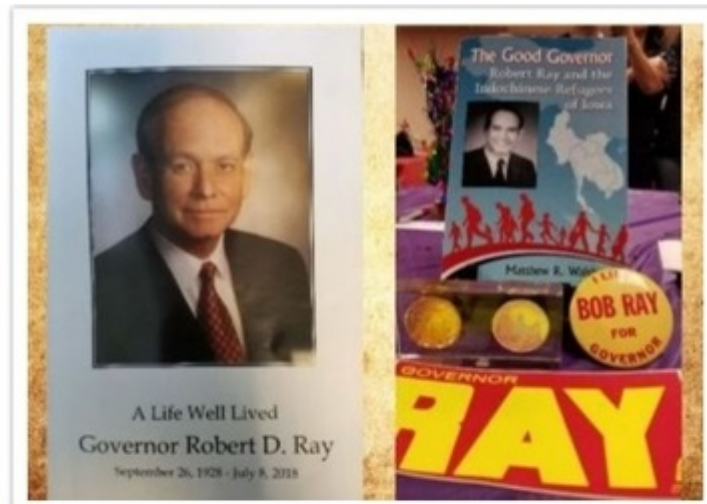




July 30, 2018

**Commission of Asian & Pacific
Islander (CAPI) Affairs
and
Office of Asian & Pacific Islander
Affairs**

Tribute to Governor Robert Ray



Voices of the Living Legacies of Former Governor Robert Ray: Memorializing the Man who Saved Countless Lives

Photo courtesy of Theresa Backham

"The door of liberty, freedom, great opportunities, and happiness opened for a small group of shattered people named the 'Tai Dam' in 1975. From tens of thousands of miles away, we arrived in Iowa not by choice, not by destiny, but by a priceless compassion from a special man, Governor Ray, and the kindhearted Iowan people.

Over four decades have passed, and we have seen snow storms, fast-paced flood waters, and high wind tornadoes, but Iowa is still our home. Most of the Tai Dam are here to stay, now and for generations to come. Today is a sad day. Today, we must say 'goodbye' to

our dear friend and mentor, and a once in a lifetime teacher of great compassion to people in need.

Dear Governor Ray. Please rest in peace. You will forever be in our hearts and remembered by the Tai Dam people." - [From your humble orphans, Tai Studies Center](#)

"Sometimes one individual does truly make a difference"... "He was a hero in our eyes because he had the courage and the commitment to do what he felt was truly honorable, and the right thing to do to save thousands of lives." - [Nu Huynh, Executive Director of the Iowa Asian Alliance](#)

"Governor Ray is like a Godfather to the Tai Dam people. The federal government's policy did not allow refugees from Laos to come to the U.S., because there was not a war over there. Gov. Ray fought the policy to allow Tai Dam refugees asylum in Iowa. He was the only governor out of all of the 50 states to do this. We, the Tai Dam people, have a lot of respect and are forever grateful for Gov. Ray who helped give us our freedom.

Our family, the Xayasouk family, was the first of 300 families to come and settle down in Cedar Rapids, Iowa in October of 1975. We were then sponsored by Chuck and Norma Graybill and their family." - **Mecksavanh Xayasouk, Tai Dam**

"Our family is so grateful, thankful for his good heart and appreciate his efforts to bring refugees to Iowa from the Thailand refugee camps - our family is one of them. We were able to come together as a family, all 11 of us. He is always remembered in our hearts. May he rest in peace." - **Hien Lothi on behalf of the Lothi family, Tai Dam**

"We are saddened by the loss of former Governor Robert Ray. My family, as well as the entire Tai Dam community, will be eternally grateful for all his humanitarian efforts. We may not be alive today without him. He was one of the very few leaders who stepped up to help us when we cried out for help. We hope there will be other great future leaders who put people and humanity first, and who will step up to help other human beings in need. We will continue to remember him and all the things he's done. He is an inspiration to all of us." - [Matsalyn Brown, Tai Dam](#)

"We were on a journey where we had found ourselves at one point poor and hungry, at a loss for hope and peace. Governor Ray and the hearts of Iowans turned this hopelessness into security and safety, shelter, food, and reunions with family. Our gratitude is unending." - [Sonya Baccam Streit, Tai Dam](#)

"We thank Governor Ray for resettling the Tai Dam people, so that our children, grandchildren, and future generations can have an education, good jobs, and a good life." - **Mrs. La Baccam, Tai Dam**

