



# LOCKE FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

PRESENTS

## *Voices:* Chinese Women Of The Delta

### Fundraiser Luncheon

*with support - LockePRDA*

Sunday, November 5, 2023  
12:30 – 4:00 pm

Lucky Jade Restaurant  
7007 South Land Park Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95831

[www.locke-foundation.org](http://www.locke-foundation.org)

# Locke Foundation and LockePRDA

Presents  
a Fundraiser Luncheon for



## ***Voices: Chinese Women in the Delta***



Lucky Jade Restaurant  
7007 South Land Park Drive  
Sacramento, CA 95831

12 noon	Registration & Social
12:15 pm	Capitol Chinese Orchestra
12:45 pm	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Honorees
1:10 pm	Lunch – Announce Art Sale by Pattie Fong (Currents Newsletter)
1:30 pm	Capitol Chinese Orchestra – President Louisa Yu

Classical songs: Color Clouds Chasing the Moon, Step Up, Thunder in the Drought, Blooming Flowers and Full Moon, and Moonlight on the Lake Placid

Folk Songs: Going to the Flower Fair, Puppy Love, Story of a Little Town, Spring Breeze Fantasy, Ocean of Laughter, and Shanghai Bund

Popular Songs: Can-Can and Red River Valley

2:00 pm	Introduction – Locke Foundation Board and Accomplishments
2:30 pm	Introduction – LF – Oral History Project and Committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Trailer Film – Voices: Chinese Women in the Delta</li><li>• Min Zhou – Film Director Message</li></ul>
2:55 pm	Introduction – LF-OHP Honorees
3:20 pm	Thank all Sponsors and Friends – Remind Art Sale is Opened
3:30 pm	Door Prize and New Membership Drawing

Closing Remarks



## Locke Foundation Board - 2023

**President:** Stuart Walthall

**Vice-President:** Clarence Chu

**Treasurer:** Eileen Leung

**Secretary:** Douglas Hsia

### **Directors:**

Carol Lee

Corliss Lee

Honey Lum

Dustin Marr

Mark Miller

Darrel Woo

### **Docent Volunteers**

#### **– Boarding House Museum**

Eva Chu                      Joyce Eng

Darwin Kan                Lili Kan

Anita Lo                    Eva West

Alfred Yee                 Justin Cairns

### **Event Chair** - Honey Lum

### **Event Volunteers**

Betty Louie                Eileen Leung

Eugene Louie             Eugene Wong

Jim T. Chong              Lucy Oback

Margie Wong             Pattie Fong

Pearl Lim                  Sue Lim



**Program Book Designed By**

*Cathy Wei*

The Locke Foundation (LF) is a nonprofit organization created to educate the public about the history, culture and legacy of the town of Locke. We work to preserve and conduct activities that will benefit Locke – National Historic Landmark. Locke is the largest, most complete example of the rural agricultural Chinese American community in the US.

We are so glad to collaborate with Min Zhou, an award-winning film-maker and journalist, to direct the documentary film titled: “Voices: Chinese Women of the Delta.” Min has devoted her career to researching the Chinese American immigrant experience and producing short documentary films relating to Chinese railroad workers (Carlin 13) and the Chinese American WWII veterans (Land of Luck and others).

We thank and honor Ruth Jang, Corliss Suen Lee, Gay Lum and Harry Sen for their captivating stories that contribute to the LF-Oral History Project. Their vibrant stories bring life to the Delta. They remember childhood to teenage years, later as adults in serving our communities through education, housing development, public service and journalism – print media. Their collective work impacted the educational and professional growth and development of today's youth, their families and our communities. They are role-models that we are so proud of them . . . we remember their accomplishments and their great strides to mentor folks along the way.

On behalf of the LF board, we hope you enjoy the luncheon and have a great time networking with friends. We appreciate your support with Voices: Chinese Women of the Delta. We thank the LF-OHP committee, Capitol Chinese Orchestra, Pattie Fong – Currents Newsletter for the Silent Auction, Cathy Wei for designing the booklet and the volunteers who help to make this luncheon festive. Have an enjoyable time and safe journey always.

