

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN BELL OF FRIENDSHIP

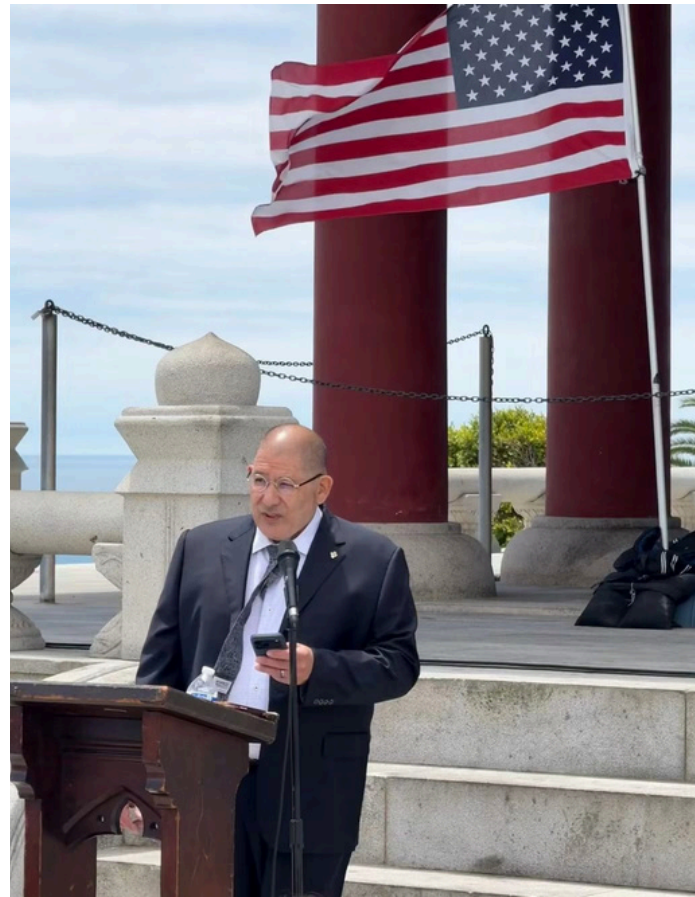


USC's Korean Heritage
Library
Celebrates Its
40th Year



A message from the President & Chair

Celebrating 50 Years of the Korean Bell of Friendship Carrying the Legacy Forward



Alex Chang, KAPC

Aloha and mahalo to our KAPC members, descendants, supporters, and friends. As we reflect upon the past year, I find myself thinking about legacy.

This has been a particularly meaningful time for our community as we continue to commemorate the 81st Anniversary of Korean Independence and celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Korean Bell of Friendship in San Pedro. These milestones remind us not only of the sacrifices that made these achievements possible, but also of our responsibility to preserve and pass forward the stories of those who came before us.

The Korean American Pioneer Council was founded to honor and preserve the legacy of Korean American pioneers and Korean independence patriots. While the world around us continues to change, that mission remains as important today as it was when KAPC was first established.



For many of us, this history is personal.

It is not simply something we read about in books or discover in archives. It lives within our families. It lives in the stories told around dinner tables, in old photographs tucked away in albums, in letters written long ago, and in memories passed from one generation to the next.

For me, that connection is deeply personal. My great-grandfather, Whangbo, Chung Kul, and my grandfather, Whangbo, Ik Jun (Eugene Park Hwangbo) were participants in Korea's independence movement.

Like many descendants, I often reflect upon the sacrifices made by those who dedicated themselves to a future they might never personally see. Their commitment to freedom, justice, and service continues to inspire me today.

Their generation understood something important. They understood that history is not something we inherit passively. It is something entrusted to us. Today, we have become the caretakers of that trust.

One of the realities we face is that the generation with direct memories of the pioneers is becoming smaller with each passing year. Many of those who personally knew the early immigrants, community leaders, and independence activists have now left us. Their voices are growing quieter, making the work of preservation even more important.

Every family story matters.

Every photograph matters.

Every letter, diary, newspaper clipping, and personal memory matters.

Together, these individual pieces help tell the larger story of Korean America.

That is why the mission of KAPC remains so important.

We are fortunate to have dedicated partners who share this commitment to preserving history. This year marks the 40th Anniversary of the USC Korean Heritage Library, one of the most important repositories of Korean American historical materials anywhere in the world.

Through the efforts of librarians, scholars, donors, descendants, and community supporters, countless documents and historical records have been preserved for future generations.

On behalf of KAPC, I extend our sincere congratulations and gratitude to Dean Melissa Just and the USC Korean Heritage Library on this remarkable milestone.

Their work has ensured that future generations will have access to the stories, records, and memories that help define the Korean American experience.



We are also grateful for our continuing relationship with Dr. Sunyoung Park, Director of the Korean Studies Institute at USC. Through educational programs, symposiums, and scholarly engagement, the Institute helps ensure that Korean American history remains an important part of both academic study and public understanding.

This year's KSI-USC Symposium brought together scholars, descendants, students, educators, and community leaders to explore Korean America and the evolving relationship between Korea and the United States. Gatherings such as these remind us that history is not simply about the past. It continues to shape our present and guide our future.

The Korean Bell of Friendship remains another powerful symbol of this continuing legacy. Standing proudly above the Pacific Ocean, the Bell serves as a reminder of the enduring friendship between Korea and the United States and of the generations of Korean Americans who helped strengthen those bonds.

This year, as we celebrated the Bell's 50th Anniversary, many of us were reminded of the vision behind its creation. The Bell represents peace, friendship, remembrance, and mutual respect. It is also a place where our community comes together to honor those who came before us.



Each time we gather there, we are reminded that we are part of something larger than ourselves. We are connected to a story that began long before us and will continue long after we are gone.

This year we were also honored to recognize the work of artist Gary Green. Through his commemorative artwork celebrating Korean independence and Korean American history, Gary has helped bring important stories to life for new audiences. His work reminds us that history can be preserved in many forms and that art often provides a powerful bridge between past and present.

As we look ahead, I believe KAPC's greatest responsibility is not simply preserving history, but helping future generations understand why that history matters.

The pioneers who arrived in America faced tremendous challenges. They built communities, supported one another, established churches and organizations, and contributed to Korea's independence movement while adapting to life in a new country.



Their sacrifices created opportunities for future generations that many of them could scarcely imagine.

Today, we are the beneficiaries of those sacrifices.

Tomorrow, we must become their stewards.

In Hawai'i, there is a value that many of us know well: mālama. It means to care for, protect, and preserve.

In many ways, KAPC's mission is an act of mālama.

We mālama the stories of the pioneers.

We mālama the legacy of the independence patriots.

We mālama the memories entrusted to us by previous generations.

And in doing so, we help ensure that future generations will understand where they came from and appreciate the sacrifices that made their opportunities possible.

As President & Chair of KAPC, I remain optimistic about the future. We are blessed with dedicated members, committed volunteers, respected partners, and a growing community of descendants who understand the importance of preserving our shared heritage.

