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Volume 2 | Issue 03 | June 2011

ACA Newsletter

# University of Texas Honors Asian Community Leaders in Its 2nd Annual Community Leadership Awards

Austin, TX— Dr. George Chang, Executive Vice Chairman of the Asian Contractor Association, was among four honorees and one non-profit Asian organization to receive the 2nd Annual Asian American Community Leadership Awards.

The awards were presented by the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement of University of Texas at Austin on May 11 at the Etter-Harbin Alumni Center. Close to 200 guests and family members were there to celebrate the occasion.

Dr. Chang along with The Honorable Dr. Martha Jee Wong and Mr. Ali Khataw received the Community Leadership Circle Award, while Dr. Mitchel Wong won the Legacy Award. The Network or Asian American Organizations in the meantime received the Community Partnership Award, which was accepted by the network's incumbent President, Mr. Channy Soeur.

Dr. Chang was honored for his efforts to lift the City's Asian population to the status of an official minority group, thus protected by the City's ordinances and its affirmative action program. As a result, Asian Americans now represent 3% of the City's workforce marking Austin as the only city in the state of Texas recognizing Asians as a minority group.

Following his retirement, Dr. Chang served as a member of the Citizens Review Panel of the city's Police Monitor Office for three years. He also helped start many nonprofit Asian organizations such as the Chinese Society of Austin, the Network of Austin Asian American Organizations, the Asian American Resources Center, and the Texas Asian Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Martha Wong on the other hand is lauded as the first Asian American to serve on the Houston city Council. She also holds the title of the first Asian Woman to serve in the Texas House of Representatives.

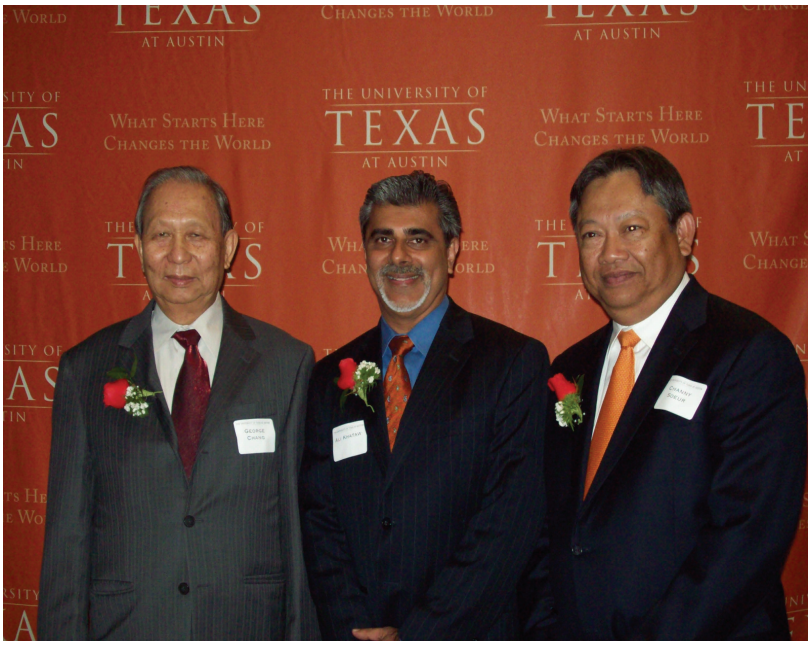
During her two terms as State Representative, Dr. Wong received several awards including the Texas Association of community Development Corporations' community Champion 2005 for outstanding service to low-income communities across Texas.

A native of Austin and UT alumnus, Dr. Mitchel Wong received his Doctor of Medicine from Baylor Medical School in the 60s and founded the Austin Eye in 1969. Austin Eye was one of the pioneers that first introduced small incision cataract surgery, intraocular lens technology, and topical anesthesia cataract surgery to Austin.

The Wong family settled in Austin since the 1930s and Dr. Wong was considered the first full-blooded Chinese born in Central Texas. He is also one of the founders of the Texas Asian Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Wong is currently working to establish a program for ophthalmic nursing with the possibility of partnering with UT School of Nursing.

Mr. Ali Khataw has been actively involved in the Asian American community for over 20 years. He has his own engineering firm and sits on six boards of community and business organizations. Please see more of Mr. Khataw's achievements on page 2 of this newsletter.




From left to right: Dr. George Chang, Mr. Ali Khataw, and Mr. Channy Soeur

The Network of Austin Asian American Organizations (NAAO) is the leading service and information network that unites and promotes the Asian American community in Austin. It now has a total of 15 member organizations encompassing a variety of ethnic groups from China, Taiwan, India, Vietnam, Korea, Bangladesh, Cambodia and the Philippines.