Sincerely,

**Stuart Walthall**, President Locke Foundation

P.O. box 1085, Walnut Grove, CA 95690 – federal tax ID# 20-0364281



The Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta has a rich and long history of the presence and contribution of the Chinese. In the 19th century, the Chinese came to build the levees, drain the swamps and stayed to transform the wild wetlands into the most productive farmland in the U.S. It was the Chinese who helped build California.

Scattered along the Sacramento River is a series of small towns that include Locke, Walnut Grove, Courtland and Isleton. These enclaves were a haven for the generations of Chinese immigrants of the Delta. The history of the Chinese immigrants in America is more than one hundred fifty years. However, the acknowledgement of their contributions pale in comparison to the struggles, hardships and discrimination they suffered. It is undeniable that the Chinese men who immigrated accomplished feats beyond comparison.

However, hidden within the Chinese American (CA) immigration story is that of Chinese women. Marginalized and discriminated against, Chinese women suffered in silence within the male-dominated Chinese culture. Invisible and voiceless, their own community gave them little consolation or support. Away from their homeland Chinese women were viewed as aliens without rights or standing. To deny entry, women were labeled as prostitutes to prevent perpetuation of the race. The racism persisted especially when there was no longer any use for Chinese labor. To truly reflect the CA immigrant history, it is important to share the forgotten and untold stories of the resilience of Chinese women.

Gone are the Chinese women who endured the hardships and supported the CA immigrant communities. This documentary project, "Voices: Chinese Women of the Delta", will focus on the Chinese women's sacrifice and contribution through the recollection of those descendants that remain.

The Locke Foundation - Oral History Project (LF-OHP) and with support from prior residents (Locke Prior Residents & Descendants Association - Locke PRDA) are producing this short documentary film to tell some stories. These former residents of the Delta are committed to reviving the conversation about the CA contributions in the Delta. This endeavor is long overdue.

The film will be produced and directed by Min Zhou, an award-winning filmmaker and journalist, who has devoted her career to CA immigration history. She is credited with producing a series of documentaries on Chinese railroad workers, CA WW-II veterans and CA fishing villages. We are thrilled to be in collaboration with Min to document Chinese women's voices.

Sincerely,

**Corliss Suen Lee**, Chair  
Locke Foundation – Oral History Project



**OHP Committee:**

Corliss Suen Lee - Chair  
Honey Lum - Co-Chair  
Carol Lee  
Mark Miller

**OHP Volunteers:**

Ron Chan  
Cindy Chang  
Douglas Hsia  
Anita Lo  
Darren Suen  
Bucky Wing







# Honoree

## *Ruth Jang*

Ruth Chan Jang and her siblings were born in Walnut Grove to Chuck Wing Chan and Lum Sue Ying. Her parents operated the Happy Café at 13964 Main Street, Locke, which currently houses Ning Hou Art Gallery. Ruth is recognized today, at age 100, as a Delta resident who served her country valiantly as a Chinese American woman in the Women's Army Corp during WW II.

At 21, in 1943, she joined the armed forces for duty and adventure. She and a friend went to the recruitment center, and contrary to their mutual agreement, her friend enlisted in the Navy. Ruth, who could not swim and was afraid of the ocean, entered the Army. Ruth said that she enjoyed more food than was available to her in Locke and swears that she grew an inch in height. Her first station was Moody Field, Georgia where her duties were as a "Gopher", delivering messages from each building riding a tri-motor scooter. Ruth became the Captain of the woman's basketball team because she was taller than many of the other women players. A cherished adventure, once a pilot took her up in a B25 Bomber where they dive bombed cows on a farm. She was then transferred to Mitchell Field, Long Island,

New York where she helped care for injured servicemen. Her favorite place was New York as one of her assignments was to take wounded soldiers to free Broadway shows. She recalls enjoying Showboat and watching the Radio City Music Hall Rockettes. Being the only Chinese in her units, we asked whether she ever experienced racism or discrimination. Her answer was, "No". Instead, she felt very special and popular. On weekends she enjoyed going out with her Polish, Jewish and Italian girlfriends. They enjoyed dancing with the servicemen. She ate pizza and pickled herring for the first time. In 1946, at the end of the war she was discharged.

