



## ❖ Vision, Mission & Pledge ❖

**ALOHA AILA Colleagues!** 2008 is a very important election year for our nation and our organization, and I ask for your vote to elect me national Secretary of the American Immigration Lawyers Association. It is an honor to have been nominated and recognized as a tireless, fair-minded, consensus-builder who emphasizes strategic and thoughtful discourse in **artful Liaison, innovative Legislative Advocacy, and positive AILA Governance.**

Known to have a “**velvet-covered steel**” style in liaison and to be a tenacious but diplomatic liaison and legislative advocate since 1993, I am proud of my long record as a key member of the liaison committee that helped AILA work through the painstaking transitions and historic changes

in INS/DHS leadership that transpired as a result of September 11. What a delicate transition that has been, and I was honored to have been invited to serve on the **INS/USCIS Headquarters Benefits and Policy Liaison Committees for over six years, from 2001–2007.** Despite the anti-immigrant fervor generated by 9/11, we stood our ground, providing the USCIS with technical expertise and frequent briefings so many earlier resolved issues and established “common law” legacy-INS concepts would not get put aside or forgotten as a result of DHS’s emergence as a “newly” reorganized superagency that might be tempted to create its own guidance.

**Supporters of my candidacy include many top attorneys in the immigration field who believe AILA will benefit from my depth and breadth of experience, intensity of focus on serious issues, warmth of spirit, “substance with common sense” judgment, and inclusive approach to leadership.** With great passion, commitment, an open mind, and good will for all, I stand poised to mobilize all of our best and brightest thinkers, writers, litigators, teachers, and advocates. What really motivates me now in my mature years is **reaching out to people within AILA and beyond AILA** in channeling our collective knowledge, insights, and talents, so we can safeguard our nation’s immigration policies and laws for fairness, efficiency and rational implementation. I am committed to deliver effective governance responsive to members’ needs, to achieve meaningful immigration policy development, and to advance excellence in all substantive practice areas of AILA.

I stand energized and ready for the many challenges we face, including the opportunity this contested election provides. **2008 is the year for AILA to expand its top leadership team to include a person who brings new perspectives and has an appreciation for diversity.** I am the daughter of Asian immigrants. I come from a small state and travel long distances to participate in AILA. I am one of two women partners in a law firm of 30 attorneys. I practice in Hawai’i, a very important gateway for U.S. immigrants from the Asia-Pacific region. These factors bring some new perspectives and add value to the diversity of AILA’s current leadership. Additionally, I have an appropriately assertive and diplomatic drive, a strong record of accomplishment, a solid understanding of our institutional history of governance, and a sincere respect for the strong personalities that have guided us to this juncture in AILA’s history. I am not afraid to express a novel approach or opinion that may run against the majority; yet, I listen respectfully to divergent views and try always to build consensus and to approach complex problems through meaningful collaboration.

**In 2008, we are now divided in a 3-way contested election, yet we must join together at a new crossroads.** Once our new American President is elected, much technical analysis will be needed from all areas of expertise, and we will face unprecedented challenges and exciting opportunities. My proven substantive skills in liaison and advocacy over a long period, together with my perspectives and active commitment to social justice in Hawai’i and nationally, will best serve AILA’s goals over the next several years, as **together** we steer how our concerns will be addressed positively by a new Administration.

**Vote for Ruth Oh – AILA Executive Committee Secretary**

**My Pledge.** As your Secretary, I pledge to work tirelessly to improve our organization, to showcase our expertise through sound legal analysis, and to change the course that our nation's immigration policies have taken over the past several years. I will evaluate situations and provide honest, fresh perspectives for AILA that will strengthen and complement the current ExCom leaders' efforts to understand the diversity of our membership throughout our 50 states and beyond, so that we can work together and set straight our nation's priorities, fix our broken immigration system, and keep us moving forward in ***the best interests of all***.

