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## PRESS RELEASE

June 17, 2009

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### **Book Release Announcement: *Untold Civil Rights Stories* *Asian Americans Speak Out for Justice***

LOS ANGELES, CA – June 17, 2009, the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) celebrates the release of *Untold Civil Rights Stories: Asian Americans Speak Out for Justice*.

*Untold Civil Rights Stories: Asian Americans Speak Out for Justice* is the first educational textbook describing the role of Asian Americans in United States civil rights history and is co-published by the Asian Pacific American Legal Center (APALC) and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center (AASC). Although there are more than 13 million Asian Americans in the United States, *Untold Civil Rights Stories* is the first book created for students to learn and discuss the social struggles Asian Americans have faced for over a century in this country. *Untold Civil Rights Stories* is edited by APALC's President & Executive Director, Stewart Kwoh, and UCLA Asian American Studies adjunct professor, Russell C. Leong.

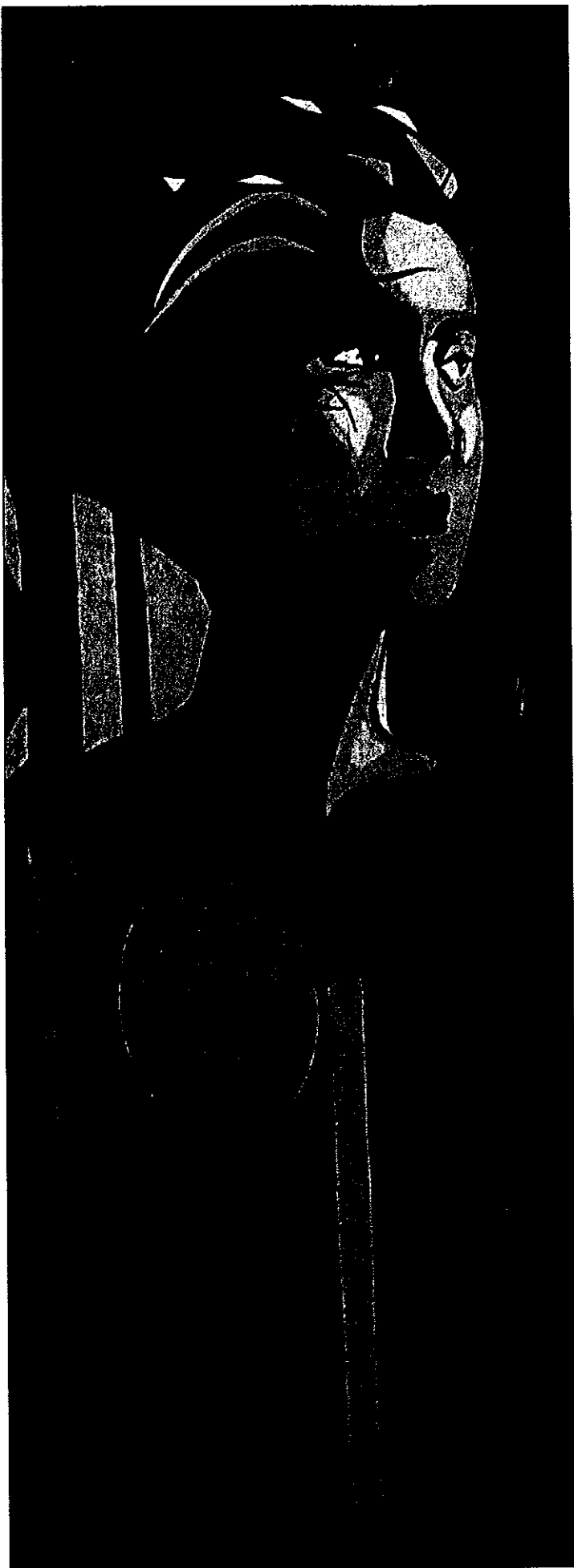
The stories of Amric Singh Rathour, Beulah Ong Kwoh, Fred Korematsu, Joseph Ito, K.W. Lee, Lily Chin, Peping Baclig, Philip Vera Cruz, and the enslaved Thai garment workers are stories that are often forgotten in United States history. Many students do not know and are not taught the history of hate crimes against Asian Americans, the crossing of racial boundaries in Hollywood, and Asian Americans' fight for constitutional rights during World War II. With its included lesson plans and teacher resources, *Untold Civil Rights Stories* seeks to fill this educational void and to do away with the "invisibility" of Asian Americans in United States history.

