

# E-Newsletter of the Organization of Chinese American Women

September 2025



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501(c)(3) Nonprofit Organization

*(from Linda Devine, Editor)*

I hope everyone had a good summer! My thanks to those who contributed material for this issue. I also appreciate my husband Ed's work on preparing the photos.

I continue to encourage OCAW members to write articles or submit information if there is something you think would be of interest to the membership.

Please also feel free to send me any suggestions that you might have for the e-newsletter at:  
[devinefive@comcast.net](mailto:devinefive@comcast.net)

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## **Opera International's Charitable Giving**

*(from Linda Devine)*

Opera International has been disbursing its remaining funds to charities and worthy nonprofit organizations. Information about our actions can be found in the April and June *OCAW E-Newsletters*.

As a result, we have been gratified to receive nice letters of appreciation from the grateful receiving organizations.

**From the American Red Cross**



“June 6, 2025

On behalf of the American Red Cross, thank you for your generous gift on June 3, 2025, which will be applied to Where It Is Needed Most. Support from organizations like yours is truly making an impact in the lives of those we serve every day.

During their darkest hours, people know they can turn to the Red Cross for comfort and care. Our humanitarian mission of preventing and alleviating human suffering in the face of emergencies depends on the compassion of our generous donors.

I am deeply grateful for your commitment to the lifesaving work of the Red Cross. Thank you once again for standing with us to help turn heartbreak into hope.

Sincerely,

Cliff Holtz  
President and CEO, American Red Cross”

**From The Institute for Human Services, Honolulu, Hawaii**



**The Institute for Human Services, Inc.**  
Ending the Cycle of Homelessness

“June 20, 2025

Mahalo for the generous gift from the Organization of Chinese American Women received on 6/13/2025.

Every night on Oahu, thousands of individuals are without a home. Thanks to your generosity and compassion, they don’t have to struggle alone. Your support ensures that emergency shelter, a warm meal, health services, and support services are always within reach. Once inside the safety and stability of shelter, guests can breathe easier and start planning for a future beyond tomorrow.

Every year, support from caring people like you allows thousands of individuals to receive a warm meal, a safe space, medical care, or job training for those who found themselves in need.

Thank you again for your generosity and the futures you make possible.

Warmest mahalo,

Steven Tseu  
Director of Philanthropy & Community Relations”

**From the Feiyang Dance Team, New Orleans, Louisiana**



“July 12, 2025

Subject: Heartfelt Gratitude for Your Generous Support

Dear Opera International Fund Team,

On behalf of the Feiyang Dance Team, I would like to express our deepest gratitude for the generous donation entrusted to us through the Organization of Chinese American Women. We are truly honored to receive this recognition from the Opera International Fund for our efforts in promoting Chinese culture and enriching community life through dance.

Your support not only affirms the value of our work but also empowers us to continue sharing the beauty of Chinese traditions with diverse audiences. This contribution will greatly assist us in sustaining our performances, and outreach programs, allowing us to inspire even more people through the art of dance.

Once again, we sincerely appreciate your kindness and belief in our mission. Please extend our thanks to everyone involved in this decision. We hope to make you proud by continuing to serve as cultural ambassadors and fostering cross-cultural connections in our community.

With warm regards,

Yong Yi  
Captain of the Feiyang Dance Team”

**From the New Orleans Skylark Performance Troupe, New Orleans, Louisiana**



“July 13, 2025

To the Officers and Members of the Opera International Fund, OCAW National Organization:

Dear Opera International Fund Team,

On behalf of the New Orleans Skylark Performance Troupe, we extend our deepest gratitude for your generous grant. We are truly honored to receive this recognition and support from the OCAW National Organization.

This grant not only affirms our mission to promote cultural awareness through music, dance, fashion show, and performance but also encourages us to continue bringing joy, connection, and cultural pride to our communities. Your support fuels our commitment to sharing the richness of Chinese heritage and fostering intercultural understanding across generations.

We are proud to be part of the OCAW community and deeply appreciate the trust you’ve placed in us. With your support, we will continue to reach more audiences, inspire new performers, and uplift our community through the power of cultural expression.

Thank you again for this meaningful recognition.

With sincere appreciation,

Lily Yang and Lily Wu  
Representatives, New Orleans Skylark Performance Troupe”



**New Donation: Silicon Valley Chapter**

The OCAW Silicon Valley Chapter has worked tirelessly for many years to support the Alzheimer's Association in many ways, assisting at events organized by the Northern California and Northern Nevada Chapter, co-sponsoring important presentations, hosting meaningful educational seminars, and producing charity dance events. Very importantly, a Silicon Valley Chapter team has walked every year in the annual "Walk to End Alzheimer's" for the past decade, raising thousands of dollars to benefit the organization.

Mimi Hom, Opera International Founder-Producer-Director, witnessed how the organization's crucial work benefited her fellow residents in her own senior home, and she felt it meaningful to donate Opera International funds to this worthy organization.

Thus, a donation was recently made to the Silicon Valley Chapter's "Walk" team for this year. They will be joining countless others in the upcoming Silicon Valley Walk on Saturday, October 11.



