



**ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION OF CHICAGO
HOSTS 29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION
“IT’S TIME.....”**

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 25TH AT HYATT REGENCY O’HARE

HIS EXCELLENCY, PROFESSOR KANTATHI SUPHAMONGKHON, THE 39TH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND (2005-2006) NAMED KEYNOTE SPEAKER

RAYMOND LEE NAMED PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE

ILLINOIS SECRETARY OF STATE JESSE WHITE NAMED GRAND ASIAN AMERICAN SANDRA OTAKA MEMORIAL AWARDEE

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

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 20, 2012**

**CONTACT: GENERAL: info@aacchicago.org
(773) 463-8424 (c/o TAAI)
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(312) 635-0888
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tickets@aacchicago.org
(e-mail preferred)**

CHICAGO, IL - - Final plans are underway for the **Asian American Coalition of Chicago’s 29th Annual Lunar New Year Celebration, “IT’S TIME.....”** to be held **Saturday, February 25, 2012** at the **Hyatt Regency O’Hare, 9300 West Bryn Mawr Avenue in Rosemont, Illinois**. Over 1,000 people are expected at the black-tie optional gala. Cocktail reception, silent auction and exhibits begin at 5:30 p.m.; opening ceremonies are at 6:30 p.m., followed by dinner, entertainment and awards ceremonies until approximately 10 p.m. Tickets are available at \$800 per table of ten for this popular star-studded event, on a **first-funded, first-seated basis**. Purchase information appears below and on the website www.aacchicago.org . ***As of presstime, two-thirds of house tickets have been sold, and immediate purchase is encouraged as the event is on track to be sold-out.***

Every year a different Asian community takes turn playing host of Lunar New Year. This year it is the Thai American Community, which has thrice before (1988, 1996 and 2004) held the gavel for the Asian Pacific American community’s most important event of the year. The Thai American Association of Illinois (TAAI) holds the leadership honors.

The Coalition is pleased to announce that **His Excellency, Professor Kantathi Suphamongkhon,* The 39th Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand (2005-2006)**, has been named as this year’s AACCC Keynote Speaker. Suphamongkhon is presently a Visiting Professor of Law and Diplomacy at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), as well as Senior Fellow at the Burkle Center for

*Pronounced: “**KHAN-TA-TEE SOO-PA-MOWNG-KHON**” (Mowng and Khon with long O’s)

(MORE)

ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION 29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION -- ADD ONE

International Relations at UCLA. He previously served as the University of California Regents' Professor at UCLA (from 2007–2009). He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Southern California (USC); a Master of Arts degree in International Studies from the American University in Washington, D.C.; and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from UCLA. *(See full profile below.)*

Steve Dolinsky, Food Reporter ABC 7 News Chicago, and Food Feature Writer, "Michigan Avenue" magazine and **Nancy Loo**, Reporter/Fill-in Anchor, WGN-TV, have been named as this year's Co-Emcees.

"The Thai American Association of Illinois is proud to be hosting the 29th Annual Asian American Coalition of Chicago Lunar New Year Celebration for the fourth time," said Vallapa Kongsri, 2012 Chair of the Asian American Coalition of Chicago, and current President of the Thai American Association of Illinois (TAAI). *"We invite everyone in the community and friends of the Asian Pacific American community, to join in helping make this year's Celebration the best ever,"* she said.

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 and on-air talent 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.

"Asian Pacific Americans have contributed tremendously to this country. Economically, we are stronger, but politically, we only have begun to feel a new sense of consciousness. Yes, we are increasingly visible – and being visible is a key to making ourselves stronger politically. The Lunar New Year Celebration makes us visible like nothing else can. It's time....." said **Arun Sampanthavivat**, 2012 AACC Lunar New Year Co-Chair, (and Chef/Owner, Arun's Thai Restaurant in Chicago.)

AWARDS

The Coalition plans to award its 2012 Community Service Awards, its Youth Who Excels Awards, its prestigious Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Award - its highest award, and its Grand Asian American Sandra Otaka Memorial Award that evening.

The Asian American Coalition of Chicago is pleased to announce that **Raymond B. Lee**, Owner and President of Golden Country Oriental Food Co. (since 1979) and Golden Ocean Seafood, Inc. (since 1984) has been named the **2012 Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Awardee**. Raymond Lee built his business from a small warehouse on Wells Street in Chicago to what is now one of the largest Asian, African, Caribbean and Oriental wholesale food importers and distributors in the United States.

