



Photos by Kevin Chang | Staff Photographer

**A MOBILE DAY OF THE DEAD ALTAR**, created by Santa Ana-based nonprofit Latino Health Access, makes a stop at Ponderosa Park in Anaheim on Oct. 31. Local Latino communities in Santa Ana and Anaheim have been hit disproportionately by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Traveling altar honors the dead

A local nonprofit drove a mobile Day of the Dead altar through Latino communities in Anaheim and Santa Ana last weekend to honor the deceased.

The event was organized by Latino Health Access, a Santa Ana-based nonprofit that advocates for the health of the local Latino community, as a way to bring the celebration to the homes of those most affected by the virus while still heeding health safety guidelines.

The event was imbued with special significance this year as Latinos have been disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in Orange County and the rest of the country.

The nonprofit organized it as part of the of the Latino Health Equity Initiative. The county launched the program in June in partnership with Latino Health Access after data revealed that the Latino community, particularly in Anaheim and Santa Ana, has taken the brunt of the pandemic in Orange County.

Santa Ana and Anaheim account for about 36% of the county's COVID-19 cases. Anaheim is 56% Latino and Santa Ana is 77%.

— Ben Brazil



**AZTEC DANCERS** celebrate the Day of the Dead at Ponderosa Park in Anaheim on Oct. 31.



**A DAY OF THE DEAD** altar, created by nonprofit Latino Health Access, traveled to Anaheim and Santa Ana last weekend.



**A MASKED AZTEC DANCER** participates in a celebration of the Day of the Dead at Ponderosa Park in Anaheim on Oct. 31.

## Mental health leaders discuss strategies

In a virtual forum, a panel considers how to help Cambodian, Vietnamese refugee communities.

BY ADA TSENG

For the past six months, since Dr. Clayton Chau took over as the director of the Orange County Health Care Agency, his public remarks have largely centered around explaining and defending the county's medical response to the coronavirus pandemic.

But in a Oct. 22 virtual forum "Let's Talk About Mental Health in the Cambodian & Vietnamese Community," hosted by TimesOC, USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism and Viet Rainbow of Orange County (VROC), Chau joined a group of Asian American medical providers, officials and advocates to speak about mental health.

"Most of you who know me know that I've been very public about my own journey in re-

**"We have to be able to allow the person in front of us to be the expert of their experience..."**

— Paul Hoang

Founder of Moving Forward Psychological Institute

covery for chronic depression and PTSD related to childhood and youth trauma," Chau said in the Zoom panel.

Chau and his family fled to the U.S. as a refugee from Vietnam, and he said that the reason he eventually pursued a career as a psychiatrist was because he understood the ways that immigrants experience trauma — and often are retraumatized while trying to build a life for themselves in America.

They can also be misdiagnosed by medical providers who don't understand their cultural background and history.

The panel was moderated by TimesOC freelancer Agnes Constante and VROC founder Hieu Nguyen. It featured Chau, Orange County Asian and Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA) founder Mary Anne Foo, Moving Forward Psychological Institute founder Paul Hoang, CalOptima director of behavioral health services Edwin Poon, the Cambodian Family health and mental health program director Amina Sen-Matthews and VROC project manager My Nguyen.

The discussion was kick-started by Constante's presentation of her three-part TimesOC series "Improving

See *Mental*, page R6

## 'The Donut King' documentary release makes an O.C. homecoming

BY VERA CASTANEDA

The donut business isn't easy. There's a hustle to it, and director Alice Gu captures it in her debut documentary "The Donut King."

The film follows an immigrant tale of the American dream through Bun Tek "Ted" Ngoy, a Cambodian refugee whose charmed life is full of war, romance, entrepreneurship, racism and a caution about greed. Also, significantly for Ngoy, other Cambodian refugees and their children — donuts.

Ngoy built a vast donut shop empire across California, and it started in 1970s Orange County. He tasted his first donut at a Tustin gas station, trained as a baker in a La Mirada Winchell's and ran his own Winchell's store in the Balboa Peninsula.

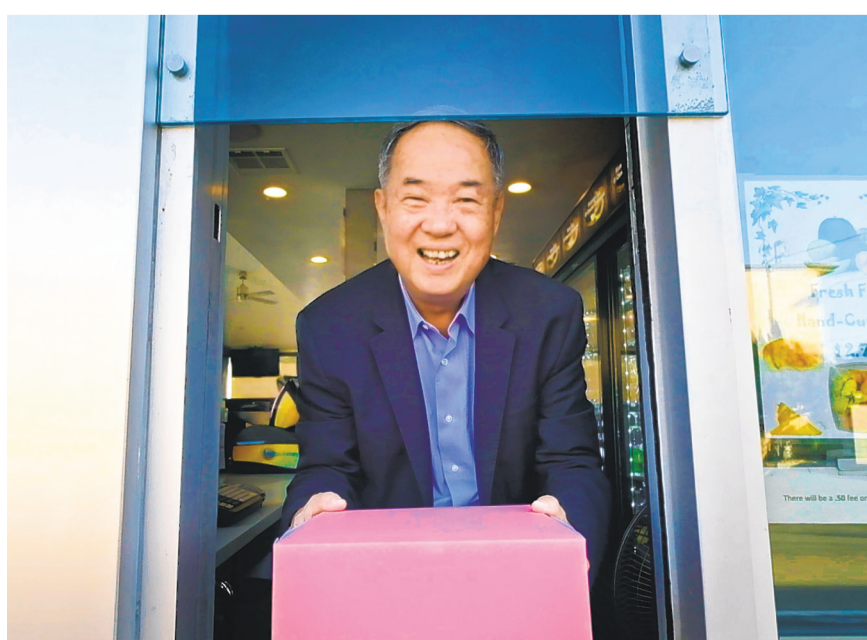
Then he opened his first independent shop in La Habra, eventually covering the rest of O.C. and California landscape with a familiar coat — yellow strip mall signs with red lettering reading Christy's Donuts.

Ngoy and his family enjoyed the fruits of their labor and at one point moved into a 7,000-square-foot mansion in Mission Viejo. He also sponsored more than 100 Cambodian refugee families and established a path of financial opportunity for them in America.

The documentary goes back and forth between Ngoy and the present-day lives of second- and third-generation donut shop kids or what Gu refers to as Donut Generation 2.0.

In this condensed and edited

See *Donut*, page R8



**DIRECTOR ALICE GU** makes her film debut with "The Donut King," following the life of Ted Ngoy, pictured, who founded his donut shop empire in Orange County.

Courtesy of Greenwich Entertainment



# Kanye West receives thousands of votes from Orange County residents

BY BEN BRAZIL

As the nation breathlessly watches a tight presidential race and agonizes over the future of American democracy, Kim Kardashian's husband received thousands of votes from Orange County residents this week.

