



# FIRST ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS

Brought to you by the  
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# HIRAM FONG (1906-2004)

- First Asian-American to serve in the United States Senate
- One of Hawaii's first senators
- Served from 1959-1977



# MAZIE HIRONO (1947-

- First Asian-American female to serve in the US Senate
- Represents Hawaii
- Has served since 2013



# PATSY TAKEMOTO MINK (1927-2002)

- First woman of color elected to the US Congress
- First Asian-American woman elected to US Congress
- She served in the House of Representatives from 1965-1977 and 1990-2002



# HERBERT CHOY (1916-2004)

- First Asian-American to serve as a United States Federal Judge
- First person of Korean descent to be admitted to the bar
- Served as a Federal Judge on the Ninth Circuit from 1971-2004



# DALIP SINGH SAUND (1899-1973)

- First person of Asian descent to serve in the US House of Representatives
- First Sikh and Indian American as well
- Represented California from 1957-1963
- Advocated for South Asians to become naturalized citizens





# JULIA CHANG BLOCH (1942-

- First US ambassador of Asian descent
- Was ambassador to the Kingdom of Nepal in 1989
- She also founded the US-China Education Trust in 1998, which funds education initiatives to improve US-China relations



# WING F. ONG (1904-1977)

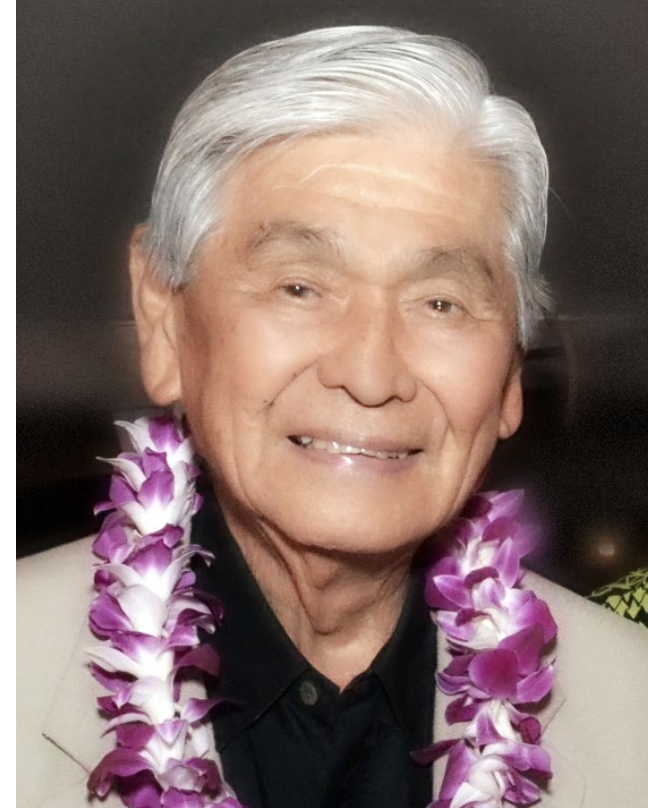
- First Chinese-American elected to a State House of Representatives in Arizona in 1946
- He ran for the Arizona State Senate and won in 1966, becoming the first Chinese-American to be elected to State Legislature





# GEORGE ARIYOSHI (1926-

- First person of Asian descent to be elected governor of a US State
- He was the third governor of Hawaii and served from 1974-1986
- He is the longest-serving governor in Hawaii's history



# ELAINE CHAO (1953-

- First Asian-American woman to serve in the US Presidential Cabinet
- She served as Secretary of Labor under the George W. Bush Administration in 2001
- Also served as Secretary of Transportation in the Trump Administration in 2017



# NORMAN MINETA (1931-

- First Asian-American to be a mayor of a major US city
- Was mayor of San Jose, California from 1971-1975
- First Asian-American to serve in the US Presidential Cabinet as Secretary of Commerce under the Clinton Administration in 2000



# ANH JOSEPH CAO (1967-

- The first Vietnamese-American to be elected to US Congress
- Represented Louisiana's 2nd District from 2009-2011
- Was a part of leading the relief for Hurricane Katrina



# ELLISON ONIZUKA (1946-1986)

- First Japanese-American to be selected for the NASA Space Shuttle Program
- First Asian-American to go to space in the 1984 *Discovery* Space Shuttle
- He was also a part of the 1986 *Challenger* mission but died in its explosion along with the other six crew members





# KATHERINE SUI FUN CHEUNG

- Received one of the first aviation licenses given to an Asian woman
- First Chinese woman to receive an international flying license
- Performed in air shows and air races



# JOKICHI TAKAMINE (1854-1922)

- Japanese-America immigrant chemist
- Was the first to crystallize and isolate epinephrine from animal cells
- Epinephrine was subsequently used in surgery to stop hemorrhage as well as allergic reactions
- Pioneered enzyme engineering





# AN WANG (1920-1990)

- Chinese-American computer engineer that helped develop magnetic core memory
- Was the memory source of computers before the microchip
- Co-founded Wang Laboratories and pioneered word-processing systems



