

21st

Korean American Day Celebration

January 13, 2026

4PM - 6PM

Room 2043 & 2044

Raybum House Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Sponsors



Embassy of the
Republic of Korea
Washington, DC



재외동포청
Overseas Koreans Agency



미주한인재단-워싱턴

Korean American Foundation
-Greater Washington





Korean American Day 2026

미연방의회가 2005년 12월에 매년 1월 13일을 미주한인의 날로 제정한 것은 미주 한인사회와 공헌과 위상을 미 주류 사회가 공식적으로 인정한 것입니다. 이러한 기념일은 한인사회와 주류사회간의 교류와 협력을 강화하고 1세와 2세대들이 힘을 합쳐 정체성을 확립하고 계승 발전시키며 또 다가오는 100년을 바라보는 미주한인들의 축제일이 될 것입니다.

미주한인들은 다인종 미주류사회와 함께 어울리는 조화와 협력과 공동의 가치관을 공유 하면서 한국의 유산을 물려 받는 자랑스러운 미주사회의 주인이 됨으로써 주목받는 모범 민족이 되어야 할 것입니다.

Since the first Koreans arrived in the United States in 1903, we now have 123 years of history as immigrants to study and reflect upon. It has been a history filled with a well-earned reputation for hard work, devotion to our families, and support for our community. In this modern rapidly evolving technologically driven society, it is important for us to remember how these values have formed a foundation for our success and that these values must be instilled into the minds and hearts of the next generation of Korean Americans.

Four Korean Americans were elected to the U.S. Congress and continue their work today. We are fortunate to have Senator Andy Kim of New Jersey and Representatives Dave Min (CA), Young Kim (CA), and Marilyn Strickland (WA) in the current 119th Congress.

We hope that more Korean-Americans will continue to advance into mainstream American society and that exchanges between the Korean-American community and all Americans will be strengthened. We hope for a continued strong alliance between South Korea and the United States. We also hope that the next generation of Korean-Americans will remember their cultural heritage and share its rich traditions with all Americans.

Our Annual Statement of Appreciation

The designation by the Congress of the United States of January 13 as Korean American Day in 2005 recognized Americans of Korean heritage as a significant and vital community within American society with major achievements in science, technology, and the arts. It marked a moment of inspiration in the history of the Korean American community by honoring Korean Americans for their accomplishments and contributions to the United States. We give thanks to America for this recognition, and for preserving and protecting at great cost our liberty from the forces of tyranny. With our liberties we hold as American citizens, we have the opportunity to help to fulfill the dreams of our families, our community, and our fellow citizens.



미 주 한 인 재 단 - 워 싱 턴 kafgw.org

Korean American Foundation- Greater Washington
10th & 11th President: Rosa Park (bmsjpark@gmail.com) 21st Event Chairperson: Albert T Kim
Event Director: Michelle Lee
KAF-GW Senior Advisors: Sekwon Chong, Eun Ae Lee, Inook Hur, Mi Schill Kim, Michelle Lee



123 years of Korean American Immigration

Korean Americans are celebrating the date of January 13, 1903, when the first wave of Korean Americans arrived in Hawaii. Korean American history goes back further to 1882, when the U.S. signed a treaty of peace, friendship, and commerce with Korea, allowing each country to establish a diplomatic mission. From that time, Koreans began to arrive in the U.S. as diplomats, political exiles, merchants, and students.

Three Waves of Korean Immigration

The first wave, from 1903 to 1949, included an early arrival (1903-1905) of about 7,500 Koreans, mostly men, who went to work on Hawaii’s sugar plantations. The first ship (RMS Gaelic) to bring Korean immigrants carrying 56 men, 21 women, and 25 children came to Hawaii on January 13, 1903. Several thousand picture brides later immigrated to the U.S. until the Immigration Exclusion Act of 1924 virtually ended the wave.

The second wave, beginning in 1950, consisted of women who married American soldiers, children fathered by American service members adopted into American families, students, businesspersons, and others. This was enabled by passage of the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1952, which removed the 1924 exclusion of Asians.