- **I pledge** to represent and unify AILA members so we are perceived as a truly more inclusive, more unified, more progressive, more diverse, and a more national association.
  - **Balance of representation** of people of diverse locations, backgrounds and orientations, at all levels of governance, is a good goal for a democracy, and I am committed to bringing people together.
  - My election in 2008 would be an achievement in itself, conveying immediately to AILA membership and the communities outside of AILA that our top leadership is **inclusive** and **geographically diverse**. I notice that even AILA attorneys sometimes need to be reminded how important and central Hawai'i is for immigration from the Asia-Pacific region. **Through my 15 years of active participation traveling many miles and adjusting to time differences, I have already demonstrated I can handle the enormous physical, social, and mental demands made on AILA officers at the national level.** Geography will not be an obstacle. Shaped in part by my ethnicity, gender, demographics and cultural experiences and perspectives as a child born of Asian immigrant parents before the Civil Rights and Equal Opportunity movements of the 1960s, and having lived in Dallas, Whitewater (Wisconsin), Boston, Fairfax, Newark, Seoul, and Honolulu, **I always strive to serve purposeful and positive roles in expanding and building communities to be better than how we find them.** *If I am elected, AILA achieves a milestone in its 62-year history. This will be the first time that the ExCom includes an **Asian-American woman** and the first time it includes someone from **Hawai'i**.*
- **I pledge** to help Chapters of AILA (**large and small, near and far**) get the support they need. I would reassess and reorganize the workload carried by Chapter Chairs and elected Directors on the Board of Governors.
  - We can do a better job sharing the heavy lifting and ensuring better continuity from year to year on the Board of Governors, so Chapter Chairs are not "overburdened," and elected Directors and other talented AILA members are not "underutilized."
  - Small Chapters (approximately 20 with less than 200 members, and 10 with less than 100) may need extra support, and I would encourage AILA to consider offering occasional project assistance (e.g., minor financial or staff support), so none of our members get left behind accessing workshop experiences, tools, or other resources needed for all AILA members to achieve "best practices."
- **I pledge** to reach out to leaders in building coalitions with communities **beyond AILA**, to support open and honest discussions on immigration, and to convince the media and elected officials that national security and enforcement concerns cannot be their sole guide.
  - We must get **beyond** the current rhetoric that overemphasizes increased border enforcement and deportation. The conversation needs to focus on what can be done to strengthen our communities on matters constituents care about the most, and show how immigrants are part of the solution.
  - We need to encourage AILA members throughout the U.S. to develop invaluable relationships with their congressional delegations and community leaders year round, not just once every spring.

## ❖ ❖ History, Achievements & Service ❖ ❖

### Serving AILA through Community, National Governance, Liaison & Advocacy

- 2003-09 Elected **AILA Board of Governors** (Nominated and elected for 2 consecutive terms, participating in BOG meetings approximately 3-5 times annually, as an elected Director.)
- 1993-08 **Texas Chapter**, Member.
- 1994-08 **Hawai'i Chapter**, Member.
- 2008 **Midyear Conference, Chair**. Hapuna, Kohala Coast, Big Island, Hawai'i.
- 2007-08 **National Asian Pacific American Bar Association (NAPABA)**, Member.
- 2007-08 **AAO-AILA Liaison Chair**. Identifying problem trends through "lost" or delayed problem case inquiries; posting more AAO decisions on InfoNet; addressing issues relating to "educational equivalencies", transfer case problems; identifying how AAO can clarify "substantive" USCIS issues not addressed consistently by Service Centers.
- 2007-08 **AILA Strategic Planning Committee**, Membership/Demographics Study Group.
- 2007-08 **SCOPS-AILA Liaison Committee**, Member.
- 2007 Featured as one of only four Hawai'i attorneys in an article in "**Honolulu Magazine**" on "**The Best Lawyers in Hawaii**", July 2007.  
<http://www.honolulumagazine.com/Honolulu-Magazine/July-2007/The-Best-Lawyers-in-Hawaii-82161/>
- 2006 Published "**On the Record**" with U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, in **AILA's 60<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Issue of ILT (AILA's Immigration Law Today)**. Senior U.S. Senator Inouye was willing to be interviewed and shared his views on immigration policy, as a result of my approaching him when HR 4437 was gaining disturbing popularity, along with other negative legislation such as the proposed elimination of birthright citizenship.
- 2003-09 **Hawai'i Women Lawyers**, Board of Directors.
- 2004-05 **AILA Nominating Committee**, Member.
- 2004-05 **Department of State (DOS)-AILA Liaison Committee**, Member.
- 2004-05 **AILA Teleconference Committee Chair**.
- 2004 **Spring AILA Conference Chair**. Washington, DC (After 9/11, this was the first meeting with post-INS representatives for new bureaus of DHS: **CIS, CBP, ICE**.)
- 2003-09 **Patsy T. Mink Fellowship**, A founding supporter and Fellowship Selection Committee member. Mission: to perpetuate Congresswoman Patsy T. Mink's tireless advocacy for Hawai'i communities and girls' education nationwide. Also, a supporter of the "Making Waves Films" documentary: "Ahead of the Majority: The Life and Times of Patsy Takemoto Mink."
- 2000-03; 05-07 **AILA-INS Benefits Policy/ USCIS Headquarters Liaison Committees**, Member.
- 2001-03 **DOL Regional Liaison** (Hawai'i), Region VI.
- 2001-03 **Hawai'i Chapter Chair**. (1998-01 Secretary, Treasurer, Vice Chair.)  
Arranged meetings with Former CSC Director Dona Coultice (1999, 2000); CSC Director Don Neufeld (2003); Certifying Officer DOL Region VI Martin Rios (twice in 2002); ISD Service Center Operations Assistant Commr Fujie Ohata (2002); EOIR Chief Immigration Judge Michael Creppy (2001-02); EOIR Assistant Chief Judge Robert Owens (2001-02); leaders from Social Security Administration (2002); Department of Motor Vehicles; DOT; testified for State Legislature on driver's license requirements (2003).
- 2000-01 **CSC-AILA Liaison Committee Chair**. Facilitated positive camaraderie among committee and association members attending Quarterly & Special Meetings at CSC, including "member case-inquiry days" and special topic-focused meetings, with guest experts from AILA addressing problem issues, such as L-1 denials; no movement in EB-5 adjudications; overly burdensome "ability to pay" evidence; interpretations on "successor in interest"; advocating consistency of adjudications where no gross error or no fraud; and extremely overly burdensome RFEs; etc.
- 2001 Partner, Kobayashi, Sugita & Goda, Honolulu, Hawai'i. I am one of two women attorneys to have made Partner in a 30-attorney commercial litigation and business law firm.
- 1998-02 **CSC-AILA Liaison Committee**, Member.
- 1995-08 Regularly participated in Legislative Advocacy every year.

