



Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month

Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month recognizes the contributions that these cultures have made to our country and our community.

Tammy Duckworth, United States Senator of Illinois is an example of an elected official of Asian ancestry. Her mother is Thai Chinese and originally from Chiang Mai. Just one glowing illustration of where Asian American ancestry has contributed to our country and our community here in Illinois. Senator Duckworth also has the additional distinction of being an Iraq War Veteran and the recipient of the Purple Heart for valor during combat.

Pacific Islanders, Japanese Americans, and Filipino Americans were instrumental in the US's triumph in World War II, serving as linguists, laborers, and soldiers.

I also want to take the opportunity to shine a light on examples of inventions from our Asian community that have changed our daily lives and demonstrate how they have influenced the culture in this country and our community.

China was the first nation to invent paper, a resource we are purging because of the impact on the environment, but for centuries has memorialized history, memories and communication.

The Chinese also invented the compass, which is still a valuable tool for directional navigation. In addition, they were instrumental in the production of tea which has been used for centuries for medical purposes, calming, and a viable alternative to coffee, including so many flavors and healthy ingredients. The Asian culture invented silk, a quality fabric that is used in producing art, table coverings, high fashion clothing and so many other countless items over many centuries. These are just a few examples of the innovative and important contributions of these communities.

It was also important to me in drafting this statement to add a personal and local perspective by interviewing local residents, who are part of the Asian culture within our community. The following represents high notes of their personal viewpoint of their culture and its impact on their families.

Intergenerational influence is important in the Asian culture. The grandparents focus on values and encouraging their children and grandchildren to be disciplined and high achievers in school.

Young Chinese children today still reflect the influence of discipline and because of immigration, the work ethic of commitment and dedication. Asian American and Pacific Islander heritage represents a variety of ancient civilizations that has survived for centuries. Residents emphasized how their cultures are represented through food and how it can bring people together. In our community and others these traditions have influenced American cuisine through its strong presence in restaurants and the local dining experience. These residents view the heritage of food as a way to bring their cultural experience to the American table. It is a perfect illustration, that despite language and cultural differences, food can bring families and communities together.

Let us take this opportunity to highlight how recognizing other cultures and their influence is an opportunity to bring our nation and our community together by recognizing the value and contributions of all our residents and the rich culture that each brings to our community. I recognize that this is only a snapshot, but it is our first effort to bring the richness of other cultures to life.

I am recognizing Asian American and Pacific Islander residents this month and their vibrant culture and traditions that continue to enhance and enrich our community daily.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mayor Johnson", is written over a faint circular stamp.

Mayor Johnson