career as a reporter at KIFI-TV in Pocatello, Idaho.

Nydia is dedicated to helping our community in a myriad of ways. She is on the community advisory board for the Asian American Women's Coalition and volunteers her time for a number of other organizations.

She is especially passionate about raising awareness and desperately needed funds for lung cancer research after the passing of her mother in 2009. Nydia also enjoys mentoring aspiring journalists.

Nydia received a Bachelor of Science in Journalism with a focus on International Studies from the Medill School of Journalism at Northwestern University. Fluent in Korean, Nydia also graduated from a program at Yonsei University in Seoul, Korea. Nydia is a mom to two young children, a wife and a friend. She enjoys good food, good wine, and most of all, a good laugh.

(Photo & Text Source: <https://6abc.com/about/newsteam/nydia-han/>)



**Dr. Belinda Huang**, Principal of Celadon Consulting, offers customized leadership, talent and organizational development in higher education and organizations. Frequently invited to give presentations on leadership, diversity, equity and inclusion, Dr. Huang has spoken on the lack of leadership diversity, postdoctoral professional development, developing an inclusive climate, and implicit bias. Early in her career, she developed and taught a leadership workshop for Asian American college women at selective colleges and universities nationally. In her faculty appointments at U.C. Berkeley, University of Pennsylvania, C.S.U. East Bay, Loyola University, and George Washington University, she taught Asian American Studies and Higher Education and Policy. Dr. Huang's published works include empowering Asian American leaders in academe, advancing women of color senior leaders in higher education, creating inclusive environments for Asian American faculty, and mentoring and professional development for postdoctoral women. Dr. Huang served as Executive Director of the National Postdoctoral Association and advocated for the needs of the postdoctoral community to academe, government, industry, and funding agencies. She has also served on the Advisory Board for the National Science Foundation's "Trajectories into Early Career Research" and on the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine's committee for the "Characteristics of Effective Mentoring Relationships Among STEM Faculty and Students" workshop. Throughout her career, Dr. Huang has taught leadership to

undergraduates, Ph.D., and postdoctoral scholars. A facilitator of intergroup dialogues and a college advisor to low-income, first generation and underserved individuals, she is committed to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Dr. Huang is an AAWC Advisory Board member.



**Grace Wu Kong** is the Director of the Chinese Unit at Echelon Care and Rehabilitation Center in Voorhees, New Jersey. This specialized unit ensures that residents are able to communicate and receive needed support from caregivers who speak their own language. Grace has been working in the medical field for the past 35 years in various capacities, including as Dietetic Technician/ Dietary Supervisor at Thomas Jefferson Hospital, Community Liaison and Interpreter at the Chinese Health Information Center, Personal Care Plus Specialist for Ameri-Choice for Medicare/Medicaid dual patients. She assisted Ameri-Choice open the first Chinatown Community Service Center in Philadelphia, and helped provide information on Medicare, Medicaid, and Kids Choice benefits to various Asian communities. She also worked as Partnership Specialist for the US Census Bureau for the 2010 and 2020 Decennial Census.

Grace currently serves as President of the Asian American Women Coalition, Commissioner for the Mayor's Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs in Philadelphia since 2016, and Secretary for the Asian American Lions Club. She sits as a member of the Board of Directors for Penn Asian Senior Services Inc., Asian Advisory Committee for Philadelphia Corporation for Aging, and the Northeast Philadelphia Chinese Association. She co-founded and was past president of the Chinese American Women's Sisterhood Society of Philadelphia. Grace was born in Hong Kong, and raised in Philadelphia Chinatown. She holds an associate's degree in Dietetics in Food and Clinical Nutrition and a bachelor's degree in Business Administration from Gwynedd-Mercy University. In her spare time, she enjoys hiking, exploring nature, traveling, dining out, and spending time with her three children and two grandchildren.



**Carniesha Kwashie** is the Sr. Manager of Workforce Development Corporate and Community Impact at PECO. Carniesha previously worked in philanthropy as the director of a workforce development funders collaborative at the United Way of Greater Philadelphia and Southern New Jersey. She designed and implemented with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) and Race Forward a racial equity driven Workforce Benchmark Network initiative – the first of its kind in the nation. Carniesha earned a Bachelor of Arts in African-American Studies and Psychology from Temple University and a Master of Science in Interior Architecture and Design from Drexel University. She is a proud Baltimore native who resides in Philadelphia with her husband, daughter and two dogs.

*(Photo & text source: <https://skilledwork.org/meet-the-board/carniesha-kwashie/>)*



**Romana Lee- Akiyama** is a global cross-sector leader at the intersection of social change, equity, community well-being, and the arts and culture. Throughout her 25-year career, she has served as a skilled advocate and partner to nonprofit and community-based leaders and organizations, grantmakers and funders, and government institutions. Her expertise lies in unknitting challenging situations and complex systems to drive towards equitable results through strategy, planning and engagement. Romana joined the Building Movement Project as their Senior Director of Institutional Advancement in January 2024. She is the former executive director of the Mayor's Office of Public Engagement for the City of Philadelphia. She started her career at the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation (PCDC).

Romana is the founding director and curator of the Chen Lok Lee Legacy Project, which she founded in 2021 as a tribute to her late father, an artist, printmaker and professor. She serves on the board of directors of PCDC, and as a Board of Advisors to the Bryn Mawr College Graduate School of Social Work and Social Research. She recently completed her term as Co-Vice Chair of the PA State Advisory

Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. She is also a Marshall Memorial Fellow with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, and a fellow with the Center for Asian Pacific American Women. Romana is a dedicated yoga practitioner and teacher.