# Asian Contractors Corner

Ali Khataw, Chairman of the Austin Asian American Chamber of Commerce, is the owner and CEO of Encotech Engineering Consultants Inc., he founded in 1990.

Born and raised in Karachi, Pakistan, Mr. Khataw came to the US to study in the 80s because, he said, he desired an American education. Subsequently he graduated from the University of Texas at Austin in 1984 with a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering.

Encotech Engineering, the entrepreneur said, represented the realization of his long-time aspiration to own his own firm. He was hesitant to move forward with his dream at first, however, since he had obtained citizenship through the company that hired him after college. He wanted to remain loyal to the company, the engineer explained. He finally seized the opportunity to start Enotech after his employer closed down the company, stated Mr. Khataw.

Under Mr. Khataw's leadership, the company, which now employs 19 people, has seen a steady growth over the last 20 years and recently opened a second office in San Antonio in 2009.

When asked about the factors that contributed to his success, Mr. Khataw named three things: "Honesty, Hard Work, and Persistence."

His firm's commitment to quality design, responsiveness to clients, and development of meaningful and long-term relationships has won the firm many contracts with the City of Austin and the private section as well.

To the many challenges faced by small business owners especially in today's economy, Mr. Khataw offered his personal insight. "As a business owner, the ups and downs of the economy always pose challenges. But I believe in opportunity - when one sector is in danger of declining, that is the time to expand your service offerings and look for new markets," he said.

"For instance, before this most recent downturn, my firm started aggressively pursuing work in the public sector. This helped cushion the fallout of the private sector. Now that the private work is coming back, the public sector seems to be slowing down. With a diversified portfolio, we are able to weather these ups and downs."

With a number of contracts under his belt with the City of Austin, Mr. Khataw advised potential contractors to be "persistent," as a key component to do business with the city. He said, "It takes awhile for the City to become familiar with you, but once they realize that you are committed to doing business with them, you will start to win work," he commented.

"Once they know and trust you, you have to consistently provide quality work and excellent customer service in order to keep them as a client," said Mr. Khataw.

Mr. Khataw added, " as an Asian businessman, I have been honored to be deeply involved in the Austin community. I serve on many boards and commissions that help me promote economic development in Austin, and at the same time I am able to represent the interests of the Asian community. "

The CEO presently sits on six boards, including the Austin Asian American Chamber of commerce, the Network of Asian American Organizations, Salvation Army Austin, and Leadership Austin.

This May, Mr. Khataw along with three other Asian Americans received from the University of Texas at Austin the Community Leadership Circle Award, which states, "Through his participation, Mr. Khataw has brought the interests and concerns of the Asian community to the forefront."

Furthermore, "He has assisted in bringing events to Austin that encourage sharing of knowledge and understanding between Asians and Westerners. These events include the Interfaith Leaders Breakfast with Mayor Leffingwell, Discover Asia and many more," mentions the award.

The award also points out, "He also worked tirelessly to promote economic development in Austin and to help fellow Asian entrepreneurs start and succeed at running their own businesses."

# New Website Contents of SMBR Give Easy Access to Latest Contracting Opportunities and City Documents

Austin, TX — Small & Minority Business Resources recently renewed the contents of its website making it more user-friendly and easier to access the latest announcements, policies, documents, and project opportunities.

The newest homepage also provides links to various program descriptions including the Small Business Construction Program, Super-Prompt Pay Program, and how to be compliant with MBE/WBE Program presented via a video.

Contracting opportunities are highlighted in the center of the homepage that takes users to solicitation notices published by CLMD, City's Purchasing Office, and the Plan Room.

Under the category of "City Business Resources" is a new item called City's Business Portal, which lists three types of business: City Financial Departments, Doing Business with the City, and Doing Business with Central Texas. Users can again access various departments and find out project opportunities and visit additional government websites for information regarding doing business with other government entities.

Another useful link under City Business Resources is the Public Records Access—On-line Document Search. Users can directly retrieve council-approved records, municipal election documents, and municipal utility district documents. There is also an easy search function allowing users to type in keywords or document category to search for specific documents.

The new homepage serves as a table of contents giving a clear view of what information is available on the website, so users no longer have to navigate and find their way in a labyrinth that so many government websites seem to embody when it comes to website design.

Please take a moment to visit SMBR's new homepage to see what tools and information are added to help your business better prepared in participation of city projects. Please visit http://www.ci.austin.tx.us/smbr/. SMBR's address is :

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