As of 5 p.m. Thursday, West and his Independent Party running mate Roque "Rocky" De La Fuente Guerra had received 3,641 votes from Orange County residents.

West was listed as a vice presidential candidate on the California ballot.

It won't be good enough

to put the man who called himself "the greatest artist that God has ever created" in the Oval Office. West conceded defeat late Tuesday night after falling behind Joe Biden and Donald Trump by tens of millions of votes.

West ran on a platform that included restoration of prayer in schools, expansion of education opportunities, investment in renewable energy and criminal justice reform. "In our future, we will H.E.A.L.," his campaign website reads, "Hold Everyone Accountable to Love."

West, who appeared on

the ballot as an independent in several states, could not be reached for comment on Wednesday.

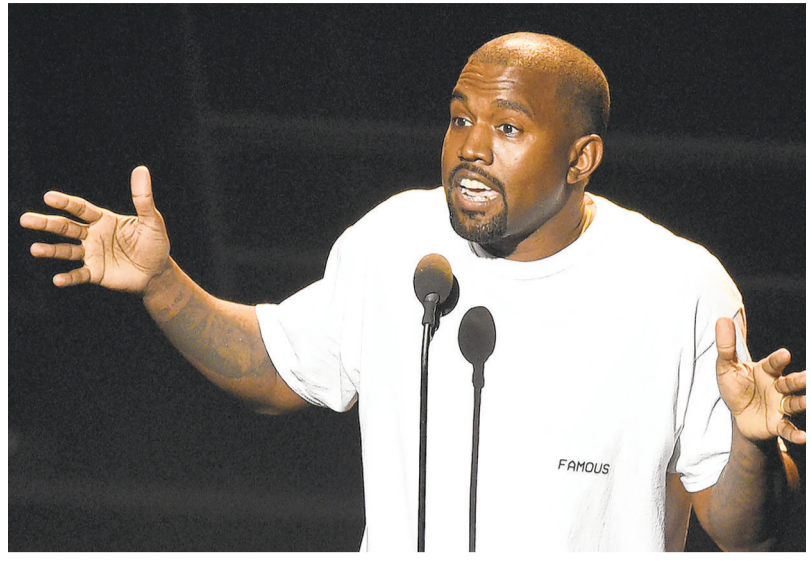
In Los Angeles County, West and Guerra received more than 10,000 votes.

A few people voiced their dismay on Twitter at West's vote totals.

One Twitter account read, "2623 adults in #OrangeCounty voted for Kanye! Post election task: Find ALL and cancel their voting rights!"

"Oh lord," another user commented.

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**KANYE WEST** at the MTV Video Music Awards in August 2016.

Chris Pizzello  
Associated Press

# ORANGE COUNTY BAIL FUND PREPARES TO HELP PROTESTERS IN THE WEEKS AHEAD

BY BEN BRAZIL

With protests expected in the coming weeks as the presidential election unfolds, the Orange County Bail Fund is ready to support those who are arrested while demonstrating.

Meanwhile, the Orange County Sheriff's Department has prepared for potential unrest.

"Everyone in the O.C. Bail Fund has their perception of what's to come," said O.C. Bail Fund member Miguel Tenayuca. "Some of us are very worried about whatever outcome of the presidential election leads to. Myself, I don't think we are on the verge of Civil War. I think there are others who probably disagree with me. But in terms of what's going to happen out there on the streets, there will be protests."

"Whoever wins, ultimately we lose. And when I say we, I mean the working class people at the bottom. Because, politicians, by and large, don't have our interests at heart. And that's going to make people angry. And the anger is going to pour out in the calle. And people are going to get arrested. And we're going to be there to help out in any way we can."

In the past few days, the young group has focused on spreading the word on social media. They also now have a general phone line where people can contact them.

Tenayuca said he will be out in the streets to connect with protesters and hand out fliers with details about the fund.

"I will let them know, as I always have, that this money is for all of you out there who have a righteous rage in their hearts," Tenayuca said.

Protests are expected nationwide as vote counts continue in battleground states and President Trump makes legal challenges to the outcomes of those counts.

Protests have already



**MEMBERS OF THE** Orange County Bail Fund, from left, are Miguel Tenayuca of Santa Ana, Michelle Rojas of Aliso Viejo, Diana Iñiguez from Irvine, David Cortazar from the city of Orange and Nikki Reizt from Huntington Beach.

been held in Washington, D.C., and Portland, among other places.

Orange County has been fairly quiet just a few days removed from election day, though a "Stop the Steal" pro-Trump motorcade was slated to travel from Mission Viejo to Los Angeles on Saturday.

Protect the Results, a national coalition to demand that all votes be counted, postponed two rallies on Wednesday that were scheduled to be held in Laguna Beach and Santa Ana.

"While the coalition will not activate our event today, we know that Trump may say and do anything he can to cling to power — and that's why, as part of the entire Protect the Results national coalition, we will remain vigilant in the days and weeks ahead," the group said in an email.

"We are ready to mobilize if needed to ensure every vote is counted and respected. For now, the event

date has been updated to Dec. 1."

The Orange County Sheriff's Department has been preparing for protests.

"O.C. Sheriff is committed to ensuring you can safely exercise your right to vote," Sheriff Don Barnes said in a Twitter statement this week. "Protection of 1st Amendment constitutional rights also remains a priority. Peaceful speech will always be supported, but acts of violence or destruction of property will be addressed swiftly."

Though the O.C. Bail Fund is a young organization, its members say they have prepared for what's to come.

The O.C. Bail Fund was founded towards the end of May during the Black Lives Matter protests that broke out after George Floyd died after Minneapolis Police Officer Derek Chauvin knelt on his neck during an arrest.

After a protest in Santa Ana escalated, O.C. Bail

Fund member Diana Iñiguez said she and a few other members of the Orange County chapter of the Democratic Socialists of America realized that the county needed a more general bail fund.

So they started a Go FundMe fundraiser, which has raised more than \$46,000.

Iñiguez pointed out that she set the goal for \$10,000.

Since then, the bail fund has branched off from the rest of the OCDSA, which is a nonprofit. The seven-member bail fund includes some who aren't with the OCDSA, like Tenayuca, who has worked with the local branch of the Incarcerated Workers Organizing Committee.

"When we heard about the bail fund being formed by the DSA, we immediately jumped at the opportunity to help form a more solid fund in Orange County because it was definitely needed," Tenayuca said,

pointing out that the other fund in the county was the Orange County Justice Fund.

"The only other fund that was out there was specifically for migrants ... And that's one of the key points behind our founding, we wanted something that was more general."

