

APA STUDIES NEWSLETTER

Asian Pacific American Studies Program Michigan State University



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DR. NAOKO WAKE
APA STUDIES DIRECTOR

Director's Biography

After completing her B.A. and M.A. at Kyoto University, Japan, Naoko Wake received her Ph.D. in history from Indiana University, Bloomington. She is the author of *Private Practices: Harry Stack Sullivan, the Science of Homosexuality, and American Liberalism* (Rutgers, 2011) and *American Survivors: Trans-Pacific Memories of Hiroshima and Nagasaki* (Cambridge, 2021), and also a recipient of the National Science Foundation's STS Grant, the Association for Asian Studies' NEAC Grant, and the Huntington Library's Dibner Research Fellowship. She has taught at Michigan State since 2005 and loves yoga, cooking & eating (both savory and sweet), and gardening.

Director's Welcome

Welcome to Fall 2020! This is an election year promising to be highly consequential for everyone, including the faculty, staff, and students in the Asian Pacific American Studies Program at Michigan State. I have already registered to vote by mail, and hope you are making plans, too. Things have changed drastically after Covid-19, and having everyone's voice heard is more important than ever. Speaking personally, this is my first presidential election since I became a US citizen. Having lived here for decades, I am incredibly excited that I will finally have my vote counted!

This past year was a challenging one for the APA Studies Program. When the coronavirus began to spread globally, an increased number of racist comments were made against people of Asian Pacific Islander Desi American and Asian (APIDA/A) background here at MSU. Unfortunately, this mirrored a national trend. "Racism is Contagious," the website created by a coalition of APIDA/A organizations, has reported more than 1,700 attacks against APIDA/A people across the United States and Canada since March 2020. As if this is not disturbing enough, MSU's business college alumnus and donor made disparaging comments about Vietnamese and Vietnamese American business owners during one of his popular webinars. These incidents do not align with MSU's stated values, but it is difficult to stem these incidents and repair the damages.

It was all the more necessary, then, that the APA Studies Program worked with the APIDA/A Faculty and Staff Association and the APA Student Organization to hold a townhall meeting in response to the racist incidents. This collaborative effort allowed us to come together and gain much needed strength at this time of crisis. We also have been in conversation with the Broad College of Business, to help them transform the culture that allowed the racist statements to be made. One of our proposed plans is that the college integrates more APIDA-related contents into their curriculum. We can make only small steps at any one time, but these steps are critical for creating a university where everyone feels genuinely safe and welcome. On a related note, some of our faculty published or presented on Covid-19 (Please see "Faculty Spotlight"). This, too, shows how APA Studies expertise can be an agent of change in these challenging times.

APA Studies Program made notable accomplishments last year. You will notice that we created a minor in the College of Social Sciences. This new minor exists along with the original minor in APA Studies, and we are hopeful that our courses will reach a larger number of students. Please let us know of any interested students! I am also happy to note that Dr. Jennifer Marcy joined our program as a coordinator. Among others, she has made some great updates to our introduction course. I am grateful for all the efforts led by the former co-directors Profs. Andrea Louie and Anna Pegler-Gordon throughout their tenure. Thanks to their dedication, the program is ready for further growth. I am so looking forward to working with you all as the events for this year unfold!

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Vietnamese and Asian American Students Challenge Racist Comments

By Dat Le

Special Thanks to the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA), Vivian Huynh, and David Tran

On May 7, 2020, Larry Gaynor, an MSU graduate with an entrepreneurship program bearing his name at the Eli Broad College of Business and the President and CEO of TNG Worldwide, made several racial remarks during a business webinar for salons and beauty shops. This webinar was posted onto his website, but it has since been removed (recordings of the webinar can be found on the internet). In the webinar, Gaynor claimed that the biggest enemy in the nail business is the Vietnamese salon. “I cannot support any partner that supports the Vietnamese. There’s just nothing I can say good for what they’ve done to our industry,” Gaynor said. Gaynor proceeded to mock the Vietnamese language, and he suggested businesses should avoid using brands made by Vietnamese companies if they wanted to join his company’s exclusive membership tier. Once this webinar was posted online, many were outraged, especially members of the Vietnamese community. On May 8, Gaynor apologized for his remarks saying that they were a “mistake.” “It came off wrong,” Gaynor said. “I apologize for the remarks I made. I did not make any knowingly racist remarks. I don’t even know that that word means. I’m not that type of guy.” While Gaynor did apologize for his comments, some were unsatisfied by it. One student organization decided to take steps to challenge the racist comments made by Gaynor.



