



I-NAPA

INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF
ASIAN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATORS

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JOIN I-NAPA IN CELEBRATING
WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH



"What or who inspired you to pursue a career in local government?"

"I thank my mom for introducing me to a career in local government. She worked in Finance for the Santa Clara County Transportation Agency when I started college, and she brought home an internship application for me to complete. My first assignment was with the Airports Administration in the summer after my freshman year. I helped managers prepare budget requests and Board reports, and analyzed revenues and expenditures during the fiscal year, which I really enjoyed doing! I got a chance to work with budget analysts from the County Executive's Office of Budget and Analysis (OBA), which is where I got assigned my next internship. I loved working with the OBA Analysts—they were committed to public service, fun to be around, and were great teachers and mentors to me. I always felt that, even though most of our work was done in meetings and in our offices writing reports, we were helping make decisions that improved people's lives, especially those who were underserved and most vulnerable in the community."



"Has being a woman helped develop or influence your leadership perspective or style?"

"Leadership is about individual intention, initiative, and the desire to help people. We are shaped by our life experiences, our education, and our own vision for serving the world. I was born in the Philippines and emigrated to the U.S. with my family when I was 10 years old. My parents left their home and successful careers to bring all eight of their children here so we could have more opportunities for a better life. This immigrant drive explains my focus on working toward progress, and approaching situations through a lens of opportunity for all.

Being a Filipino woman made me different from what most people were used to seeing among their local government leaders. I attribute my success to my parents, supervisors, and mentors who saw potential in me and supported me throughout my career. They made me believe that being different is a strength along with other unique qualities that make me a good person and effective leader. While I acknowledge that stereotypes and biases still exist, which can be really discouraging at times, I chose to lead in a way that valued difference, that aimed to understand all perspectives in helping organizations improve and communities thrive."



"What difference did male and female advocates make in your career?"

"I often got comments from women, interns and others I worked with that they were inspired to see someone like them in a senior leadership position. I truly believe in the words of Pat Martel, retired City Manager of Daly City in her inaugural speech as ICMA President, that people "can't be what they don't see." I was really fortunate to have a boss (John Maltbie, retired County Manager) who believed in my leadership and always said yes when I wanted to try something new for the organization. I also had mentors like Susan Muranishi, County Administrator for Alameda County, Charles Ozaki, City/County Manager for Broomfield, CO, Ed Shikada, City Manager of Palo Alto, CA, and other colleagues who took the time to really listen to me. They encouraged me by sharing their own work and life experiences, and made it possible for me to see what I can be."



"What do you like to do for fun?"

"I retired last year to take care of my 85-year-old mom, and if we're not at the gym or church or reading at home, we love going to the movies, especially the theaters with reclining seats so we can take naps. I also love riding roller coasters, having grown up with six big brothers who dragged me on every ride. When I turned 50, I said I would ride 50 different roller coasters in one year. It's going to take me about two years, but I'm up to 35 and have gone to places outside California, including Cedar Point, OH and Tampa Bay, FL. My favorites are dive coasters like Valravn at Cedar Point and SheKra at Busch Gardens, and ones that start fast like Superman at Six Flags in Vallejo."