"*Untold Civil Rights Stories* is a social milestone...a must-have for educators and students alike," said Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, City of Los Angeles.

Supervisor Mark Ridley-Thomas, County of Los Angeles, said, "*Untold Civil Rights Stories* is an important contribution to a broader understanding of the contemporary struggle for democratic rights."

*Untold Civil Rights Stories* features the works of noted authors and scholars, including May Lee Heye, Bill Ong Hing, Dale Minami, Karen Narasaki, Angela Oh, Mary Ellen Kwoh Shu, Julie Su, Casimiro Urbano Tolentino, Kent Wong, Eric Yamamoto, Helen Zia, Esther Taira, and Irene Lee. It also includes timelines, student commentary and lesson plans geared especially for K-12<sup>th</sup> grade students learning about United States history, economics, and government. For more information regarding the availability of *Untold Civil Rights Stories*, please contact Ryan Khamkongsay of APALC at (213) 241-0235 or Russell Leong of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center at (310) 206-2892.

###



*"A must-read and a must-have for educators and students alike."  
-Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, Los Angeles*

# Untold Civil Rights Stories

ASIAN AMERICANS SPEAK OUT FOR JUSTICE

STEWART KWOH & RUSSELL C. LEONG

EDITORS

RESOURCES FOR STUDENTS, TEACHERS  
AND COMMUNITIES

ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN LEGAL CENTER

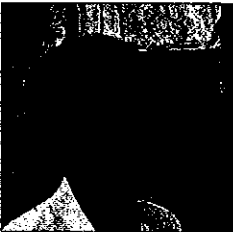
UCLA ASIAN AMERICAN STUDIES CENTER

## Contributors

### Editors



**Stewart Kwoh** is the president and executive director of the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (APALC). APALC is the largest and most diverse legal assistance and civil rights organization targeting Asian Pacific Americans in the United States. He is the co-author of *Searching for the Uncommon Common Ground: New Dimensions on Race in America*, 2002. Kwoh was named a MacArthur Foundation Fellow in 1998. He is the first Asian American attorney and human rights activist to receive this highly prestigious recognition, often referred to as a “genius grant.”

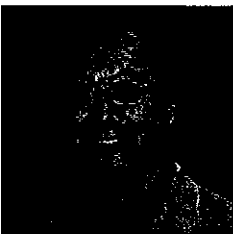


**Russell C. Leong** is the editor of UCLA's *Amerasia Journal*, the interdisciplinary journal of Asian American Studies. He is an adjunct professor of English and Asian American Studies, and also serves as the project head of the U.S./China Media Brief at UCLA. [www.uschina-mediabrief.com](http://www.uschina-mediabrief.com)

### Authors



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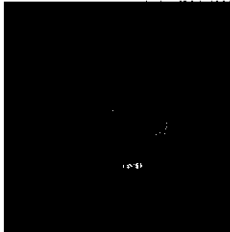
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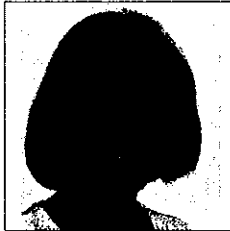
**Dale Minami** is an attorney and partner with Minami Tamaki LLP in San Francisco, specializing in personal injury and entertainment law. He has been involved in significant litigation involving the civil rights of Asian Pacific Americans and other minorities, including: *Korematsu v. United States*, *United Pilipinos for Affirmative Action v. California Blue Shield*, *Spokane JACL v. Washington State University*, and other landmark cases. He was a co-founder of the Asian Law Caucus, Inc., a community-interest law firm, a co-founder of the Asian American Bar Association of the Greater Bay Area, the first Asian American Bar Association in the United States, the Asian Pacific Bar of California and the Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans, a registered political action committee.