Ruth married Harry Jang who was a lieutenant in the Air Force during WWII and received the Distinguished Flying Cross for his exceptional navigational skills under fire in Asia. After the war Ruth settled into married life, raised three children, (Gwen, Sarah Gayle, and Bobby), worked as an elementary school interpreter, earned her teaching credential and taught. She attributes her longevity to staying active her entire life. She may not play golf any longer, but Ruth still enjoys watching sports on TV.

# Honoree

# *Corliss Suen Lee*



Corliss Suen Lee grew up as a resident of both Locke and Walnut Grove. She is the daughter of Robert and Louise Jang Suen. Louise Jang, "Wong Paw" of Locke, was her grandmother (on mother's side). Her grandparents (on father's side) were merchants and partners with mom and dad when they opened Lim Kee in Locke.

As evidence by her long lineage in Locke and Walnut Grove, Corliss cares deeply and is passionate about preserving the legacy of the Chinese of the Delta. Intensely impacted by the resilience of the women around her, Corliss is committed to sharing their silent struggles. As a resident and descendant Corliss embraces the responsibility to revive whatever stories remain.

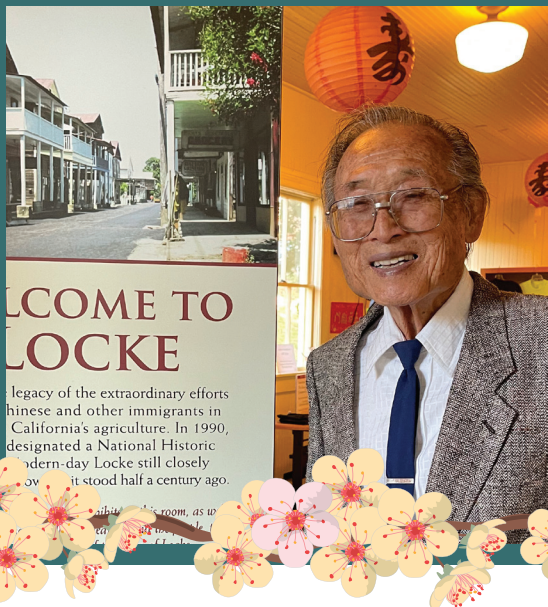
Grandma Jang was widowed early and subsequently charged with raising 12 children on her own. She managed with meager resources and tenacity. With a gentle disposition and without complaint, she showed perseverance under challenging circumstances. As a provider, she was an excellent gardener, good cook and working at the cannery well into her seventies. To her credit, her children grew up with her same gentle spirit and positive outlook.

Daughter Louise, Corliss' mother, became a successful businesswoman. In Walnut Grove

the Lim Kee Dry Goods store prospered due to her guidance and management when she made it her own. Once, in Locke, she fiercely chased a man out of the store with a pool cue for whispering something inappropriate. Louise was raised to be self-confident and when her father wanted her to marry his friend, she said, "If you like him so much you marry him". She was fortunate she refused because he was abusive to his wife, Louise's sister.

Empowered in her own right, Corliss was President of her own company, a developer/builder of subdivisions of homes, in a male-dominated industry. Her insight as a woman was what launched her success. Corliss became the first woman minority president of the Building Industry Association and served as Vice Chair of the California Seismic Safety Commission. In Contra Costa County Corliss worked with nonprofits, building the first Habitat for Humanity houses in Contra Costa County. Raising \$600,000 she directed those resources and her expertise to manage the construction of the Battered Women's Shelter.

Corliss was inspired and compelled to make a difference, having experienced the resilience of the women she knew. "Voices: Chinese Women of the Delta" brings light to the pioneering women of the Delta.



# Honoree

## *Gay Hoy Lum* (In Memoriam)

Gay Hoy Lum was born in 1927, Siu Yun Village, Zhongshan, China. In 1939, at age 11, Gay and his cousin arrived at Angel Island through his father's sponsorship.