Iñiguez said the group came together with the goal of abolitionism — a rejection of incarceration in any form.

"We don't believe in prisons, cops, I.C.E., or anything that's part of the prison industrial complex," she said. "We don't believe it's the solution to social problems."

The group has spent about \$26,000 posting bail for a handful of people over the summer.

Iñiguez said Orange County protesters were largely released without charges or had minor fines, so the group has so far posted bail for individuals unrelated to protesting.

**"Whoever wins, ultimately we lose. And when I say we, I mean the working class people at the bottom. Because, politicians, by and large, don't have our interests at heart. And that's going to make people angry."**

— Miguel Tenayuca  
O.C. Bail Fund member

They partnered with the O.C. Justice Fund on an immigration-related case. They also helped a protester pay booking fees.

Iñiguez said the group doesn't have limits on who they help.

"Because we're abolitionists, we don't really have limits on that," she said. "We don't really care what the person is being charged with, or if they have past charges or anything like that."

"Because as abolitionists we don't believe in prison as an institution. We don't believe anyone should go there. That being said, we haven't gotten any requests that might be challenging to that. But yeah, for the most part we will help anyone that asks us."

The fledgling group is still working on developing a website and attaining its nonprofit status.

"We're going to keep doing this for as long as we can," Tenayuca said.

"We're not going to let this fire burn out. It was lit during the Black Lives Matter uprisings, and the fire is not going to die any time soon."

The O.C. Bail Fund can be reached at (657) 200-5335.

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Raul Roa | Staff Photographer

# For second year, Consulate of Mexico in Santa Ana celebrates Mexican culture

BY TIMESOC STAFF

For the second year, the Consulate of Mexico in Santa Ana is celebrating Mexican culture through "Semana Global de Mexico."

The weeklong celebration kicked off online and outdoors with Día de los Muertos festivities on Nov. 1 and will continue to produce virtual programming through Nov. 8.

Norma Edith Aguilar, consulate of communications, arts and education, said the Institute of Mexicans Abroad started the initiative to promote Mexican culture across the world and extends to about 80 embassies, 67 consulates and eight organizations like the United Nations and UNESCO.

While the first event focused the programming in Mexican communities around the globe, this year their entire network participated.

In late October, the consulate collaborated with local museums and or-

ganizations to produce events following health guidelines — a drive-in screening of "Coco," art kits to pick up and a mobile altar.

It also hosted a Facebook live event with professor Gloria Arjona to discuss her latest book "Posada's Unknown Calaveras," a collection of artist José Guadalupe Posada's well-known illustrations of Día de los Muertos skeletons.

A Facebook live event, "The Art of Mexicans in Orange County: Traditions, Customs and Languages" took place on Thursday and included 21 county community leaders. The discussion was divided by three sections: regional Mexican traditions popular in the county, how to encourage a younger generation to participate in traditions and language, and how Mexican culture has influenced the county.

"We're going to talk about how they share traditions with new generations and how difficult it is

to do so for some like the Maya community from Yucatán," Aguilar said.

The speakers were slated to represent the various Mexican regions the consulate recognizes as present in Orange County such as Chiapas, Guerrero, Michoacán, Nayarit and Yucatán.

The consulate also collaborated with OC Film Fiesta. Although the film festival ended on Oct. 25, five Mexican short films from IMCINE related to death will be available for free online viewing throughout the rest of the month along with the festival's Q&A sessions.

The short films include "Jacinta," "La Noria," "Lluvia en los Ojos," "Piedra de Caballo" and "Ramona."

"They're not like what you would expect with a movie like 'Coco' where it's about the specific holiday. It's more about mortality, ruminations on life and the hereafter from all spectrums of the human experience," said Victor Payan, cofounder of OC Film Fiesta. "If you're talk-



Photos courtesy of IMCINE

**A STILL FROM** the short film "Jacinta," directed by Karla Castañeda, featured online for free during the Consulate of Mexico's "Semana Global de Mexico."



**IN THE OPENING** scene of "Ramona," the 80-year-old main character declares to her family that she is ready to die. The short film is one of five available for free online viewing.

ing about connecting with your *antepasados*, your deceased relatives, the films really make you feel good. It's family friendly."

Most of the films are in animation, except for the

award-winning "Ramona," which starts with an 80-year-old woman declaring to her family that she is ready to die. As her son gathers money for a coffin, the film follows her

preparation and her neighbors stopping by to say their goodbyes, often in humorous ways.

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DEB'S STORY

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# Orange County investigates report of fake polling site, complete with 'I Voted' stickers

BY ADAM ELMAHREK

Orange County officials said Tuesday that they were investigating reports that someone established a fake voting center at the headquarters of a City Council candidate in Westminster and accepted ballots and handed out "I Voted" stickers.

Registrar of Voters Neal Kelley said the incident was under investigation by his office and the Orange County district attorney's office, but wouldn't comment further. At about 3 p.m., he said officials were "on scene and active right now."

Video purporting to show the phony voting center was posted on Twitter by Ty Bailey, an organizer with OCFORBlackLives, an Instagram account supporting the Black Lives Matter movement. He said activists were patrolling neighborhoods looking for voter fraud — "The orange man said to watch the polls, so that's what we're doing" — when an activist spotted a "Vote Here" sign written in black marker.

Shortly after the video was posted, a Times reporter saw the sign discarded behind the building.

Bailey said he saw people walking in with their ballots and then walking out with "I Voted" stickers, which he described as fake. He called the Registrar of Voters office, which confirmed it's not an official vote center.

The purported voting center was at an address that is listed as the headquarters of Apogee International, a skincare company owned by Kimberly Ho, the vice mayor of Westminster, who is up for reelection to the City Council. A man who answered a phone number for Apogee said that the address was Ho's campaign headquarters. The man declined to give his name or answer questions about the site's alleged use as a fake voting center.

"You need to talk with the lawyer," the man said and would not provide further names or information.

Van Tran, a former state assemblyman who is the attorney for the Ho campaign, acknowledged that people were coming there to drop off ballots.



Adam Elmahrek | Los Angeles Times

A "VOTING CENTER" sign apparently discarded behind a building in Westminster is part of an investigation into a possible phony voting center.

He also said the office was helping to "advise" voters on how to vote.

The video showed two campaign volunteers with boxes of what the narrator said appeared to be discarded ballots. However, Tran said the boxes contained empty ballot envelopes, not ballots, and Kimberly Edds, Orange County district attorney's communications director, seemed to confirm that. She said Tuesday evening that the office's investigators "have found no evidence of ballots being discarded at the location. What is being thrown away is the envelopes ballots

come in."

"It's a false controversy that the opponents are creating," Tran said, gesturing to several activists milling about in the parking lot. "There is absolutely no evidence whatsoever that any illegality is happening."