OCAW Silicon Valley Chapter's 2024 "Walk to End Alzheimer's" team

Carol Yuan, SVC's Secretary and a former President, has been the leader of the chapter's efforts to support the Alzheimer's Association. She confirmed receipt of OCAW and Opera International's letter of recognition and donation check, and wrote:

"Thank you for your kind support and recognizing our efforts in the fight of Alzheimer's disease."

She sent our letter of recognition to all of the SVC officers "to enjoy and be inspired like I've been since reading it," and she plans to share it with all of the members.

She also expressed, "Mimi was so kind and generous in supporting our efforts. Her warmth and generosity will always be remembered."

"Thank you again for your kind support!"

Plans are in development for contributions to benefit the communities of the DC metro area chapters (Maryland and Virginia) later this year.

### **Muriel Hom Music Grants**

As discussed in the April e-newsletter, Cathy Roberts' idea of awarding music grants in Mimi Hom's name has taken shape. Grants of \$500 will be available, and it is hoped that talented instrumentalists and vocalists who could benefit from some additional funds to further their studies and activities, will apply.

**The first Muriel Hom Music Grant was awarded in July to a young musician in Maryland.** She has trained on the violin, but is currently pursuing voice lessons with a renowned teacher who has told us that she has an exceptional voice. Her essay was beautifully written, expressing her love of music and how it is giving meaning to her life, and we were happy to assist her financially with her studies.

The grant application form has been sent to each chapter president. *If any OCAW member knows of an individual who is serious about pursuing their music studies and might be able to use some financial assistance, please either contact your chapter president, or send an email to me: devinefive@comcast.net, and we will be more than happy to email you an application which you can then forward to your musician.*

### **News from the Maryland and Virginia Chapters**

*(Maria Yang, Acting Maryland Chapter President)*

*(Barbara York, Virginia Chapter President)*

### **Marufuji Japanese Market outing**

*(from Linda Devine)*

It all started when Amy Lee emailed me with her nice compliments on the June e-newsletter and expressed her thanks for the hard work it entailed – as she frequently does, and for which I am grateful. I in turn thanked her again for being a steadfast Virginia Chapter photographer, and specifically for her wonderful

photos of the chapter's Marufuji Japanese Market outing in April. I happened to mention that when I was inputting her pictures into the issue, I wished that I had been there with her, Barbara York, and Maria Yang. I added that sometime, I'd have to go to the store myself and check it out, whereupon Amy immediately emailed me back and told me to select a date, and she'd go with me! She also offered to seek out potential others to join us, and subsequently after efforts by her, Barbara, and Maria, another Marufuji outing was born! ☺



*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*

In Maria's email invitation to OCAW members, she stated (excerpts):

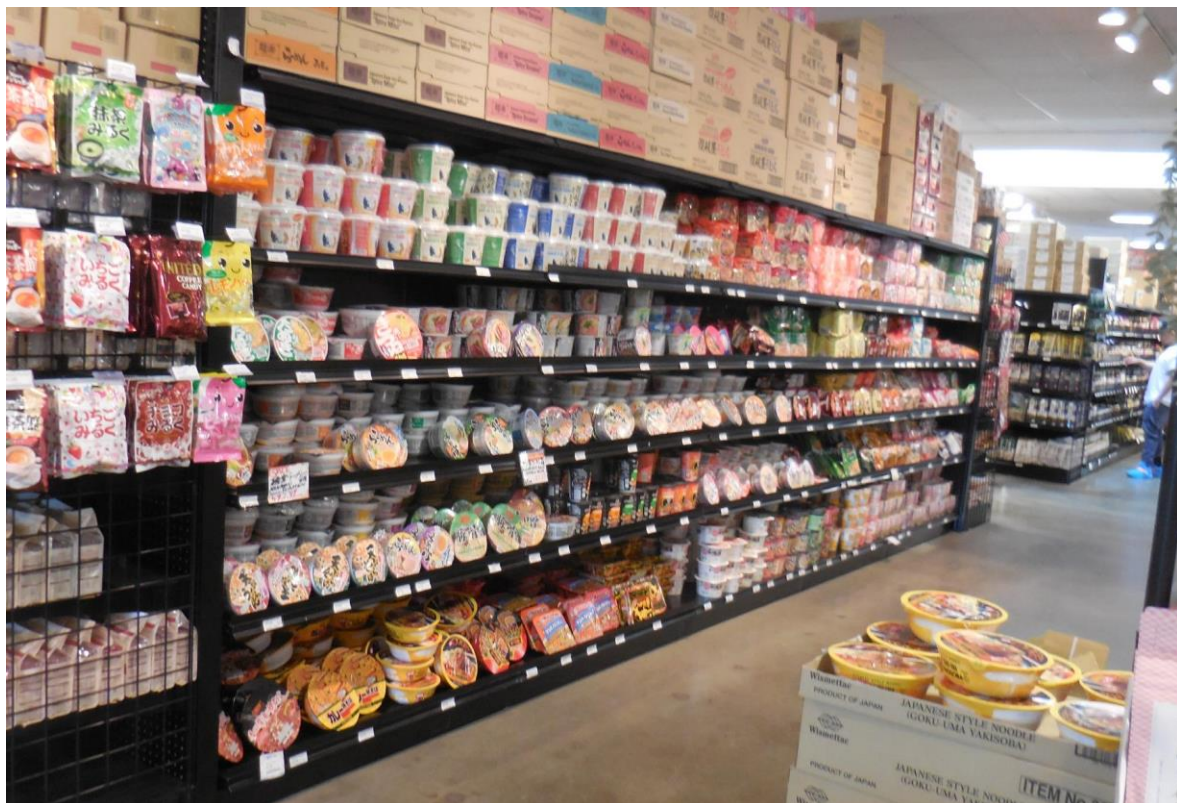
"We are delighted to invite you to a cultural field trip to **Marufuji Japanese Market**, a new, charming local store that offers a wide array of Japanese groceries, snacks, seasonal items, and household goods.