The work continues.

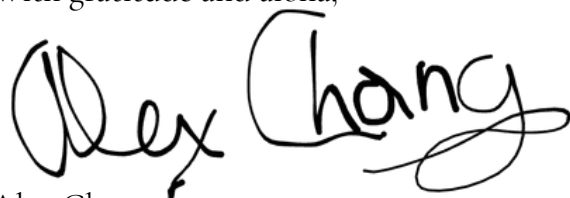
The responsibility continues.

The legacy continues.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, mahalo nui loa to all of our members, descendants, supporters, partners, and friends for your continued dedication to KAPC and its mission.

Together, we honor the past, remember those who came before us, and help carry their legacy forward for generations yet to come.

With gratitude and aloha,



Alex Chang

President & Chair

Korean American Pioneer Council



Alex Chang, President & Chair, Korean American Pioneer Council; Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation; and Martin Choi, President, AROKA-USA.



2026 Annual Commemorative Newsletter

Congratulatory Message

Dear Members of the Korean American Pioneer Council,

Warm greetings to all of you. It is my great pleasure to extend my heartfelt congratulations through this newsletter on the 81st anniversary of Korea's liberation. It is a profound honor to join you once again in celebrating the rich history, enduring resilience, and remarkable achievements of the Korean American community.

This year holds exceptional significance as we mark several historic milestones that symbolize the deep-rooted ties between our two countries. We celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Korean Bell of Friendship—a monumental symbol of liberty, peace, and the linchpin alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States, as the U.S. celebrates its 250th birthday. For half a century, its resonance has reminded us of our shared values and mutual respect.

Furthermore, we commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the USC Korean Heritage Library, an invaluable treasure trove that has dedicated four decades to preserving our history, literature, and the vibrant legacy of Korean immigrants for future generations.

These milestones are not merely markers of passing time; they are living testaments to the dedication of Korean American pioneers, descendants, scholars, veterans, and community organizations. Through your unwavering commitment, you have built a bridge of cultural understanding and historical preservation that spans generations. Your efforts ensure that the sacrifices of the past continue to inspire the leaders of tomorrow.



As we look toward the future, the Consulate General remains firmly committed to supporting the Korean American community and strengthening the ironclad friendship between our two nations. Together, we will continue to honor our heritage, celebrate our shared triumphs, and pave the way for a brighter, more connected future.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the President of KAPC, Alex Chang, and the members of KAPC for their tireless dedication to keeping our history alive. May this commemorative newsletter serve as a beacon of pride and inspiration for all.

July 7, 2026

Youngwan Kim

Consul General

Consulate General of the Republic of Korea in Los Angeles

OUR MISSION

To preserve the legacy, record, and promote the education, understanding, and appreciation of the experiences and history of the Pioneer Generation of the Korean American community.

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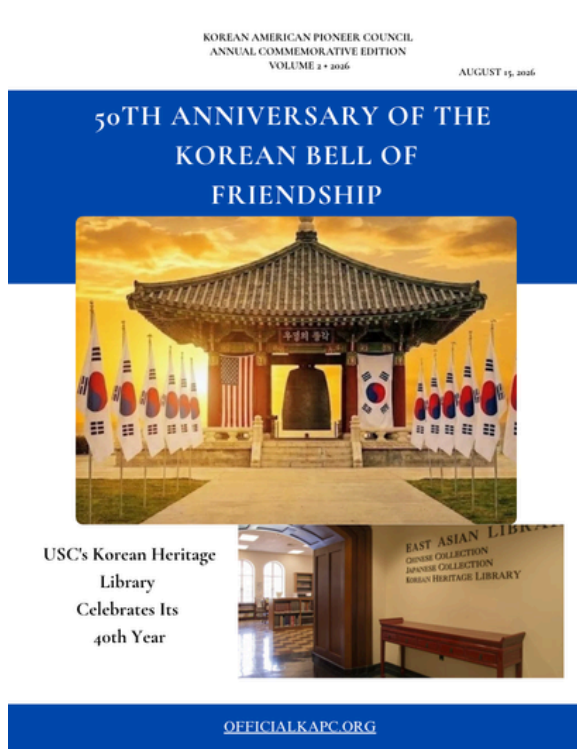
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On the cover: The Korean Bell of Friendship was presented by the Government of the Republic of Korea to the United States of America to commemorate the U.S. Bicentennial and to symbolize the enduring friendship between the two nations.

The Korean American Pioneer Council Annual Commemorative Edition is published as a permanent historical record to preserve the legacy of Korean American pioneers, descendants, scholars, veterans, and community leaders, ensuring their stories continue to educate and inspire future generations.

Korean American Pioneer
Council Annual
Commemorative Edition
Volume 2 • 2026





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Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation



Out of darkness
REGAINING THE LIGHT
광복절

The 81st Anniversary of the Korean Liberation Day

Special Musical Performance
Hanbando Arirang Medley
(한반도 아리랑)



Saturday, August 15th, 2026. 1:30 PM ~ 3:15 PM.

The Friendship Bell Pavilion,

3601 South Gaffey Street, San Pedro, California, USA





The Golden Voice of Friendship: 50 Years of the Korean Bell of Friendship

2026 marks a historic convergence: the United States celebrates its 250th birthday, and the Korean Bell of Friendship honors its 50th year as a symbol of an unbreakable bond of friendship and alliance.

by Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation



The Inscription written on the side of the Friendship Bell reads as follows:

The people of the Republic of Korea present this bell to the people of the United States of America in celebration of the American Bicentennial Jubilee and in commemoration of Century of Friendship and Trust Between our two Peoples.

The people of the United States have built upon the foundation of their pioneer spirit and aspiration for independence, a free and prosperous nation on a new continent. Their achievements serve as an impetus and inspiration for the development of all mankind.

The traditional amity between our two peoples has been established upon this shared faith in freedom and independence. When Korea suffered under the yoke of foreign rule, the people of the United States came forward as encouraging friends. With the victory of the United States in World War II, Korea's unflagging patriotic struggle finally attained the goal of National Liberation.

In striving to preserve freedom, the United States and the Republic of Korea are inseparable allies linked by ties forged in blood. This is a fraternity of mutual trust which shall remain forever unchanged.

May this bell ring and sound forth the hope and resolve of our two nations in their common devotion to enduring prosperity, liberty and peace.

A Monument Built on Shared History

The bell's home in San Pedro was chosen not for its convenience, but for its profound meaning. When Korean delegates toured the wind-swept bluffs of the decommissioned military base at Fort MacArthur, they were initially unimpressed by the remnants of bunkers and wild tumbleweeds. However, the name "MacArthur"—honoring Arthur MacArthur, father of the legendary General Douglas MacArthur—stopped them in their tracks. Realizing the site bore a spiritual connection to the defense of their homeland, they decided then and there that this rugged cliff overlooking the Pacific would house Korea's bicentennial gift.



