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NAPA Honors Gary Locke for Excellence in Public Service




Secretary Janet L. Yellen and Governor Gary F. Locke to Receive the National Academy of Public Administration's "Elliot L. Richardson Prize for Excellence in Public Service"

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**Elliot L. Richardson Prize for
Exceptional Public Service**



Janet L. Yellen
Honoree
Former U.S. Secretary
of the Treasury



Gary F. Locke
Honoree
Former Governor of
Washington State



Jenn White
Moderator
Host, 1A

On December 10, 2025, the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) announced that Secretary **Janet L. Yellen**, American Economist, former Treasury Secretary and former Chair of the Federal Reserve of the United States, and Governor **Gary F. Locke** 骆家辉, former U.S. Ambassador to China, U.S. Secretary of Commerce and Washington State Governor, will receive the Elliot L. Richardson Prize for Excellence in Public Service on January 28, 2026.

The award ceremony will take place at the Ronald Reagan International Trade Center at 1300 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Washington, D.C, from 7-9 p.m. on Wednesday, January 28 after a reception beginning at 6:00 p.m. Journalist **Jenn White**, host of NPR's 1A program, will moderate a discussion with the two award recipients as part of the event.

The Elliot L. Richardson Prize is presented on a biennial basis to individuals exemplifying the public service virtues demonstrated by the award's namesake. The prize in the amount of \$50,000 will be split between the two awardees. Consistent with the public-spiritedness of Elliot L. Richardson, recipients of the award are required to designate one or more charities to receive half the prize amount they are awarded.

Elliot L. Richardson is considered to be one of the nation's finest public servants. An Academy Fellow, he served in four Cabinet-level positions in the U.S. government: Secretary of Health,

Education and Welfare (HEW); Secretary of Defense, Attorney General; and Secretary of Commerce under both Republican and Democratic Presidents. Richardson is remembered for his integrity and courage that saved the nation from a constitutional crisis during the “Saturday Night Massacre” incident during the Nixon administration.

Gary F. Locke’s legacy has many dimensions reflecting his varied roles as a trailblazing politician, public servant, and a diplomat who has been a leader in the areas of education, employment, trade, human services, and the environment.

Locke served as the 10th United States Ambassador to China from 2011–2014, the 36th U.S. Secretary of Commerce from 2009–2011, and Washington State’s 21st Governor from 1997–2005. He was the first Chinese American elected governor in U.S. history, the first Asian American governor in the continental United States, and the first Chinese American Secretary of Commerce.

As Governor, Locke earned national recognition for innovations in government efficiency, customer-focused service delivery, and priority-based budgeting. Under his leadership, Washington State was ranked among the nation’s best-managed states, with major initiatives delivered successfully and under budget. His work has been cited by leading scholars and institutions, including Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government.

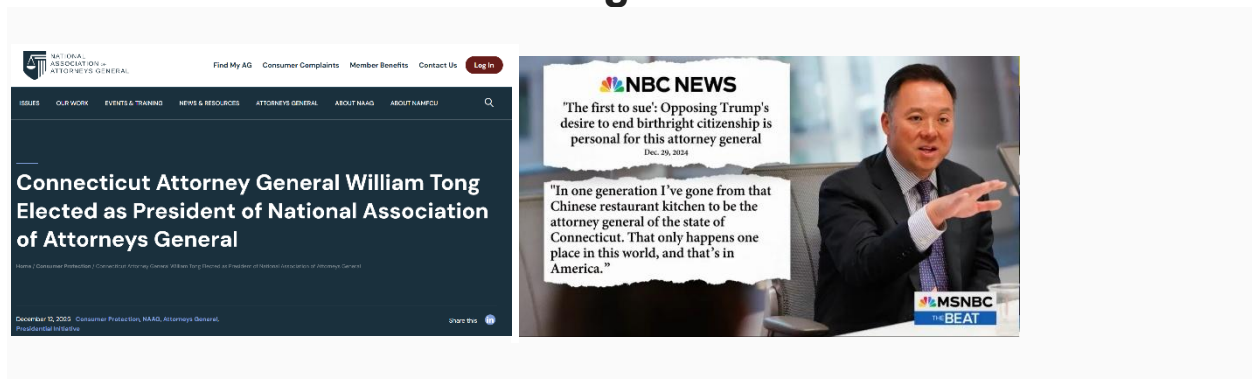
Locke later brought his pragmatic, cross-cultural leadership to diplomacy, strengthening U.S.–China engagement while advancing American economic and strategic interests. He currently serves as Chairman of Locke Global Strategies, advising clients on trade, regulatory, and investment matters, and as Chair of the [Committee of 100](#).