Our goal is simply to enjoy a light-hearted and enriching experience as we explore the flavors, customs, and aesthetic sensibilities of Japanese culture, right here in Tyson's Corner, VA.

**This outing is an opportunity to approach another culture with curiosity, understanding, and open hearts. We believe that building bridges through shared experiences can deepen our appreciation of diverse cultures and strengthen community bonds."** Well said, Maria!

Thus, on Thursday, June 19, 2025, a group of OCAW-MD and OCAW-VA members met at 11 a.m. at the new, impressive Japanese market in Vienna, Virginia.





(Photos taken by Linda Devine)



Maria had the foresight to realize that with a decent-sized group as ours was, we might be able to arrange for a tour of the store. Store manager Mai Carriker was very gracious and obliged Maria's request, making Noah, one of her staff members, available as our tour guide. In an organized, systematic fashion, Noah led us aisle by aisle and section by section through the store, explaining the various items that it had to offer, some of which were especially interesting.



Tour guide Noah

*(Photo taken by Maria Yang)*

We appreciated his commentary. For instance, I did not realize that there is white miso and red miso. Noah explained that the white variety is mild and is the kind used in miso soup, but that the red is slightly bitter, and can be a valuable ingredient in many dishes. He told us that he preferred the red, himself. I am not a cook, so I could not appreciate all of the details of the various foodstuffs which he talked about, but the chefs among us did. And those chefs asked many questions about the different items.

After leading us through the large quantities of food products, Noah showed us the wide variety of non-food items that the store had for sale. \*So\* many items throughout! Definitely a shopper's delight! And Noah invited us to please ask him or any staff member about any of the items in the store for which we had questions, when we looked further.



*(Photo taken by Linda Devine)*

Once our tour was complete, we adjourned to the food court, where we pulled tables together and ordered entrees from the wide selection. My shrimp curry was delicious, and Amy nicely offered me a taste of her chicken curry, maybe for my next visit there? We all had a wonderful time enjoying our dishes and catching up with one another.



Amy's delicious chicken curry!

*(Photo taken by Amy Lee)*





(Photos courtesy of Maria Yang)



During our tour, Maria had been filling up a shopping cart with lots of items, which I assumed was for future meals she had planned to prepare for her and Bill. However, at the end of our lunch, she spread out all of the packages on the table and insisted that we select an item/items to take home – which served as nice ‘souvenirs’ of our outing. Thank you, Maria!

All in all, it was a most enjoyable gathering with participants saying that they had a lot of fun. ☺



Wanda Chin, OCAW-VA Lifetime member; Camilla Ng, former OCAW-MD President; Maria Yang, National President and Acting OCAW-MD President; Amy Lee, OCAW-VA Lifetime member and events host; Mai Carriker, Marufuji Store Manager; Linda Devine, National Communications VP and OCAW-MD Lifetime member; Steve Chang, husband of Christina Chang; Alice Yee Way, OCAW-VA Vice President; Jean Lorentzen, OCAW-VA Lifetime member; Noreen Hom, former OCAW-VA Secretary; and Christina Chang, Immediate Past National President with her granddaughter Jordana

*(Photo courtesy of Amy Lee)*

### OCAW Maryland Appreciation Luncheon for Lifetime Members

*(from Maria Yang, National President and Acting OCAW-MD President)*

We were delighted to host a special Appreciation Luncheon in honor of the lifelong dedication and support of our lifetime members on Monday, July 21, 2025, at Hong Kong Pearl Seafood Restaurant in Gaithersburg, Maryland (formerly known as New Fortune Restaurant).

This gathering celebrated **nine lifetime members from the Maryland Chapter**, along with two members and a spouse from the Virginia Chapter. Over delicious Dim Sum, we enjoyed the warmth of friendship, the spirit of community, and the joy of a mid-summer reunion.



*(Photos taken by Maria Yang)*





*(Photos taken by Maria Yang)*

For those who had not yet received a copy of *Remembering Shanghai: A Memoir of Socialites, Scholars and Scoundrels*, written by OCAW Hawaii Chapter member Claire Chao and her mother, complimentary books



were given to these members. OCAW Maryland once again thanks Claire for her generosity in gifting these books to OCAW chapters!