Forged in Resilience

Constructing the 17-ton masterpiece was a feat of sheer will. After decades of colonial rule and the devastation of the Korean War, Korea's surviving bell masters had no modern furnaces or cranes. Over 20,000 workers moved materials by hand, working through a brutal winter that caused the first casting to crack. Undeterred, they started over, completing the bell just in time for its 1976 delivery. Simultaneously, artisans lived in barracks on-site in San Pedro for nine months, hewing stone by hand to build the intricate, concrete pavilion that stands today.

The Language of Peace

The bell is a "Story Keeper" rich in symbolism. Its design features four pairs of figures: the Goddess of Liberty holding hands with a Korean Angel (Seon-Nyeo). Together, they hold symbols of harmony, eternity, victory, and peace. The inscription penned by a renowned writer Park Jong Hwa captures this spirit perfectly, describing the bell as a tribute to an "inseparably linked by ties forged in blood." It serves as a sacred instrument intended to sound forth a common devotion to liberty and enduring prosperity. France gave America its statue of Liberty as a beacon of freedom. Korea gave Americans its friendship bell as an instrument of Peace.

Celebrating the Golden Anniversary

To honor this milestone, the Friendship Bell Foundation has launched a comprehensive Phase IV Strategic Restoration Plan. This \$2,000,000 initiative includes replacing the ceramic roof system, restoring the traditional "Dancheong" polychrome pigments, and constructing a new "Pathway of Honor" to memorialize the 36,592 American soldiers who fell in the Korean War. These efforts will culminate in a massive celebration before the opening of the Los Angeles Summer Olympic Games in 2028.

Celebrating 50 Years of Friendship

To celebrate this golden anniversary, we have been hosting a series of commemorative events: Korean American Day in January, Heon Da Rye in April, LA Fleet Week in May, Korean Memorial Day and Juneteenth in June, and the 250th American Independence Day in July. We will continue with the Korean Liberation Day in August, US Constitution Day in September, the Infinite Challenge 5K/10K run in October, and the Turn Toward Busan memorial in November.





Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation

Conclusion

As we look toward the rest of 2026 and beyond, the Korean Bell of Friendship remains a living instrument of solidarity. We invite you to join the Friendship Bell Foundation in preserving this landmark for the next fifty years. Whether through visiting a ceremony or contributing to our restoration fund, your support ensures that this golden voice of friendship continues to ring across the Pacific, honoring our shared past and our prosperous future.



Juneteenth at the Korean Friendship Bell

Juneteenth is a meaningful day of friendship, remembrance, and community partnership as people from many backgrounds gathered together to celebrate the shared values of freedom, equality, dignity, opportunity, and mutual respect.

We were especially honored to support our friend Gary Green and his outstanding solo exhibition at the Korean Bell of Friendship. Gary's artwork reflects a lifelong commitment to preserving history, building cultural understanding, and bringing communities together through art.

We were particularly proud that his exhibition included commemorative works recognizing the 80th Anniversary of Korean Independence, as well as pieces honoring the Korean American Pioneer Council and the generations of Korean American pioneers whose sacrifices helped build our communities.



We were also pleased to recognize our friends Arnold Chun and Terrance Williams for their efforts to preserve history, strengthen community connections, and share stories that inspire future generations.

Terrance's award-winning documentary, *My Father's Footsteps: Letters to the Fallen*, reminds us of the importance of preserving family stories and honoring those who came before us. Arnold's commitment to education, community engagement, and storytelling continues to help connect generations and strengthen our understanding of history.

One of the most meaningful moments of the day was welcoming Brian Kim and his wife. Brian is a third-generation Korean American whose family legacy reflects both the Korean independence movement and the early Korean American pioneer experience.



Gary Green - KAPC Artist





Los Angeles City Councilmember Tim McOsker joins filmmakers Terrance Williams and Arnold Chun during Gary Green's exhibition celebrating the Korean Bell of Friendship Juneteenth celebration.

His grandparents, Kim Sung Kwon and Kang Hae Won and family members were recognized by the Republic of Korea for their contributions to Korean independence, and his family's story spans Korea, Hawai'i, and California. Despite significant health challenges, Brian made a tremendous effort to join us. His presence served as a powerful reminder that the legacy of our pioneers and independence patriots continues through future generations.

One of the highlights of the day was the presentation of Certificates of Recognition to the Korean American Pioneer Council from both Los Angeles County Supervisor Janice Hahn and Los Angeles City Councilmember Tim McOsker. These recognitions acknowledge KAPC's continuing efforts to preserve Korean American history, promote community engagement, and support programs that build friendship, understanding, and cooperation among diverse communities.



Artist Gary Green presenting Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation with an original piece of art of appreciation at the end of the Juneteenth celebration





Alex Chang (KAPC); Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation; Grandmaster Jon Wiedenman, House of Chang Moo Kwan; and Tim McOsler, Los Angeles City Councilmember, District 15, with Ranger, Grandmaster Jon Wiedenman's beloved service dog.

These honors belong to all of our pioneers, descendants, board members, volunteers, and supporters who continue to advance the mission of KAPC.

We also extend our heartfelt appreciation to our friend Ernest Lee and the Friendship Bell Foundation for their continued stewardship of this treasured landmark. Through Ernest's leadership, the Korean Bell of Friendship continues to serve as a place where people of all backgrounds can gather in friendship, remembrance, and mutual respect.

As we move forward, may we continue honoring the sacrifices of those who came before us, preserving their stories, and building bridges between communities for future generations.

Thank you for your continued support of KAPC and its mission. Together, we carry this legacy.

With gratitude and aloha,
Alex Chang

76th Anniversary Commemoration of the Outbreak of the Korean War

On June 20, 2026, I had the privilege of representing the Korean American Pioneer Council (KAPC) at the 76th Anniversary Commemoration of the Outbreak of the Korean War, hosted by the Republic of Korea Army Association-USA (AROKA-USA).

The ceremony brought together Korean War veterans, military leaders, community organizations, descendants, and friends to honor those whose courage and sacrifice helped preserve the Republic of Korea during one of the most challenging periods in modern history.

As descendants of Korean pioneers, immigrants, and independence patriots, we understand that freedom is never free. We also understand the importance of preserving the stories of those who came before us so that future generations may learn from their example.

It was an honor to stand alongside our friend Martin Choi, President of AROKA-USA; Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation; Grandmaster Jon Wiedenman, together with many distinguished guests who share a commitment to preserving history and honoring those who served.



Korean War veterans, community leaders, and guests gather for a commemorative photograph marking the 76th Anniversary of the Outbreak of the Korean War.



Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation; Jay H. Lee distinguished Korean War veteran; and Alex Chang, President & Chair of the Korean American Pioneer Council (KAPC), following the 76th Anniversary Commemoration of the Outbreak of the Korean War in Pacific Palisades, California.



Martin Choi, President of AROKA-USA; Alex Chang, President & Chair of the Korean American Pioneer Council; Grandmaster Jon Wiedenman of the House of Chang Moo Kwan; and Ernest Lee, President, The Friendship Bell Foundation, following the 76th Anniversary Commemoration of the Outbreak of the Korean War in Pacific Palisades, California.

