

APAAN Year in Review 2019

In 2018, Pepper Hamilton — led by partner **Hyung P. Steele** and Pepper alumna Sarah K.S. Auerbach (Corporate Counsel, Five Below) and with support from Kassem Lucas, the firm’s Partner in Charge of Diversity — created the **Asian Pacific American Affinity Network (APAAN)**.

“APAAN’s mission is to provide support and be a resource for issues impacting Pepper attorneys who are of Asian Pacific American (APA) descent or are allies of those of APA descent. APAAN will support the recruitment, training, nurturing, retention and promotion of APA attorneys and allies at Pepper. APAAN will also foster the professional development of its members through its support and collaboration with internal and external organizations with similar goals on inclusion events, community outreach and participation in activities relevant to the APA community.”

To that end, APAAN’s co-chairs — Steele and associates **Connie Lee** and **Ying Zeng** — followed a successful affinity group debut in 2018 with a remarkable 2019 filled with individual accolades, successful collaborations and events that united not only the APA community at Pepper, but the entire firm.

As we look back to the events and experiences that shaped our 2019, we also look forward to 2020 and a successful partnership with our new colleagues at Troutman Sanders.

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Lunar New Year Event

FEBRUARY 5, 2019

APAAN held a lunch to celebrate the “**year of the pig**.” The lunar new year is celebrated by China and other Asian countries that use a calendar based on the cycles of the moon. The Peppers in attendance enjoyed a lunch catered by Han Dynasty, and each attendee received a traditional red envelope (filled with chocolate coins), which is given at Lunar New Year to symbolize good luck and prosperity for the upcoming year.

YEAR OF THE PIG FACTS:

- Upcoming years of the pig include 2031 and 2043.
- The pig symbolizes luck and good fortune.
- The pig is the twelfth animal of the twelve zodiac signs.



Pepper Hamilton and APAAN Host Author and Activist Simon Tam

MAY 29, 2019

In honor of [Asian Pacific American Heritage Month](#), APAAN hosted an event in Pepper's Philadelphia office with **Simon Tam**, musician, activist and author of *"Slanted: How an Asian American Troublemaker Took on the Supreme Court."* The event was also broadcast via video conference to all of Pepper's offices.

Tam is best known as the founder and bassist of The Slants, the world's **first and only all-Asian American dance rock band**. Founded in 2006, The Slants chose their name to seize *"control of a racial slur, turning it on its head and draining its venom,"* Tam has said in interviews. In 2009, the band sought trademark protection for its name, but the application was denied by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO), which found that there was *"a substantial composite of persons who find the term in the applied-for mark offensive."* Tam appealed the decision all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, and, in 2017, a unanimous Supreme Court sided with Tam and ruled that the federal law the PTO relied on was unconstitutional.

At the event, clients, current and former Pepper Hamilton attorneys and staff, summer associates and other guests listened intently as Tam discussed *"Slanted"* and the long journey from filing for a trademark to defending free speech before the nation's highest court. Attendees were also treated to live music from Tam and his guitarist, **Joe Jiang**, as well as a book signing and reception.



The Slants' "The Yellow Album" released on February 4, 2014

Connie Lee Recognized by Philadelphia Bar Association

JULY 10, 2019

APAAN co-chair **Connie Lee** was honored with the **Philadelphia Bar Association's Large Firm Management Committee Public Service Award**. The Award honors young lawyers who have made a difference in Philadelphia through extraordinary pro bono representation or public service to individuals or entities that address the challenges faced by communities of need in the city of Philadelphia. Lee has done pro bono work for the Legal Clinic for the Disabled and the Public Interest Law Center, among others, and was nominated for the award by the **Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania (APABA-PA)**.

A Conversation About Diversity and Inclusion in Central Pennsylvania With State College Mayor Don Hahn (Harrisburg, PA)

SEPTEMBER 18, 2019

The first-ever collaboration between APAAN, the **Asian Pacific American Bar Association of Pennsylvania**, and the **Hispanic Bar Association of Pennsylvania** was a networking event with **State College Mayor Don Hahn** held in Pepper's Harrisburg office. Mayor Hahn discussed his Korean-American upbringing, his path to becoming an attorney, and his decision to run for mayor of State College. The event was attended by area law school students, attorneys and local advocates in and around Central Pennsylvania. Notably, following the event, law school attendees discussed starting their own affinity groups to expand outreach efforts. In November 2019, Mayor Hahn was elected as district judge.