Lee was instrumental in the formation of the Asian American Alliance and served as the President of its Board for three years (1996-1999) and as Director Asian American Alliance (Asian American Small Business Center) (from 1996-2002). The Alliance was an organization comprised of various Asian Chambers of Commerce (Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese). He also served as a Chicago Park District Commissioner (1988-1989) and Chicago Board of Education member (1989-1990), becoming the first Asian American appointed to each such position, at a time when there was little or no representation of Asian Pacific Americans on such important boards in Chicago.

Among numerous community and civic service affiliations, Lee is past Chairman, President, and current Secretary of the Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce (service in various roles, 1983-present); Managing Director, Chinatown Parking Corporation (service since 1984); Chairman of the Board, Chinese American Development Corporation (since 1985); a member of the Ping Tom Memorial Park Advisory Council (since 1994); and a member of the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (2001-present). *(See full profile following.)*

(MORE)

ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION 29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION -- ADD TWO

Attorney and community leader **Darryl Tom** will assist in the award presentation, on behalf of **The Tom Family**. 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 of Chicago.

Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White has been named the **2012 Grand Asian American Sandra Otaka Memorial Awardee**. 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.

MAJOR SPONSORS

The Asian American Coalition of Chicago welcomes its generous sponsors, which include The Hartford as a \$10,000 Global Sponsor, and American Family Insurance and CNA as \$5,000 Continental Sponsors, among others.

TICKETS

For ticket reservations, please contact **Tippi Lee at tickets@aacchicago.org** . Advance purchase is required. **Tickets are \$800 per table of ten**. They are being distributed through community outlets as well as directly from the Coalition. They are **first-funded, first-seated**.

SPONSORSHIPS / SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS

Sponsorship rates and packages are priced as follows: \$25,000 Presenting Sponsor; \$10,000 Global Sponsor; \$7,000 Pan-Asian Sponsor; \$5,000 Continental Sponsor; \$3,000 Community Sponsor and \$1,500 Coalition Sponsor. To inquire about or to reserve sponsorships, and/or to donate items towards the Silent Auction, please contact info@aacchicago.org .

ADVERTISEMENTS

In addition, advertisement space reservations in the Souvenir Program Book are available at \$500 for a full page (size 8-1/2" x 11") and \$300 for a half-page (8-1/2" x 5-1/2"). Non-profit full-page ads (8-1/2" x 11") are available at a discounted rate of \$300. Checks, insertion orders, and camera-ready black and white artwork creative for 2012 ads are due no later than **January 24, 2012**. Ads must be funded by the deadline in order to run.

AACC... WHO WE ARE

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, the Asian Pacific American population in Illinois numbers approximately 586,934, or 4.6% of the statewide population. Approximately 92,304 Asian Pacific Americans reside in DuPage County, comprising 10.1% of DuPage County's population, with the bulk of the other 322,672 residents of Cook County, comprising 6.2% of Cook County's population. The 2010 Census shows that Asian Pacific Americans reside in Chicago in communities including West Rogers Park, Albany Park, Uptown, Armour Square and Bridgeport; in suburban Cook County in communities including Schaumburg, Hoffman Estates, Skokie, Niles and Morton Grove; and in suburban DuPage County in communities like Oak Brook and Naperville.

In the past 10 years, the Asian population in Illinois jumped 38.6 percent. In the Northwest suburbs, Asians now make up 12.7 percent of the population. They make up 10.1 percent of the population in DuPage County, and 6.3 percent of the population in Lake County. These are the 10 Illinois suburbs with the biggest percentage Asian population: South Barrington: 26.6%; Oak Brook: 23.2%; Hoffman Estates: 22.7%; Glendale Heights: 22.1%; Schaumburg: 19.8%; Vernon Hills: 19.3%; Buffalo Grove: 16.0%; Hanover Park: 15.2%; Streamwood: 15.0% and Naperville: 14.9%. (Source: U.S. 2010 Census).

(MORE)

**ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION 29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION
-- ADD THREE**

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sponsor, ad, silent auction donation and general inquiries should be directed to info@aacchicago.org (e-mail preferred).

MEDIA

ENERI Communications has again been named the agency of record for this year's Lunar New Year Celebration, and has received the assignment to coordinate media relations, TV station/media company participation, celebrity presenters and press credentials. Media requests for interviews and images should be directed to ENERI at info@enericom.net or (312) 635-0888.

