



Barbara Hing

克城婦女聯誼會 慶祝國際婦女節

(上接 P01)本屆婦女聯誼會主席 Barbara Hing 她感謝大家對協會的支持, 多年來協會始終保持每年慶祝國際婦女節活動, 當晚有成功女士 Iris Choi 的主講, 來自克城當代中文學校媽媽舞蹈隊的藏族舞蹈表演和 Sodsri (Dwee) Cherney 表演的傳統泰國舞蹈。晚會在阿唐海鮮城舉辦, 大家在豐富的節目和豐盛的菜肴, 唱卡拉 OK, 大家有說有笑, 愉快度過了佳節。



Sodsri (Dwee) Cherney 表演泰國舞蹈

THE ROAD TO SUCCESS FOR AN ASIAN AMERICAN WOMAN

By Iris Choi

Good evening everyone. I am honored to be here this evening with each and every one of you in celebration of Women's Day. My congratulations to the new officers, and many thanks to your President Ms. Barbara Hing for inviting me.

I was asked to talk about my "immigrant experience". Just like many of you in this room I was born in another country and moved to the US some years ago. I believe sharing our experiences is important and helpful. If nothing else, talking about it can help one another deal with what AAs face everyday.

WHEN PEOPLE ASK ME WHY AM I HERE? Easy question □ the majority of AAs came here looking for a better life for us and our children, specifically, education and economic opportunities. For me, I was born in HK and lived there for the first 17 years of my life. As you know, HK was a Colony under the control of Great Britain for many years. It is sad that during my years there I never felt I belong to a country, any country. My late father, who was also born and raised in HK, told me many times that when he was a young man growing up in HK, every time he walked past the park in Central District, there was a sign posted at the gate by the British that says Chinese and Dogs not allowed! Just imagine in a city where 97 % of its population is Chinese, see something like this was beyond comprehension.

After high school, I had a scholarship to study music in Osaka, Japan for several months. Next, I traveled to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and studied at Taylor's College, a private College-Prep School preparing students to attend college in Melbourne, Australia. After that, instead of going to Australia my parents wanted me to go, I decided to come to Canada and started college in Toronto. Eventually I moved to the US and have lived in this country now for over 35 years. I still love to travel. I have been to all 50 states, visited many countries in Europe and other parts of the world; lived in many places, but the last 19 years I was in Ohio.

I have been fairly lucky in pursuing my American Dream. I met my husband in Canada and we have been married for 31 years. We have one daughter. After completing my Bachelors and Masters Degrees I had my own career for 10 years. From the mid 70's to 80's, I was district manager

for a fast food chain in Denver, CO. It was not until my daughter was 6 years old that I decided to go to law school and pursue a legal career.

HOW I GET INTO GOVT. When I was in my last year of Law School at the University of Toledo, I was recruited by the State of Ohio. I attended the University's "Career Day" where potential employers came on campus to recruit. At that time I was attending Law School in the evening, working for a Judge at the Toledo Municipal Court and the Toledo Bar Association during the day. I was looking for a permanent position dealing with "Public Interest Law". I was hired right from Law School into the State of Ohio, Civil Rights Commission as an investigator. The Civil Rights Commission investigates discrimination complaints and enforce Ohio's Laws against discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodation, credit and higher education. I have been with the agency now for 16 years, 2 years in Toledo and 14 years in Cleveland. From where I started as an investigator to where I am now as regional director consisted of 5 promotions. I was very lucky that I received 5 promotions in 4 years, which no one had done before. Everything happened so quickly that during those 5 years with this agency my nickname was "The Golden Girl of the Commission".

AAs IN THE US. AAs represent only 3 % of the population in the US, yet AA students have the highest scores in any systemic tests (elementary, middle, high school or college entrance exams). AAs set the standard on test scores. You should also know that in the State of Ohio, AAs as a group working in state govt is the highest paid group of state employees. So where are these high-paying jobs that are occupied by many Asian Americans? These are Psychologists and Psychiatrists working in state hospitals, institutions, and prisons treating people with mental illness. If AAs are doing so well in Ohio, is there discrimination out there? Absolutely! In the workplace, restaurants, schools, and the communities..... You name it, it's there. No matter how long you have lived in this country, people still ask you where you are from. They may not have any malice, but it still makes you feel like an outsider. AAs are passive, we seldom argue with

people, we follow the rules, we don't throw the first punch... which make us more vulnerable to be taken advantage of.