Tran, a Republican, said this was also an effort by the campaign to help bridge a cultural barrier to voting with the local Vietnamese community.

"Fellow countrymen and countrywomen who speak the language, offering a service that no other government agency provides," he said.

Activists in the parking lot, which was lined with Trump campaign flags, said they had no relationship with Ho's campaign opponents.

"I don't even know who her opponent is," said Justin Frazier, an activist with Clarity O.C., which describes itself as a grassroots voter engagement organization.

Ho, who survived a recall campaign in April, was running against Tai Do, a police officer who is also on the City Council. Because of redistricting, the two were vying for the same seat on the nonpartisan council.

Last month, a judge halted efforts by state Atty. Gen. Xavier Becerra to investigate the state GOP's use of ballot drop-off boxes, some of which were briefly, and falsely, labeled as official ballot sites.

Sacramento Judge David I. Brown agreed with the Republican Party that the boxes violated no law and posed no threat to voting.

L.A. Times staff writers Richard Winton, Kiera Feldman and Anh Do contributed to this report.

ADAM ELMAHREK writes for the Los Angeles Times.



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## Orange County, once a GOP stronghold, goes for Biden over Trump in 2020

BY LUKE MONEY

For the second straight presidential election, a Democratic candidate appears poised to splash a coat of blue over the former conservative stronghold of Orange County.

But perhaps the most surprising thing about former Vice President Joe Biden's lead in the county — once so reliably ruby red that President Reagan quipped it's "where the good Republicans go before they die" — is the fact that it was not unexpected.

"That's not at all surprising, given the registration and the other trends that are making this a purple county," said Fred Smoller, an associate professor of political science at Chapman University.

Biden was leading President Trump in the county, 53.7% to 44.4%, Thursday afternoon, with a margin of more than 125,000 votes, according to the Orange County registrar of voters office.

While there are still plenty of ballots left to tally, the preliminary numbers demonstrate the potential endurance of shifts in demographics and voter attitudes that four years ago made Hillary Clinton the first Democratic presidential candidate to win the county since the Great Depression.

"It doesn't take a genius to see that if Orange County supported Hillary Clinton, who many people felt was a flawed candidate, that they would also support, perhaps in even greater numbers, Joe Biden," Smoller said.

Clinton beat Trump in the county by a margin of 50.9% to 42.3%. In 2012, Republican candidate Mitt Romney prevailed over then-President Obama by more than 6 percentage points.

There are a few reasons



Allen J. Schaben | Los Angeles Times

QUAN NGUYEN of Santa Ana votes early Monday in Anaheim.

for Orange County's political metamorphosis, experts say. One is that the makeup of the county itself is changing.

"Older white males, conservatives, have been exiting the electorate — either dying or retiring to Arizona — and they're being replaced by younger people, particularly people of color, who are trending Democratic," Smoller said.

Louis DeSipio, a professor of political science and Chicano/Latino studies at UC Irvine, said the county also has experienced "sort of the national demographic trend of white women being a little bit more suspicious of the Republican Party."

"It's been building," he said of the county's shift toward swing status, "and the building story is a demographic story."

Another factor, DeSipio said, is Democrats' increased attention and activity in the county. They've made significant gains in voter registration — overtaking Republicans in that metric last year — and swept the county's seven congressional seats in 2018.

"That sort of investment serves to mobilize new voters," he said, "because if there's an area that's so solidly with Democrats or so

solidly with Republicans that there's no competition, younger voters are slower to get involved in the process because they think, 'What difference does it make?'"

That's not to say Orange County is on the cusp of transforming into a blue bastion, though. Republicans remain competitive down the ballot and had staked narrow leads in two of the county's congressional races as of early Thursday.

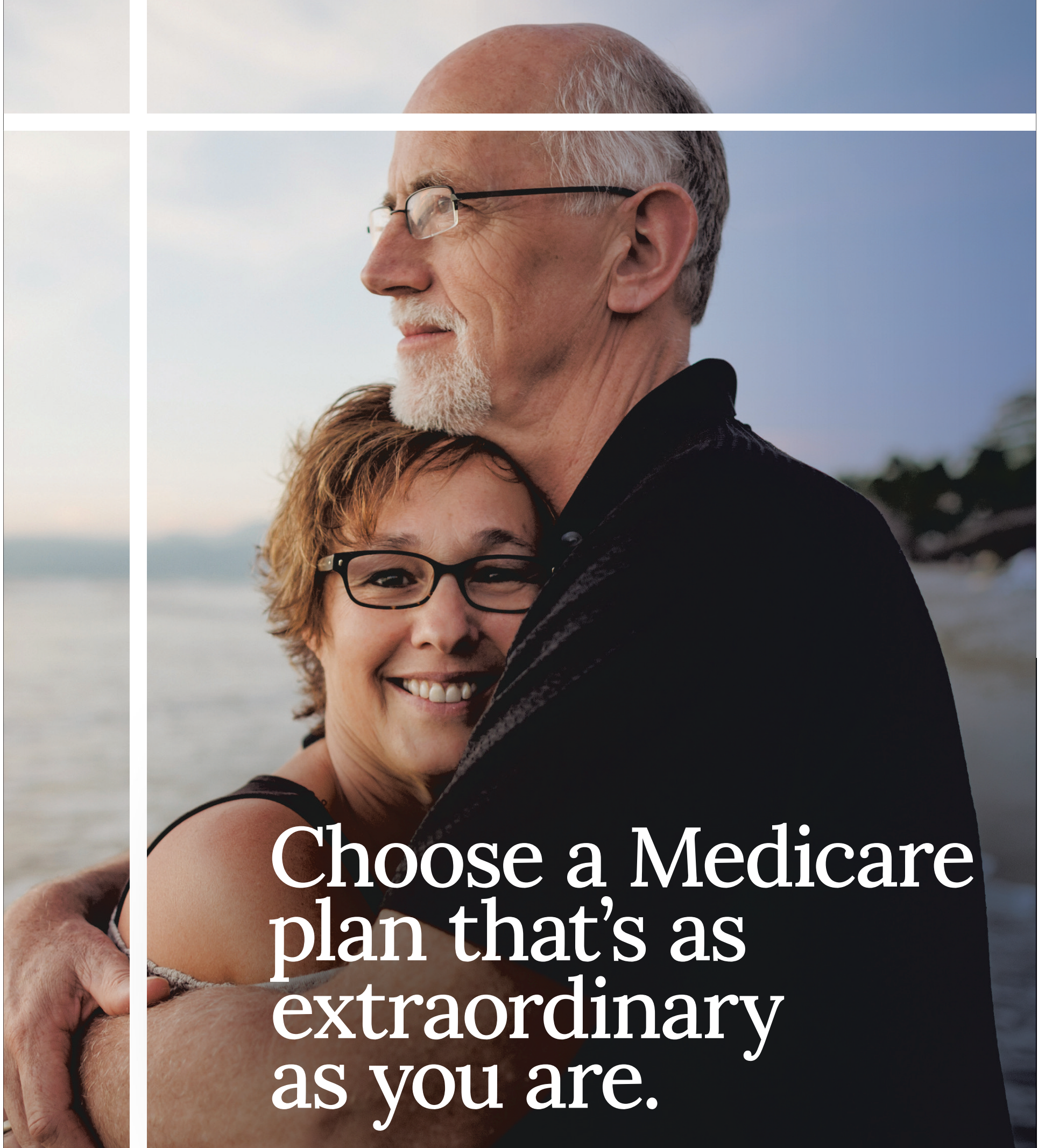
It's also impossible to write the definitive account of Orange County in 2020 when there are still more than 211,000 ballots left to count, according to an estimate from the registrar of voters.