ALL MEDIA MUST BE CREDENTIALLED ahead of time for entrance to cover from the PRESS PLATFORM. Please send requests to ENERI Communications at rsvp@enericom.net by February 15, 2012 C.O.B. Media wishing to sit at dinner tables must pre-arrange purchase of dinner tickets through the assistance of community organizations.

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Attachments: Keynote Speaker Profile
2012 Ping Tom Memorial Pan Asian American Awardee Profile

**2012 ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION OF CHICAGO
29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION**

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3260 West Irving Park Road, Chicago, Illinois 60618
Tel. (773) 463-8424 Fax (773) 463-3004
e-mail: info@aacchicago.org
website: www.aacchicago.org

FOR: 2012 Asian American Coalition of Chicago Planning Committee

THE AACC 2012 HOST COMMITTEE

Vallapa Kongsri, Chair
Arun Sampanthavivat, Co-Chair
Tippi Lee, Secretary/Tickets Chair
Surachai Moraras, Treasurer

FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES ONLY, CONTACT:

Irene Cualoping, JD (ENERI/Rieny), Chair, AACC 2012 Media Committee
Managing Partner, ENERI Communications
tel. (312) 635-0888
e-mail general: info@enericom.net

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This release posted at: www.aacchicago.org and www.enericom.net/blog

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29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION
February 25, 2012 Hyatt Regency O'Hare**

**KEYNOTE SPEAKER PROFILE
HIS EXCELLENCY PROFESSOR KANTATHI SUPHAMONGKHON
THE 39TH MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE KINGDOM OF THAILAND**

His Excellency Professor Kantathi Suphamongkhon* is the 39th Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of Thailand (2005-2006).

Professor Kantathi Suphamongkhon is presently a Visiting Professor of Law and Diplomacy at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) as well as Senior Fellow at the Burkle Center for International Relations at UCLA. He previously served as the University of California Regents' Professor at UCLA (from 2007–2009). He holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from the University of Southern California (USC); a Master of Arts degree in International Studies from the American University in Washington, D.C.; and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science from UCLA.

He has been Chairman of the Human Security Network. He has also served as Thai Trade Representative (Cabinet rank) and Advisor to the Prime Minister of Thailand on Foreign Affairs. In addition, he was elected as a Member of the Thai Parliament for two terms. He has served as Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Speaker of the House of Representatives in Thailand. Before politics, he served as a career diplomat in Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 10 years, four of which were spent as a representative of Thailand to the United Nations in New York.

Professor Kantathi Suphamongkhon has also worked in the private sector as Director of the Post Publishing Public Company, which publishes the "Bangkok Post" and the "Post Today" newspapers. He is now Chairman of Kanta Enterprise International Company Limited (KEI). He is also a Director at Kanta Sahakij Company Limited and Athakravi Company Limited.

Professor Kantathi Suphamongkhon has taught various subjects including, International Law, International Organizations, Political Science, Theories and Practices in International Relations, International Trade and Foreign Policy, Negotiations and Foreign Policy, International Politics and Globalization, Foreign Policy of Thailand, Southeast Asian Studies, Foreign Policy Decision-Making as well as Psychology and Foreign Policy.

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**2012 PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE PROFILE
RAYMOND B. LEE
Owner/President, Golden Country Oriental Food Co.
Owner/President, Golden Ocean Seafood, Inc.**

The Asian American Coalition of Chicago is pleased to announce that **Raymond B. Lee**, Owner and President of Golden Country Oriental Food Co. (since 1979) and Golden Ocean Seafood, Inc. (since 1984) has been named the **2012 Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Awardee**. Raymond Lee built his business from a small warehouse on Wells Street in Chicago to what is now one of the largest Asian, African, Caribbean and Oriental wholesale food importers and distributors in the United States.

Lee was instrumental in the formation of the Asian American Alliance and served as the President of its Board for three years (1996-1999) and as Director Asian American Alliance (Asian American Small Business Center) (from 1996-2002). The Alliance was an organization comprised of various Asian Chambers of Commerce (Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese). He also served as a Chicago Park District Commissioner (1988-1989) and Chicago Board of Education member (1989-1990), becoming the first Asian American appointed to each such position, at a time when there was little or no representation of Asian Pacific Americans on such important boards in Chicago.

Among numerous community and civic service affiliations, Lee is past Chairman, President, and current Secretary of the Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce (service in various roles, 1983-present); Managing Director, Chinatown Parking Corporation (service since 1984); Chairman of the Board, Chinese American Development Corp. (since 1985); a member of the Ping Tom Memorial Park Advisory Council (since 1994); and a member of the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (2001-present).