The third wave, beginning in 1967, consists of Koreans who came under the occupational and family reunification preferences of the 1965 Immigration Act. These waves of emigration followed growing U.S. involvement in Korea during the twentieth century.

Impact of Koreans on American Society

There has been much to celebrate for Korean Americans over the previous 123 years. Sammy Lee was a two-time Olympic gold medalist in diving. Lieutenant Commander Dr. Jonny Kim is a NASA astronaut, part of the Artemis team of future missions to the moon and beyond. David Hyun was the architect who revitalized Little Tokyo in LA, and Hines Ward Jr. played for the Pittsburgh Steelers. Korean Americans Andy Kim (NJ), Marilyn Strickland (WA), David Min (CA) and Young Kim (CA) serve the nation in the U.S. Congress.

Korean culture has also left a sizable footprint in the U.S. Korean food such as Bibimbap and Kimchi has become popular. Many people now watch Korean movies and listen to K-Pop music. Korean classical musicians and vocalists are a growing presence in the performing arts. Korean electronics and machinery are widely recognized as being state of the art.

Korean American Day Establishment Video

To mark the 122th anniversary of Korean immigrations to the United States, the Korean American Foundation – Greater Washington produced a documentary video describing the establishment of Korean American Day to preserve this history for the next generation.

“The Establishment and Significance of Korean American Day”
The video link is posted on the main website page at kafgw.org.

109th CONGRESS

1st Session

S. RES. 283

Recognizing the contributions of Korean Americans to the United States and encouraging the celebration of ``Korean American Day".

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

October 20, 2005

Mr. Allen (for himself, Mr. Durbin, Mr. Stevens, Mr. Kennedy, and Mr. Inouye) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

December 16, 2005

Committee discharged; considered and agreed to

RESOLUTION

Recognizing the contributions of Korean Americans to the United States and encouraging the celebration of ``Korean American Day".

Whereas on January 13, 1903, the arrival of 102 pioneer immigrants to the United States initiated the first chapter of Korean immigration to the United States;

Whereas members of the early Korean American community served with distinction in the Armed Forces of the United States during World War I, World War II, and the conflict in Korea;

Whereas in the early 1950s, thousands of Koreans, fleeing from war, poverty, and desolation, came to the United States seeking opportunities;

Whereas Korean Americans, like waves of immigrants to the United States before them, have taken root and thrived as a result of strong family ties, robust community support, and countless hours of hard work;

Whereas the contributions of Korean Americans to the United States include the invention of the first beating heart operation for coronary artery heart disease, development of the nectarine, a 4-time Olympic gold medalist, and achievements in engineering, architecture, medicine, acting, singing, sculpture, and writing;

Whereas Korean Americans play a crucial role in maintaining the strength and vitality of the United States-Korean partnership;

Whereas the centennial year of 2003 marked an important milestone in the now more than 100-year history of Korean immigration; and

Whereas the Centennial Committees of Korean Immigration and Korean Americans have designated January 13th of each year as ``Korean American Day" to memorialize the more than 100-year journey of Korean Americans in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Senate—

(1) supports the goals and ideals of a ``Korean American Day";

(2) commemorates the 103rd anniversary of the arrival of the first Korean Immigrants to the United States; and

(3) encourages the people of the United States to—

(A) share in such commemoration in order to greater appreciate the valuable contributions Korean Americans have made to the United States; and

(B) to observe ``Korean American Day" with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 109th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

House of Representatives

H. RES. 487

Supporting the goals and ideals of Korean American Day

December 13, 2005

Whereas the influence of Korean Americans may be observed in all facets of American life, including entrepreneurship, the arts, and education;

Whereas on January 13, 1903, 102 pioneer Korean immigrants arrived in the United States initiating the first chapter of Korean immigration to America;

Whereas the centennial year of 2003 marked an important milestone in the history of Korean immigration;