The mission of OCAW is to advocate for the needs and concerns of Chinese and other Asian Pacific American women by working to improve their educational, economic, social, and political opportunities. We also honor their excellence, leadership, and contributions to the quality of life in our communities. OCAW is a nonpartisan organization, and membership is open to individuals who share this mission's values.

Currently, **OCAW Maryland is seeking a new chapter president**. As acting president, I encourage any member interested in stepping into a leadership role to reach out. OCAW National stands ready to offer support and guidance as we plan for the future leadership of our Maryland Chapter.



(front row) Suzy Hung, Christina Poy, Maria Yang, Kitty Hsu Dana, Noreen Hom, and Betty Toy  
(back row) Rose Li, Dorothy Hsiao, Alice Yee Way, Nancy Toy, and Linda Devine

*(Photo courtesy of Maria Yang)*

**Editor's Note:** Maryland members thank Maria for arranging this wonderful luncheon. In her article, of course she would be too modest to say this, but Maria, with her usual extreme generosity, surprised everyone by picking up the tab for the luncheon. Upon learning of this, many tried to reimburse her for their share of the cost, but she graciously refused. And this is certainly not the first time that OCAW members have benefited from her generosity!

We who received Maria's hospitality this time wanted to acknowledge her special treat for the day. All of us there had a really nice time getting together with our fellow sisters, so thank you very much, Maria!

### **Upcoming event**

*(from Barbara York, OCAW-VA President)*

#### **Mid-Autumn Festival Potluck Dinner**

The Virginia Chapter's annual potluck dinner for the Mid-Autumn Festival is scheduled for Sunday, October 5, 2025. It will be held in the Penthouse Party Room of Amy Lee's condo building in Alexandria, Virginia. More information will be forthcoming.

It should be a real treat because the full Autumn moon will brighten our skies the following evening. Please mark your calendars!

### **News from the New Orleans Chapter**

*(Yong Yi, President)*

#### **Spring Luncheon and Heritage Sharing Event**

*(from Lily Wu, Vice President, and Weihong Tu, Lifetime member)*

The OCAW New Orleans Chapter held its Spring Luncheon and general meeting on Saturday, May 3, 2025, at Sushi Masa in Metairie, Louisiana. The event was attended by twenty members, family, and friends, and featured updates on chapter activities, announcements of upcoming cultural events, and community engagement opportunities.

In recognition of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month, members shared meaningful personal stories and historical reflections. Pat Ellzey, OCAW New Orleans Chapter Immediate Past President, delivered a moving presentation on the legacy of Shaie-mei Temple, the founder and first president of the OCAW New Orleans Chapter. A trailblazer as one of the earliest female nuclear engineers in the region, Ms. Temple was also a passionate community leader and cultural preservationist. Her invaluable contributions included documenting Chinese American history in New Orleans, rediscovering the historic Chinese tombs in St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, and preserving the histories of the local Presbyterian Church and Chinese-language media.

Pat also highlighted her own family's multi-generational commitment to education and mission work, including that of her sister-in-law, Mayling Hew, a longtime active member of OCAW.

The luncheon concluded with warm fellowship, door prizes, and excitement for upcoming chapter events, including a fall French Quarter tour and the annual Christmas party.

**OCAW New Orleans Chapter Participates in the 75th Annual Korean War Commemoration Ceremony**

*(from Sophie Lin, Lifetime member)*

On Sunday, June 22, 2025, members of the OCAW New Orleans Chapter took part in the 75th Annual Korean War Commemoration Ceremony held in Gretna, Louisiana. The event, held under the theme “*The Korean American Association of Greater New Orleans Invites Veterans, Family, and Friends,*” was hosted by the Korean American Association of Greater New Orleans to honor Korean War veterans and to celebrate the enduring friendship between the United States and South Korea.



OCAW members collaborated with the Korean Performing Arts Troupe from Houston, Texas, to assist in a cultural program that showcased traditional Korean clothing and customs. Their participation promoted cross-cultural understanding and appreciation, and highlighted the chapter's commitment to supporting meaningful community events.

The ceremony began with a prelude by the Marine Reserve Band. Korean War veteran Mr. James Salvant led the U.S. National Anthem, while students from the Korean Language School sang the Korean National Anthem. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by veteran Mr. Mert Lassere, and the invocation was offered by Dr. Howard Woo, elder of the Williams Boulevard Baptist Church.



Welcoming remarks were delivered by Mr. Hyung Cho, President of the Korean/American Association of Greater New Orleans. The keynote address was given by President Myong H. Chong of the Federation of Korean American Associations, who emphasized the importance of remembering the sacrifices of the past and building future cultural ties. The event was emceed by Ms. Sula Kim, news anchor at WDSU-TV.

Following the formal program, guests enjoyed a dinner buffet generously sponsored by the event chair, Ms. Sun Kim. Ms. Kim is an active member of the Asian Pacific American Society (APAS), an umbrella organization that the OCAW New Orleans Chapter is proudly affiliated with. Her contribution added a warm and communal touch to the evening, fostering fellowship among all attendees.

The OCAW New Orleans Chapter was honored to be part of this meaningful occasion. Their involvement reflected OCAW's mission to foster civic engagement, cultural exchange, and community support.