He previously served as a Member, Advisory Board Member and Finance Committee Chairman for the Chinese American Service League (various roles, 1988-2009); Member, City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations Advisory Council on Asian Affairs (2001-2002); and as a Member, Asian American Advisory Council to the Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White (2001-2002).

From the AACC Nomination Package (Compiled by Leonard M. Louie):

“Raymond Lee built his business from a small warehouse on Wells Street to what is now one of the largest Asian, African, Caribbean and Oriental wholesale food importers and distributors in the United States. During this time, he has always been a strong supporter of Asian organizations, both financially and most important, volunteering his time and personal services. In other words, he was a “doer”! “If you need me, I will be there and I will help!” “

“At a time when Asian representation on Government positions were strictly in non-decision making Boards and commissions, Raymond Lee was appointed a Commissioner of the Chicago Park District by then Chicago Mayor Eugene Sawyer, and later he was moved by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley to the Chicago School Board. These appointments opened the door for more Asians to be appointed to key

(MORE)

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2012 PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE PROFILE
RAYMOND B. LEE**

-- ADD ONE

positions. While serving his terms with the Park District and School Board, Raymond initiated the work which resulted in Ping Tom Memorial Park and a new Haines Elementary School. He accomplished this by inviting his fellow Commissioners to accompany him to view the desolated abandoned rail property near Chinatown Square. He did likewise by bringing the Board Members to visit the 100-year-old former Haines property”.

“His greatest achievement was the fulfillment of a request made by legendary Ping Tom just prior to Ping’s passing. Ping indicated that the Chinatown Square Project was having severe financial problems but had to be completed since the Community desperately needed more residential and commercial space. Raymond took over the leadership of the Corporation upon Ping’s untimely death and used all his business acumen and committed personal finances, to eventually complete the Chinatown Square Project.”

“Raymond felt strongly that Asian Businesses needed help in obtaining government assistance and preparing procurement proposals. His initiative resulted in the formation of a Coalition of Asian Chambers of Commerce (Asian American Alliance and the Asian American Small Business Center). He helped finance their early operations and served as their first President.”

“When the Chinatown Museum Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, committed to preserving the culture of the Chinatown and Chinese American Community in Chicago was in its early stages and still searching for a home, Raymond Lee again stepped forward. He felt that the history and culture of the Community needed to be preserved for future generations and that the museum needed a home if they were going to become a reality. A property which his family had originally owned was on the market where Raymond spent his early years working for 35 cents an hour. He had an emotional attachment to the property and felt this to be the perfect scenario to retain the building and help the museum. He purchased the property* for \$660,000 and donated it to the Museum.” (In addition, after the fire in 2008 destroyed the upper two floors of the museum, Ray donated an additional \$500,000 to renovate and rebuild the damage caused by the fire.)

“In a capsule, this is Raymond Lee.”

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January 20, 2012

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**The museum building, formerly the Quong Yick Co., and now known as the Chinese American Museum of Chicago, the Raymond B. and Jean T. Lee Center, is located at 238 West 23rd Street in Chicago’s Chinatown. The Museum opened to the public in May 2005. After a devastating fire in September of 2008, the Museum was closed for renovation and reopened in 2010.*

Raymond B. Lee Nominated by: Leonard M. Louie, Chair - 2007 AACC Lunar New Year Celebration and Member of AACC Board of Directors; President, Ping Tom Memorial Park Advisory Council; Executive Director, Chinese American Development Corporation; Treasurer and Past President, Chinese American Civic Council; Director, Chinese American Service League; Advisory Board, Chinatown American Museum of Chicago and Member, Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community, With Letters of Support from Tony Shu, President, Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Woodrow M. Lee, 2011 President, Chinese American Civic Council of Chicago and Bernarda Wong, President, Chinese American Service League.



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**2012 PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE PROFILE
RAYMOND B. LEE
Owner/President, Golden Country Oriental Food Co.
Owner/President, Golden Ocean Seafood, Inc.**

**ERRATA January 25, 2012
-- ADD ONE, Last Paragraph**

Corrected the wage reference from 25 cents per hour (in original release) to 35 cents per hour.

Corrected the actual price of the museum to \$660,000 from \$600,000 (in original release) and added line:

"In addition, after the fire in 2008 destroyed the upper two floors of the museum, Ray donated an additional \$500,000 to renovate and rebuild the damage caused by the fire."

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January 25, 2012

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