

WILDCAT WEDNESDAY

Letter of the Law



James E. Rogers College of Law

March 23, 2016

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2015

100 YEARS

The Honorable Roxanne Song Ong ('78)

The Law College Association and the University of Arizona Alumni Association will present the UAAA Public Service Award to the Honorable Roxanne Song Ong, Class of 1978.

Judge Song Ong served on the bench for nearly 30 years, breaking new ground as the first Asian American woman judge in Arizona.

A Phoenix native, Judge Song Ong began her career practicing in the areas of criminal prosecution, defense, and immigration law, followed by five years on the Scottsdale City Court, beginning in 1986.

In 1991 she became a judge for the Phoenix Municipal Court and in 2000 was appointed Assistant Presiding Judge. She was Chief Presiding Judge from 2005 until her retirement from the court in late 2014.

Judge Song Ong's term was marked by advances in the management of DUI cases and the introduction of specialty courts to address cases involving populations with significant financial, psychological, behavioral, physical and related challenges. She continues to serve as Pro Tem Judge for other jurisdictions in Arizona.

Upon her retirement, Chief Justice Scott Bales of the Arizona Supreme Court wrote:

"While ably leading the Phoenix Municipal Court, [Judge Song Ong] has devoted countless hours working to improve the administration of justice in Arizona by helping to train other judges and



serving on various statewide court committees. She has also been actively engaged in her community by speaking to students in hundreds of classes, appearing at career days, and judging mock trial competitions."

Judge Song Ong has received awards from organizations such as the American Judges' Association, the National Conference of Metropolitan Courts, the State Bar of Arizona, the Maricopa County Bar Association, the Arizona Women Lawyer's Association, and the National Asian American Bar Association.

In 2013, she was named "Judge of the Year" by the Arizona Supreme Court and profiled as one of eight leaders in the PBS [Makers: Arizona](#) series.

Most recently, in 2015, she received the "Spirit of America Award" from the National Chinese American Citizens Alliance and the "Wing F. Ong Legacy Award" from the Arizona Asian Chamber of Commerce.

Judge Song Ong's service to the public and the profession has never flagged as she has worked in support of a diverse and effective judiciary and taught, mentored, and inspired countless new judges and attorneys.



Chief Justice Scott Bales and Judge Song Ong on her retirement (image courtesy of [azatty.wordpress.com](#))