Previous recipients of the Elliot L. Richardson Prize include Secretary **Norman Mineta**.

[NAPA](#) is a Congressionally chartered, nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization that advances excellence in public administration through its research programs and its nearly 1,000 elected Fellows. Comparable in structure and mission to the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine (NASEM), NAPA serves as a national resource for objective expertise on governance and public management.

Read the NAPA press release: <https://bit.ly/4rX1Fal>. Register to attend the January 28 event in person or virtually: <https://bit.ly/4iZPlgu>.

Connecticut AG William Tong Elected President of NAAG



On December 12, 2025, the National Association of Attorneys General (NAAG) [elected](#) Connecticut Attorney General (AG) **William Tong** 湯偉麟 as President of the association during its annual Capital Forum, held December 8–10. Attorney General Tong succeeds New Hampshire Attorney General **John Formella**, who served as NAAG President in 2025.

William Tong is the 25th Attorney General of Connecticut, first elected in 2018 and currently serving his second term. A national leader in high-impact litigation and investigations, Attorney General Tong has led bipartisan, multistate efforts to hold the addiction industry accountable for the opioid crisis, restore competition in the generic drug market, and protect consumers from data breaches and unfair practices. He has also prioritized reducing energy costs, expanding broadband access, and ensuring affordable healthcare.

The son of immigrant small-business owners, Attorney General Tong brings a personal understanding of the challenges facing working families. He has worked to safeguard civil rights, defend Connecticut's gun safety laws, and hold corporations accountable for climate-related deception. Before becoming Attorney General, Tong served 12 years in the Connecticut General Assembly and practiced law for nearly two decades. He is the first Asian American elected to statewide office in Connecticut and the first Chinese American elected Attorney General in the United States.

During the APA Justice monthly meeting on May 5, 2025, Attorney General Tong reflected on the significance of his historic election, noting that its rarity underscores the continued underrepresentation of AAPI communities in political leadership. He spoke candidly about persistent xenophobia and racism, and about how Asian Americans—particularly East Asian Americans—are often perceived as perpetual foreigners who are quiet, passive, and unlikely to lead, contributing to the rise in anti-Asian hate. Tong argued that greater AAPI representation in positions of power would allow communities to prevent discrimination rather than merely react to it, and he strongly defended birthright citizenship under the 14th Amendment as central to his own identity. Drawing on the long history of Chinese American contributions to the nation, he emphasized that AAPI stories are deeply American, concluding with a call for solidarity, collective voice, and mutual protection so that no one in the community faces discrimination alone.

Read his remarks at the APA Justice monthly meeting: <https://bit.ly/4oYIMSf>

Asian Pacific American History in Connecticut Schools



According to [AP News](#) on December 12, 2025, three years after Connecticut mandated Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) history in K–12 education, West Hartford Public Schools are rolling out a comprehensive, year-round curriculum that integrates AAPI history across most grade levels. Students will learn not only about familiar topics like Japanese American incarceration during World War II, but also lesser-known stories such as Medal of Honor recipient **Sadao Munemori**, as well as immigration history, birthright citizenship cases like **Wong Kim Ark**'s, and contemporary figures such as architect **Maya Lin**. Educators say the expanded curriculum addresses long-standing gaps that left many students feeling invisible and reflects the district's diverse population. The effort is part of a broader national movement accelerated by the surge in anti-Asian hate during the pandemic, with roughly a dozen states now requiring AAPI history.

At the same time, the push for inclusive education has exposed tensions within the AAPI community and across states, particularly where lawmakers resist teaching systemic racism or broader ethnic studies. While AAPI history mandates have sometimes gained bipartisan support, critics argue that similar openness has not been extended to Black, Latinx, or LGBTQ+ histories, raising concerns about sanitized or selective narratives. Educators in Connecticut emphasize that the goal is not ideological instruction but a “deeper, richer” understanding of American history—one that includes struggle, resilience, and achievement. District leaders plan to continue refining the curriculum, using literature and age-appropriate lessons to embed AAPI experiences into a balanced and inclusive view of the nation's past.

Update from NAPABA



During the APA Justice monthly meeting on December 1, 2025, **Edgar Chen** 陳春品, Special Advisor, National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA), provided an overview of NAPABA's recent annual convention and the organization's broader civil-rights-focused work. He began by thanking APA Justice for the opportunity to share updates and participate in discussion of Florida's SB 264 during the Q&A.

Edgar explained that NAPABA represents more than 80,000 Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) attorneys, judges, law professors, and law students across the United States, with additional Canadian affiliates. Each year, NAPABA convenes members in a different host city for its annual convention. The 2025 gathering took place in Denver, Colorado, and was NAPABA's second-largest convention ever, with over 2,800 attendees. He noted that last year's Seattle convention reached a record 3,400 attendees and featured Governor **Gary Locke** as an opening speaker.