The boys joined his uncle and father (Lum Chew) in Locke. The four shared an 8'X9' room that included a kerosene stove, a kerosene lamp, and four foldable cots. Gay's first job was weeding in the tomato fields alongside his father. His dad was paid \$1 per day and Gay was paid 50 cents for the same work.

After one year in Locke, Gay moved to the JB Thomas Ranch in Ryer Island where he was the houseboy for six years. Attending Rio Vista High School, the art teacher recognized Gay's exceptional artistic talent and was his biggest advocate for a scholarship to attend the San Francisco Academy of Advertising.

In 1953, just shy of his 26th birthday and 2 units short of graduation, Gay was drafted into the Korean War and trained for Army Intelligence. He was assigned to the 38th parallel – Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) in Korea and stationed at headquarters.

Once discharged, Gay returned to Sacramento State College to complete the remaining units for his degree. Gay had met his future wife Katie a few years earlier at the

Ranch. They were married upon his return from the service.

In 1957, Gay was the first Chinese hired by the Sacramento Bee Newspaper as an Editorial Illustrator. Gay received the highest honor in Journalism for his lifetime professional achievement. In 1996 the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA) acknowledged Gay with the Pioneer Spirit Award for "Leading the Way for Asian American Journalists".

Gay retired in 1992 after working 35 years, but not before sponsoring his mother to the U.S. Gay was able to fulfill his father's dream, reuniting them after 25 years apart. They lived together happily for 11 years in their own home before his father's passing.

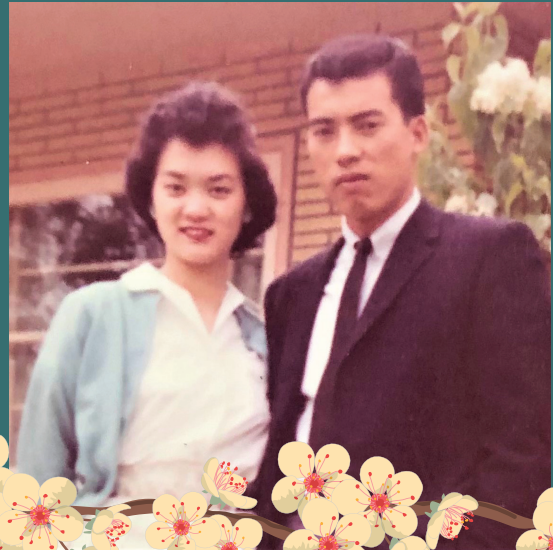
Gay and Katie celebrated 66 years of marriage and are proud of their two daughters, Suelene and Milene, grandson Daniel (wife Victoria) and great-grandchildren, Phin and Selah. His words of wisdom were to get an education and to be humble. Gay had a notable Chinese saying, "If you never taste bitter, then you don't know sweet."

Gay Hoy Lum passed away in September 2023, leaving a loving family and fond memories for all who knew him.



# Honoree

# Harry Sen



Harry Sen was born in 1933 to a family of pear and vegetable farmers. He was the only son of eight children, referred by some Chinese as the "Gum Jai" (Golden Son). When he was 7 years old, the family moved to Locke for new opportunity.

Harry developed his work ethics, sense of responsibility and drive for success at an early age. His parents emphasized family and the importance of the education they themselves did not get. He tended the family garden and the pigs, ducks, and chickens. By age 10, he helped his father prune pear trees at various orchards during holidays and school vacations. His grandfather's grocery store, Foon Hop, was known for scrumptious prepared foods and popular freshly made tofu. Barely tall enough to reach the pot, Harry eagerly helped his aunties stir the cooking concoction that would become tofu.

Harry attributes his love of cooking to his mother, "who could cook anything the restaurant could". In the US Army, Harry was stationed in the Bay Area. When asked to prepare a celebratory Chinese feast for 30 high-ranking officers, his culinary skills earned him the reputation as the go-to guy for any gastronomic event.

After service in the Army, Harry continued his

education, earning a Fisheries degree and a Public Health certificate. While attending Humboldt State, he met the love of his life, Leila. Married for 63 years, having raised three children, LaVerne, Gordon and Wesley, they have 6 grandchildren.