One of the highlights of the day was the opportunity to personally thank several Korean War veterans and hear their stories. Their service and sacrifice helped secure the future of South Korea and strengthened the enduring alliance between the Republic of Korea and the United States.

The event also provided an opportunity to meet new friends and community leaders, including representatives from the Los Angeles Korean Sports Association and the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary. These connections remind us that preserving history is a shared responsibility that brings together people from many different backgrounds and organizations.

KAPC extends its sincere appreciation to Martin Choi and the entire AROKA-USA team for organizing this meaningful gathering and for their continued dedication to honoring Korean War veterans.

As we reflect upon the 76th anniversary of the outbreak of the Korean War, may we continue to remember those who served, honor their sacrifices, and preserve their legacy for future generations.

To all Korean War veterans:

Thank you.

We honor you.

We remember you.

And we will continue sharing your stories.

With gratitude and aloha,
Alex Chang





USC's Korean Heritage Library Celebrates Its 40th Year

By Jungeun Hong

2026 marks the 40th anniversary of the launch of the Korean Heritage Library at the University of Southern California. At the time, there were, in North America, only a handful of university libraries that supported research collections for the study of Korean history and culture. In anticipation of starting such a project at USC, the Korean librarians from the Library of Congress, Harvard, Columbia, Berkeley and Washington were invited to Los Angeles to offer advice on how the new collection should begin and how it could best benefit Korean studies nationwide. The unanimous advice was that the one area in which USC could best impact the field would be to set a focus on the history of Koreans in America; none of the five Korean collections had ever committed to building such a collection and USC's proximity to the largest community of Korean Americans outside of Korea placed it in an ideal position for such a campaign.

Today, 40 years later, USC's Korean Heritage Library ranks among the very best libraries serving the advancement of Korean studies and pre-eminent in its support of research and teaching of Korean American studies. The library's archival collection, and in particular the Korean American Digital Archive (KADA) have been at the forefront of recording the history of the first few generations of Koreans in America. As such, the Korean Heritage Library and the Korean American Pioneer Council have worked closely together for more than three decades. The USC Library will celebrate the Korean Heritage Library's 40th anniversary at an event scheduled for September.



Clay Walls: Story vs History

By Dr. Kenneth Klein

Also celebrating its 40th anniversary this year is the novel *Clay Walls*, in which author Gloria Hahn—writing under her Korean maiden name, Kim Ronyoung—uses her own family to characterize the situation of Korean Americans between the First and Second World Wars. The book, it is important to point out, is a work of fiction and not anyone's biography or memoir. Her parents—and her own—experiences and relationships helped to create a framework for the novel. This helps to convey the sense of real individuals trying to cope with living in a very different culture than the one they left behind in Korea.

All that said, Gloria's parents played significant roles in the Pioneer generation's central aim to regain their native homeland's liberation from foreign rule. As useful and entertaining as the novel is, it is also valuable to understand the actual experience of the author's parents and the people with whom they interacted.

George Shannon McCune (1873-1941) and Helen Bailey McAfee (1872-1952) were married in 1904 and were sent that same year as missionaries to Korea. Both had served a couple of years as principals, he at Coe College, in Iowa, she at a school for women. Both were quick to learn Korean. Arriving in the midst of Russo-Japanese War, which concluded with the yielding to Japan of unopposed power over the Korean peninsula, George and Helen were sympathetic witnesses to the Koreans political and cultural plight.

The War and the Treaty of Portsmouth also led to new popular efforts among the Korean population to resist foreign control over their homeland. In 1906, Ahn Changho launched the Shinminhoe (신민회 “New People's Society”) in San Francisco and its Korean base was established the following year. This was Ahn Changho's first effort to organize Korean resistance to Japanese rule. The leaders in Korea also included Yun Chi-ho, Yang Ki-tak, Im Chi-chong, An Tai-kuk and Ok Kwan-pin.

In view of their previous experience back in Iowa, George McCune was named principal of Sun Choun School for boys, and Helen was made principal of a girls' academy. Gloria's father, Kim Yong-son, enrolled in the boys' academy and Helen in the girls'.

In *Clay Walls*, Faye's father Chun is said to have been close to the missionary/ teacher, McNeil, and worked for him in exchange for his education. Gloria's father, Kim Yong-son, had been a student at Sunchoun High School, where George McCune was president and had a close relationship with Principal McCune.

As Japanese dominance over Korea tightened, efforts to resist its advance increased, including acts of violence. In 1908, the pro-Japanese American diplomat, Durham Stevens, was shot and killed in San Francisco, resulting in a dramatic surge of donations to support the shooters' legal defense. In 1909, Ito Hirobumi Japan's former Resident General of Korea, was assassinated in Harbin. When, in 1911, a couple of Korean burglars claimed knowledge, under torture, of a broad scheme to shoot Japan's new and first Governor-General of Korea, the conspiracy was at least plausible.



Over a hundred who were known to actively oppose Japanese rule were arrested and, again under torture, made to admit to the plan. A central focus for the arrests was the membership of the Shinmonhoe as well as followers of Reverend McCune.

The concocted plan for the assassination was that, when Governor-General Terauchi came out from the train when it stopped at the Sonchun station, Rev. McCune was to identify him by shaking hands with him. Several shooters in the crowd then would fire at him. Despite the lack of any shooting having taken place, 105 men charged with having conspired were kept in jail, tortured into confessing and/or incriminating others, and held for a trial. At the age of 19, Kim Yong-son was the youngest to be arrested. An English reporter and founder of an English newspaper in Japan, Robert Young, closely investigated the charges of conspiracy and presented a strong case that the entire episode was fabricated for the purpose of suppressing anti-Japanese organizations in Korea. Largely on the basis of his work, the charges were dismissed in 1913 for 99 of the men, Kim Yong-son included. The remaining six, basically the leaders of the Shinmonhoe, were kept in prison for a few more years before also being released.

The importance of the Conspiracy episode for Rev. George McCune was such that when his first son, Shannon McCune, was born just a couple of weeks after the 99 men were freed, he was given as his Korean name Yun An-paek (“peaceful hundredth on”).

The Conspiracy also impacted Gloria’s father, Kim Yong-son, deeply. When he fled to Shanghai and then to the United States, he travelled under the new English name, “Robert Kim.”

When Gloria’s mother joined him in Los Angeles, she came as “Helen Kim”, adopting Mrs. McCune’s name. Their first son, born in 1917, was given as his English name, “McCune,” their second son’s English name was “Young.”

Novel though Clay Walls is, there was an impactful reality behind its story.