"It's a sad day for Iowans – especially for my community," ... "We will never forget him. He is part of our history." - [Som Baccam, Tai Dam](#)

"A man that I have never seen, met, or known was willing to take on the challenge that no one had ever done. He had done it with the love and compassion for humankind and willingness to take a person like me into his arms and give me and my family a second chance to better our lives. Not just my family... Governor Ray had also impacted many Asian-refugee lives, as well. Without him and his vision, I don't know what would have happened to all the Southeast Asian refugees back in the mid-1970s. Today, I am deeply honored to call him 'The Father of Southeast Asian Refugees and A True Asian-Refugee Hero.'" - [Doua Lor, Laos \(Highlander Lao - Hmong\)](#)

"Many thanks to Governor Ray for helping refugees come to Iowa and for making Iowa great. We wouldn't be here without his help." - **Hong Cuc Nguyen, Vietnam**

"I am grateful to be born and raised in Iowa as my parents were Vietnamese refugee immigrants who worked in the packing plants. Thirty years later, they have grown a successful Asian grocery store." - [Peggy La, Commissioner - Iowa Commission of Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs, Vietnam](#)

"My dad was a refugee who came to Iowa thanks to Robert Ray. Now, I choose to make this state my home." - [Linh Ta, daughter of Vietnamese Refugees](#)

"I would like to express my condolences to the Ray family. Governor Ray saved thousands of families from the horrors of war - both in Vietnam and Cambodia. My family and I sought refuge in Thailand; even there, refugee camp life was difficult and harsh. After being accepted to come to Iowa, we were overjoyed and worked hard to build a better life. I am grateful for Gov. Ray's compassion and the kindness of Iowans. Gov. Ray was a great 'Commander in Chief.' I am very proud to serve our great Nation. God bless him, his family and God bless America." - [James Suong, Cambodia](#)

"Governor Robert D. Ray is man of greatness. He has saved those of us who had no where to go and those whose lives were in danger. I can't imagine where we would be if he had not spoken up for us and fought for us. We are forever indebted to you for your compassion." - **Theresa Backham, Tai Dam**

[The Iowa Department of Human Rights Releases Statement on the Passing of Former Iowa Governor Robert Ray](#)

On the Road: CAPI's Listening Tour in Cedar Rapids



R to L: Tina Shaw, DHR-Office of API; Commissioners James Suong, Karlai Thornburg, Suresh Basnet, Michelle Yoshimura-Smith, Ben Jung - Chair. Not pictured: Commissioners Peggy La and Ritu Gurung



The [Iowa Commission of Asian & Pacific Islander Affairs \(CAPI\)](#) greeted festival-goers in Cedar Rapids over the weekend. At its peak time, over 1,500 attended to celebrate Asian heritage and learn about lowans of Asian & Pacific Islander (API) descent from the 14 cultural villages. The Cedar Rapids-metro area has the [second largest API population density](#) in the state (not factoring international students in university settings - Ames, Iowa City); the Des Moines-metro is the highest.

Thanks to Cedar Rapids and the Iowa Asian Alliance - Eastern Chapter for the warm welcome! Keep up with CAPI on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter @IowaDHR](#).

API COMMUNITY EVENT: Bhutanese Community in Iowa

The Bhutanese Community in Iowa (BCI) invites the public to its Convention and Awareness Raising Program on Saturday, August 4, 2018, 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM at [4300 Beaver Avenue, Des Moines, IA](#). [Please contact BCI with any event-related questions.](#)

While tailored for Bhutanese families in Iowa, this event is also a unique opportunity for BCI to invite and inform the general public about what the organization is doing on behalf of the Bhutanese community and what it intends to accomplish in the future. The program will contain presentations by experts on Financial Literacy and Substance Abuse Awareness.

Program: 10:00 AM - Awareness-related presentations for the Bhutanese families; 11:00 AM and beyond will feature cultural, dance and musical performances followed by BCI reports and updates. Lunch with typical Bhutanese cuisines will be served to all attendees. In order to help BCI draw estimates on the number of attendees, [please RSVP here.](#)

The BCI Convention & Awareness Program

Day, Date, Time & Venue
 Saturday, August 4, 2018
 10:00AM – 4:00PM
 4300 Beaver Ave,
 Des Moines, IA 50310

BHUTANESE COMMUNITY IN IOWA
 I am because we are!
 ESTD. 2011

www.bhutanaiowa.org

Event Details

- Experts Speak on Financial Literacy & Substance Abuse Awareness.
- BCI Reports – Past, Present & Future.
- Free Transportation & Food
- Cultural Dances & Music

Sponsored By

PRAIRIE MEADOWS

United Way
 United Way of Central Iowa

BCI- A non-profit organization dedicated to the Nepali-speaking Bhutanese in Iowa. Make hay while the sun shines – take the benefit of your own community organization when you can.

