

## The History of Asian Pacific American Heritage Month

Inspired by proclamations for Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Week, Ms. Jeannie Jew and Ms. Ruby Moy, congressional staffers, sought to have similar legislation enacted for Asian Pacific Americans. The nationwide effort was coordinated by the National Coalition for a Pacific/Asian American Heritage Proclamation, founded and chaired by Jeannie F. Jew, who was an OCA National Board member. Also involved with the founding of this celebration was OCA's founder, K.L. Wang. OCA played an integral role in making May 1990 the first APA Heritage Month under President George Bush Sr. and is proud that the tradition has continued strong ever since.

June 1977

Representatives Frank Horton (R-NY) and Norman Y. Mineta (D-CA) introduce Pacific/Asian Heritage Week (House Resolution 540) in the House of Representatives, which calls upon the President to proclaim the first ten days of May as Pacific/Asian Heritage Week.

July 19, 1977

Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduce SJ Res. 72 into the Senate, similar to legislation introduced by Frank Horton and Norman Mineta in the House.

July 10, 1978

House Representatives pass legislation to proclaim an Asian/Pacific American Heritage Week next year in May. *This proclamation must be obtained yearly because the final Joint Resolution did not contain an annual designation.*

October 5, 1978

President Jimmy Carter signs the Joint Resolution.

May 7, 1990

Asian Pacific American leaders around the country, including OCA's leaders, gathered at the White House to witness the signing of a proclamation by George Bush, declaring May to be Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.

May 6, 1991

President Bush signed a proclamation designating May 1991 and May 1992 as "Asian Pacific American Heritage Month."

October 23, 1992

President Bush signed legislation into law to designate May of each year as "Asian Pacific American Heritage Month." The law (HR 5572), introduced by Rep. Frank Horton (R-NY) and Norman Mineta (D-CA) was approved unanimously by the House of Representatives and the Senate during the 102<sup>nd</sup> Congress.