Dr. Kenneth Klein, KAPC



USC Symposium on Korean America and the

US-Korea Relations

By Gloria Koo,

Associate Director,

USC Korean Studies Institute

On April 17, 2026, the Korean Studies Institute at the University of Southern California hosted an all-day symposium titled "Korean America and the U.S.-Korea Relations." Building on the 2025 conference on "Colonial Korea across Linguistic and National Boundaries," the event furthered the Institute's efforts to integrate Korean and Korean diasporic studies. Sponsored by the Korea Foundation and co-sponsored by USC Libraries Korean Heritage Library and the UCLA Center for Korean Studies, the symposium was held at the Ronald Tutor Campus Center Forum Room 450 on USC's Parkside Campus. The event drew 80 in-person attendees, including 3 speakers, 6 presenters, 3 moderators, and 4 roundtable panelists. The participants consisted of students, postdoctoral researchers, faculty, staff as well as members of community organizations.

The core part of the program comprised two academic panels examining the role of the Korean Americans in international politics as well as new directions in Korean American Studies. We ended the day with a roundtable discussion with Korean American youth activists. After welcoming remarks from Sunyoung Park, Director of the Korean Studies and Dean William Deverell, Dean of Social Sciences, the symposium began with the opening address by Jane Junn, US Associates Chair in Social Sciences and Professor of Political Science and Gender and Sexuality Studies.

She discussed analytical challenges in studying Korean American history, political behavior, and cultural identity. She called for comparative and intersectional approaches, urging us to analyze the issues within given historical contexts.

The first panel on Korean America in National and International Politics opened with three presentations.

Richard Kim (UC Davis) recounted the historical formation of Korean American identity through the process of civic protest, bracketing his account with two symbolic legal cases - the Durham Stevens Assassination and the Free Chul Soo Lee Movement. His talk highlighted the fundamentally political, socially constructed nature of an ethnic identity. Christine Hong (UC Santa Cruz) examined the important role of Dongnip Sinmun and Freedom newspapers during the Korean War, comparing their critical reports with those of the mainstream media during the 1992 Los Angeles uprising as well as the recent right-wing appropriation of its living legacy in the militarized meme of "rooftop Koreans." Ga Young Chung (UC Davis) presented on the issues of the undocumented Korean immigrant justice movement in the contemporary period, noting the movement's crucial shift of the focus from achieving legal citizenship for individuals to building an emancipatory future for all. The conversation was moderated by Dillon Sung, a doctoral candidate in the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity.



KOREAN AMERICA AND THE U.S.-KOREA RELATIONS

WHEN APRIL 17, 2026 (FRI) **WHERE** RONALD TUTOR FORUM ROOM 41

SPONSORS USC Libraries, KOREA KF FOUNDATION, UCLA Center for Korean Studies, USC Dornsife Asian Studies Institute

1 Welcoming, Congratulatory, and Opening Remarks 9:30–10:15am

SUNYOUNG PARK
Director, USC Korean Studies Institute

WILLIAM DEVERELL
Dean, Division of Social Sciences

JANE JUNG
USC Associates Chair in Social Sciences and Professor of Political Science and Gender and Sexuality Studies

2 Session 1: Korean America in National and International Politics 10:30am–12:30pm

RICHARD KIM (UC DAVIS)
"From Diasporic Nationalism to Asian American Justice: The Durham Stevens Assassination and Choi Soo Lee Legal Cases"

CHRISTINE HONG (UC SANTA CRUZ)
"Police State, Police Action, Police Brutality: Dongnip Sinmun and Freedom Newspaper on the Korean War"

GA YOUNG JUNG (UC DAVIS)
"Unexpired: Time, Imperial Futurity, and the Undocumented Korean Immigrant Justice Movement"

Moderator:
DILLON SUNG (USC)

3 Lunch Break 12:30–1:40pm

4 Session 2: New Directions in Korean American Studies 1:40–3:10pm

SHELLEY LEE (BROWN UNIVERSITY)
"Korea and Korean America: Convergent and Divergent Paths"

JONG-HYUN LIM (KOREAN AMERICAN LEGACY FOUNDATION)
"Memory, Identity, and Shared Transnational Heritage: Rehabilitating the Young Korean Academy (Hung Sa Dahn) Historic Site in Los Angeles"

Moderator:
ZAVI KANG ENGELS (USC)

5 Roundtable Discussion with Korean American Youth Activists 3:30–4:30pm

MATTY KIM (CO-FOUNDER, KOREANS 4 DECOLONIZATION)

EUJEAN DOO (PH.D. STUDENT, UC BERKELEY)

Moderator:
MICHAEL CHWE (UCLA)

6 Closing Remarks 4:30–4:40pm

This symposium examines the historical and contemporary relationship between Korea and the United States, with particular attention to the Korean diaspora in Los Angeles. Korean migration to the United States began shortly after the two countries established diplomatic ties in 1882, and by the early twentieth century Korean communities had taken root in Hawai'i and California. Korean Americans played a key role in the Korean independence movement during the period of Japanese colonial rule (1910–1945), and they contributed as activists and as soldiers to the U.S. military effort during WWII. Today, Korean Americans continue to shape political, economic, and cultural developments to both their ancestral land and their home country.

Bringing together regional as well as national experts, this event seeks to develop a more nuanced understanding of the place of Korean Americans within the interwoven histories of the two nations, in the process also deepening our knowledge of national histories themselves. Along with scholarly panels, the symposium will feature a roundtable of social activists from Los Angeles's Korean American community, seeking to identify policy concerns and future directions in light of both history and current conditions.

Organized by the USC Korean Studies Institute, this symposium is part of the West Coast U.S.-Asia Scholars Network Initiative. The event is sponsored by the Korea Foundation and co-sponsored by the UCLA Center for Korean Studies and the USC Korean Heritage Library.

Alex Chang

A Personal Keepsake from the USC Symposium

At the request of Dr. Sunyoung Park, Director of the USC Korean Studies Institute, I was honored to sign this symposium poster at the conclusion of the event as the grandson of Korean Independence Patriot Hwangbo Ik Jun (known in the United States as Eugene Park Hwangbo).

This signed symposium poster commemorates a historic gathering of descendants, scholars, students, and community members dedicated to preserving and sharing the history of Korean America while strengthening the enduring friendship between the Republic of Korea and the United States.

It serves as a reminder that preserving history is a shared responsibility—connecting the stories of the past with the generations who will carry them forward.

"The stories entrusted to us today will become the history preserved for future generations."

— Alex Chang



The panel on New Directions in Korean American Studies continued with three presentations. Shelley Lee (Brown University) discussed how fields of Anglophone Korean studies and Korean American studies shared origins and had historical convergences, despite their divergent disciplinary developments in the respective frameworks of area and ethnic studies. Drawing from her experience of co-editing the Companion to Korean American Studies (Brill, 2018), she urged researchers to maintain a transnational perspective as the two fields need to complement each other in order to analyze a number of relevant issues, both past and present. Relatedly, Jong-Hyun Lim (Heritage Smart Consulting Group) proposed a new transnational approach to preserving Korean American heritage sites; beyond serving as important anchors of popular historical memories, these sites have their meanings constructed through the negotiation of Korean and American national interests, alongside those of local Korean American communities. Illustrating his case with the rehabilitation project of the Young Korean Academy (Hung Sa Dahn) historic site in Los Angeles, he argued that the restoration and management of such heritage sites must take their transnational significance into consideration. The panel concluded with the presentation by Seon Ho Kim, who reflected on his seven years of work as the founding leader of the SoDAVi (Social Data Analysis and Visualization) group, which has served both South Korea and the Korean American community by utilizing available statistical data to provide a better understanding of demographic changes and behaviors with policy implications. The conversation was moderated by Zavi Kang Engles, a doctoral student in the Department of American Studies and Ethnicity.