**Jennifer Lin** has spent a lifetime as a reporter. For 31 years, she worked for The Philadelphia Inquirer, with postings as a financial correspondent on Wall Street, a national correspondent in Washington, D.C., and an Asia correspondent in Beijing. A decade ago, she left daily journalism to try other types of storytelling. Working with Sam Katz of History Making Productions, Jennifer made the documentary *Beethoven in Beijing* about the Philadelphia Orchestra's China legacy. The film premiered on PBS's Great Performances. Her next films — *Ten Times Better* and *About Face* — are both about the Asian American experience in ballet. Jennifer also wrote a companion oral history to *Beethoven in Beijing* and published her family memoir, *Shanghai Faithful: Betrayal and Forgiveness in a Chinese Christian Family*. Jennifer and her husband, writer Bill Stieg, live in Doylestown.



**Kim Nguyen** is the founder & CEO of Medicare & Money. She is a visionary leader committed to serving the community. Kim's mission is to be a trusted partner in her clients' journeys to better health and financial wellness. With a deep understanding of the challenges individuals and families face when navigating healthcare options and financial planning, Kim is dedicated to providing guidance, support, and education every step of the way.



**Ellen Poster** is a board member of the Congregation Rodeph Shalom in Philadelphia. AAWC is working with Ellen in this year's community service work to support the Breaking Bread on Broad (BBobB), the food pantry of the Rodelph Shalom Congregation.



**Hinal Vaghela** joined PECO in 2021 and brings over six years of experience in the financial sector. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Economics. As a Senior Financial Analyst, Hinal currently supports Electric Operations. Previously, she contributed to the Financial Planning & Analysis group, focusing on PECO Revenues. Hinal has been an active board member of the Asian American Resource Group (AARG) since 2022, where she currently serves as Board Treasurer. She is also a member of EmpowHer, an Exelon group dedicated to supporting women in finance and controllership. As a 1.5 generation immigrant, Hinal is deeply committed to advocating for Asian American communities. Through her work with AARG, she collaborates with fellow board members to raise awareness of various Asian celebrations, emphasizing diversity, equity, and inclusion.



**Margarita Wilson** is a retired Philadelphia Public School teacher and a retired adjunct professor at Penn GSE, with 30 years of experience. She continues to teaching through an educational staffing company. Margarita has also been a Zumba Dance Fitness instructor for 12 years, teaching in local gyms, schools and adult centers in Philadelphia. As a Zumba fitness instructor, she is able to combine music, dance and fitness, and allows her to share and inspire healthier lifestyles. She is deeply committed to making a positive impact in the Filipino community in the Philippines by donating to various charities and scholarships. She believes that collective giving can address critical social issues and empower individuals to create lasting change.



For most of her life, **Cecilia Yep** has been an active advocate for the Chinatown community and still resides there. In 1966, she organized the community's first Town Meeting in response to the State's plan to destroy the Holy Redeemer Church and School and the damage this would bring to the community. She also founded the Philadelphia Chinatown Development Corporation, which became the leading force to save the

church and school. Cecilia led the development of various affordable housing projects in Chinatown, including Hing Wah Yuen, Dynasty Court, On Lok House, Gim San Plaza, Mei Wah Yuen, and Sing Wah Yuen. She is also proud of the realization of her China Friendship Gate project. Cecilia has served on many Civic Boards and City Commissions. She received the prestigious Philadelphia Award in 1999, and honored as a “Distinguished Daughter of Pennsylvania” by Governor Ed Rendell in 2006. Cecilia is the co-founder of the Asian American Women’s Coalition.



**Anna Zhang** is a 19-year-old bassoonist from Philadelphia and a sophomore at the Manhattan School of Music in New York. She began her musical journey as a percussionist before discovering her passion for the bassoon as a student at Central High School. She has performed in prestigious venues including Carnegie Hall, Kimmel Center, Cincinnati Music Hall, and Chicago Symphony Hall. She is currently a member of the Manhattan School of Music Symphony Orchestra, the New York Youth Symphony, and the Columbia University Bach Society Orchestra. Anna studies on a full scholarship at the Manhattan School of Music under William Short, Principal Bassoon of the Metropolitan Opera, and previously with Daniel Matsukawa, Principal Bassoon of the Philadelphia Orchestra.



## AAWC SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

The 2025 Asian American Women's Coalition Scholarship application is now open. **The deadline for application is March 15, 2025.**

The link to apply is:

[Apply - ASIAN AMERICAN WOMEN'S COALITION \(AAWC\)](#)

AAWC will celebrate this year’s scholarship recipients at its **Annual Banquet on June 5, 2025 at Ocean Harbor Restaurant.**





# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## *Presenting Sponsors*

**Asian Bank**

**Asian Mosaic Funds**

**Diana Liu**

**Methodist Hospital Foundation**

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## *Website Design*

**Anna Vien Nguyen**

## *Photography*

**Emily Du**

## *Annual Meeting Planning Committee*

Hon. Ida Chen, Lisa Chen, Margaret Chin, Marife Domingo, Grace Kong, Lily Higgins, Jacqui Lam, Pearl Lee, Anita Li, Rona Navera, Katherine Ngee, Anna Nguyen, Wendy Smith, Sarorng Sorn, Xena Wang, Sophie Xu, Cecilia Moy Yep, Gloria Yu

## *Alpha Sigma Rho Volunteers*

Victoria Cheung, Valerie Feng, Camille Geronimo, Haisly Man, Cammy Nguyen, Dakota Nguyen, Jessica Quach, Evelyn Richards, Danielle Staber, Kate Stechert, Danielle Tam, Brianna Tran, Kirsten Viray (*current president*), Song Win, Amy Wu