



**Asian American
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**NEW YORK STATE SENATOR JOHN C. LIU TO BE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT
ASIAN AMERICAN BAR ASSOCIATION OF NEW YORK'S 2019 JUDGES'
RECEPTION**

NEW YORK – May 29, 2019. The Asian American Bar Association of New York (“AABANY”) is pleased to announce that New York State Senator John C. Liu will be the keynote speaker at AABANY’s Annual Judges’ Reception to be held on May 30, 2019 at the Surrogate’s Court, Courtroom 503, 31 Chambers Street, New York, NY, starting at 6 pm.

This year marks the third consecutive year that AABANY has honored newly inducted, elevated and retired judges of Asian Pacific American (APA) descent at its Judges’ Reception. This year, AABANY is proud to honor:

Hon. Shahabuddeen Ally

Judge Shahabuddeen A. Ally graduated from Hofstra University School of Law in 2001. Judge Ally began his legal career as a staff attorney with the New York City Administration for Children’s Services. As a staff attorney, Judge Ally litigated cases involving child abuse and neglect. Judge Ally appeared as lead counsel on hundreds of cases and at various stages of litigation including settlement conferences, discovery, compliance conferences, and trial. Judge Ally then went to work for the New York City Law Department as an Assistant Corporation Counsel. Judge Ally was assigned to the Family Law bureau where he prosecuted juvenile delinquency matters. Judge Ally started in the Bronx division where he prosecuted a range of cases from misdemeanors to serious felony cases. Judge Ally’s practice grew when he was appointed to the sex crimes prosecution unit, where he was solely responsible for the prosecution of all sex crimes in New York County. For a decade prior to his time on the bench, Judge Ally operated his own law practice specializing in Family and Criminal law. Judge Ally was a member of the 18b panel where he provided indigent legal services to litigants in Family, Criminal and Supreme courts. Judge Ally’s judicial career began when he was elected to the Civil Court, Countywide, from New York County in 2018. Judge Ally is the first Muslim male Judge elected in New York State history. Judge Ally is currently assigned to the Bronx Criminal Court. Judge Ally resides in Upper Manhattan with his wife, a Family Court Judge, his son and puppy.

Hon. Karen Cortes

Judge Karen Cortes was appointed to the Family Court in January 2019. She received her undergraduate degree from New York University and her law degree from Brooklyn Law School. Judge Cortes has practiced family law for nearly 15 years, most recently with the New York State Unified Court System as a Court Attorney Referee in Bronx County, Family Court. Prior to that, she served with the New York City Administration for Children's Services.

Hon. Shorab Ibrahim

Judge Shorab Ibrahim was born in Guyana, South America in 1977 and immigrated to America at the age of seven. She grew up in Queens and attended CUNY John Jay for undergrad and then Hofstra Law School. After law school she joined a small landlord/tenant firm in Brooklyn and was involved in all aspects of landlord/tenant law. She practiced all throughout the city representing landlords and tenants for 15 years. She was appointed to the bench on May 30, 2018. She is currently seated in the Bronx Housing Court. Currently she presides over a universal access part where most tenants will qualify to get a free lawyer.

Hon. Donald Leo

Judge Donald Leo was appointed as a New York City Criminal Court Judge by Mayor Bill DeBlasio in December 2015, and in July 2018, he was designated Acting New York State Supreme Court Justice by the Chief Administrative Judge Lawrence Marks. He currently serves in the Kings County Supreme Court, Criminal Term. Judge Leo began his legal career at the New York County (Manhattan) District Attorney's Office and was assigned to the Trials Division and Sex Crimes Unit, where he prosecuted narcotics and violent felonies, specializing in sex crimes and homicides. He left the District Attorney's Office in 2004 and joined the corporate investigations firm of Fortress Global Investigations, where he was the Managing Director in charge of business development. In 2007, Judge Leo returned to public service by joining the New York State Office of the Attorney General, and became the Deputy Bureau Chief of the Sex Offender Management Bureau, where he was responsible for the civil management of violent sex offenders pursuant to New York State Mental Hygiene Law Article 10 after their release from prison. Judge Leo graduated from New York University with a double-major in Political Science and Art History, and received his law degree from Brooklyn Law School.

Hon. Ushir Pandit-Durant

Justice Ushir Pandit-Durant began her career as a Prosecutor in the Queens County District Attorney's Office, serving there with distinction for 25 years before being elected to New York City Civil Court in 2015, becoming the first South Asian to hold that elected office. On December 21, 2018, Hon. Ushir Pandit-Durant made history as the first South Asian judge elected to New York State Supreme Court in Queens and the first South Asian woman judge elected in New York State.

Hon. John Zhuo Wang

Judge John Zhuo Wang is a Judge of the Housing Part of the NYC Civil Court and currently sits in Brooklyn Housing Court. Prior to his appointment to the bench in June 2018, he clerked for the Hon. Anthony Cannataro, a New York State Supreme Court Justice and the Administrative Judge of the New York City Civil Court, and he has also served as a court attorney in Civil and Family Court. He began his legal career as Assistant Law Clerk in Supreme Court. Judge Wang is currently a co-chair of the Civil Court Committee of the New York Women's Bar Association, a member of the Civil Court Practice Section at NYCLA, and a member of the Judiciary Committee of AABANY. Judge Wang is a graduate of Brooklyn Law School and Vassar College.