Pro Bono Pepper Hamilton Team Represents Chinese Takeout Restaurant Owners in Settlement With City of Philadelphia

OCTOBER 4, 2019

A pro bono Pepper Hamilton team led by **Jeremy D. Frey** and APAAN co-chair **Ying Zeng** successfully entered into a settlement with the city of Philadelphia on behalf of their clients — 23 Chinese-American restaurant owners who sued the city, alleging that its 11 p.m. ordinance was discriminatory against their takeout businesses. The matter originated after a study conducted by **Philadelphia Councilman David Oh** found that nearly all of the businesses cited for violations of the ordinance were Chinese takeout restaurants.

The settlement agreement, which was announced in a press conference on October 4, provides for payment of \$265,000 to the plaintiffs to compensate them for their out-of-pocket expenses and disruption brought to their lives and businesses. The city also agreed to conduct additional police training and agreed not to enforce the ordinance against any parties in the future.

A story in The Philadelphia Inquirer — *“Philadelphia suspends 11 p.m. closing ordinance; city will pay \$265,000 to Chinese takeouts”* — covered the settlement and the work of Pepper Hamilton and the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund on the case.

“The critical fact in this case is clear and dramatic and probative. [Civil violation notices] were issued to Chinese people, in their Chinese takeout restaurants, in jaw-dropping percentages,” Frey said.



Ali Wong: The Milk & Money Tour

OCTOBER 17, 2019

Sometimes the best events are those conceived at happy hours! During a meet and greet to discuss diversity, equity and inclusion efforts at Pepper Hamilton and the value of affinity groups, summer associates in the New York office, **Alyson Tseng** and **Kristen Liang**, and the APAAN co-chairs, dreamed up the idea of seeing **Ali Wong**, the comedian and star of *“Always Be My Maybe.”* In October, the dream became reality when this group, along with a few other Pepper attorneys, clients and allies enjoyed dinner at South Jazz Kitchen followed by Ali Wong’s performance at the MET in Philadelphia.



Judicial Diversity Panel Sponsored by All Pepper Affinity Groups

NOVEMBER 5, 2019

In November, APAAN along with Pepper's African-American/Black Affinity Group, Latina/o Caucus, Pepper Pride, South Asian Affinity Group, Veterans Group, and Women's Initiative joined forces to co-host a Judicial Diversity Panel featuring four judges from the Philadelphia Court of Common Pleas:

- Judge Daniel Anders (Pepper alumnus)
- Judge Kai Scott
- Judge Lisette Shirdan-Harris
- Judge Stella Tsai

The panel was moderated by **Tiffany Southerland**, Pepper's manager of associate recruitment, diversity and inclusion. The diverse panel of judges spoke about the importance of diversity on the bench and in the courtroom. They also discussed the challenges they had to face and overcome as diverse individuals on their respective journeys to the bench. The event was held in Philadelphia and broadcast to all Pepper offices.



Other Notable 2019 Accomplishments and Events

- Quarterly informal brown bag lunches allowed APAAN members to meet and discuss any topics of interest.
- APAAN members across the firm participated in **Pepper Hamilton's Week of Service** in June. This annual event allows Pepper attorneys and staff in all 14 offices to spend a day volunteering in the community alongside their co-workers and colleagues.
- Pepper Hamilton sponsored the **APABA-PA's Lunar Banquet** in February. APAAN co-chair **Connie Lee** chaired and emceed the event, which featured a lion dance performance by the Philadelphia Suns and dinner at Ocean Harbor in Chinatown. More than 200 guests attended, the largest APABA-PA Lunar Banquet ever. Pepper attendees included APAAN co-chairs Lee and **Ying Zeng**, Partner in Charge of Diversity **Kassem Lucas**, Pepper attorney **Murray Levin**, former Peppers **Jocelyn Young** (Corporate Counsel, Hikma), **Sarah K.S. Auerbach** (Corporate Counsel, Five Below), and **Brian Auerbach** (Ballard Spahr).
- Pepper Hamilton sponsored APABA-PA's 35th Annual Banquet in October. The event is a fundraiser to support the **Judge William M. Marutani Fellowship**. Pepper attendees included APAAN co-chairs **Hyung Steele**, **Connie Lee** and **Ying Zeng**; associates **Brian Callaway**, **Karli Cozen** and **Kavida Gobalasingham**; and **Cynthia Coles**, **Karen Hardy** and **Carole Ward** of the firm's diversity team.
- APAAN co-chairs **Hyung Steele**, **Connie Lee** and **Ying Zeng** attended the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association's 2019 conference, held in Austin, Texas from November 7 to November 10. The event included a keynote speech from Korean-American chef **Kristen Kish**, the winner of season 10 of the hit show "Top Chef."
- APAAN closed out its 2019 on December 6 with a holiday meeting, where the group recapped the past year, looked forward to 2020 and enjoyed food from **Dim Sum Garden**.