Larry Gaynor

TNG Worldwide Founder, President and CEO, Larry Gaynor, in a webinar with his “Diamond Partners”



VSA Eboard 2019 – 2020 celebrated Tết (Vietnamese New Year)

Members of the Vietnamese Student Association (VSA) at MSU first heard of the Larry Gaynor incident three days after it occurred. Unsatisfied by Gaynor’s apology, Vice President of VSA, David Tran, brought up the incident to his Eboard members and requested a plan of action. “I guess you can say that I was the one to introduce it to my board, but it was the diligent and responsive team of both VSA and Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO) that got this situation investigated,” David said. VSA first came out with a statement on social media condemning Larry Gaynor’s actions, which caught the attention and support of the APA community on campus. The statement also caught the attention of Gaynor himself, prompting him to reach out to VSA to apologize. While the VSA statement brought Gaynor’s remarks to the attention of MSU, the university brushed off their concerns about the incident, and failed to recognize the impact it has on the community.

Unsatisfied with the university’s response, VSA released a second statement which demanded MSU take appropriate steps to address Gaynor’s actions. This second statement gained the support of 13 student organizations such as Pi Alpha Phi, Women’s Council, and APASO. A bill by APASO and Intercultural Aides (ICA) was later composed and submitted to ASMSU calling for more Donor Accountability (which had since passed). An email by Central Administration was sent to VSA and the APA Studies Program giving their regards and a commitment to make sure that diversity is more prominent. A meeting was held with APASO, VSA, the American Pacific American Graduate Alliance (APAGA), faculty from the APA Studies Program and Dean of the Broad College of Business Sanjay Gupta to discuss more programs to strengthen equity, especially in relation to Asian Americans. The outcome of the meeting was that the removal of Mr. Gaynor’s name is not possible according to the administration; however, they accept the idea of implementing more involvement and inclusive opportunities for Asian Americans in the Business College. Currently, VSA is at a point where they can’t do anything to further this case. “It’s kind of bothersome that MSU isn’t holding their alumni accountable, but instead keeps close relations just because of how much money he has donated to the school,” said Vivian Huynh, President of VSA. VSA and other representatives of the MSU Asian American community plan to work to achieve more results when the school semester starts, including expanded programming involving issues of diversity and Asian Americans.

Alumni Spotlight – Sarah Wahab Ghazi



Our featured alumna for this issue is Sarah Wahab Ghazi (she, her, and hers). Sarah came to MSU in 1998, and graduated in 2002 with a Bachelor's degree in communication with a focus in public relations and Asian American Studies. Sarah completed coursework in Asian American Studies, however, she was not able to receive a minor as the APA Studies Program was not recognized until 2004 (more on that later). In this interview with Sarah, we discuss various topics such as identity and the formation of the APA Studies Program.

Who are you, and what do you identify as?

I am a cisgender, biracial, Indian, Asian American female. I identify as a Muslim. I am a second generation Indian on my father's side and am the descendant of fifth generation Polish and German European ancestors on my mother's side. I was born in Michigan. I am also a daughter, a sister, and an aunt.

Were you involved in any clubs or organizations at MSU?

During my time at MSU, I was involved in several university, student, and community-led organizations. I held elected positions within the Residence Hall Association (RHA), APASO, and the Hubbard Hall Student Government. Towards the end of my time at MSU, I was a McNair/SROP scholar in the Ronald E. McNair Achievement Program and Summer Research Opportunity Program, mentored by Dr. Andrea Louie.

