

Speaker Resumes
NAPCO Webinar • Wednesday, March 22, 2023; 3:00 PM (EDT)
To be Asian in America's Local and State Courts

Hon. Rabeea Sultan Collier

... is a native Houstonian of Pakistani heritage. She was elected as Presiding Judge of the 113th District Court of Texas in Harris County (Greater Houston) in 2018 and re-elected in 2022. The District Court is a general jurisdiction court. Judge Collier is double Board Certified in Civil Trial Law and Personal Injury Trial Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization. She was awarded the 2021 Jurist of the Year for the Texas Chapters of the American Board of Trial Advocates, the 2021 Distinguished Member Award by the South Asian Bar Association of Houston, and the 2022 Lois Prestage Woods Legacy of Justice Award by the Texas Southern University, Thurgood Marshall School of Law Alumni Association.

Judge Collier chairs the Jury Committee for the Board of District Judges that oversees jury operations for more than 80 courts in Harris County. Judge Collier previously co-chaired the COVID Response Judicial Task Force for Harris County.

She serves on the Curriculum Committee for the Texas Center for the Judiciary, which is comprised of approximately 15 judges that develop judicial education for all Texas judges. She also currently serves as an executive board member for the Association of District Judges and a former board member of the Asian American Bar Association of Houston. Judge Collier recently joined the Bench Book Committee and served as the 2022 editor of the Civil Trial Section, Texas Bench Book for the Texas Center for the Judiciary.

She is a graduate of Kingwood High School in Houston, Texas. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Government from the University of Texas at Austin and a Juris Doctor degree from Texas Southern University, Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston, Texas. Judge Collier is married to Robert Collier, an attorney. They have two sons and live in North Houston.

Hon. Roxanne Song Ong (ret.)

... has served the Arizona criminal justice system for over 40 years, breaking new ground as the first Asian American woman lawyer and the first Asian woman judge in Arizona. A Phoenix native, Judge Song Ong began her career practicing in the areas of criminal prosecution, defense, and immigration law, followed by her judicial career beginning in 1986 on the Scottsdale City Court. In 1991, she became a judge for the Phoenix Municipal Court and in 2000 became the Assistant Presiding Judge. In 2005 she was appointed as the Chief Presiding Judge of Phoenix, the fifth largest city in the United States, running one of the busiest courts in the country until her retirement from the court in late 2014. Judge Song Ong became the first woman and minority to hold the chief judge position.

Judge Song Ong's term was marked by advances in the management of DUI cases and the introduction of specialty courts to address cases involving populations with significant financial,

psychological, behavioral, physical and related challenges. Phoenix's Veterans Court, Homeless Court, Mental Health Court, and Domestic Violence Court have become models for other courts in the state and country. Judge Song Ong continues to serve as Pro Tem Judge for other jurisdictions while teaching and speaking on topics of judicial, legal and civics education as well as diversity and cultural competency.

She is on the Board of Directors of the National Association for Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO) and was a member of the 2015-16 Strategic Planning Team that repurposed the National Conference of Metropolitan Courts (NCMC), NAPCO's predecessor organization, to refocus on trial court leadership enhancement for all trial courts, regardless of size or jurisdiction. She received her Bachelor's Degree from Arizona State University and her Juris Doctorate from the University of Arizona's James E. Rogers College of Law.

Hon. Cheri T. Pham

... is the Assistant Presiding Judge of the Superior Court of California, County of Orange. She was elected to the Court on June 8, 2010, and has the distinction of being the first Vietnamese American to be elected by voters directly to the bench in California. While waiting to take office on January 1, 2011, Judge Pham was appointed by Governor Schwarzenegger in the interim, enabling her to assume her judicial duties on July 21, 2010.

As Assistant Presiding Judge, she is the first Vietnamese American to serve in such a capacity in any Superior Court in California. Judge Pham has been a resident of Orange County for 47 years, having immigrated to the United States as a refugee from Vietnam in 1975.

Preceding her current leadership position, she served as Criminal Supervising Judge, overseeing the Court's Felony Trial Panel and Criminal Operations. Her previous judicial assignments included the North Panel, the Family Law Panel, and the Felony Trial Panel.

Prior to her election to the bench, Judge Pham practiced criminal law for 19 years in the Orange County Public Defender's Office, the Orange County Alternate Defender's Office, and the Orange County District Attorney's Office. She was also the first Vietnamese American appointed as a Commissioner and Vice-Chair of the John Wayne Airport Commission, from 2008 to 2010.

Judge Pham graduated summa cum laude from the University of California, Los Angeles, with a Bachelor's Degree in Economics/Business in 1987, and received her Juris Doctor Degree from the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law in 1990. Since 2019, Judge Pham has served as an Adjunct Professor at Chapman University, Dale E. Fowler School of Law, where she teaches Advanced Criminal Procedure: Adjudicative Process.

Hon. Gloria Y. Tan

... is First Justice of Middlesex County Juvenile Court in Massachusetts and currently sits in the Cambridge Juvenile Court. She was appointed to the bench in 2013, and is the only Asian-American Juvenile Court Judge in Massachusetts. Prior to her judicial career, Judge Tan served

as the Deputy Director at Harvard Law School's Criminal Justice Institute, where she taught and supervised law students representing indigent adults and youth in criminal and delinquency proceedings in Boston.

Justice Tan currently serves on the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court (SJC) Jury Management Advisory Committee, the MA Trial Court Standing Committee on Alternative Dispute Resolution, the Executive Board and Board of Trustees for the Flasher Judicial Institute, the J2J Judicial Mentoring Advisory Board, and previously served on the MA Trial Court Race and Implicit Bias Advisory Committee, the SJC Advisory Committee on Massachusetts Evidence Guide, and the MA Juvenile Court Education Committee. She was a recipient of the Massachusetts Bar Association Access Justice to Award in 2013.

She began her legal career as a public defender representing juvenile and adult clients in the Youth Advocacy Project and the Boston Trial Unit of the Committee for Public Counsel Services. Justice Tan earned her B.A. from Rice University and J.D. from Yale Law School.

David Yamasaki

... is the Court Executive Officer and Clerk of Court for the Superior Court of California, County of Orange (Greater Santa Ana), a position he has held since December 2016. It is a unified trial court, ranking as the fifth largest in the nation with 140 judicial officers, 8 locations, 1500 employees and 500,000 annual case filings. He has over 32 years of experience in the California Judicial Branch, including Chief Executive Officer (2008-2016) in Santa Clara County Superior Court; Assistant Executive Officer (1998-2008), Director of Criminal Operations (1993-1998), and Coordinator of Criminal Operations (1992-1998) in San Diego County Superior Court; Administrative Operations Manager (1988-1992) in North County Municipal Court in Vista CA; Senior Administrative Assistant (1987-1988), Legal Research Assistant (1986-1987) in Los Angeles Municipal Court; and Deputy Clerk II (1985-1986) in San Diego Municipal Court.

During his various positions within the California court system, Mr. Yamasaki has served on numerous committees, commissions, and task forces with the Judicial Council, California's judicial system governing board, and as a member of the Council itself. Additionally, he also serves on the Executive Committee of the National Association of Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers (NAPCO).

Mr. Yamasaki has a B.S. degree in Criminal Justice Administration from San Diego State University, and M.A. Degree in Public Administration with an emphasis in Judicial Administration from the University of Southern California.