The evening was marked by deep respect, unity, and shared appreciation for the sacrifices of veterans and the beauty of cultural traditions.



Modeling Korean ancient court clothes from the Korean Consulate in Houston

*(back row)* Sophie Lin, Jenny Yao, Lily Wu, Qing Liu, Ruiyi Jiang, Yong Yi, and Wenyi Shan  
*(in front)* Chloe Li (Wenyi's daughter)

### **Feiyang Dance Team Joins Jefferson Senior Dance Gala**

*(from Yong Yi, President and Dance Team Captain)*

On Thursday, August 7, 2025, the Jefferson Community Senior Service Center hosted a joyful Senior Dance Gala at the Alario Center in Westwego, Louisiana. Jefferson Parish President Cynthia Lee Sheng joined the celebration, sharing in the dancing and fun with everyone.

Themed “A Tribute to the Unforgettable ’50s, ’60s, and ’70s,” the event featured nine community dance teams. Friends from across the community came together to dance, mingle, and enjoy an afternoon filled with laughter, music, and good cheer.

The Feiyang Dance Team proudly represented the Chinese community with their performance, “*You Bloom Like Peach Blossoms in March*.” Choreographed and coached by Fang Lin, the group included three OCAW members: Yong Yi, Wenyi Shan, and Weihong Tu, and three other dancers: Qing Liu, Jianli Yao, and Wenju Wu. Their elegant and spirited performance not only won warm applause but also added a special cultural touch to the celebration.







Jianli Yao, Weihong Tu (*OCAW member*), Yong Yi (*OCAW member*), Qing Liu, Wenyi Shan (*OCAW member*), and Wenju Wu



### **Memorable Gathering to Celebrate Community and the Arts**

*(from Sophie Lin, Lifetime member)*

On Saturday, August 9, 2025, the OCAW New Orleans Chapter brought members and guests together for a joyful summer gathering at Bamboo House, a beloved Chinese restaurant in Metairie, Louisiana. The event was filled with lively conversations, laughter, and, of course, delicious Chinese food that everyone thoroughly enjoyed.



Crabmeat and Crawfish Bun



Dry pot fish



Blacken short rib pot



Beef chow fun

This special occasion wasn't just about enjoying good food and company; it was also a celebration of achievement and community support. OCAW proudly recognized its two affiliated performance groups, the Feiyang Dance Team and the New Orleans Skylark Troupe, both of which recently received \$500 grants. These grants were awarded through Opera International, a signature program of OCAW founded in 1994 by Muriel (Mimi) Hom, whose love of music and lifelong dedication to the arts continue to inspire.



New Orleans Skylark Troupe members

Nicole Landry, Wenyi Shan, Lily Wu (OCAW New Orleans Vice President), Jinghong Xiong,  
Jinxu Lin, Pat Ellzey (OCAW New Orleans Immediate Past President), Lily Yang,  
Ruiyi Jiang, and Qing Liu



Feiyang Dance Team members

Wenyi Shan, Weihong Tu, Jianli Yao, Pat Ellzey (OCAW New Orleans Immediate Past President), Yong Yi (OCAW New Orleans President), and Qing Liu

The afternoon was a wonderful reminder of the strength and vibrancy of the OCAW community in New Orleans. With full hearts (and full stomachs), everyone left the restaurant feeling more connected, encouraged, and ready for what lies ahead.

**Note from Pat Ellzey, Immediate Past President:**

I much enjoyed presenting the Opera International grants to the members of the Dance Team and Skylark Troupe. They plan to use the monies primarily to pay for the rent for their practice facility. The members were most happy since they have been pooling their personal monies to cover the cost.

*Editor's Note:* It is nice to learn that Mimi Hom's goal of awarding these kinds of grants is realized – that they can benefit productive and deserving organizations to carry out their worthy missions.

**Upcoming Event**

*(from Yong Yi)*

The Feiyang Dance Team and the New Orleans Skylark Performance Troupe will perform at the dinner of the National Presbyterian Assembly on Tuesday, September 23, 2025. We look forward with great anticipation to this meaningful opportunity for cultural exchange.



## **News from the Silicon Valley Chapter**

*(Yufan Lu, President)*

### **Spring Hike**

*(from Alice Chiou, Historian)*

A group of 14 OCAW-SVC members had a blast at the Spring Saratoga downtown and Villa Montalvo walking and hiking event on a beautiful Sunday, April 6, 2025. The adventure kicked off in downtown Saratoga, and we journeyed to Villa Montalvo. After a quick break in the serene Montalvo garden area, we tackled the hike all the way up to the lookout point for some incredible views.













We then took a different route back to downtown Saratoga, where we all celebrated a successful 2.5-hour trek with a delicious luncheon at the Hong's Gourmet Chinese Restaurant. It was a day filled with fun and friendship!







### **From and About Our Members**

#### **About Rose Li, OCAW Maryland Lifetime Member**

*(from Linda Devine)*

The U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) named Rose M. Li, PhD, MBA, the **2024 Small Business Person of the Year for Maryland**. “Our 2024 National Small Business Week award winners exemplify excellence, innovation, and commitment, and the SBA is proud to showcase their incredible achievements and impact on their communities and our economy,” said SBA Administrator Isabel Casillas Guzman in the award announcement.