The concluding roundtable featured Korean American youth activists, Matty Kim (Co-Founder of Koreans 4 Decolonization), Eujan Doo (UC Berkeley) and Katelyn Lee (UCLA, moderated by Michael Chwe (UCLA). The discussion surveyed the critical views and approaches by the rising generation of Korean American activists, with a particular attention to how college students respond and shape the Korean American political activism in the era of global populism.

The symposium provided a valuable venue for the scholars of diverse fields to gather and discuss their common research interest - the entwined history and future of Koreans and Korean Americans.

Presentations by scholarly experts showcased the status quo of Korean American studies and its current intersections with Korean studies. They also projected the potential future synergy between the two fields through the application of new methodological approaches and existing theoretical frameworks. In addition, the participants of the symposium benefited from interacting with a number of the local Korean American community members who are vastly invested and affected by scholarship on Korean American studies. We were reminded of the closely interwoven nature of the Korean and Korean-American studies, and of the vantage in scholarship attributable to our personal connections and commitments.





By Grandmaster Jon Wiedenman, M.A. Ed

“We are the conduit. We can still remember the voices, carry forth the message, and share the wisdom with truth.”

It is a deep honor to be part of the Korean American Pioneer Council because its mission speaks directly to the work of preserving memory, honoring those who came before us, and carrying their wisdom forward in service to others. It is crucial in the present that we build a bridge between the past and the future.

My own connection to the “KAPC spirit” comes through my teacher, Supreme Grandmaster Nam Suk Lee, founder of Chang Moo Kwan, one of the five founding traditional Korean martial arts schools, or Kwans, which emerged following World War II.

Born in 1925 in Seoul, Korea, my teacher came from a generation that knew hardship, occupation, war, rebuilding, resilience, and responsibility. The Principles and Elements he first developed to be the philosophical “soul” of Chang Moo Kwan were not abstract ideas. They came from lived experience. They were tools for survival, character, discipline, and service, designed for the greater good of humanity: gaze, ki, shifting weight, accuracy in attack and defense, keeping adequate distance, coordinating rhythm and strength, breathing control, and flexibility in mind, body, and spirit.

What is learned in the dojang must be applied to life outside the dojang. The purpose is not simply to become stronger, faster, or more skillful. The greater purpose is to become more useful, more aware, and more capable of exercising compassion and empathy with precision and relevance, with a focus on building a better world through good deeds.

Move forward with focus, rhythm, and control, while remaining keenly aware of your surroundings — and most of all, be flexible and adaptable without changing your primary vision; and, don't forget to breathe.” We applied this to forms, fighting, living life, and most of all, serving humanity.”

For almost four decades, the Korean Friendship Bell has been much more than a beautiful memorial park to me. My teacher and I walked there together. I have taught many Chang Moo Kwan classes before our Bell, overlooking the beautiful Pacific. The Korean Friendship Bell became a place where I could become a student again — learning from the surroundings, from the people who visit, and from those who carry deep love for humanity and the lessons of history, including Korean Friendship Bell Executive Director Ernie Lee, KAPC President Alex Chang, the artists and musicians who visit, and our valorous veterans.

About three years ago, I noticed things needed to be done around the Korean Friendship Bell, and I simply began doing them. At first, it was picking up litter across our 10 upper acres. Before I knew it, I was covering graffiti, retrieving kites from trees, rolling boulders from the playground back up into the rock garden, and bailing water out from under the Bell after a strong southwesterly storm.

Each task became another way of putting Chang Moo Kwan's “Principles into Practice,” combining “an act of humility with an act of humanity.” A year later, I was standing beside Ernie Lee helping with the First Saturday Bell Ringing Ceremony and serving beside him on special occasions.



The awesome connectedness between our Bell, our Korean American community, our pioneers, our veterans, and the “greater good” became wisdom through resonance. I also began giving informal tours whenever called upon.

People from around the world visit the Korean Friendship Bell each day. Our Bell is a vortex of goodness, drawing together a magnificent diversity of communities, cultures, and countries. Each visitor brings something of their own unique background to our Bell. Being aware of this allows me to enhance their experience and draw upon a “common thread” to connect a theme across Korea’s history and our Bell’s symbolism, creating lasting memories.

The Korean Friendship Bell represents peace, remembrance, friendship, and the enduring relationship between Korea and the United States; however, it is also an inspiration to all who visit. Here, we can pass on the lessons of history benevolently, embracing the spirit of our Bell. The “KAPC spirit” embraces the wisdom of history and renders the great lessons of our elders into something we may share with the future.



“Legacy is not only what we preserve. Legacy is what we live.”



Grandmaster Jon Wiedenman, M.A. Ed
Traditional Chang Moo Kwan
The House of Chang Moo Kwan





What We Leave Behind

By Dr. Patricia Yoon West

KAPC Member; granddaughter of Lim Chi Ho, and Lim In Jae, participants in Korea's independence movement.

As I have grown older, I have come to realize that history is not measured only by great events. It is measured by the **people we remember**.

The first Korean immigrants to America did not think of themselves as pioneers. They were simply trying to build lives for their families while never forgetting the country they had left behind.

Many of them carried little more than hope, determination, and a deep love for Korea.

Today, most of that generation is gone.

Those of us who knew them have become caretakers of their memories.

I have been fortunate to watch the Korean American community grow over many decades. I have seen organizations built, friendships formed, and younger generations become interested in learning where they came from.

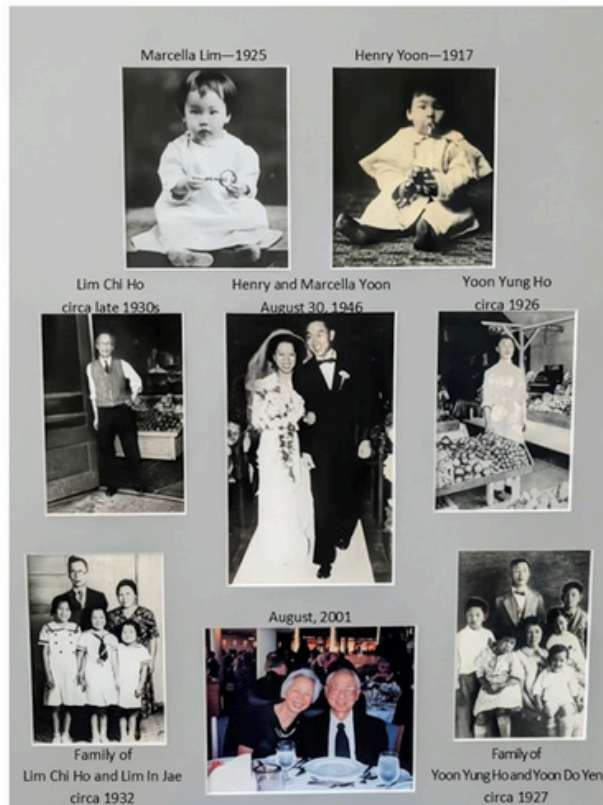
That gives me hope.