What have you learned from your experience at MSU?

I learned a lot about my intersecting identities, and the multiple communities that I was a part of. Prior to my time at MSU, I struggled with my own sense of belonging. My undergraduate years helped me really clarify some of the intersecting identities that I held, but didn't know how to name, and give voice to. College was the first time I saw myself more fully as a biracial, Indian, Asian American. This was in large part due to the Asian American Studies coursework I engaged in. This coursework and the Asian American Studies Program were years in the making due to the student leadership and advocacy of people like Meghan Yamanishi, Drew Yamanishi, Subhash Kateel, and others. In addition to the faculty and staff leadership, which would include Maggie Chen Hernandez, Dr. Andrea Louie, Shina Steinberg, Dr. John Lee, and Dr. Joe Cousins. These were individuals who I remember drawing a lot of knowledge from, because I was able to also see how they were operating in the university and within the larger Asian American community within Michigan State.

What are the benefits of being part of APA Studies, and how did it relate and help you build your career?

For a long time, I have believed that my father's immigration from India to the US was a part of a surge of South Asian parents that came in the 70s. After attending anthropology and social studies courses, I realized how much these stories were connected to the Civil Rights Movement, landmark immigration policies of exclusion, internment, protesting, and other historically significant events of "othering" that shaped the lives of Asian American communities in this country. Prior to this, I never fully understood how the term "Asian American" came about. The APA Studies courses I took were my first exposure to concepts like the perpetual foreigner, the model minority myth, systemic othering, and whiteness. It forced me to confront my Indian and European ancestry within the historical context of this country, alongside narratives of other marginalized communities of color, and draw connections from my own childhood and upbringing with those of my fellow classmates. All these things really made me start to become more critical of how I understood issues of race, oppression, power, privilege, and my own positionality.

(Interview continues on the next page)

Alumni Spotlight – Sarah Wahab Ghazi – Cont.

What are you currently doing now relating to your career?

I am currently a practicing Licensed Clinical Social Worker working in Chicago and the Chicagoland area. I am also a part-time adjunct lecturer in the School of Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago. I teach a direct clinical practice course with a focus on anti-oppressive social work practice for first-year graduate students. My interest in social work, direct practice work, and identity exploration wouldn't have been possible without the Asian American Studies classes and community-engagement experiences I had at MSU. These opportunities provided me exposure to coursework, concepts, and connections that carries me through my work today.

What are your goals for the future?

To continue to be involved in community-lead engagement efforts that support anti-oppressive, anti-racist practices -- recognizing that these are not designations, but rather constant practices of how I try to show up in my work and my life. I want to continue my work of being committed to social justice engagement within the Chicagoland communities I am a part of.

Do you have any advice or anything to offer to current APA Studies students?

Based on my own experience, I can say that college was a great time of self and relational exploration. My advice would be to max out every opportunity that you can, while also learning about parts of yourself and other communities' histories. Recognizing that ultimately, we have an opportunity to feel a sense of community and belonging with whom we find ourselves in community with. If you have never fully engaged in an education about the histories of Asian Americans in the US, the APA Studies Program is a structured opportunity for that. The program supports a level of educational privilege and access to knowledge that can be shared in support of re-centering the stories and lived experiences of communities that have been decentralized within US education systems and curriculum. If you can use the knowledge that you've gained around historical policies and systems of inequity, oppression, enslavement, and othering to promote a level of advocacy, critical self reflection, inclusion that has value as well. Because ultimately, we each can make a choice to use our privilege to benefit more than ourselves and acknowledge the ancestors of generations of Black, Indigenous, and communities of color that came before us on this land and in this country.

Do you have anything in mind that you want to share in the newsletter (like recent publications or awards)?

Since leaving MSU, I have received an Advanced Opportunity Fellowship from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison, WI -- thanks in large part to my McNair/SROP research with Dr. Louie. I served in the AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America). I was also selected as a fellow for the American Muslim Civic Leadership Institute.

This concludes the interview with Sarah Wahab Ghazi. Sarah left us a quote that was relevant to understanding her work, the APA Studies Program, and her education.