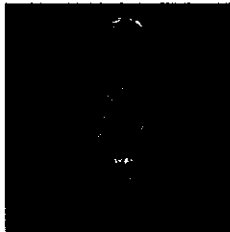
**Karen Narasaki** is the president and executive director of the Asian American Justice Center, formerly known as the National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium. The AAJC is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that works to advance the human and civil rights of Asian Americans through advocacy, public policy, public education, and litigation.



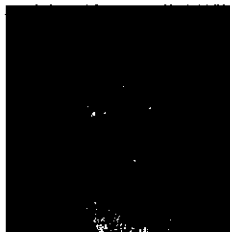
**Angela Oh** is an attorney, teacher, and public lecturer. Her law firm, Oh & Barrera, LLP, is based in Los Angeles. The firm offers representation in state and federal criminal matters and civil rights. The various commissions and boards she has served include the California Commission on Access to Justice and the board of directors for Lawyers Mutual Insurance Co., and the Washington, D.C.-based Women's Policy, Inc. and the Western Justice Center Foundation.



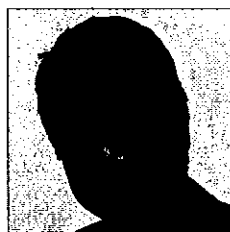
**Mary Ellen Kwoh Shu** is blessed to come from a family of many heroes — her mother, Beulah Quo, her father, Edwin, and her brother, Stewart. She and her husband, Jack, have three children — Christina, Teddy, and Julia — and have made their home in La Mesa, California. A former psychiatric social worker, Mary Ellen is now enjoying another career as an elementary school librarian.



**Julie Su** is Litigation Director at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California (APALC). She is also a MacArthur Fellow, recipient of the Reebok International Human Rights Awards, and was named one of the "Top 75 Women Litigators" in California by the *Daily Journal*. Su was the lead attorney for the Thai and Latino workers.



**Casimiro Urbano Tolentino** is a labor and civil rights lawyer. He has been an administrative law judge II for the state of California since 1992. He was assistant chief counsel for the Department of Fair Employment and Housing for six years enforcing California's civil rights laws, and was a regional attorney and regional director for the Agricultural Labor Relations Board. He has also co-founded numerous organizations including the Pilipino American Bar Association and the board of the Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium (a civil rights advocate for the Asian Pacific communities based in Washington, D.C.), now the Asian American Justice Center.



**Kent Wong** is director of the UCLA Center for Labor Research and Education, where he teaches Labor Studies and Asian American Studies. Kent has also served as national president of the Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, and the United Association for Labor Education.

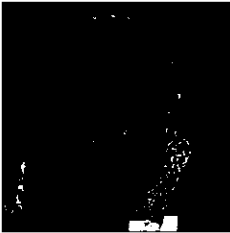


**Eric Yamamoto** is an internationally recognized law professor at the University of Hawai'i William S. Richardson School of Law. He is known for his legal work and scholarship on civil rights and racial justice, with an emphasis on reparations for historic injustice. He is a founding member of the Equal Justice Society and speaks regularly across the country and internationally on issues of racial reconciliation, reparations, civil and human rights and national security and civil liberties. In 1983 and 1984, Professor Yamamoto served as a member of Fred Korematsu's *coram nobis* legal team.



**Helen Zia** is the author of *Asian American Dreams: The Emergence of an American People* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001). She is board co-chair of the Women's Media Center and a member of the Committee of 100, a national organization of Chinese American leaders.

### *Curriculum Consultant*

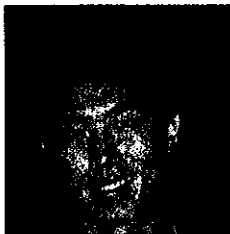


**Esther R. Taira** currently consults for organizations including the Los Angeles Unified School District, the Go for Broke Education Center, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California. She was the instructional specialist in charge of the Los Angeles Unified School District's Multicultural Unit until her retirement in 2002. In her 36 years with the district, she wrote a number of district curriculum guides and developed and presented workshops.