But both Smoller and DeSipio said the trends that have pushed the county into the purple realm are unlikely to dissipate anytime soon.

"It always used to be red, it wasn't even worth talking about because everything was red," Smoller said. "But now you're going to see competitive races: Some are going to go to Democrats, some to Republicans and several of them are going to be very, very close."

LUKE MONEY writes for the Los Angeles Times.





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# 'It's in the blood:' 3 generations of women and their journeys toward political activism

BY ADA TSENG

Lacy Lew Nguyen Wright, 23, has been "voting" since she was a baby.

Her mother, Annie Wright, wheeled her in her stroller into the voting booth for the first time when she was 5 months old. When Lacy was about 5 years old, Annie started letting her punch the holes in the cards. By the time Lacy was 10, the two of them would go through sample ballots together to discuss local candidates and propositions.

Annie also took Lacy to her first protest before she turned 1. This was in 1999, when a video store owner in Little Saigon put up a flag of Vietnam with a photo of former North Vietnamese President Ho Chi Minh.

Crowds of up to 15,000 people, many refugees who had fled the communist regime after the Fall of Saigon, united for a protest that lasted approximately two months.

Despite the civic engagement lessons Annie was determined to teach her daughter, she had no desire to work in politics herself.

"I learned growing up that politics gets you killed," Annie said.

Annie is the daughter of Jackie Bong-Wright, born Le Thi Thu Van, and the late Nguyen Van Bong, who was assassinated in 1971 when Annie was 7 years old.

In Vietnam, Bong was the director of the National Institute of Administration, and he trained young people to be civil servants. In 1969, he founded an opposition political party, the Progressive Nationalist Movement.

The day before Bong's murder, South Vietnam's President Nguyen Van Thieu had asked Bong to become their prime minister. Bong was killed by a bomb placed under his car.

"In Vietnam, doing politics is very dangerous," Jackie said.

## 'I HAD TO FIGHT FOR THE LIVELIHOOD OF MY COMMUNITY'

Jackie, the second youngest of 10 children, said her family wasn't initially involved in politics.

But her older sister became a sworn operative for the coalition whose members would eventually become the Viet Cong, and it divided their family.

Her sister told the North Vietnamese government to put her own brother in jail, where he eventually died. Two of Jackie's other brothers also died as soldiers during the Vietnam War.

Jackie said when she met Bong at a mutual friend's wedding in Paris, he didn't have any political ambitions yet. He wanted to be a law professor; she planned to



IN 1999, Annie Wright, left, took her daughter, Lacy Lew Nguyen Wright, to a protest in Little Saigon over a video store owner who displayed a photo of Ho Chi Minh and the Vietnamese flag.

Courtesy of Annie Wright



IN 1973, Jackie Bong-Wright represented Vietnam at an international family planning conference.

Courtesy of Annie Wright

teach French.

A widow in her early 30s with three kids under 8, Jackie threw herself into work as a way to cope. She advocated for family planning, representing Vietnam in an international conference, and she was the director of cultural activities at Saigon's Vietnamese American Assn.

When Saigon fell, she fled with her children. They stayed in various refugee camps before eventually

ending up in Alexandria, Va.

Jackie would eventually marry Lacy Wright Jr., the man the younger Lacy is named after, a diplomat she and Bong had met briefly when he was stationed in Vietnam.

But Lacy and Jackie didn't reconnect until they coincidentally ran into each other outside of a drugstore ("She found Mr. Wright," the family likes to say).

After all she had experienced, Jackie didn't want

**"In our community, we deal with these traumas, and when we come over, we put our head down and work to try to put food on the table."**

— Annie Wright

any of her three children involved in politics. But she felt she personally had no choice.

"I had to fight for the livelihood of my community," she said.

She worked to resettle refugees and find them jobs.

"I registered thousands of them to vote in order for them to have power," she said. "Because we had to fight for the people in Vietnam who were still in prison, like my brother ... We had to fight for the people who were stranded in the Southeast Asian refugee camps to come here to the U.S. .... We had to go lobby Congress."

For the last two decades, Jackie has been the president and CEO of the national Vietnamese-American Voters Assn.

## 'I THINK IT'S ABOUT KNOWING YOUR OWN POWER'

Growing up in Orange County in the 2000s, Lacy Lew Nguyen Wright remembered hearing stories about her grandfather, but everyone called him a professor, an academic.

His students from the National Institute of Administration still gather in Little

Saigon annually around Nov. 10, the anniversary of his death, to celebrate his life.

Lacy said she started learning more about her family history when her grandmother was crowned Ms. Virginia in the Ms. Senior America pageant in 2004. Jackie had entered so she could share her refugee story.

Jackie was the first Vietnamese American to participate in the national competition, documented in the 2006 film "The Queen from Virginia: The Jackie Bong-Wright Story."

By then, she had also published an autobiography "Autumn Cloud: From Vietnamese War Widow to American Activist," which documents four generations of their family.

"I couldn't explain to my children what happened to their father because every time I talked, it was so painful that I started to cry," Jackie said. "It's only when I wrote my autobiography when everything came out."

No one actively encouraged Lacy to go into politics.

"In our community, we deal with these traumas, and when we come over, we put our head down and

work to try to put food on the table," Annie said. "We work for the second generation all the time, right? Because we know how hard it was in our country, we try to steer our children away from politics and things like that."

But when Lacy ran for student government in college, no one was surprised.

"My grandfather's sister lives in Lake Forest now, and she was like, 'It's in the blood!'" Lacy said.

Lacy entered college at UC Santa Barbara in 2014 when students were actively lobbying legislators to prevent proposed tuition hikes. That was her introduction to advocacy work, and she's been meeting with local politicians since.