From left to right: Arnold Chun, Christopher HK Lee, Dr. Kenneth Klein, Ernest Lee, Sunjoo Yeo, Alex Chang, Jungeun Hong gathering at Cafe' Mak, Korea Town, Los Angeles, November 21, 2025



The stated Mission of the Korean American Pioneer Council is “to preserve the legacy, record, and promote the education, understanding, and appreciation of the experiences and history of the Pioneer Generation of the Korean American community”



These two montages illustrate what KAPC is all about...preserving our history and legacy and passing it on to generations to come



These are the great, great grandchildren of the Lim and Yoon pioneers — the fifth generation, our future

The hanbok each is wearing on their first birthdays is the same one worn by Patricia Yoon West,
aka Yoon Cha Young (center) in 1949

If we do not to continue to connect our future to our past, they will miss out on the stories of our pioneers’
courageous journeys and our history and legacy will fade away and could be lost forever.

We cannot, we must not, let that happen!

Family Photographs Courtesy of Dr. Patricia Yoon West

History is not preserved by museums alone.

It is preserved every time a grandparent tells a family story.

It is preserved when parents teach children where they came from.

It is preserved whenever a young person asks questions and an elder takes the time to answer them.

One day, our generation will also become history.

What we choose to share today will become tomorrow's understanding of who we were.

That is why organizations like the Korean American Pioneer Council remain so important.

They help ensure that our stories are not forgotten and that future generations will know not only what our pioneers accomplished, but also the values they lived by—service, sacrifice, perseverance, and hope.

As we celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Korean Bell of Friendship and the 81st Anniversary of Korea's Liberation, I hope every family will take a moment to remember those who came before us.

Their legacy lives on—not only in monuments and photographs—but in each of us.

May we honor them by passing their stories forward with gratitude, dignity, and love.

L-R
HENRY YOON
YIM KIM
INONG LEE
LILA LEE
CECILIA
MRS SY WHOO
DOROTHY CHON
CARRIE YOON KWO
BARBARA N/A
BERNICE CHO
MARIE LEE

Handwritten by Ralph Ahn





“The Korean Bell of Friendship has stood as a symbol of peace and friendship for fifty years. As San Pedro continues to grow, preserving this landmark helps ensure that history remains a visible part of the community’s future.”

The Korean Bell of Friendship and the Changing Community of San Pedro

By Makayla Carrillo, KAPC Board Member, & Realtor®

The history of the Korean Friendship Bell in San Pedro dates back to 1976, when it was first rung on October 3rd. The Bell stands on what was part of Fort MacArthur, which was a U.S. Army base from 1914 to 1974. The Fort was transferred to the City of Los Angeles following its closure. San Pedro has undergone major changes throughout the years, and major projects are reshaping the area now. The price of Single Family residences have increased, which is a good sign for homeowners and for buyers interested in purchasing a property in the area.

San Pedro Major Projects

San Pedro is undergoing a major waterfront and housing transformation. The massive West Harbor (<https://www.westharborla.com/>) entertainment district is the biggest project. It will feature the San Pedro Fish Market, a 6,200-seat amphitheater, and a 175-foot Ferris wheel.

Here are the biggest projects reshaping the area:

- **West Harbor Entertainment District:** This 42-acre project on the LA Waterfront replaces the old Ports O' Call Village. Alongside the San Pedro Fish Market, it will house restaurants like Poppy + Rose, Mike Hess Brewing, and an immersive art exhibit called Hopscotch. It will also feature the SkyStar Ferris wheel, pickleball courts, and outdoor event spaces. Projected Grand Opening 2026.
- **Jules San Pedro:** This mixed-use building recently broke ground near Downtown at 155 W. 6th Street. It will be an eight-story complex featuring 281 apartments and ground-floor shops.
- **Rancho San Pedro Redevelopment:** The city is rebuilding a massive 1940s public housing complex into a vibrant, modern neighbor



- Warner Grand Theatre: The city is restoring this historic 1931 movie palace to preserve its architectural beauty and bring new performances to the downtown area.

- Front Street Beautification: The Port of Los Angeles recently completed this project near the Vincent Thomas Bridge, which added a new multi-use pedestrian and bicycle path.

San Pedro Real Estate Market

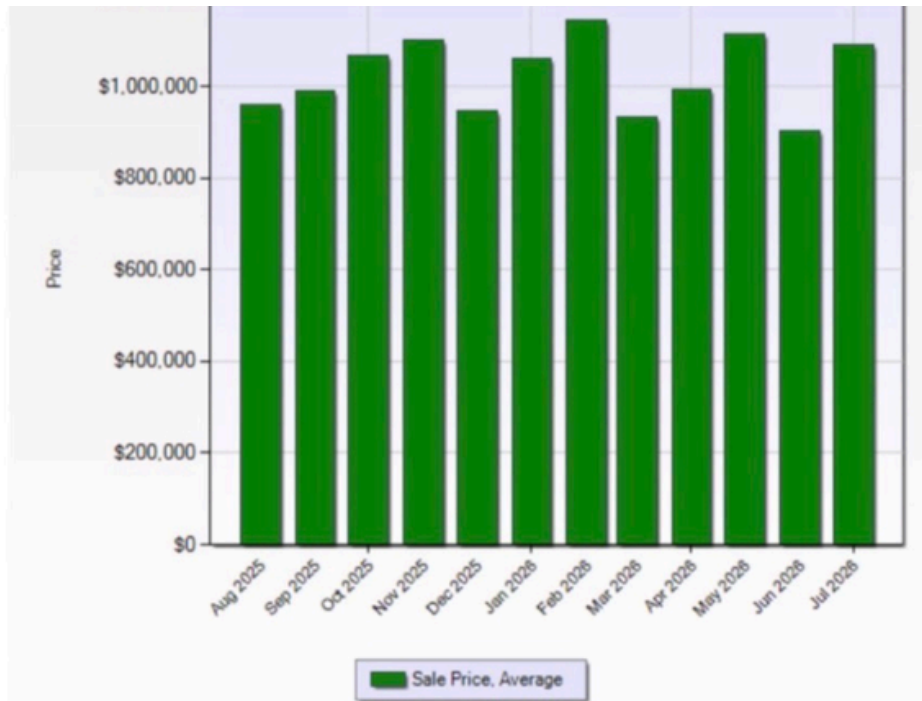
San Pedro is a historic neighborhood in Los Angeles, located about 20 miles south of Downtown. It is home to the Port of Los Angeles. It offers fresh seafood, striking ocean cliffs, and a unique maritime culture.