### *Editorial Assistants*



**Irene Lee** is a fourth-year undergraduate majoring in Asian American Studies at UCLA. Inspired by her experiences both in school and at the APALC, she hopes to pursue a profession that is dedicated to improving conditions for minority and low-income communities. On and off campus, she has been involved with: the Rotary Interact Club, Unicamp, and the Asian Pacific American Legal Center.



**Ryan Khamkongsay** did his undergraduate studies at USC as an Economics major, while serving as a Sergeant in the U.S. Army National Guard. He currently works at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center in Program Administration. Outside of APALC, he is an advocate for the Thai/ Laotian American communities and an activist for marriage equality.



**Jieun Jacobs** attended UC Berkeley as an undergraduate, majoring in History while lettering on the women's tennis team. She is currently attending Southwestern Law School's two-year SCALE program and will graduate with a J.D. in May 2009. She has been a volunteer and law clerk at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center.

# Untold Civil Rights Stories

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## *Introduction*

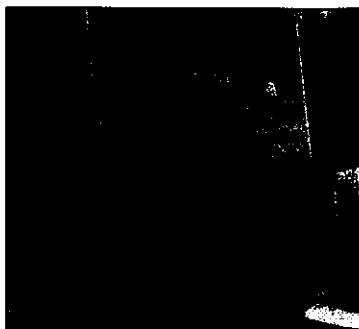
STEWART KWOH

### *Hidden Stories, Unsung Heroes*

**A**s I was growing up, I watched Martin Luther King Jr., Cesar Chavez, and Nelson Mandela fight for social justice by confronting and challenging the inequalities that affected their communities. These courageous public figures of different ethnic and racial backgrounds helped me to recognize the types of injustices happening everyday to those closest to me in my own life and community.

One of my first and most vivid realizations of this occurred when I was a middle school student. My church pastor, who was white, was nearly killed during a peaceful demonstration in Alabama in the 1960s. The demonstration was in response to the brutal murders of four African American girls in a church bombing by white supremacists. It was a result of such experiences that I began to develop a consciousness of how all individuals could be affected by racism and discrimination.

UNTOLD CIVIL RIGHTS STORIES  
Asian Americans Speak Out for Justice



*“Untold Civil Rights Stories is a social milestone that recognizes the unsung contributions of Asian Americans to America’s Civil Rights Movement. It shows mothers, daughters, sons and fathers — ordinary Americans — organizing around workplace, racial profiling and other issues that have affected all of us before and after 9/11. It has a broad multicultural experience and is solidly grounded in U.S. history. A must-read and a must-have for educators and students alike.”*

—Mayor Antonio R. Villaraigosa, city of Los Angeles

*“Untold Civil Rights Stories is an important contribution to a broader understanding of the contemporary struggle for democratic rights. It is essential reading in order to appreciate the contributions of Americans of Asian and Pacific Islander heritage to the fight to secure civil rights, union representation, social justice and the American Dream.”*

—Supervisor Mark Ridley Thomas, city of Los Angeles

UNTOLD CIVIL RIGHTS STORIES is the first educational textbook directed to U.S. high school students, high school teachers, and communities, about the role of Asian Americans in today’s Civil Rights and social justice struggles, before and after 9/11.

Asian Americans involved in social justice issue, labor organizing, anti-violence, and community organizing issues include: Philip Vera Cruz, Lily Chin, Buppha “Kaew” Chaemchoi, Suchadal “Jang” Eiampol, Sirilak “Jim” Charasri, the Iletto family, Beulah Ong Kwoh, K.W. Lee, Fred Korematsu, Faustino “Peping” Baclig, Amric Singh Rathour, and others.

\*Profiles    \*Teachers’ Lesson Plans    \*Historical Timeline    \*Photographs

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