“Remember that consciousness is power. Consciousness is education and knowledge. Consciousness is becoming aware. It is the perfect vehicle for students. Consciousness-raising is pertinent for power, and be sure that power will not be abusively used, but used for building trust and goodwill domestically and internationally. Tomorrow's world is yours to build.”

-Yuri Kochiyama,
Japanese American activist

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Asian American History (MC319/HST319)

By Dr. Anna Pegler-Gordon



“Chinese American activist Wong Chin Foo became a US citizen in Grand Rapids in 1874.” Photo: Olivia Moses

Although Asian immigrants and Asian Americans have long lived in Michigan, their stories have often been silenced, misrepresented or lack detailed information. Students in Anna Pegler-Gordon’s Asian American History class created [an online map](#) which foregrounds the stories of Asian Americans in Michigan, showing how their lives are important to Michigan history and to American history.

The map follows early Chinese immigrants in **Detroit, Grand Rapids** and the **Upper Peninsula** in the 1800s. It traces the role of the University of Michigan in supporting **colonialism in the Philippines** in the 1890s and the **early presence of Filipinos in Michigan**. Chinese and South Asian Michiganders such as **Wong Chin Foo, Wong Wing** and **John Mohammed Ali** fought for the right to immigrate and become US citizens in the early 20th century, while **Chinese, South Asian** and Korean Americans built communities and **founded businesses** in and **around Detroit**. Chinese allies such as pilot **Hazel Ying Lee** were based at Willow Run during World War II, while **Japanese Americans** were imprisoned, then **resettled in Detroit**. Renowned author **John Okada** and architect of the World Trade Center **Minoru Yamasaki** both lived and worked in Michigan. MSU faculty problematically used



John Mohammed Ali, Detroit resident and local businessman in the early 1900s

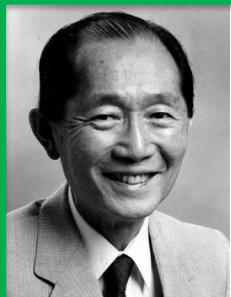
their expertise to support **US involvement in the war in Vietnam**, while Michigan resident **President Ford** supported **Southeast Asian refugees**. **Korean** and **Chinese children** have come to Michigan as adoptees, impacting Michigan families and society in important ways. Asian Americans such as **Vincent Chin** and **Chong Moua Yang** have also faced deadly violence in Michigan. Finally, Asian Americans have fought for justice, as **politicians in the Michigan Legislature** and as **community activists**. Many Asian Americans have shaped the history of Michigan. Check out their stories on the student-created map and, if you’re an MSU student, consider signing up for this course!

Asian Americans Mentioned in the Online Map

John Okada was a Japanese American novelist best known for his 1957 novel *No-No Boy*. He lived in Detroit.



Hazel Ying Lee served as a pilot during at Willow Run during WWII. She was the first Chinese American to fly for the United States.



Minoru Yamasaki was a Japanese American architect based in Michigan, renowned for designing the original World Trade Center

Ilhan New was a Korean entrepreneur who founding La Choy Food Products, Inc. with a colleague from the University of Michigan.



Event Spotlight - Dr. Kimberly McKee's Talk & "The Grey Area: Asian American Adoptees and Asianness" Panel

By Kate Firestone, PhD, former Co-President of the Asian Pacific American Graduate Alliance
Grace Gerloff, PhD student, Media Coordinator of the Asian Pacific American Graduate Alliance
Sophie Schmidt, BA, former Historian for the Asian Pacific Student Organization

In spring semester 2020, the APA Studies Program sponsored and co-sponsored two adoptee-centered events: a talk by Korean adoptee and adoption studies scholar, Dr. Kimberly McKee, and a panel on Asian American adoptee identity led by the three writers of this piece. Though the panel happened first, we begin with a reflection on Dr. McKee's talk, as it provides important context to our panel on adoptee identity.