"When you think about your elected officials, it seems intimidating," Lacy said. "But also, our politicians are here to respond to us and to our needs. They also don't know of everything."

One of her high school friends was a homeless community college student who wasn't able to shower in the school's gym. So he wrote the bill that allowed homeless students to shower in all community college gyms in the state.

"We just went up and down throughout Sacramento, popped into people's offices, asked them to co-sponsor this bill and asked them if they would vote for it," she said. "I think it's about knowing your own power and knowing that you can propose what you want."

After transferring to the University of Pennsylvania, she was an intern on Hillary Clinton's 2016 finance team.

During the Democratic presidential primaries in 2019, she was the national advance associate on Sen. Kamala Harris' campaign.

Lacy is currently the associate director of BLD PWR (pronounced "build power"), which was started by actor and activist Kendrick Sampson to connect folks in the Hollywood entertainment industry with political organizers.

"I had done so much lobbying on different pieces of legislation ... and it was like you were rolling a boulder up a mountain just to watch it roll back, over and over again," she said.

After years of advocating for sexual assault survivors, it wasn't until the #MeToo movement that Lacy realized "what we're willing to allow others to believe about ourselves is so dependent on what is put out by the media, by entertainment."

At BLD PWR, she works with Black Lives Matter Los Angeles and collaborates with grassroots organiza-

See *Blood*, page R9

## MENTAL

Continued from page R1

Healthcare Access for Cambodians and Vietnamese," which was supported by the USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism 2020 California Fellowship.

A child of Cambodian refugees, Sen-Matthews said she often translated for her parents during medical appointments.

Because about a third of the clients she serves at the Cambodian Family are older adults, she said she "sees her parents in every one of them."

The Cambodian Family offers workshops to educate their members about preventative health practices and provides health navigators who help patients navigate the healthcare system.

Nguyen shared his experience as someone who had difficulty finding mental health providers who understood both his Vietnamese culture and his LGBTQ identity. He also spoke of the importance of community organizations like VROC, which provide safe spaces for him and other youth.

Hoang emphasized the importance of providers practicing "cultural humility," reminding his peers that just because someone shares the same ethnic background, that doesn't mean that they are providing culturally sensitive

healthcare.

"We have to be able to allow the person in front of us to be the expert of their experience and be students in that moment to learn," he said. "And allow the person to teach and share with us and tell us their stories so we can work with them."

Foo spoke about one of her organization's recent cases, involving a woman suffering from severe depression and thoughts of suicide. She was the main supporter of her family, and her business was severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Through all these stories, you see it's not only about an individual's behavior and mental health," Foo said, explaining how they not only worked with healthcare providers but her business network and her kids' school district to provide support for her.

"You need to integrate wellness and mental health into all systems ... [and] think about all of the barriers to wellness, the root causes of the issues."

## ACTIONABLE STEPS

In Constante's series, she reported that one of the main barriers was language: 90% of Southeast Asian Americans speak a language other than English at home, while 45% have limited English proficiency.

She pointed to the need to encourage more Vietnamese and Khmer speak-

ers to become certified by the National Board of Certification for Medical Interpreters and the Certification Commission for Healthcare Interpreters.

Other panelists also offered actionable steps moving forward.

Poon said it was important for county agencies like CalOptima to "continue conversations and engagement with community-based organizations, to get feedback so we're not just looking at it from the traditional view of one-size-fits-all."

Sen-Matthews spoke

about their long-term goal of encouraging Cambodian youth to pursue healthcare as a profession. Currently in O.C., there is only one Khmer-speaking doctor.

She added that when the Cambodian Family was looking to hire a Khmer-speaking therapist, it took them a year to find someone, and he's currently undated with cases, especially during the pandemic.

Poon also spoke about CalOptima working with interns and trainees in the beginning stages of their medical careers, with the hope that they'll continue to sup-

port vulnerable communities in the future.

After listening to his fellow panelists, Chau offered a bigger-picture perspective from his viewpoint as an administrator.

"One area we have to address is the sustainability issue of the healthcare system," Chau said.

He explained that when funding is divided among so many specialized programs, it's ultimately inefficient and unsustainable.

"It's going to require all agencies to come together, work, integrate and find a solution that's most appro-

appropriate for the community," he said. While Hoang acknowledged that funding is important for sustainability, he also wanted to highlight the impact that community members can have through volunteer work.

"If each of us can donate something, contribute something, together we can create a bigger pool which can be a resource for the community," he said. "We need to continue to inspire and bring people together to address these needs."

ADA TSENG writes for the Los Angeles Times.



Times OC

A SCREENSHOT FROM the "Let's Talk About Mental Health in the Cambodian & Vietnamese Community," hosted by TimesOC, USC Annenberg Center for Health Journalism and Viet Rainbow of Orange County on Oct. 22.



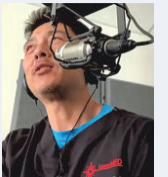
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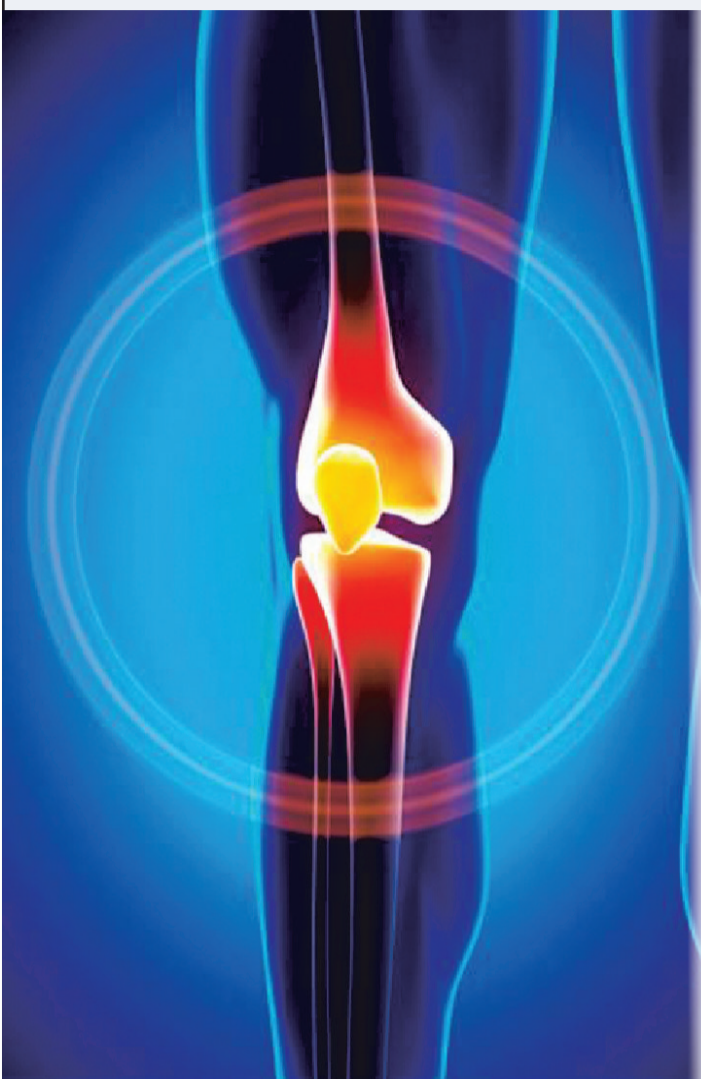
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- Can no longer play golf or your favorite hobby
- Swollen, stiff, sore & sharp hip & knee pain
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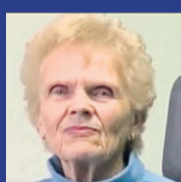
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-Linda L., R.N., Newport Beach, CA  
(Registered Nurse & Zumba Instructor)