I am Because We Are!

EDUCATION

Universal Constructs: Essential for 21st Century Success

"Frustrated with 'teaching to the test', the [State of Iowa's Department of Education](#) set out in 2009 to identify soft skills, needed by employers in Iowa, that could be taught in the classroom. The result of that project, code-named 'Iowa Core,' created [six categories of soft skills](#) called 'universal constructs.'" Read more here: <https://on.wsj.com/2LnwK mz>

Complex communication topped the list of sought-after soft skills by employers. Complex communication in the 21st Century reflects:

- negotiation processes that generate mutually satisfactory solutions
- managing and resolving conflicts
- interacting effectively with people of different cultures
- selection and integration of various communication processes
- integration of appropriate forms of informative communication technology
- understanding the interactions among modes of communication
- meaningful and engaging interactions
- focus, energy and passion around the key message
- navigation through nuances of effective communication.

White House Intern Program – Now Accepting Applications for Spring 2019

The White House Internship Program (WHIP) application portal is now live for the Spring 2019 term! The White House Internship Program selection process is highly competitive. Applicants are encouraged to submit a thorough application that illustrates their qualifications, character, and commitment to public service.

Those who want to apply to be part of the WHIP Spring 2019 Class, which will run from January 16-April 12, 2019, must apply before the deadline: August 24, 2018 at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time. [Find more information and complete the application here.](#)

ELDERCARE & WELLNESS

[Loneliness, Depressive Symptoms, and Cognitive Functioning Among U.S. Chinese Older Adults](#)

"As minority groups in the United States are concerned, Asian-Americans are viewed as the one that has, in general, done best for itself in terms of socioeconomic status, overall health and socialization. This perceived advantage is known as 'model minority' status.

However, a team of researchers, prompted by some skepticism that this status was ill-fitting or misplaced, set out to challenge the concept by better understanding and studying older Chinese-Americans, a representative subset of that larger, multi-cultural ethnic population."

"The articles address a gap in understanding health equity issues in the Asian community -; in the United States and globally -; and offers insight on how health care professionals and policymakers can provide support through understanding cultural values, such as filial piety, collectivism, individualism and sense of harmony in families." [Related article.](#)

Title: [Loneliness, Depressive Symptoms, and Cognitive Functioning Among U.S. Chinese Older Adults](#)

Source: [Rutgers University's Institute for Health, Health Care Policy and Aging Research](#)

HEALTHCARE

[July is National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

Despite advances in health equity, disparities in mental health care persist. The US Dept. of Health & Human Services [Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality \(AHRQ\)](#) reports that racial and ethnic minority groups in the U.S. are less likely to have access to mental health services, less likely to use community mental health services, more likely to use emergency departments, and more likely to receive lower quality care. Poor mental health care access and quality contribute to poor mental health outcomes, including suicide, among racial and ethnic minority populations.

[New Report Details High Heart Disease Risk in South Asians in U.S.](#)

The report noted that South Asians in the U.S. are more likely to die from heart disease than non-Hispanic whites and other Asian-American subgroups. South Asians in the U.S. come from different countries, including Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. In addition to having a high risk for heart disease, the report noted that South Asians are more likely to die from it than non-Hispanic Whites and other Asian American subgroups. Higher insulin resistance, hypertension, obesity and chronic kidney disease are some contributing factors cited in the report. [Related article from NBC News](#)

Title: "Atherosclerotic Cardiovascular Disease in South Asians in the United States: Epidemiology, Risk Factors, and Treatments"

