

让我们一起讲述华裔的故事

蓝采风博士 (Phylis Lan Lin) 11月8日在华盛顿华裔博物馆落成晚宴上的讲话

David, thank you for your kind words.

Good evening. I would like to take this special opportunity to say a big "Thank You" to the Chinese American Museum in DC Founder, Mr. and Philip Qiu and to the Museum Foundation Vice President, Ms. JennyLiu, for their vision and for their devotion to the establishment of this, the first Chinese American Museum in Washington, DC. Please join me in a big round of applause. Thank you, and on behalf of the museum's Academic Advisory Board I would like to express a heart-felt appreciation to Dr. Sesin Jong, who flew in from Shanghai and will leave for Taipei tonight. Dr. Jong, a prominent medical doctor from New York, gave us a special demonstration of his Chinese ink brush painting last night at our museum. His work is absolutely inspirational. Thank you, Dr. Jong, for showing us the truthfulness, humanism and beauty in your Chinese ink brush painting.

I arrived in DC two nights ago from the heartland of America, Indianapolis, Indiana. It is always a breath taking and eye opening experience to see this great city with its monumental capital buildings and some of the grandest museums in the world.

I was born in Taiwan 76 years ago. I am a Hakka with Chinese heritage. The Chinese characters for Hakka literally means "guest families." It is estimated that there are about 80 million Hakka Chinese scattered in almost every corner of the world, including more than 50,000 in the United States. I speak some Hakka, Taiwanese, Mandarin Chinese, and English. So my upbringing introduced me to a mixture of many languages and cultures.

Ever since I was little, my dad always whispered to me, "Phylis, we live on this small island, just like frogs living in a well. You only see that much of the sky. You must jump out of the well and go to America to see the big sky." Without hesitation, upon my graduation from Tunghai University, a Christian university founded by the United Methodist Church of America, I packed a suitcase full of dreams and started my long journey to America. Before I left, my grandmother, who was in her 90s, gave me an outfit like this one (I wore out the one she gave me, which was almost 100 years old, and I had this identical Hakka outfit made 30 years ago). Grandma said, "O Sen Jiang (My Japanese name, because Taiwan was occupied by Japan for 50 years. Everyone on the island was forced to adopt a Japanese name or be jailed), please take this outfit with you and please always remember, don't marry a high nosed, red haired, white skinned person in America." Grandma was not one of those "crazy rich Asians" but she saw a big difference between the Chinese and the Americans. My husband is also from Taiwan but my daughter is married to an American. Yes, my son-in law has "high nose, red hair" and white skin. However, he is a good hearted person. He is the best son-in-law any mother can have. You see, it is not our outer physical traits, it is our "inner heart", and it is what we do, that counts.

One day my daughter, an orthopedic surgeon, wrote me after she checked into the hotel in Disney World with her family, "Mom, can you imagine my kids, who are only 3, flew first class and they are staying at the Ritz Carlton!" I answered, "Great! You know, Dad and I flew economy class and we stayed at the Holiday Inn. But don't feel guilty, I bet your kids will fly their

own private jets when they grow up." I am so happy because our next generation and future generations are making good progress in this great land. This is what immigrants' American dream is all about. Progress is the key word. We come to America, we integrate, and we become part of the American fabric. I hope my grandchildren will grow up bilingual and embrace multiculturalism. There are a few second and third generation Chinese American guests here tonight. We can't wait to hear their stories. We are building a Chinese American Museum in DC as a platform for future generations to share with us their rich American experiences. Their stories are our American stories! They are, we are, more than ever, part of America's mainstream. "Build it together" is our motto. We need everyone's help to promote our good cause and noble mission. The opening of this museum is timely and exciting. It represents the best of Chinese and American values and work ethic and signals the importance of valuing and understanding diverse heritages in our globalized society.

Time flies, I have lived in America for 52 years. I am very clear about my identity. Who am I? Chinese? American? Neither. I am a Chinese- American. In me, I have the best of these two worlds. My Asian heritage cultivates my Confucian values (humanism and humility) and moral teachings (work ethics, filial piety, and loyalty), and my assimilation to American culture cultivates my scientific mind (critical thinking and research skills), democratic orientation (leadership style and civic engagement), and volunteerism (community service and social responsibility). I am able to grasp the best of both worlds and maintain an integrated yet balanced framework between the east and the west. I am a Chinese/Taiwanese/Hakka and I am a naturalized American citizen. Culturally, I am a Chinese-American. I came to America, I integrated, and I am part of the American fabric.

I am often asked this question — "Phylis, have you ever been discriminated against?" I do not reply with a "yes" or a "no." The answer is obvious. You see, I am short, I am a woman, and I am an Asian. But I always walk tall, I exercise women's soft power, and I can speak Chinese, Taiwanese, Hakka, and English. My three disadvantages are my three strengths. I am proud of my heritage and I am proud to be an American. Asia is my mother and America is my husband. I love them both. I am glad to be here.

When I came to America in 1966, I received a scholarship from the Zonta Club, an American international women's professional organization. They granted me a scholarship for my graduate study in Montana. What came to my mind at that time was, "Someday, I will create a scholarship that is 1,000 times larger and for American students as my token of appreciation to the Zonta ladies and to America!" I approached that goal when I established a scholarship in 2000 for social work students. And, yes, I will be able to reach that goal—a 1,000 times larger scholarship, in the near future. This is my American dream. I taught for 45 years at the University of Indianapolis before I retired 10 weeks ago. I have devoted almost half a century to educating American students. This teaching career in America was not what I had planned when I set foot in America. I was planning to come, to get my graduate education and return to Taiwan to teach there,



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to teach "my people!" Well, I came and I stayed and I became one of you. I have served and I hope to continue to serve.

"Build it together", ladies and gentlemen, our Chinese American Museum in DC is a great and promising platform for our good cause and noble mission. We will have events and programs to tell the world our Chinese American stories; we will pay tribute to the many and transformational accomplishments of Chinese Americans; stories about their spirit, resilience, and contributions, from the turn of the last century to the present and beyond. We aim to foster appreciation of Chinese culture. We also wish to advance global learning and cultivate deeper understanding of the history and accomplishments of Chinese Americans in both the historical context and in contemporary life. The Chinese American Museum in DC is not only meant to provide a compelling exhibit space, but to be a center for educational, academic, and art programs. The Chinese American Museum is a museum for all audiences, regardless of their heritage. We want to showcase how America is a land of immigrants. Just like immigrants of many different heritages, Chinese Americans have been, and will continue to be working alongside all peoples in this land. We trust we can "Build it together." We came, we integrated, and we are among the movers and shakers of this great nation. Ladies and gentlemen, please enjoy our stories. Chinese American stories are American stories. We need your support and guidance and we thank you for coming. Thank you.