# FLOSSIE WONG-STAAAL (1946-2020)

- Chinese-American virologist who worked for the NIH
- Was the first to clone HIV virus
- Her work was significant to developing treatment for HIV



# ANNA MAY WONG (1907-1961)

- First Chinese-American movie star in Hollywood
- Worked in silent film, sound film, television and theater
- Was the first Asian-American woman to be a series lead in a US television show, *The Gallery of Madame Liu-Tsong*



# MIYOSHI UMEKI (1929-2007)

- Japanese-born American actress
- Was the first Asian woman to win a competitive Oscar for acting in *Sayonara* (1957)
- Was also nominated for a Tony and Golden Globe



# PAT MORITA (1932-2005)

- Japanese-American actor
- Starred as Mr. Miyagi in the *Karate Kid* franchise
- Was the first American-born Asian actor nominated for an Oscar (for *The Karate Kid*)
- Starred in one of the first US Television shows with a predominantly Asian cast, *Mr. T. and Tina*



# HAING NGOR (1940-1996)

- Cambodian-American actor, gynecologist and author
- First Asian actor to win a Supporting Actor Oscar for his work in *The Killing Fields* (1984)
- Accepted the role as a way to expose the harsh realities of the communist regime in Cambodia



# CHLOE KIM (2000-

- Korean-American Snowboarder
- Youngest person to win an Olympic gold medal in the snowboard halfpipe at 17 years old
- Six-time X Games gold medalist
- First woman to win two gold medals at the Youth Olympic Games





# SUNDAR PICHAI (1972-

- Indian-American businessman
- The first person of Indian descent to become CEO of Alphabet Inc and its subsidiary, Google
- Led product management for Google Chrome and Chrome OS
- Was influential in developing Google Drive



# NAOMI OSAKA (1997-

- Japanese-Haitian professional tennis player
- First Japanese player to win a Grand Slam singles title
- Four-time Grand Slams winner
- First Asian player to hold top ranks in singles



# SANDRA OH (1971-

- Korean-American-Canadian actress
- First person of Asian descent to host the Golden Globes at the 2019 ceremony
- First actress of Asian descent to be nominated for a Primetime Emmy for Lead Actress
- First Asian woman to win two Golden Globes



# KRISTI YAMAGUCHI (1971-

- Japanese-American professional figure skater
- First Asian-American woman to win a gold medal at any Olympic event
- Was the 1992 Olympic champion
- Two-time gold medal winner at the World Championships





# HINALEIMOANA WONG-KALU

- Native Hawaiian filmmaker, hula teacher and activist
- She is a "mahu," or a third gender person and transgender woman
- One of the first transgender people to run for statewide office in the United States
- Ran for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs
- Wrote the short film *A Place in the Middle* to educate on the third gender in Hawaiian culture



# CONNIE CHUNG (1946-

- Chinese-American journalist
- First woman to co-anchor CBS Evening News
- First person of Asian descent to anchor a major American news network as co-anchor of the CBS Nightly News Broadcast
- Also hosted her own news show, *Eye to Eye with Connie Chung*



# EMIL GUILLERMO

- Filipino-American broadcaster
- First Asian-American to regularly host a national news broadcast during his run on NPR's *All Things Considered* (1989-1991)





# YOUNG-OAK KIM (1919-2005)

- Korean-American Army officer
- First Asian-American to command a combat battalion
- Commanded the U.S. 100th Infantry Battalion in 1943 during WWII, a battalion of Japanese-Americans from Hawaii
- Was awarded 19 medals, including a Distinguished Service Cross



# EUGENE CHUNG (1969-

- Korean-American football player
- First Asian-American and Korean-American selected in the first round of the NFL Draft
- Played for New England Patriots in 1992
- Was the third Asian ever to play in the NFL at the time he was drafted



# ROSE PAK (1947-2016)

- Chinese-American political activist
- Was the first Asian-American female journalist at the *San Francisco Chronicle* in 1974
- Lobbied for Asian-Americans to become leaders in San Francisco, including Fred H. Lau as the first head of the San Francisco Police Department and Edwin M. Lee as the first mayor of San Francisco



# TAMMY DUCKWORTH (1968-

- Thai-American politician and retired Army National Guard lieutenant colonel
- First Thai-American woman elected to the US Senate in 2016
- First woman with a disability to be elected to the US Senate
- First double amputee to be elected to the US Senate



# RADHIKA JONES (1973-

- Indian-American magazine editor
- First woman of color to become editor of *Vanity Fair*
- Was also the editorial director of the books department at *The New York Times*



# YUAN YUAN TAN (1976-

- Chinese-American ballerina
- First Asian-American to reach the top rank of principal dancer at an American company
- Dances with the San Francisco Ballet
- Was promoted at age 19 and was the youngest principal in the company's history





# LARRY ITLIONG (1913-1977)

- Filipino-American grape farmer
- One of the first people to walk off a Coachella Valley grape farm to protest for higher wages
- Started the Delano Grape Strike, which lasted from 1965-1970 and ended in victory for Filipino farmers
- Founded the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, a Filipino worker's rights organization
- Inspired the work of Cesar Chavez, who joined him on picket lines