Longtime Maryland resident Dr. Li founded Rose Li & Associates (RLA) in 2003 as a small business designed to amplify the impact of organizations with a big public health footprint. In the 20 years since, RLA has become a partner to health- and research-focused institutions such as the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services; Leidos; the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine; and both public and private universities.

During that time, Rose has also worked to advance public health and education through service to the Maryland Commission on Aging and the Maryland State Board of Education.

Rose was also named the **2024 Small Business Leader of the Year by the Montgomery County (MD) Chamber of Commerce**.

Additionally, she won the trifecta by receiving the **International Leadership Foundation Business Leadership award**.

Congratulations, Rose!

## **Japanese Cuisine, and Comparisons with Chinese Cuisine**

**by Maria Yang**

*(Editor's Note: Maria is OCAW National President.)*

After a field trip to the newly opened Japanese supermarket, Marufuji Market, on Thursday, June 19, 2025, I was inspired to explore Japanese cuisine further through online research and AI tools. Although Taiwan was under Japanese colonial rule from 1895 to 1945, and my parents and grandparents had adopted many aspects of Japanese culture, I was born and raised as a Chinese under the influence of the KMT government following the end of the colonial period. Nevertheless, Japanese cultural influence has continued to shape life in Taiwan from 1945 to the present day.

### **What is culture?**

Culture is the shared set of beliefs, values, traditions, customs, behaviors, languages, and artifacts that characterize a group of people or a society. It encompasses both tangible elements (such as art, clothing, and food) and intangible aspects (including norms, rituals, and social roles). Culture is passed down from one generation to the next and shapes how individuals within a group interact with each other and with the world around them. It influences everything from communication styles to decision-making processes, and it can evolve over time through both internal changes and external influences.

### **Food is an essential part of culture.**

It reflects a group's **history, geography, climate, religion, and social customs**. Traditional dishes, cooking methods, and eating habits are passed down through generations and often carry deep cultural meaning. For example:

- **Italian pasta, Japanese sushi, or Mexican tamales** are more than just food; they are cultural expressions.
- **Religious practices** often include dietary rules (like **kosher** in Judaism or **halal** in Islam).
- **Festivals and rituals** frequently center around specific foods (e.g., mooncakes for the Mid-Autumn Festival, turkey on Thanksgiving).



Food also serves as a powerful way for people to **connect with their heritage** and **share their culture with others**.

Japanese food is known for its distinct characteristics that reflect the country's cultural values, natural environment, and aesthetic sensibilities. Here are the key characteristics:

### **1. Emphasis on Freshness and Seasonality**

- Ingredients are chosen based on their peak season to maximize flavor and nutritional value.
- Seasonal ingredients (like bamboo shoots in spring or chestnuts in autumn) are highlighted in dishes.

### **2. Natural Flavors with Minimal Processing**

- The taste of the raw ingredients is preserved with light seasoning and simple cooking techniques.
- Common seasonings: soy sauce, miso, sake, mirin, dashi (soup stock), and vinegar.

### **3. Presentation and Aesthetics**

- Food is beautifully arranged to appeal to the eye, often reflecting nature or seasonal themes.
- Tableware, colors, and shapes are chosen to enhance the dining experience.

### **4. Balance and Variety**

- A typical meal includes multiple small dishes offering balance in:
  - Taste (sweet, salty, sour, bitter, umami)
  - Texture (crispy, soft, chewy)
  - Cooking methods (raw, grilled, steamed, simmered, fried)

### **5. Rice as the Staple Food**

- White rice (*gohan*) is central to most meals, accompanied by side dishes (*okazu*), soup (*miso soup*), and pickles (*tsukemono*).

### **6. Use of Seafood**

- Being an island nation, Japan relies heavily on fish and other seafood, often served raw (*sashimi*, *sushi*) or grilled.

### **7. Respect for Nature and Ingredients**

- There is a cultural emphasis on not wasting food and respecting what is served.
- Meals often include expressions like *itadakimasu* ("I humbly receive") before eating, and *gochisōsama* after.

## 8. Umami Flavor

- Japanese cuisine is rich in **umami**, the “fifth taste,” found in **dashi**, soy sauce, seaweed, mushrooms, and fermented foods.

Together, these characteristics make Japanese cuisine not only healthy and flavorful but also deeply reflective of the country’s cultural identity.

**Dashi** forms the base of **miso soup**, **simmered dishes (nimono)**, **noodle broths**, **chawanmushi**, and more. So while “dashi” is often translated as **broth** or **stock**, the word is usually left untranslated in culinary contexts due to its unique role and flavor.

**Umami** is a Japanese word that translates to “**pleasant savory taste**” or “**deliciousness**” in English. It refers to one of the five basic tastes, alongside sweet, salty, sour, and bitter.

Umami is a rich, savory flavor that comes from the presence of **glutamates**, **inosinates**, and **guanylates** in foods. It is often described as a deep, brothy, or meaty flavor, and it can make foods taste fuller and more satisfying.