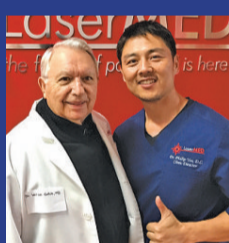
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-Rosemary, Huntington Beach

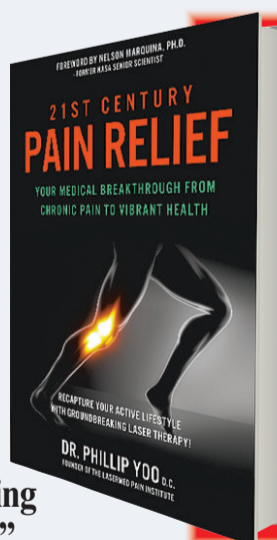


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-Dr. William Gutch, MD., 84 yrs. Palm Desert, California  
(Orthopedic Surgeon)



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**DONUT**

Continued from page R1

conversation, Gu talks about the American dream, Cambodian American Republicans, 1970s Orange County and the best donut she ate during filming.

**Q** What drew you to Ted's story at the start?

**A** Finding out about his story, it's fascinating — a guy who comes here penniless and becomes a Donut King. That phrase "Donut King" is already so eye-catching right off the bat. Upon deeper glance, it was so personal for me.

I'm Chinese American. I am the child of immigrants who came and moved here for the American dream. It really helped put some perspective on the journey to get here from somewhere else and the struggles that people go through when they arrive in a new, strange and foreign land. The premise of family in the film is how hard your parents work and the sacrifices they make so that you can have a life better than they did.

**Q** Did working on this film change or contribute to your perspective of the American dream or immigrant stories?

**A** It seems like these days the American dream is harder and harder to attain. There's so much competition.

The world moves so quickly now, but I do believe that it is still real and it is still possible. I wanted to tell this story in a way that was inspirational and optimistic.

As far as the immigrant experience and my parents — what it really did for me is open my eyes and I just cut them some slack about growing up here in conflict with wanting to be an American kid and their Chinese ways of raising me. Doing this film was really an exploration for me of understanding where you come from.

**Q** When you first reached out to Ted, it was a cold call. What was it like?



Courtesy of Greenwich Entertainment

**CHUONG LEE TAO** passed down DK's Donuts in Santa Monica to her daughter, Mayly Tao, who updated the shop with a vast menu.

**A** I spoke with him and he was in Cambodia. He was very surprised that anybody would find him and want to tell his stories. I told him that he has a story to tell. This is an incredible story of how he helped people. It was really wonderful. In our very first phone call, he asked if I was American and I told him that I was Chinese American. He said he's Chinese Cambodian and we spoke Mandarin for a couple of minutes. That really broke the ice for us. We had an instant connection and it felt like we were meant to be doing this story together.

**Q** His story has been told through different angles in a couple of articles. What new information did you learn in the making of the film?

**A** There was a lot that was new to me. In doing the research and finding that it was President [Gerald] Ford who issued the executive order to receive the refugees, a Republican president — that was a huge surprise to me given that during the time that we were making this film we

were hearing Donald Trump's rhetoric. Also Jerry Brown, who we've seen in California as our beacon of hope and morality, in 1975 was actually the opposite. He said that we didn't have room for these refugees here. We were taxed to the hilt, unemployment was high and he was very reluctant to give refugees a home here when Californians were out of work. That was super mind blowing for me to hear the political flip-flop and really insightful about another time when politics were more civil and there could be discussion.

The other discovery for me was what I called Donut Generation 2.0, the kids who go to take over the parents' mom and pop shops. These are kids who are American educated. They're savvy, young, hip. They have social media and know how to work it to innovate their parents' old donut shops with a worldwide following.

**Q** What was surprising for me was watching Ted, a Republican, pictured with Pete Wilson at one point in the film since



**TED NGOY** stands at his first independent donut shop in La Habra, named after his wife, Christy.

**Wilson supported laws that hurt immigrants.**

**A** It's wild. To understand the politics, the Republican party at the time was a very anticommunist party. Ted and a lot of the Asians who came aligned themselves with the Republican party. Ted had met Ronald Reagan, George Bush Sr., [Richard] Nixon. He hosted Dan Quayle and Pete Wilson at his house. He's friends with Dana Rohrabacher. These are all people who present day you don't associate with welcoming refugees with open arms. Interestingly, largely because of Democratic policy we got a grant for our camera and it came from this girl, who was the daughter of Vietnamese refugees who landed in Arkansas. I called her when I found out and asked if she knew about Ford and Brown. And she said she knew a lot of people in her parents' generation who are lifelong Republicans and that's why they hate the Democratic party.

I'm also, again, the daughter of Chinese American immigrants and my dad was a big Republican party supporter. And I thought, "How could that be?" He's passed away now so I can't talk to him about it, but it was a learning experience for me about my parents' relationship with politics.

**Q** There's this portion in the film that goes into Ted and his ex-wife Christy's experiences in Orange County during the 70s. Tell me more about how they connected to the local community.

**A** Ted came in the 70s and it was quite homogeneously white in Orange County at the time and a lot of people had never seen an Asian person, much less heard of a place called Cambodia. Ted was dis-

mayed. When he was working in the donut shop, he went to his sponsor and said he was having a hard time. People made fun of his accent. It was hurtful. His sponsor told him people will have their prejudices but they mean well. He suggested that Ted hang out in the back and to put Christy in the front. People love her and she's beautiful. It was a strategy that ended up working for them. Christy was in the front and made a lot of inroads with the community and built a lot of bridges.