On March 10, 2020, on the second floor of James Madison College, Dr. McKee presented on her 2019 book, *Disrupting Kinship: Transnational Politics of Korean Adoptees in the United States*. Dr. McKee is an Associate Professor in the Integrative, Religious, and Intercultural Studies Department at Grand Valley State University. Her talk focused on what she has termed the "transnational adoption industrial complex" (TAIC) to demonstrate how adoption from Korea has evolved into a complex system of profit, often at the expense of birth families and adoptees. She explained that this system—the TAIC—is comprised of industries such as orphanages, governments, churches, and airlines (to name a few), and that it has benefited from the exploitation of women's labor in factories and sex work.

As we sat in an audience made up of adoptees, non-adoptees, students, teachers, and staff, we couldn't help but feel a sense of excitement that so many people were hearing about our collective histories as Asian American adoptees. Too often, adoption is understood to be unequivocally "good"; and while it can have positive aspects, such conceptions tend to veil the trauma and, in too many cases, the injustice of profiting from the separation and redistribution of families. Dr. McKee's talk provided scholarly evidence of the profound complexity that is Asian American adoption and it was heartening to see so many engage with it in the Q & A after.

Though it happened after our panel, Dr. McKee's theoretical work was a key facet of our presentation on Asian American adoptee identity that we gave with the support of the APA Studies Program and the Asian Pacific American Student Organization (APASO) at APASO's Tea Time event on January 27th. Kate (adopted from Korea), Sophie, and Grace (both adopted from China) provided attendees with histories of adoption from Korea and China and reviewed some of the similarities and differences between the two. We then opened the floor to questions from our peers.

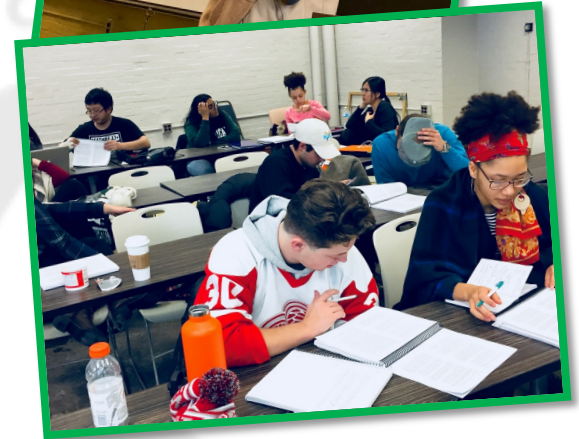
What was particularly special about this experience is that we got to engage with non-adopted Asian American students about how adoptees fit into and expand the Asian American designation. Specifically, we shared key experiences we've each had regarding our identity struggles, as we were all raised by white parents in predominantly white communities and have often found ourselves straddling the line between not being "white enough" but also not being "Asian enough." We engaged audience questions about our experiences with loss and abandonment as well as questions about how non-adopted Asian Americans can support their Asian American adoptee friends. Overall, it was truly an honor to be recognized and treated as experts of our own experiences, and we are thankful to the APA Studies Program and APASO for taking the time to make that possible.



Introduction to Asian Pacific American Studies (SSC 293)

By Dr. Anna Pegler-Gordon

Introduction to APA Studies is the only course that is required for both minors offered by the APA Studies Program, a minor for students in the College of Social Science and a minor that all other MSU students can take. It is a unique course that is coordinated by APA Studies Program Coordinator Jennifer Marcy with class sessions led by faculty and staff from a wide range of areas, including Anthropology, Education, James Madison, History, Lyman Briggs, Psychology, Religious Studies, Residential College in Arts and Humanities (RCAH), Sociology, Writing, Rhetoric and American Culture (WRAC) and the Office of Cultural and Academic Transitions (OCAT). The course brings together students from across the university who care about Asian American, Pacific Islander American and Desi American communities ... and who want to learn more! Some of the topics that students address include Asian American Activism, Asian Americans in Media, the Bamboo Ceiling, Cultural Appropriation, Immigration, the Model Minority myth, Mental Health, and Transnational Adoption. In contrast to some courses where these issues are studied from the top-down, this introductory course centers Asian American voices and perspectives. The course also aims to include a wide variety of these perspectives as Filipina/os, Chinese, Japanese, Koreans, Vietnamese, Hmong and South Asians have very different histories and experiences in the United States. If you are reading this article and you are a student at MSU, you should take "Introduction to Asian Pacific American Studies"!