### Foods High in Umami:

- **Tomatoes**
- **Cheese** (especially Parmesan)
- **Soy sauce**
- **Mushrooms** (like shiitake)
- **Seaweed** (like kombu)
- **Meats** (especially aged or cured)
- **Fish sauce**
- **Cured ham** (e.g., prosciutto)

Umami is often associated with **savory dishes** and enhances the overall flavor profile of food by balancing out other tastes.





Here are some mouth-watering examples of Japanese cuisine featuring a variety of dishes:

1. **Kaiseki-style plated meal** – A beautifully arranged, traditional multi-course dinner, highlighting seasonal ingredients and elegant presentation.
2. **Tempura set** – Lightly battered and deep-fried vegetables and seafood, often served with dipping sauce and rice or noodles.
3. **Yakitori skewers with sides** – Chicken grilled on skewers, often served in izakayas accompanied by small dishes and drinks.
4. **Traditional breakfast spread including natto** – A wholesome morning meal with miso soup, rice, pickles, and natto (fermented soybeans).

### More Popular Japanese Dishes

- **Sushi & Sashimi** – Pieces of raw fish or seafood served over vinegared rice (nigiri) or sliced alone (sashimi), often enjoyed with soy sauce and wasabi.
- **Ramen** – Savory wheat noodles served in broth – shoyu (soy), miso, tonkotsu (pork bone), or shio (salt) – with toppings like chashu pork, egg, mushrooms.
- **Okonomiyaki & Monjayaki** – Japanese savory pancakes cooked on a griddle, loaded with cabbage, meat, or seafood, and topped with sauce, mayo, bonito flakes.
- **Takoyaki** – Crispy-on-the-outside, soft-inside octopus-filled batter balls drizzled with sauce and mayonnaise.
- **Udon & Soba Noodles** – Udon (thick wheat noodles) and soba (buckwheat noodles) served in hot broth or cold with dipping sauce.
- **Miso Soup** – A comforting staple of fermented soybean paste broth with tofu, seaweed, and scallions.
- **Yakitori** – Skewered and grilled chicken parts seasoned with tare sauce or salt – perfect with a drink.
- **Natto** – Sticky and pungent fermented soybeans, often eaten over rice for breakfast.

Japanese and Chinese cuisines are two of the most influential and diverse culinary traditions in Asia. While they share some similarities (such as the use of rice, noodles, and soy-based seasonings), they differ significantly in **flavors, ingredients, cooking methods, and cultural philosophy**.



Here is a detailed comparison:

### 1. Flavor Profile

Aspect	Japanese Food	Chinese Food
Flavor	Subtle, light, clean flavors	Bold, rich, often oily or spicy
Umami Use	Emphasizes umami from dashi, seaweed, fermented foods	Umami from soy sauce, fermented bean paste, mushrooms
Seasoning	Minimal – salt, soy sauce, mirin, miso	Broad range – soy sauce, vinegar, chili, sugar, garlic

### 2. Cooking Methods

Aspect	Japanese Food	Chinese Food
Techniques	Raw (sashimi), steaming, grilling, simmering	Stir-frying, deep-frying, braising, steaming
Oil Usage	Low	Higher
Focus	Preserving natural taste of ingredients	Creating complex layers of flavor

### 3. Ingredients

Category	Japanese Food	Chinese Food
Staples	White rice, miso, seafood	Rice (south), noodles (north), pork, tofu
Proteins	Seafood, tofu, eggs	Pork, chicken, beef, duck, tofu, seafood
Vegetables	Seasonal, lightly cooked or pickled	Varied – stir-fried, pickled, or stewed
Broth Base	Dashi (kelp, bonito)	Meat bones, herbs, spices

### 4. Presentation and Philosophy

Aspect	Japanese Food	Chinese Food
Aesthetics	Delicate, seasonal, artistic plating	Family-style serving, focus on variety
Cultural Idea	Wabi-sabi: beauty in simplicity	Yin-yang balance in ingredients and cooking
Meal Structure	Multiple small, balanced side dishes	Shared dishes in center, each person has rice

## 5. Famous Dishes

Japanese	Chinese
Sushi, sashimi, tempura, miso soup	Dim sum, mapo tofu, Peking duck, hot pot
Ramen, udon, soba	Fried rice, lo mein, kung pao chicken

## 6. Dietary Considerations

- **Japanese food** tends to be lower in calories and fat, with more focus on fish and vegetables.
- **Chinese food** is incredibly diverse – ranging from light Cantonese to spicy Sichuan cuisine – with more variety in meat and spice use.

### Summary:

	Japanese Cuisine	Chinese Cuisine
Focus	Simplicity, purity, seasonal beauty	Variety, balance, bold flavor
Cooking Style	Light, precise, artistic	Rich, complex, diverse
Cultural Approach	Individual servings, aesthetic harmony	Shared meals, communal enjoyment

Both cuisines are rich in tradition and deeply reflect their respective cultures. Neither is “better”; they represent different culinary philosophies.

(Note from Maria: The above written sources are from AI.)

