

NAMES IN THE NEWS

Yang, Soma among James Beard finalists



Rachel Yang and husband-chef Seif Chirchi, who is also a finalist.

On March 16, the **James Beard** Award announced its finalists for its first awards in two years. Only three Seattle chefs and restaurants are still in the running for awards out of the 11 chefs, four restaurants, and one baker from Washington who were 2022 James Beard Award semifinalists.



Mutsuko Soma

in Chicago. ■

They include **Rachel Yang** of Fremont's **Joule**—a Korean restaurant famous for its beef short rib kalbi with grilled kimchi, and soba master **Mutsuko Soma**, whose restaurant **Kamonegi** serves soba noodles, local meat and seafood, and creative desserts like tempura Samoa Girl Scout cookies.

The winners will be honored during the James Beard Restaurant and Chef Awards ceremony on June 13

Densho founder Tom Ikeda retiring



Tom Ikeda

Tom Ikeda, the founding executive director and longtime leader of **Densho**, an online archive and public history organization that documents the stories of Japanese Americans incarcerated during World War II, recently announced his pending retirement.

Ikeda co-founded Densho in 1996, shepherding its growth from a small, volunteer-run oral history project to a “gold standard” digital archive that reaches over a million people across the globe each year.

“Tom’s a real trailblazer, not just in using digital technology to make this history more accessible, but also in keeping it relevant and engaging the next generation,” said Board Chair **Ron Tanemura**.

A major national search for a dynamic new leader to take the helm is now underway.

Ikeda plans to stay on until a new executive director has been selected and to help guide the transition process. ■

Mae Ngai wins Bancroft Prize



Mae Ngai

Mae Ngai won one of the most prestigious awards in the field of American history.

The Columbia University professor wrote “The Chinese Question: The Gold Rushes and Global Politics,” which was published by W.W. Norton, and was praised by the jury as “an extraordinary

book” that “brilliantly shows us how much of the white Anglo-American world came to view the Chinese as a racially unassimilable and threatening people.”

The **Bancroft Prize**, which includes an award of \$10,000, was established in 1948 by the trustees of Columbia University, with a bequest from the historian Frederic Bancroft.

Books are evaluated for “the scope, significance, depth of research, and richness of interpretation.” ■

Bee Nguyen for GA Secretary of State



Bee Nguyen

Last week, **AAPI Victory Fund** announced their latest endorsement for the upcoming midterm elections: **Bee Nguyen** for Georgia Secretary of State.

Nguyen made history as the first Vietnamese American member elected to the Georgia General Assembly in 2017.

This year, if elected, Nguyen may make

history once more as Georgia’s first AAPI Secretary of State.

AAPI Victory Fund President & CEO **Brad Jenkins** said, “Nguyen gained invaluable mentorship experience through a local nonprofit she founded to educate and empower young women and, over the decade she spent in the Georgia public school system, knows firsthand the best practices to organize and spark change for her community...as Secretary of State, we have no doubt Representative Nguyen will position the state of Georgia as a leader in our country for voting rights.” ■

Thank you!

Our daughter Vanessa Lee won the 2022 Miss Chinese Chamber of Commerce, First Princess and Miss Talent in the Miss Chinatown U.S.A. pageant in San Francisco recently.

We are fortunate to have the support of friends, community organizations, and leaders. We appreciate their congratulatory advertisements in the Northwest Asian Weekly and Seattle Chinese Post, gifts, red envelopes, flowers, and good wishes. Thank you to all the guests, including Seattle Police Chief Adrian Diaz, for coming to our celebration dinner on March 12 at China Harbor Restaurant.

Also, we'd like to thank our elected officials for sending us congratulatory letters, including Congressman Adam Smith, Gov. Jay Inslee, King

County Executive Dow Constantine, and Port of Seattle Commissioner Toshiko Hasegawa. Smith's representative Arshia Nilchian, Constantine's representative James Bush, Bellevue Deputy Mayor Jared Nieuwenhuis, and Bellevue City councilmember Conrad Lee were also at the event to present the certificate and acknowledgement letters.

Last but not least, we'd like to acknowledge the support of the Lee Family Association and Greater Seattle Chinese Chamber of Commerce for sponsoring and coaching our daughter, and also for attending the pageant in San Francisco to cheer for her success.

— Kristin and Jim Lee

PHOTO BY ALVIN TANG