Whereas Korean Americans, like other groups of immigrants that came to the United States before them, have settled and thrived in the United States through strong family ties, community support, and hard work;

Whereas Korean Americans have made significant contributions to the economic vitality of the United States and the global marketplace;

Whereas Korean Americans have invigorated businesses, churches, and academic communities in the United States;

Whereas Korean Americans have made enormous contributions to the military strength of the United States;

Whereas today, at least 4,000 Korean Americans serve in the Armed Forces of the United States, with approximately 25percent of them currently serving in Iraq; and

Whereas the Centennial Committees of Korean Immigration and Korean Americans have designated January 13 of each year as 'Korean American Day' to commemorate the first step of the long and prosperous journey of Korean American in the United States: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives -

1) supports the goals and ideals of a Korean American Day;

2) urges all Americans to observe Korean American Day so as to have a greater appreciation of the invaluable contributions Korean Americans have made to United States; and

3) honors and recognizes the 103rd anniversary of the arrival of the first Korean immigrants to the United States.



**Korean American Foundation
Greater Washington**



**Korean American Foundation
Greater Washington**



January 13, 2026

Dear Friends –

I am honored to serve as the event chair of the 21st Korean American Day celebration. This past year marks the 50th year since I immigrated to the United States as an eleven year old child. As a Korean immigrant in America, I hold a deep love for Korea for its long history, rich culture, assortment of cuisine, and camaraderie among our people. However, I also learned to love America as well. And as much love as I have for Korea, there is no other country that I would rather live in than the United States. This great country has given me amazing opportunities to learn as a student, succeed as a businessman, and raise a loving family. It has also given me the religious freedom to practice my faith in God as a Catholic. I am proud to be a Korean American in this country which is about to celebrate its 250th birthday this year.

I would like to express my deep gratitude and appreciation to Rosa Park and her staff of volunteers who organized today’s celebratory event. Finally, I wish continued success and longevity for the fulfillment of the mission of the Korean American Foundation – Greater Washington.
May God Bless America and Korea!

Albert Kim
Event Chairperson
The 21st Korean American Day Celebration Event
AK & Associates, P.A.
CPAs and Advisors

Jan 13, 2026

Dear Friends -

Every year, as we celebrate Korean American Day, we gather together to honor and recognize the rich contributions Korean Americans have made to our diverse society. On this day, we honor the strength, resilience, and spirit of the Korean American community.

As we reflect on our shared history, we remember the countless individuals in the past that came to this land with dreams of a better future. Their hard work, dedication, and commitment formed the foundation so that we and our future generations could have a better life in America.

Let us also celebrate the beauty of our cultural heritage. Through music, dance, cuisine, and other traditions, we continue to share our stories and cultural values, enriching our communities and fostering cross-cultural interest and respect. Today, we embrace the differences in our culturally diverse society while recognizing the common threads that bind us together as Americans.

Happy Korean American Day !!

Rosa Park
President
Korean American Foundation
Greater Washington



THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 13, 2026

I send my best wishes to all those gathered on Capitol Hill to celebrate Korean American Day.

As we celebrate 250 glorious years of American independence, we proudly honor the Korean American community for their incredible contributions to our Nation, our culture, and our way of life. They have strengthened our economy, enriched our culture, advanced our innovation, and played an indispensable role in our great national story. Through their endless hard work, resilience, and unwavering devotion to freedom, Korean Americans have embodied our most sacred ideals.

Korean Americans have also been vital in sustaining the enduring alliance between the United States and the Republic of Korea. Our nations are united by a shared commitment to freedom, human dignity, and opportunity for all. Last October, I was proud to deepen this partnership by signing a landmark agreement with the Republic of Korea to enhance our cooperation in innovation, investment, and advanced technologies—laying the foundation for a future of growth, security, and mutual success.

May God bless you, the Republic of Korea, and the United States of America.



존경하는 미주 한인 동포 여러분,

대한민국 대통령 이재명입니다.