"SSC 293 is a fun and interactive course that allows students to learn about important issues, while also reflecting on their own personal experiences at MSU and their home communities. I enjoy teaching SSC 293 because the course allows students to actively engage with the history and rich contemporary experiences of our diverse Asian Pacific American communities. Students in the class enjoy learning from each other and discussing topics that are often new to them, while connecting course themes to larger issues impacting our society, such as immigration, social justice, and activism politics."

- Dr. Jennifer Marcy,
SSC 293 Instructor

"This class has taught me that there are many issues in the APA community that need to be corrected and that starts with activism."

- Viktor, Former student

**Register for SSC 293
Today!**

**Spring 2021
Monday & Wednesday
3:00 PM – 4:20 PM
Online**



Publications and Awards

APA Studies professors and staff have been very active over the last few years, earning accolades and reshaping the field of Asian American Studies. Here are some of their accomplishments.

Dr. Andrea Louie

Awarded 2020 *National Endowment for the Humanities Fellowship* for a project titled Chinese American Mothering Across Generations: Toy Len Goon and the Creation and Recirculation of the Model Minority Myth.

Dr. Naoko Wake

Published a critical essay about COVID-19, "Lack of Empathy Takes the United States Deeper into the Second Cold War," *The Asia-Pacific Journal* 18.14.17, July 2020
<https://apjif.org/2020/14/Wake.html>

Published "Homosexuality and Psychoanalysis Meet at a Mental Hospital: An Early Institutional History," *Journal of the History of Medicine and Allied Sciences* 74.1 (2019): 34-56.

Dr. Anna Pegler-Gordon

Presented "From East to East: Chinese Migration and the Hidden History of Ellis Island" at the University of Idaho in February 2020.

Engaged in a remote conversation on the "Model Minority Myth, COVID-19, and Racism against Asian/Asian Americans" with Dr. Terese Monberg in April 2020.

Reviewed Edward Tang's *From Confinement to Containment: Japanese/American Arts during the Early Cold War* for the *Journal of American History* 106, no. 4 (March 2020).

Dr. Ethan Segal

Awarded a Fulbright fellowship for the 2020-21 academic year to conduct research in Japan on his latest project, "Searching for Economic Thought in Medieval Japan."

He also began a year-long term as member of the Association for Asian Studies (AAS) Board of Directors and as chairperson of the AAS Council of Conferences.

Dr. Frederick Leong

Featured in faculty spotlight by the Asian Caucus of the Society for Research on Child Development for AAPI Heritage Month in May.

Dr. Maggie Chen Hernandez

Awarded the Jack Breslin Distinguished Staff Award in 2020.

Dr. Terese Monberg

Published an article co-authored with Shane Bernardo in the *Community Literacy Journal*. Bernardo is a Detroit-based anti-oppression facilitator and food justice organizer who uses food, oral tradition and ancestral land based traditions and spirituality as mediums for healing

Appointed a co-editor of the Filipino American National Historical Society (FANHS) Journal (with Dr. Patricia Halagao).

Dr. Sheng-Mei Ma

Published *Off-White: Yellowface and Chinglish by Anglo-American Culture*. Bloomsbury Academic, 2019.

Published "Kung Flu." *America Unfiltered*. May 8, 2020.

Dr. Sidney Xu Lu

Started teaching *ISS 330B Minorities and Subcultures in East Asia*. This course challenges the myth of homogeneity in the understanding of East Asian societies.

Dr. Stacy Camp

Awarded \$379,017 Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) program from the National Park Service

Dr. Steven Gold

Awarded *American Sociological Association, International Migration Section, Distinguished Career Award, 2019*.