Due to the location and development projects, San Pedro continues to be a popular area for buyers and investors.

If you invested in the San Pedro real estate market back in 1976, chances are you are sitting on a large amount of equity or have used the equity to continue to buy more real estate. The price of a single family home in 1976 ranged from \$48,000-\$68,000. Homes now have gone up 1,000%+ in value. Data shows that just last year, Single Family home sales have increased \$130,000+ on average from August 2025.

Popular neighborhoods of San Pedro include South Shores and the Palisades, that is where the Korean Friendship bell is located. Other popular areas are Downtown, Vista Del Oro, and Miraleste Canyon.





Time frame is from Aug 2025 to Jul 2026
 Property Type is 'Residential'
 Property Sub Type is 'Single Family Residence'
 State Or Province is 'California'
 City is 'San Pedro'
 Results calculated from 240 listings

Month	Sale Price, Average
Aug 2025	\$959,093
Sep 2025	\$991,263
Oct 2025	\$1,067,647
Nov 2025	\$1,099,194
Dec 2025	\$946,515
Jan 2026	\$1,061,636
Feb 2026	\$1,145,470
Mar 2026	\$931,583
Apr 2026	\$993,921
May 2026	\$1,114,792
Jun 2026	\$904,333
Jul 2026	\$1,092,000

“The Korean Bell of Friendship has stood as a symbol of peace and friendship for fifty years. As San Pedro continues to grow, preserving this landmark helps ensure that history remains a visible part of the community’s future.”



LOOKING AHEAD

As we conclude this commemorative edition, we pause with gratitude for those who came before us and with hope for those who will carry their legacy forward.

The Korean American Pioneer Council remains dedicated to preserving the stories of Korean American pioneers, Korean independence patriots, their descendants, and all who continue to carry that legacy forward through research, education, community service, and enduring friendship.

History is not simply remembered—it is carried forward by each new generation.

Every story matters.
Every photograph matters.
Every letter matters.
Every memory matters.

Together, they become our history.

The work continues.
The friendships continue.
The legacy continues.

WITH GRATITUDE

Mahalo to our members, descendants, veterans, scholars, volunteers, donors, community partners, and friends for your continued support of the Korean American Pioneer Council.

Together, we honor the past, preserve the present, and inspire the future.

We look forward to another year of **preserving history, documenting family stories, strengthening friendships, and serving our community in the 2027 KAPC Annual Commemorative Edition.**

Until then, may we continue to preserve the stories entrusted to us, share them with future generations, and ensure they are never forgotten.

Every story matters. Every family matters. Every generation matters.

On behalf of the Korean American Pioneer Council, mahalo for helping preserve the legacy of Korean American pioneers and Korean independence patriots. Together, we carry their stories forward for generations to come.

Click the photo to watch
Dr. Jeffrey Kim's Korean
Bell of Friendship Vlogs.

Visit us at:

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Year in Photographs



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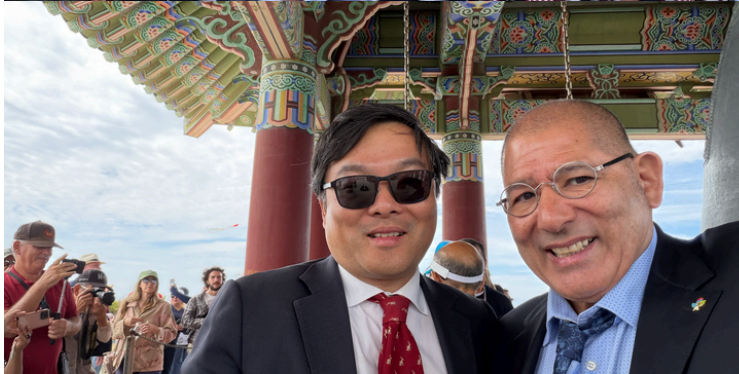
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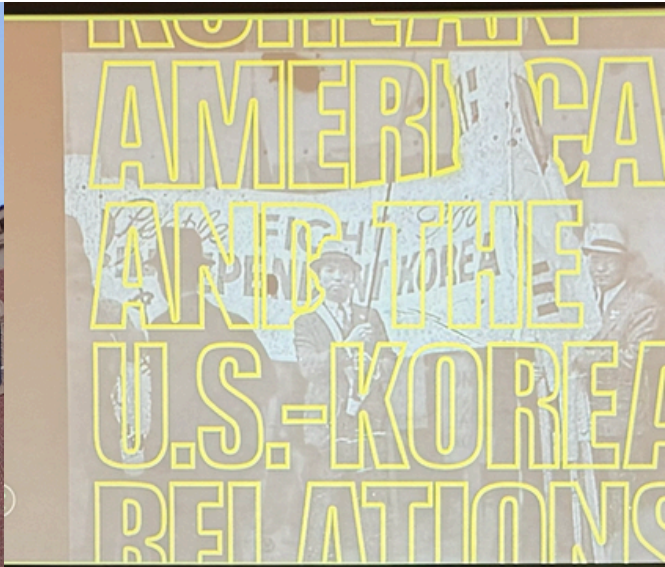
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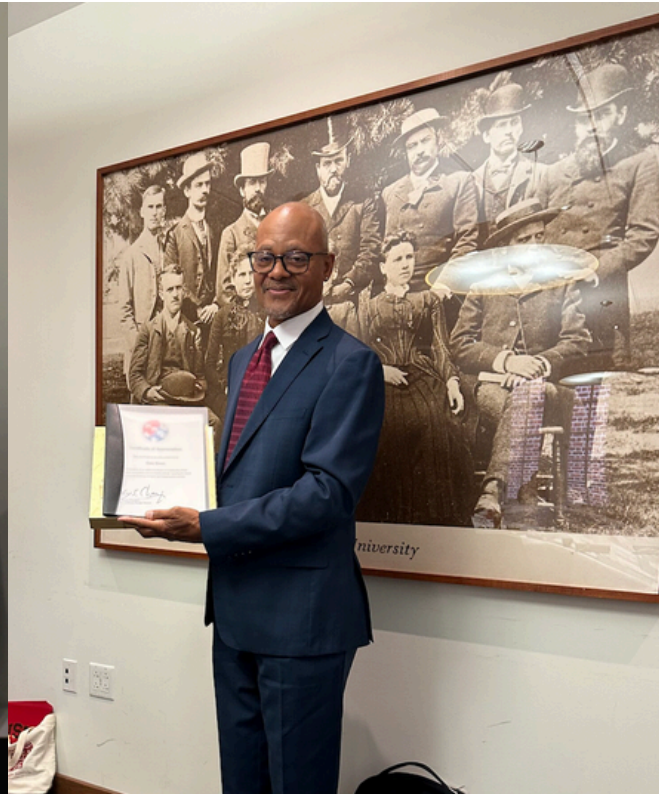
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United States

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