Other Activities:

- Collaborated with Steve Yale-Loehr and Lincoln Stone on articles in Bender's Immigration Bulletin on AAO EB-5 Decisions.
- Co-authored articles in AILA Annual Handbooks.
- Speaker, dozens of local and national immigration law conferences.
- Rotary International – Honolulu. Member of 400-member chapter, one of the largest chapters and biggest donations fundraiser nationwide.
- Hawai'i Korean Chamber of Commerce, Director, Member.
- State of Hawai'i Business Development & Advisory Council, Member.
- Hobbies & Interests: The Ocean; Music; Dance; Long-board Surfing; Elizabethan Songs; My 3 years in Korea from 1984-87 conducting field research in Ethnomusicology and Dance Ethnology (I studied "cultural grey-out" and how aspects of old systems change in order to save their essence, through traditional Korean music and dance repertoires under Korean Intangible Human Cultural Assets Yi Mae-Bang and Ahn Suk-son.)



An evening with Fred Korematsu,

**March 11, 2004, Honolulu, Hawai'i.** "60 Years after Korematsu: Where are We?" The **late Fred Korematsu** (far left), a U.S. citizen by birth, **Professor Eric Yamamoto** coram nobis co-counsel who successfully reopened the infamous WWII Japanese-American internment case, Korematsu v. U.S. (middle), and **Ruth Oh** AILA Board of Governors Director (right), at a community discussion and tribute to the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink. The discussion highlighted relevance of government reactions based on race and immigration to post-September 11<sup>th</sup> tension between national security and civil liberties in America.

**Beyond AILA, my current community work and interests include: safeguarding business, investment and family-related immigration; promoting the advancement of women through leadership opportunities; fostering opportunities for college and law school students to work on Capitol Hill; and supporting Asian-American social justice issues.** I was deeply affected in the Spring of 2007 when the "Grand Bargain" proposed serious curtailing of lawful family immigration. Already, immigrants from Asian countries suffer from the longest backlogs. My years of activities in these communities have enabled me to develop a network of prominent friends and leaders who can help us in our common mission.

- ❖ If you want your voice to count and influence the direction we take to shape an immigration system and policies that work,
- ❖ If you want to live your professional and personal lives with a sense of "quality of life," balance, and pride in the good deeds we do as Immigration Lawyers, and
- ❖ If you want to stop those who bring out the fears and suspicions that make us weak as individuals and as a nation, then VOTE for Ruth Oh – AILA Executive Committee.

Thank you!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ruth", written in a cursive style.

## ❖ ❖ ❖ Supporters ❖ ❖ ❖

Together, we can make a difference! 2008 (this year) Vote for Ruth Oh!

With great appreciation and respect for those colleagues in all 50 States, and beyond, who place their faith and trust in me to include their names as supporters, I thank:

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**Stephen Yale-Loehr** (Ithaca, NY)  
*... And More. Come and Join Us!*



Photographed in July 2007 Honolulu Magazine: "The Best Lawyers of Hawaii."

**Your Voice and Vote Counts!**

**Vote for Ruth Oh**

**2008 AILA Executive Committee!**

**Ruth K. Oh**

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