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# Chinese American Citizens Alliance

~ National ~

1044 Stockton Street, San Francisco, California 94108 • Telephone/Fax (415)829-9332

**National Lodge**  
ESTABLISHED 1895

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Chinese American Citizens Alliance Mourns Passing of San Francisco's First Asian American Mayor, Ed Lee**

San Francisco, December 12, 2017—The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) mourns the loss of Ed Lee, the 43<sup>rd</sup> and first Asian American Mayor of San Francisco, following his sudden passing this morning of an apparent heart attack. Mayor since 2011, he was 65.

A civil rights leader and pioneering elected official of the fourth most populous city in California, Mayor Lee was recognized by C.A.C.A. as a 2013 Spirit of America Award recipient during the 52<sup>nd</sup> National Convention held in Oakland. Established in San Francisco in 1895, C.A.C.A. joins the city's citizens in expressing condolences to his wife Anita, his two daughters, Brianna and Tania, and his family.

Edwin Mah Lee was born in Seattle to immigrant parents from Guandong Province in China. One of six children, Mayor Lee was 15 when his father died of a heart attack and worked in restaurants to help support his family. In 1974, he graduated from Bowdoin College in Maine and later earned a law degree at the University of California at Berkeley, where he launched an active career in public service and politics. Mayor Lee worked for the San Francisco Asian Law Caucus as an advocate for immigrant rights and affordable housing. He later joined city government, leading the Human Rights Commission and the Department of Public Works in 2000. In 2005, Mayor Lee became a city administrator. On January 2011, Mayor Lee was appointed by the Board of Supervisors to replace then Mayor Gavin Newsom, who had been elected lieutenant governor of California. Initially not interested in the position, Mayor Lee eventually relented in face of popular support and won election to a full term in November 2011 and re-election in 2015. Mayor Lee presided over a city expanding in prosperity largely driven by the presence of leading tech companies but also challenged with rising costs in housing and growing homelessness.

San Francisco Board of Supervisors President London Breed assumed office of mayor, effectively immediately.

“[Lee] was one of us — one of our guys made it to mayor,” said Norman Fong, director of the Chinatown Community Development Center and a 2015 C.A.C.A. Spirit of America Award Recipient, according to SFGATE.com. “That in itself is something to celebrate.”

C.A.C.A. National President Davace Chin added, “Ed Lee's too short life was a textbook example of achievement through perseverance. He was a true testament to the American dream, growing up in public housing with immigrant parents and siblings, working hard, and becoming a respected attorney and champion of housing, civil rights and immigration issues. In his political career, first as City Administrator, and then as Mayor, Ed conducted himself with professionalism, grace, and dignity. The people of San Francisco will always be grateful to Ed for the contributions he made, and the memories he leaves us, both as our neighbor and as our Mayor.”



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Web: [www.CACAnational.org](http://www.CACAnational.org)  
Chinese American Citizens Alliance

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance, established in 1895, is among the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco with chapter/lodges in Albuquerque (NM), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Greater San Gabriel Valley (CA), Greater New York (NY), Houston (TX), Las Vegas (NV), Los Angeles (CA), Mississippi, Oakland (CA), Peninsula (CA), Portland (OR), Phoenix (AZ), Salinas (CA), San Antonio (TX), San Francisco (CA), Seattle (WA) and Washington, D.C., the Alliance addresses issues regarding voter education, political participation, racial discrimination and hate crimes, and supports youth leadership training programs and equal employment opportunities for all Chinese Americans.