## **In Memoriam: Muriel “Mimi” Hom**

**by Linda Devine**

Muriel “Mimi” Hom’s entire life was devoted to music, beginning with her early recognition as a child prodigy on the piano, and receiving her college degree in music. She taught hundreds of piano students, at home and in public school, both young and old, for 68 years.

Mimi also was a piano accompanist to a variety of talented instrumentalists and singers. For the latter, she performed in concerts in multiple venues around the United States, including the Piccolo Spoleto Festival, and on PBS Television. Internationally, she performed in Germany, Austria, Mexico, Taiwan, and the People’s Republic of China.





She always wanted to help singers, but not just professionally. Especially for those who came to the U.S. from Taiwan and China, she helped them in many ways as they made this country their new home. After a while, she noticed that many international performers were being critically acclaimed and receiving worldwide attention, but not Chinese artists. She set out to rectify the situation and create a platform for them. She produced four successful concerts at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, and then went on to launch **Opera International under the auspices of the Organization of Chinese American Women**. Her aims were to train young future opera singers of all nationalities, encourage a love of opera in young people, and make world-class opera affordable to all.



Opera International's production of *La Bohème*

Based in the Washington Metropolitan area, Opera International produced and staged numerous operas and vocal galas critically acclaimed by *The Washington Post*, *The Baltimore Sun*, *Opera* magazine, and many other media.





*Madame Butterfly*



*Gianni Schicchi*



Opera International also organized benefit concerts for such worthy charitable causes as the Wounded Warrior Project, Puerto Rico Hurricane Maria Relief, and the Prevention of Blindness Society. Kennedy Center and Opera International programs spanned three decades. Mimi continued to serve as OCAW's Vice President for Programs for over 30 years.

Mimi also served as the President of The D.C. Federation of Music Clubs for many years, as well as Pianist and Music Director at the Hermon Presbyterian Church for decades. For her career-long service to music, she received numerous recognitions. Among them, she was honored in Taiwan for her dedication to sponsoring and developing singers. OCA Greater Washington DC-Asian Pacific American Advocates presented her with the Trailblazer Award for Extraordinary Vision and Achievements in the Arts. She received an award from the Prevention of Blindness Society in appreciation of her dedication to community service. The Arts Club of Washington bestowed recognition upon her for her lifelong accomplishments. And she was the recipient in Maryland of the prestigious Montgomery County Executive's Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in the Arts and Humanities.

Simply put, she gave the gift of music to many grateful people over her lifetime, and also was a dedicated friend to so many.



*Falstaff*

Mimi passed away peacefully in her sleep on July 22. For those interested, her obituary can be found at this link: [www.pumphreyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Muriel-Lee-Hom?obId=43765992#/obituaryInfo](http://www.pumphreyfuneralhome.com/obituaries/Muriel-Lee-Hom?obId=43765992#/obituaryInfo)

There will be a **“Celebration of Life” service** on Sunday, September 28, 2025, at 2 p.m. ET, in the chapel at The Village at Rockville, 9701 Veirs Drive, Rockville, MD. There will be a light reception following, which we hope will provide the opportunity for people to visit more extensively.

A number of Mimi’s friends and relatives who do not live locally have expressed an interest in being able to participate in the service remotely, if such arrangements can be made. We are investigating YouTube as a possibility. If workable, we will inform everyone of information with which they can link in, closer to the date of the service, should they wish to tune in.

The family of Mimi Hom wishes to thank everyone for their heartfelt expressions of sympathy, and their very kind words about her accomplishments as well as her kindness and friendship.

### **Remembering Mimi**

**by Cathy Roberts**

*(Editor’s Note: Cathy is OCAW National Vice President for Membership.)*

I was heartbroken to learn of the passing of my dear friend Mimi Hom. I was looking forward to planning her 100th birthday celebration. She will always be in my thoughts.

Mimi had received numerous awards during her lifetime. She was an OCA 2014 Trailblazer Awardee. My family, many OCAW Virginia Chapter members, and I were honored to attend the OCA Award Gala at the New Fortune Restaurant in Gaithersburg, Maryland. She expressed her feelings at the event: “I wish to share my award with my OCAW sisters, my family, my friends, and all the contributors and the artists of Opera International.” I know our OCAW sisters were grateful for her dedication to Opera International.

Mimi was a kind, generous, and loving person. Her devotion to music and her contributions to Opera International were remarkable. The joyful memories of attending operas and concerts produced by Mimi at the Strathmore Music Center, the Kennedy Center Terrace Theater, and the Adat Shalom Synagogue in Bethesda will always remain with me.

To Mimi: “I am glad Linda shared the thank-you letters from the organizations to which OCAW had sent Opera International donations from you, and that you had watched the pictures of the Dance Team and Skylark Troupe performances before your passing. I will miss you dearly, and we will keep your Opera International legacy alive.”

Note: You can find her award by searching for OCA 2014 Trailblazer Award

**Editor’s Note:** Thank you, Cathy, for your very lovely article!

It was Cathy’s idea to carry on Mimi’s legacy by using remaining Opera International funds to give Muriel Hom Music Grants to deserving musicians.