Became *Graduate Program Director, Department of Sociology, Michigan State University August 2002-August 2012, August 2019 to Present*.

Published *The Routledge International Handbook of Migration Studies, Second Edition* (with Stephanie Nawyn). Routledge, 2019.

Congratulation Graduate Students!



Dr. Kate Firestone earned her PhD this year from the Writing, Rhetoric, and American Cultures (WRAC) department at MSU. Her dissertation is titled “Sharing stories, Making space: A relational approach to Korean American Adoptee rhetoric through relational literacy.” Dr. Andrea Louie and Dr. Terese Monberg served as committee members in Kate’s dissertation. In addition to programmatic work, Kate works in the Writing Center at MSU, served as the vice-president of APAGA, and been active in Korean adoptee groups and events.

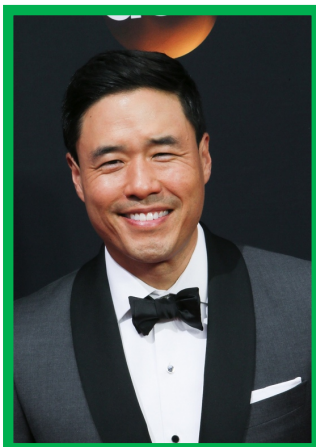


Dr. Joy Hannibal is a program coordinator at Michigan State University. Her scholarly endeavors focus on issues of persistence, retention and graduation of students of color, specifically for Pacific Islander and African American students. Joy’s dissertation is titled “Finding, creating, and following footprints:

The integration of Indigenous Knowledge in Palau Community College”. In her professional work at MSU she directs a support program whose goal is successful transition, persistence, graduation and career/post grad attainment for students from the city of Detroit.

From Asian American Studies to an On-screen Celebrity

By Dat Le



Randall Park (born March 23, 1974) is an American actor, comedian, writer, and director. Park was born and raised in Los Angeles to Korean immigrants. Since a young kid, Park was very interested in making funny videos, which would later foreshadow his career in acting. Park attended UCLA which gave him the opportunity to figure out his identity. This sense of self-discovery led to him along with two of his friends to start an Asian American theater group called *Lapu the Coyote That Cares* (LCC). His participation in the LCC led Parks to become interested in Asian American Studies. “I just had so much fun onstage and kept doing it from there, while still being immersed in academia and Asian-American studies” said Park.

Park graduated with a bachelor’s degree in English and a minor in Asian American Studies in 1997. After graduating, Park tried his hands in stand-up and improv around LA while also pursuing a career in acting, but he gained little success in attracting auditions. Park nearly gave up his career in acting, but since he was at a point in his career where he couldn’t turn back, he kept on pushing. Eventually, filmmakers started noticing him and they cast him in supporting roles

in TV shows and commercials. One of his most popular minor roles was his portrayal as Steve in *The Office*. Eventually, Park was starring in huge roles such as Kim Jong-un in the film *The Interview* and Louie Huang in the show *Fresh Off the Boat*.

During the production of the show *Fresh Off the Boat*, Park recalls an episode in the show where his character and his family flew to Taiwan for his brother’s wedding. This episode dealt with themes often associated with Asians growing up in America such as the immigrant experience and the thought of what life would be like if you never left your home country. “We went to Korea when I was really young but after a while we just stopped going, and I never really understood why” Park recalls. “When facing forms of racism that really got me down, I remember distinctly thinking, why did my parents come here?” His parents would always tell him it was for their kids, and they have no control over how they were being treated.

His portrayal in *The Interview* and *Fresh Off the Boat* propelled him into mainstream success, and since then, Park has starred in huge movies such as *Ant-Man and the Wasp* and *Aquaman*. In 2019, he co-wrote and co-starred with Ali Wong in the Netflix Original film *Always Be My Maybe*, which gained favorable reviews from critics. Also in the same year, Park along with his friends had launched *Imminent Collision*, a production company dedicated to providing comedy stories from the perspective of Asian Americans.



Parks playing the character *Marcus Kim* in *Always Be My Maybe* (2019)



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