

Proclamation

May is National Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) Heritage Month, a time to recognize and celebrate the histories and contributions of people whose roots span Asia, the Pacific Islands, and the Native Hawaiian heritage. Today, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders are the fastest growing racial group in the United States.

This year's theme, "Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together," reflects the importance of connection, mutual support, and collaboration across cultures and generations.

We observe AANHPI Heritage Month in May to mark two moments in U.S. history: the immigration of the first Japanese people to the United States in 1843, and the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad, on May 10, 1869, built with significant contributions from Chinese immigrant workers.

AANHPI communities have been essential to our nation's growth through their work in science and medicine, education and law, business and technology, public service, and the arts. However, over the years, AANHPI residents, including in the City of Alameda and the greater Bay Area, have endured, and overcome numerous hardships, although some still persist today.

These include the Chinese Immigration Act of 1882 that banned all Chinese immigration for 20 years, and the incarceration during World War II (1942-1945) of people of Japanese descent. With the COVID-19 pandemic came an increase in racist and xenophobic rhetoric and physical violence toward Asian Americans which, unfortunately, continues to the present day.

However, there are now organizations, including Asian Americans Advancing Justice (AAJC), Asian and Pacific Islander American Vote (APIAVote) and National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) whose work embodies this year's AANHPI Heritage Month theme: "Power in Unity: Strengthening Communities Together."

In the City of Alameda, over 30% of residents identify as Asian American and Pacific Islander, including Filipino American families with long-standing ties to the former Alameda Naval Air Station, whose service member relatives helped build deep community roots here. AANHPI residents from many backgrounds continue to play an essential role in the continuing story of Alameda.

These residents include Superior Court Judge Ben Reyes and City Councilmember Tony Daysog. Our community is also enriched by the legacy of AANHPI residents who have served our community and beyond, including the late Wilma Chan, former California State Assembly Speaker and Alameda County Supervisor; Betty Yee, former California State Controller; Rob Bonta, California Attorney General and former State Assemblymember and Alameda City Councilmember; Lena Tam, Alameda County Supervisor and former Alameda City Councilmember; Rev. Michael Yoshii, former Pastor of Buena Vista Unified Methodist Church and Co-Chair of Friends of Wadi Foquin; and Joann Guitarte, Alameda Businesswoman and former Chamber of Commerce Board Chair.

We also recognize leaders whose work created lasting pathways for others, including Patsy Takemoto Mink, the first woman of color elected to the U.S. Congress and co-author of Title IX, and Ellison Onizuka, the first Asian American astronaut and member of NASA's Space Shuttle Challenger crew, and Olympic figure skaters, with Bay Area roots, Alysia Liu and Kristi Yamaguchi.

The City of Alameda proudly recognizes the contributions of AANHPI residents, past and present, whose impact is reflected in the vibrancy diversity of our city.

Now, therefore, I, Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft, Mayor of the City of Alameda, do hereby proclaim May 2026 as

Asian American - Native Hawaiian - Pacific Islander Heritage Month

in the City of Alameda and encourage all residents to learn more about AANHPI histories and cultures, including through events presented by the Alameda Free Library:

Family Odissi Dance Class

Saturday, May 9, 11:15am-12:15pm, Main Library

May 17 (Sun) 2:00pm-3:00pm, Main Library

Learn classical Indian Odissi dance through storytelling, movement, and mindfulness. For families with young learners.

Stories that Dance

Saturday, May 30, 3:00pm-4:00pm, West End Library

Laya Arts Collective presents Bharatanatyam and Kathak dance demonstrations with interactive story-based activities. Family-friendly.

Author Talk: Alka Joshi

Saturday, May 30, 1:00pm-4:00pm, Main Library

In partnership with Friends of the Alameda Library, NYT bestselling author Alka Joshi discusses her Jaipur Trilogy and new novel *Six Days in Bombay* with journalist Deepa Fernandez.

Marilyn Ezzy Ashcraft
Mayor

