

Assembly Resolution No. 342

BY: M. of A. Niou

MEMORIALIZING Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim
May 2021, as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month
in the State of New York

WHEREAS, Asian and Asian-Pacific Islander Americans have contributed greatly to the wealth and cultural heritage of our great State of New York; and

WHEREAS, This Legislative Body is justly proud to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2021, as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in the State of New York, in conjunction with the observance of National Asian Pacific American Heritage Month; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Asian-Pacific Islander Americans comprise many ethnicities and languages, and their myriad achievements embody the American experience; and

WHEREAS, Asian and Asian-Pacific Islander Americans have fostered enterprises to include many of our nation's most successful and dynamic businesses; these men and women are leaders in every aspect of American life such as government, industry, science, medicine, the arts, our Armed Forces, education and sports; and

WHEREAS, New York received some of the first Asian immigrant arrivals in the early 1800s; sailors and traders of the China trade route became an essential part of the port culture that blossomed in New York City, a city of immigrants and the American Dream; and

WHEREAS, New York is home to Asian and Asian-Pacific Islanders from all parts of the Asian continent and Pacific Islands, including Japan, China, Taiwan, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Samoa, Fiji, Guam, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan; and

WHEREAS, The United States Congress passed a joint Congressional Resolution in 1978 to commemorate Asian and Asian-Pacific American Heritage Week during the first week of May; this date was chosen because two important anniversaries occurred during this time: the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants in America on May 7, 1843, and the completion of the transcontinental railroad by Chinese laborers on May 10, 1869; and

WHEREAS, In 1990, Congress voted to expand it from a week to a month-long celebration; in May 1992, the month of May was permanently designated as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month"; and

WHEREAS, According to the 2010 Census, Asian and Asian Pacific Islanders comprised 7.8% of the population of New York State and 12.7%, and growing, of New York City; and

WHEREAS, New York is home to the second largest Asian population in the country and Chinatown in Manhattan, Queens, and Brooklyn form one of the largest enclaves of Chinese people in the Western hemisphere; and

WHEREAS, There are many notable Asian and Asian-Pacific Islander Americans from New York, some of whom include: Corky Lee, a renowned Chinese-American photographer whose work documented the diversity and nuance of Asian American life and culture; Wataru "Wat" Misaka, player for the New York Knicks in the 1947-48 season; Yuri Kochiyama, former World War II Internee and Nobel Peace Prize nominee; Roger Y. Tsien, awarded the 2008 Nobel Prize in chemistry for his discovery and development of the green fluorescent protein (GFP) with two other chemists: Martin Chalfie of Columbia University and Osamu Shimomura of Boston University and Marine Biological Laboratory; Jip Chun, who worked for Otis Elevator Co. and invented a fire safety switch in all elevators; Lucy Liu, Chinese American actress from Woodside, Queens; Hikaru Utada, Japanese American singer, songwriter, arranger, and producer; Bill Lann Lee, Assistant United States Attorney General for the United States Department of Justice Civil Rights Division under President Bill Clinton; Sheryl WuDunn, a SUNY Trustee and writer for The New York Times and the first Asian American to win a Pulitzer Prize in 1990; Zubin Mehta, Conductor, New York Philharmonic Orchestra; Charles Mingus, jazz double bassist, composer, band leader; Laura Chang, science editor, The New York Times; Michiko Kakutani, The New York Times literary critic and author; Jennifer Lee, journalist, The New York Times; Grace Meng, the first Asian American elected to the U.S. Congress from New York; Benny Agbayani, former outfielder for the New York Mets; Yung Wing, the first Chinese person to graduate from a U.S. college (Yale in 1854); Jeremy Lin, player for the New York Knicks in the 2011-2012 season; Mindy Kaling, actress, comedian and writer; Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson, former World Wrestling Entertainment Champion and actor; Viet Thanh Nguyen, winner of the 2000 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction; Shuji Nakamura, recipient of the 2014 Nobel Prize in Physics; Carol Lim, in partnership with Humberto Leon, founders of Opening Ceremony; Hines Ward, activist and former NFL player; Alexander Wang, fashion designer; M. Night Shyamalan, film director and screenwriter; and Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft, to name a few; and

WHEREAS, According to a released report, Asian Americans of the Empire State: Growing Diversity and Common Needs, from the Asian American Federation, the Asian population in New York State grew fastest outside of New York City; the number of Asian American residents in the suburban counties surrounding New York City grew by approximately 50%, marking the expansion of this community throughout our State; and

WHEREAS, With the population growth upstate came increased diversity; Burmese Americans went from being too few to be reported to the sixth largest Asian group in upstate counties in 2021; and

WHEREAS, By recognizing the accomplishments and contributions of Asian and Asian-Pacific Americans, this great Empire State reaffirms our commitment to diversity and equal opportunity for all, thereby ensuring a bright future for all New Yorkers and Americans; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to proclaim May 2021, as Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in the State of New York; and be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution, suitably engrossed, be transmitted to The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo, Governor of the State of New York.