Edgar highlighted several elements of the Denver convention that intersect with current civil rights issues. Responding to earlier panel discussion about the federal Community Relations Service (CRS), he noted that CRS — often called “the nation’s peacemakers” — has historically had four directors of Asian American descent: **Grand Lum**, **Rose Ochi**, **Justin Locke**, and **Julius Nam**. Grand Lum participated in a Denver panel on alternative dispute resolution. Edgar also connected other speakers' points to NAPABA's recent work, noting, for example, that NAPABA included the Congressional Gold Medal for Chinese American WWII veterans as part of its 2018 lobby-day agenda.

NAPABA's continuing legal education offerings at the convention spanned more than 43 breakout sessions covering emerging and specialized practice areas, including artificial intelligence, cryptocurrency, healthcare law, tariffs, and even Asian American leadership in the outdoor and skiing industries — a nod to the Colorado setting. From this broad program, Edgar emphasized several civil rights sessions that were most relevant to the APA Justice audience. These included programming on birthright citizenship, such as a reenactment of the landmark **Wong Kim Ark** case; discussions about discrimination against Pacific Islander women; sessions addressing sexual violence; and a program on language access in the wake of the recent rescission of the Clinton-era executive order guaranteeing federal language-access services. The convention also explored book bans and the erosion of intersectional identities in public education and discourse.

Edgar personally moderated a panel on immigration enforcement featuring **Greg Chen** of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. He summarized the panel's key conclusion: the central issue currently shaping immigration outcomes is “discretion,” particularly the growing use of negative discretion across U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services and other parts of the federal immigration system. He stressed that, beyond ICE, these shifts have implications for refugees, asylum seekers, and vulnerable communities — especially in the context of the recent shooting in Washington, D.C., which has further intensified national debate over immigration policy and public safety.

The convention also featured a major plenary session with Justice **Goodwin Liu** of the California Supreme Court and **Ajay Mehrotra** of the American Bar Foundation. They discussed the “Portrait Project,” a data-driven analysis of AANHPI representation in the legal profession and the barriers that impede career advancement. The research identifies three persistent barriers: lack of mentorship, limited networking infrastructure, and insufficient development of soft skills that are rarely taught in law school but crucial to professional success. Edgar emphasized that first-generation lawyers in particular face challenges in navigating these unwritten rules of the legal profession, and that part of NAPABA’s mission is helping to close these gaps.

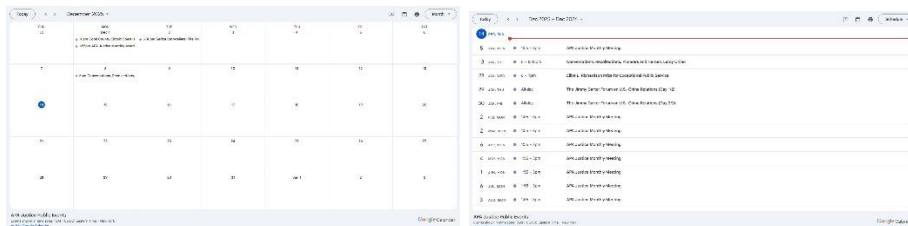
He also noted that NAPABA honored several Trailblazers this year, including Committee of 100 member **Alan Tse** and Rutgers Law Professor **Rose Cuison-Villazor**, both widely recognized for their leadership and contributions to civil rights and legal scholarship. The convention concluded with a gala featuring an in-depth conversation between actor **Rich Ting** and journalist **Katie Fang** — a session Edgar described as especially compelling.

Looking ahead, Edgar announced that the next NAPABA convention will take place in Los Angeles, where attendance could reach 5,000 members. He invited APA Justice participants and interested community members to follow upcoming announcements about the 2026 program.

A summary of the December 1 APA Justice monthly meeting is being prepared at this time.

News and Activities for the Communities

1. APA Justice Community Calendar



Upcoming Events:

2026/01/05 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

2026/01/13 Conversations, Recollections, Pioneers and Heroes: Leroy Chiao

2026/01/29-30 The Jimmy Carter Forum on U.S.-China Relations

2026/02/02 APA Justice Monthly Meeting

Visit <https://bit.ly/3XD61qV> for event details.

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APA Justice Task Force is a non-partisan platform to build a sustainable ecosystem that addresses racial profiling concerns and to facilitate, inform, and advocate on selected issues related to justice and fairness for the Asian Pacific American community. For more information, please refer to the new APA Justice website under development at www.apajusticetaskforce.org. We value your feedback. Please send your comments to contact@apajustice.org.

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