Unfortunately there are only a handful of well-known AAs as role models. Today there are Elaine Chao, Secretary of State, Norman Mineta, Secretary of Transportation, Henry Lee, the forensic scientist from Connecticut, Ioeh M. Pei, the Architect who designed the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame right here in Cleveland, Gary Locke, the first elected AA Governor for the State of Washington, Yo-Yo Ma and his music, and the athletes such as Michael Chang, Tiger Woods, and Yao Ming. When people watch movies, they see Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, and Jet Li. There is nothing wrong with that, but these are actors in martial arts, what they portray in the movies is not a true representation of what AAs are about.

The Cleveland Regional Office handles 900 discrimination complaints a year. At the state level, there are over 5000 cases filed in 6 of our Regional Offices. In the last 16 years, I have reviewed over 12,000 discrimination cases filed with our agency. I like to offer some suggestions:

I am not telling you to forget where you came from. However, if you adopt this country as your own, you are an American, so blend in, and do not isolate yourself from coworkers or neighbors, make as many friends as you can.....

Enjoy the privileges but at the same time take responsibilities

Support the country, register to vote, and fly the American Flag

Participate in community activities or volunteer work

Help one another, help your neighbors... there is an old Chinese saying that you should only shovel the snow at your front door, and disregard what your neighbor has. That old saying does not work here, you should shovel the snow for your neighbors too if you can! It would not hurt to be the first to lend a hand

As minorities, remember and be thankful to all the ones before us, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Park, the NAACP... who fought and laid the groundwork so we can enjoy what we have today. There was a protest in Detroit years ago for the murder of Vincent Chin; the Rev. Jesse

Jackson was there. He was just a handful of non-Asian persons who showed up. Would you have done the same thing for someone you don't know?

If you are pursuing a career,

Set your goal and develop a plan on what it takes and how to accomplish that goal

Be persistent; if you don't succeed the first time try again

Do not lose your focus, concentrate on the opportunity and timing to take action

Do not be afraid to take risks

If you believe you have been let down, step on, or discriminated against, do something about it, but if there is nothing that can be done, find it in your heart to forgive, let go and move on.

On Sunday, March 26, 2006, the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Ohio Civil Rights Commission, and the City of Cleveland Community Relations Board will conduct a joint presentation on discrimination in employment, housing, and hate crime. It will be from 1 □ 3 pm at the Asia Plaza, second floor, sponsored by the Organization of Chinese American of Greater Cleveland. I hope you all can attend.

Here is my final thought: If you read the bible, you know there are 10 Commandments; in my book there are 11. My 11th Commandment is

THOU SHALL NOT GIVE UP

To all my friends, life is short, we are all just passing through; the final destination is unknown. So while you are here, make the best of it, enjoy the ride and each other's company!



Iris Choi 在慶祝國際婦女節活動上講話

What do you think Cleveland Saves suggests you do with your tax credit?

(Hint: We're called Cleveland Saves.)

It's really simple. Your EITC (Earned Income Tax Credit) will do more for you if you let it grow. You see, money can grow into wealth (and we should know, we have helped 7,000 Clevelanders save \$4.4 million) – which translates into paid-off bills, emergency funds, and even home ownership. Which then translates into achieving your financial goals and gaining peace of mind. So, become a "saver" today. It's free (we're trying to save you money, remember?), and all you have to do is log on to Clevelandsaves.org or call our Moneyline at 216-781-8090.

Cleveland Saves is a member of the Cuyahoga EITC Coalition.

This message brought to you as a community service by:

National City



Cleveland Saves
You can build wealth.



克城美華協會慶祝新春佳節

圖片新聞:

一年一度的克城美華協會慶祝新春佳節晚宴,在佰億隆重舉行,有 300 多位各界嘉賓一起歡度中國的傳統佳節。當日有 Ginny Gong (OCA National President)帶領 2006 年克城美華協會董事會宣誓。