Hon. Wendy Changyong Li

Wendy Li was elected as judge of the Civil Court of the City of New York on November 6, 2018. She grew up in China and immigrated to the United States after obtaining her first law degree at Peking University. After receiving her second law degree in the United States, Wendy went on to attend Oxford University, where she obtained her Masters of Science in Law and Finance degree, and then Harvard University where she received a graduate certificate in International Relations. As a New York licensed attorney and a law partner, before taking the bench at the beginning of 2019, Wendy had worked on a wide array of matters at several prestigious law firms. Throughout her private practice legal career, she had continuously made it her duty to engage in pro bono work and public service. In addition to being a full-time attorney, Wendy was a member of her community board where she routinely devoted her time to making our city a better place to live for all of us. It is in this tradition of service that Wendy is now fully committed to giving back to the country, city, and neighborhoods that gave her a chance to fulfill her American dream. As a Civil Court Judge, Wendy believes that the court system needs to be accessible to everyone, no matter their background. The values of fairness, compassion, and equal treatment for all have guided Wendy's entire life, and they are the values she has proudly brought to the bench.

Hon. Archana Rao

Prior to her appointment, Judge Archana Rao spent 17 years with the New York County District Attorney's Office. She began her career in the trial division, where, in addition to prosecuting street crime cases, she served in the Domestic Violence Unit and the Welfare Fraud Unit. In 2004, she was assigned to the Special Prosecutions Bureau where she handled a variety of prosecutions involving financial crimes and fraud, including employee embezzlements, fraudulent documents, insurance fraud, unauthorized practice of law, thefts committed by attorneys and other professionals, offenses related to real estate and housing, and schemes to defraud the public. She was made Deputy Bureau Chief in 2010 and, in 2016, was appointed Bureau Chief of the Financial Frauds Bureau (formerly the Special Prosecutions Bureau). Judge Rao, a graduate of Vassar College and Fordham University School of Law, was appointed to Civil Court in January 2019 and has been assigned to Kings County Criminal Court.

Hon. Lillian Wan

Judge Lillian Wan was appointed to the New York State Court of Claims by Governor Andrew Cuomo on June 20, 2018. Judge Wan is currently designated as an Acting Supreme Court Justice in New York County Supreme Court, Civil Division. Judge Wan presides over an Integrated Guardianship Part, where she hears cases involving tenants who are the subject of both a Civil Court, Housing Part case and a Supreme Court Mental Hygiene Law Article 81 case. Prior to that Judge Wan was a Family Court judge, appointed to the bench by Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg in 2012, and served in both Bronx County Family Court and Kings County Family Court hearing cases involving child abuse and neglect, custody, visitation, family offenses and juvenile delinquency. Judge Wan also presided over "crossover youth" cases which involved children in foster care who are subsequently arrested and enter the juvenile justice system. Prior to taking the bench, Judge Wan was a Court Attorney-Referee in Kings County Surrogate's Court where she handled adoption, guardianship, and trusts and estates matters. In this capacity, Judge Wan conducted pre-trial and settlement conferences with attorneys and self-represented litigants and presided over guardianship hearings involving disabled adults and kinship hearings to determine who inherits an estate. Judge Wan also served for nine years as a trial attorney at the Administration for Children's Services (ACS) in the Family Court Legal Services Division, where she tried and supervised hundreds of abuse and neglect trials. Judge Wan earned her undergraduate degree from Binghamton University and her law degree from Albany Law School, where she served on the *Albany Law Review*. Judge Wan was recently elected as President of the Asian American Judges Association of New York.

Hon. Karen Bacdayan

Judge Bacdayan was born in the Philippines in 1964 and is proud of her Igorot Tribe heritage. After attending Bard College in Annandale, New York, she returned to her childhood home and received her JD from the University of Kentucky. After law school, Judge Bacdayan went to work for Legal Services for New York City where for 28 years she represented indigent tenants

in Housing Court and litigated affirmative actions in Supreme and Federal Courts to protect against housing and disability discrimination. Judge Bacdayan was appointed to the Civil Court of the City of New York, Housing Part, in February 2018. She sits in Bronx County

Hon. Michael H. Park

Michael H. Park was appointed to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in May 2019. He earned his A.B. magna cum laude from Princeton University and his J.D. from Yale Law School, where he served as Managing Editor of the *Yale Law Journal*. Upon graduation from law school in 2001, Park served as a law clerk to then-Judge Samuel A. Alito, Jr. on the Third Circuit, for whom he also clerked on the Supreme Court during the 2008 Term. Park was an associate in the New York office of the WilmerHale law firm from 2002 to 2006, and he served as an Attorney-Adviser in the Office of Legal Counsel at the U.S. Department of Justice from 2006 to 2008. Park worked in the New York office of Dechert LLP, first as counsel (2009-2011) and then as a partner (2012-2015). In 2015, Park joined Consovoy McCarthy Park PLLC as a name partner, where he specialized in appellate and complex civil litigation. During that time, he also served as an adjunct professor at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University.

For more information, please contact Yang Chen, AABANY Executive Director, at (212) 332-2478, or direct any inquiries to main@aabany.org.

The Asian American Bar Association of New York is a professional membership organization of attorneys concerned with issues affecting the Asian Pacific American community. Incorporated in 1989, AABANY seeks not only to encourage the professional growth of its members but also to advocate for the Asian Pacific American community as a whole. AABANY is a New York regional affiliate of the National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA).

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