Source: American Heart Association

POLICY RESEARCH

POVERTY

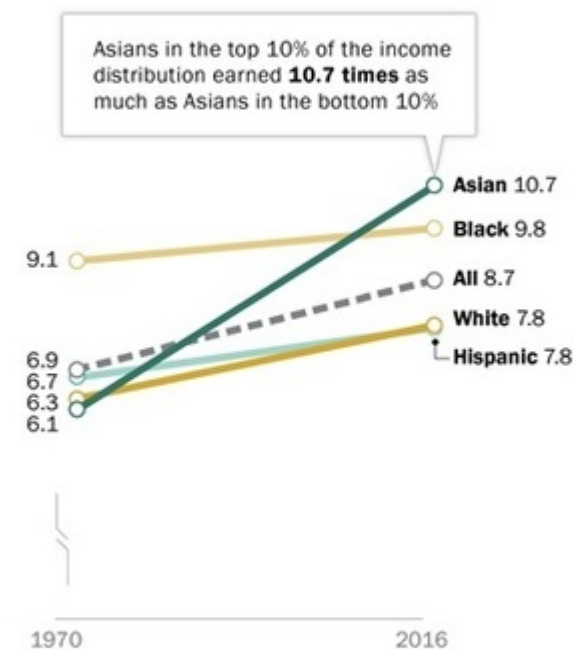
Income Inequality in the U.S. Is Rising Most Rapidly Among Asians - Asians displace blacks as the most economically divided group in the U.S. [Related articles from Iowa Public Radio](#) and [Northwest Asian Weekly](#).

Income inequality, a measure of the economic gap between the rich and poor, in the U.S. is greatest among Asians. "From 1970 to 2016, the gap in the standard of living between Asians near the top and the bottom of the income ladder nearly doubled, and the distribution of income among Asians transformed from being one of the most equal to being the most unequal among America's major racial and ethnic groups."

Source: [Pew Research Center](#)

From lowest to highest: Income inequality in U.S. increased most among Asians from 1970 to 2016

Ratio of income at the 90th percentile to income at the 10th percentile



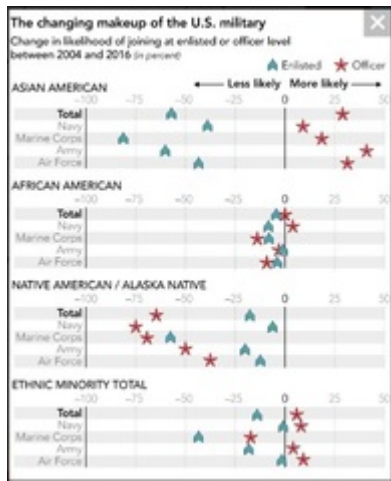
Note: Whites, blacks and Asians include only non-Hispanics and are single-race only in 2016. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders. Income is adjusted for household size. See [Methodology](#) for details.

Source: Pew Research Center analysis of 1970 decennial census and 2016 American Community Survey (IPUMS).
"Income Inequality in the U.S. Is Rising Most Rapidly Among Asians"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

MILITARY

Asian-Americans' rise through the US military ranks -- in charts



Growth in number of Army officers ten times higher than other minorities

Excerpt: "In recent years, Americans of Asian background have been signing up for the military in growing numbers, and, in 2016, they were 28% more likely to be among the officer ranks than they were 12 years earlier."

Source: [Nikkei Asian Review](#)

ART & CULTURE

How Our Conversations Around Mixed-Race Identity Have Evolved in the 21st Century

A project illustrates how the explosion of the internet has allowed for a more involved, varied, and purposeful construction of one's identity.

Gallery: [Hapa Project at the Japanese American National Museum](#)

Source: Hyperallergic.com

How a Chinese cook helped establish Yosemite and the National Park Service

"Hundreds of Chinese go to Yosemite. ... Imagine what the experience would be for them if they knew that Chinese worked on these roads over a hundred years ago."

Source: [NBC News](#)

IOWA WOMEN'S HALL OF FAME - AUGUST 18, 2018

The induction ceremony will be held on Saturday, August 18, 2018, at 9:30 a.m. at the State Historical Building, 600 E. Locust St., Des Moines, Iowa. The Friends of the Iowa Commission on the Status of Women will host a reception immediately following the ceremony. **Both the ceremony and the reception are free and open to the public.**

Among the honorees is [Jean Y. Jew, MD - Iowa City](#): professor; emeritus faculty at the University of Iowa; researcher; fought a decade-long landmark federal sexual harassment case against the University of Iowa and won; founding member of the Iowa Women's Foundation; mentor; advocate for gender equity and combating sexual harassment in the workplace/academia.



[Tina Shaw](#) | Executive Officer

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