Something else about Orange County that I found so beautiful and touching while we were making this film, there was a man who owned a donut shop in Seal Beach and his wife was stricken with cancer. He wanted to be with her, but he had no one else to manage the shop. The whole community banded together and they all agreed to sell him out of donuts every morning by 9 a.m. He would have no more donuts to sell so he could be with his wife for the rest of the day. It actually made national, if not international, news about the kindness of these people in Orange County. I thought it was so profound that this was the very same community that just a couple of decades earlier were making fun of somebody who worked at the counter and had an accent. I think that's the American way — the power of connections and people.

**Q** There's also the moment where Ted revisits his former home in Mission Viejo. How did those scenes end up happening?

**A** I asked him to travel to California again. For a year and a half, I struggled with how I was going to get access to that Mission Viejo

mansion. I thought I would just get an exterior scene for context. A day before he left, his eldest son said if you have \$3.2 million you can buy it. It was on the market. I instantly found the Realtor, the listing agent and arranged to go and have Ted walk through his old house.

**Q** Some of his relationships didn't end well. Was there any tension or awkwardness when he visited California again?

**A** He came to visit California, I think, with a little bit of trepidation. There were some hurt relationships. I can't take credit for it, but I do feel like in the making of this film and having some of these people face feelings that they hadn't confronted in many years, it was very healing. To think about what Ted did years ago — letting bygones be bygones.

**Q** Interviews can sometimes feel like a therapy session. Some of the interviews in the film seemed that way.

**A** It was actually really wonderful to speak with particularly his older kids Chet and Savy, who until that interview, they didn't have much to do with him. They barely talked to him. The second time Ted came back to California, Chet took all this time off of work, took him to his time-share in Oceanside and drove his dad around all over Southern California. This is my own speculation, but it seemed like he had come to some peace with his dad and childhood.

**Q** What is Ted up to in Cambodia nowadays?

**A** Ted is doing well. He is wealthy again. He is working in real estate. He's really funny. He says to me,

See Donut, page R9

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## 'THE DONUT KING'

In English, Mandarin and Cambodian with English subtitles; Not rated

**Running time:** 1 hour, 39 minutes

**Playing:** Regency South Coast Village, Santa Ana, and in limited release where theaters are open; available via virtual cinemas, including Laemmle Theatres



Courtesy of Greenwich Entertainment

## DONUT

Continued from page R8

"Alice, making money — it's so easy. I say, "Ted I don't think it's that easy at all." And he'll respond, "I've been rich three times. You just have to see the opportunity and go for it." Those are the wise words of Ted Ngoy.

**Q** Is there anything that you left on the cutting room floor that you still think about?

A There are a lot of things that I still think about on the cutting room floor. One of them being my interview with Michael Krondl, the food historian. He wrote a book called "The Donut: History, Recipes, and Lore from Boston to Berlin" and he gave really fasci-

nating insights into donut culture, history and our relationship to donuts in America. I could have made a special piece just on the history of donuts.

**Q** Which donut shop do you find yourself going back to for the sake of eating a donut?

A I had my out of body experience at DK's Donuts and Bakery in Santa Monica. That is because I had a buttermilk bar about 30 seconds out of the fryer with fresh glaze on it. And it was actually a donut that I refused at first from Mayly Tao, the Donut Princess. I ended up not sharing that donut. I ate the whole thing.

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Matt Fitt

**ANNIE WRIGHT**, standing under the "Sanctuary improves safety" sign, protests in 2018 after the Aliso Viejo City Council members voted to join the federal lawsuit against California's sanctuary law.

## BLOOD

Continued from page R6

tions across the county on issues ranging from mental health to climate justice.

"It's exhausting, and it's so hard on your soul," she said, of activism work. "But I've been able to have conversations with my grandmother about burnout, and she understands what I'm feeling because she's been in that space where she's doing this work so tirelessly."

### 'I WAS BASICALLY SHOCKED INTO ACTION'

Annie said it was Lacy who inspired her to go into politics after the 2016 election.

"Like many people, I was basically shocked into action," Annie said, pointing to President Trump's Muslim ban as the catalyst.

"What I was witnessing was our government employees carrying out orders to detain, deport and interrogate U.S. citizens and permanent residents," she said.

At the time, there wasn't a Democratic club in Aliso Niguel, where she lived, so she started one.

She asked Lacy and college friends to come teach

their organization how to lobby, how to talk to elected officials and how to read legislation.

By 2018, the club had helped elect Tiffany Ackley, the only woman in the Aliso Viejo City Council, and worked with other progressive organizations to flip four districts in Orange County.

"Growing up in O.C., I never thought I would see the day where every single congressional seat was Democrat," Lacy said. "So that's something that was really inspiring to me, that my mom, who had never been politically involved pre-2016, would be part of a movement to flip that many seats and reshape the political makeup of Orange County."

In 2019, Annie was elected as the vice chair of the Democratic Party of Orange County, representing South Orange County.

"Regardless of what happens in the 2020 elections, my hope is that the party will dedicate more resources to recruit and train candidates for local offices and to do more culturally competent outreach to the Asian communities in Orange County," she said.

"I was always taught that

we, as a family, are only here because of who helped us," Lacy said.

"Even now, my grandmother is the definition of high-risk for COVID, and she is still going out and handing out masks for front-line workers. She's never seen an issue and taken it lying down. She's always thinking, "There's something wrong in this world. What can we do?"

At 80, Jackie still hosts a weekly politics show on the Saigon Broadcasting Television Network where she analyzes American policies for Vietnamese-speaking immigrants.

"I cannot tell my community to vote for whom," she said. "I have to be nonpartisan ... but I think this year is the most important year, where most Vietnamese will go to vote, one way or the other."

"My mother is far more involved in the actual party," Lacy said.

"My mom can knock on every door and convince you to vote after 10 minutes of speaking with her. She can do something I can't. So I think both of them are really great about building community and encouraging people to get involved, especially those who might

not have."

Lacy represents a new generation with new ideas.

"We've been told so many times that we need to vote and it's important to vote, and we are told to vote for somebody else," she said, "and I think that's the shift I want to see: I'm not voting for a candidate or a politician, I'm voting for myself, I'm voting for my community ... I think our generation is so different because we're taking action into our own hands."

In addition to her work at BLD PWR, she runs the website Ballot Breakers, interviewing young Democrats running for office, and she's a speakers bureau representative with the Rape Abuse Incest National Network (RAINN). She's been in their last two PSAs.

"I think when people think about organizing, they only think about political organizing," Lacy said.

"But we have all figured out a way to be active and give back, organizing digitally, especially during the pandemic. That's where young people shine. Young people know how to mobilize in this space."

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