As Public Health Officer, Harry was charged with the district from Sacramento to Antioch. Covering the town of Locke and the Delta he often worked to improve labor camp sanitation conditions in food preparation, water and sewer quality, as well as translating for Chinese patients alongside public health nurses. As the Industrial Hygienist doing OSHA work, his guidance successfully implemented protective health policies and legislations, such as the No Smoking Ordinance and the Noise Control Ordinance.

Long retired, when Harry is not working in his garden, he indulges his lifelong passion... fishing. He fondly remembers fishing from shore with both his parents. Fishing for food and pleasure, Harry is known to give away his catch and his special "Hom Yee" (salted fish). His mother was so passionate about fishing that she continued fishing with Harry until her mid-eighties. Nowadays, Harry shares his passion every Saturday with his son, Gordon, reserving treasured time to fish together in the Delta.





On behalf the Locke Foundation (LF) and prior residents (LockePRDA) we thank you for donating funds to produce the documentary film – Voices: Chinese Women in the Delta. Please join us in 2024 to see the Premiere!!! If you know of friends who have a passion to contribute to this worthy project about the Chinese women and other LF programs, please continue to support us:

- \_\_\_\_\_ Oral History Program
- \_\_\_\_\_ Event Volunteer
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tour Guide to Students and Other Visitors
- \_\_\_\_\_ Docent at the Boarding House Museum
- \_\_\_\_\_ Maintaining the Memorial Park and Chinese Demonstration Garden
- \_\_\_\_\_ Purchase a Memorial Tile – to remember loved ones
- \_\_\_\_\_ Membership

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## Locke Foundation Membership Application/Renewal

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_ First Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing address \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Tel ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Fax ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer for the following activities:

Event Volunteer \_\_\_\_\_ Media/Publicity \_\_\_\_\_ Membership recruitment \_\_\_\_\_

Contribute articles \_\_\_\_\_ Contribute artifacts \_\_\_\_\_ Grant writing \_\_\_\_\_

Visitor Center Help \_\_\_\_\_ Legal skills \_\_\_\_\_ Fundraising \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership Dues: circle one**

**\$25 Individual Annual/\$200 Lifetime    \$50 Family or Non-Profit Organization Annual/\$300 Lifetime**  
**\$100 Business Annual/\$500 Lifetime**

Make check payable to Locke Foundation. Please return this form with check to Locke Foundation  
P. O. Box 1085, Walnut Grove, CA 95690. Tax ID: 20-0364281.

Office use only:

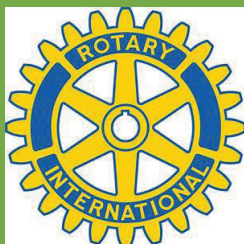
Date application received \_\_\_\_\_ Membership Year \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal \_\_\_\_\_

# The Locke Foundation

Thanks Our Supporters and Friends  
for their Generous Donations  
to Produce the "Voices: Chinese Women in the Delta"

## Diamond Sponsor

Walnut Grove Rotary Club



## Gold Sponsor

Honey Lum  
Madelyn J. Postman  
Roger G. F. Fong  
Mark Miller  
Kay Dix, Inc.  
Ed Loo Masonry, Inc.  
Chevron

## Friends and Table (Partial listing)

APAPA	US-China Railroad	Doug Owyang
Chinese American Heritage	Friendship Association	Helen Sien
Network	Camellia Lions Club	Stephen Sum Jr.
Pattie Fong – Currents	General Produce	Stuart Walthall
Newsletter	Ed Loo	Sandy Jang
Locke Management	Mary Yin Lui	Andrew Lee
Corporation	Gerrye Wong	Brandon Yung,
Sacramento Chinese of	John Fong	Andi Wong
Indo China Friendship	LaVerne Sen Ishibashi	Karen Yung Brewster
Association	Corliss Suen Lee	Capitol Chinese Orchestra
Sacramento River Delta	Van M. Mar	
Historical Society		

## Film Director

Min Zhou



## Co-Producers



Clarence Chu



Douglas Hsia