



**ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION OF CHICAGO
29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION
February 25, 2012 Hyatt Regency O'Hare**

**2012 PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE PROFILE
RAYMOND B. LEE**

**Owner/President, Golden Country Oriental Food Co.
Owner/President, Golden Ocean Seafood, Inc.**

The Asian American Coalition of Chicago is pleased to announce that **Raymond B. Lee**, Owner and President of Golden Country Oriental Food Co. (since 1979) and Golden Ocean Seafood, Inc. (since 1984) has been named the **2012 Pan Asian American Ping Tom Memorial Awardee**. Raymond Lee built his business from a small warehouse on Wells Street in Chicago to what is now one of the largest Asian, African, Caribbean and Oriental wholesale food importers and distributors in the United States.

Lee was instrumental in the formation of the Asian American Alliance and served as the President of its Board for three years (1996-1999) and as Director Asian American Alliance (Asian American Small Business Center) (from 1996-2002). The Alliance was an organization comprised of various Asian Chambers of Commerce (Chinese, Korean, Filipino and Vietnamese). He also served as a Chicago Park District Commissioner (1988-1989) and Chicago Board of Education member (1989-1990), becoming the first Asian American appointed to each such position, at a time when there was little or no representation of Asian Pacific Americans on such important boards in Chicago.

Among numerous community and civic service affiliations, Lee is past Chairman, President, and current Secretary of the Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce (service in various roles, 1983-present); Managing Director, Chinatown Parking Corporation (service since 1984); Chairman of the Board, Chinese American Development Corp. (since 1985); a member of the Ping Tom Memorial Park Advisory Council (since 1994); and a member of the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (2001-present).

He previously served as a Member, Advisory Board Member and Finance Committee Chairman for the Chinese American Service League (various roles, 1988-2009); Member, City of Chicago Commission on Human Relations Advisory Council on Asian Affairs (2001-2002); and as a Member, Asian American Advisory Council to the Illinois Secretary of State Jesse White (2001-2002).

From the AACC Nomination Package (Compiled by Leonard M. Louie:

"Raymond Lee built his business from a small warehouse on Wells Street to what is now one of the largest Asian, African, Caribbean and Oriental wholesale food importers and distributors in the United States. During this time, he has always been a strong supporter of Asian organizations, both financially and most important, volunteering his time and personal services. In other words, he was a "doer"! "If you need me, I will be there and I will help!" "

"At a time when Asian representation on Government positions were strictly in non-decision making Boards and commissions, Raymond Lee was appointed a Commissioner of the Chicago Park District by then Chicago Mayor Eugene Sawyer, and later he was moved by Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley to the Chicago School Board. These appointments opened the door for more Asians to be appointed to key

(MORE)

**ASIAN AMERICAN COALITION 29th ANNUAL LUNAR NEW YEAR CELEBRATION
2012 PAN ASIAN AMERICAN PING TOM MEMORIAL AWARDEE PROFILE
RAYMOND B. LEE**

-- ADD ONE

positions. While serving his terms with the Park District and School Board, Raymond initiated the work which resulted in Ping Tom Memorial Park and a new Haines Elementary School. He accomplished this by inviting his fellow Commissioners to accompany him to view the desolated abandoned rail property near Chinatown Square. He did likewise by bringing the Board Members to visit the 100-year-old former Haines property”.

“His greatest achievement was the fulfillment of a request made by legendary Ping Tom just prior to Ping’s passing. Ping indicated that the Chinatown Square Project was having severe financial problems but had to be completed since the Community desperately needed more residential and commercial space. Raymond took over the leadership of the Corporation upon Ping’s untimely death and used all his business acumen and committed personal finances, to eventually complete the Chinatown Square Project.”

“Raymond felt strongly that Asian Businesses needed help in obtaining government assistance and preparing procurement proposals. His initiative resulted in the formation of a Coalition of Asian Chambers of Commerce (Asian American Alliance and the Asian American Small Business Center). He helped finance their early operations and served as their first President.”

“When the Chinatown Museum Foundation, a not-for-profit organization, committed to preserving the culture of the Chinatown and Chinese American Community in Chicago was in its early stages and still searching for a home, Raymond Lee again stepped forward. He felt that the history and culture of the Community needed to be preserved for future generations and that the museum needed a home if they were going to become a reality. A property which his family had originally owned was on the market where Raymond spent his early years working for 25 cents an hour. He had an emotional attachment to the property and felt this to be the perfect scenario to retain the building and help the museum. He purchased the property* for \$600,000 and donated it to the Museum.”

“In a capsule, this is Raymond Lee.”

- 30 -

January 20, 2012

**CONTACT: MEDIA: ENERI Communications
info@enericom.net or
(312) 635-0888**

**The museum building, formerly the Quong Yick Co., and now known as the Chinese American Museum of Chicago, the Raymond B. and Jean T. Lee Center, is located at 238 West 23rd Street in Chicago’s Chinatown. The Museum opened to the public in May 2005. After a devastating fire in September of 2008, the Museum was closed for renovation and reopened in 2010.*

Raymond B. Lee Nominated by: Leonard M. Louie, Chair - 2007 AACC Lunar New Year Celebration and Member of AACC Board of Directors; President, Ping Tom Memorial Park Advisory Council; Executive Director, Chinese American Development Corporation; Treasurer and Past President, Chinese American Civic Council; Director, Chinese American Service League; Advisory Board, Chinatown American Museum of Chicago and Member, Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community, With Letters of Support from Tony Shu, President, Chicago Chinatown Chamber of Commerce, Woodrow M. Lee, 2011 President, Chinese American Civic Council of Chicago and Bernarda Wong, President, Chinese American Service League.