한인 이민의 역사가 시작된 1월 13일을 기념하며, '21회 미주 한인의 날'을 진심으로 축하드립니다.

260만 미주 한인 동포 여러분께서는 한 세기가 넘는 오랜 세월 동안 정치, 경제, 문화는 물론 우주 탐사에 이르기까지 다양한 분야에서 역량을 발휘하며 미국 사회의 신뢰받는 구성원으로 자리매김했습니다.

도전과 성취, 연대와 헌신으로 한민족의 위상을 높이고 한미 양국을 잇는 든든한 가교가 되어주신 동포 여러분께 이 자리를 빌려 존경과 감사의 말씀을 전합니다. 대한민국은 동포 여러분께서 쌓아 올린 신뢰 위에 굳건한 한미동맹의 기틀을 다질 수 있었습니다. 또한 정부 출범 이후 지난 반년 동안의 성과를 바탕으로 이제 양국의 동맹은 미래지향적이고 포괄적으로 발전하고 있습니다. 작년, 한미 관세 협상이 성공적으로 마무리된 것에 이어 올해도 양국의 다양한 협력이 계속될 것입니다. 대한민국과 미국이 새로운 역사를 만들어 가는 여정에 한미 동맹의 든든한 주역이신 동포 여러분께서 함께해 주실 것으로 믿습니다.

국민주권정부는 머나먼 미국 땅에서 모국 대한민국을 걱정하고 응원해 주시는 동포 여러분의 삶과 안전을 더욱 세심하게 살피겠습니다. 늘 변함없는 지지와 성원을 바탕으로 미주 동포 여러분의 말씀을 늘 경청하며 자랑스러운 여러분의 모국 대한민국을 반드시 만들겠습니다.

다시 한번 '미주 한인의 날'을 축하드립니다.

오늘 이 자리가 미주 한인사회의 자긍심을 더욱 높이고, 한미 양국의 우정과 협력이 미래 세대까지 굳건히 이어지는 뜻깊은 계기가 되기를 바랍니다.

2026년 병오년 붉은 말의 해를 맞아, 동포 여러분의 가정에 건강과 행복이 가득하기를 기원합니다.

고맙습니다.

2026. 1. 13.

이재명

대한민국 대통령 이재명

ANDY KIM
NEW JERSEY



United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 13, 2026

To the Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington,

It is my pleasure to send my warmest greetings as you gather for the 21st Korean American Day Celebration. Your dedication to uplifting Korean Americans across New Jersey has left a mark on our communities, and it is inspiring to see the impact of your work celebrated once again.

Over time, the Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington has served as a hub for connection, culture, and opportunity within the Korean American community. The work your organization has done nationally and internationally, through your programs, events, and initiatives, strengthen bonds across generations, preserve heritage, and provide meaningful resources that empower individuals and families to thrive. Your efforts ensure that Korean Americans are recognized not for their professional achievements and contributions to civic life.

As the first Korean American to serve in the United States Senate, I know how essential organizations like yours are in creating pathways for representation, leadership, and community growth. Your work demonstrates the power of collaboration and service, showing how a committed group of individuals can make a lasting difference both locally and nationally.

Although I am unable to join you in person this year, please accept my heartfelt best wishes for a joyful and memorable 21st Korean American Day Celebration. I look forward to seeing the ongoing accomplishments of your organization and the bright future you help build.

Regards,

Senator Andy Kim



JAMES R. WALKINSHAW
WASHINGTON, D.C.

January 13, 2026



Dear Friends,

I am honored to welcome you to the 21st Annual Korean American Day. I want to thank our hosts, the Korean American Foundation-Greater Washington (KAF-GW), for their tireless work making today possible. This celebration offers an important opportunity to reflect on shared history and honor the contributions of the Korean American community.

This year marks the 122nd anniversary of the first Korean immigrants' arrival to the United States on January 13, 1903. Those first immigrants braved the unknown to pave the way for subsequent generations of Korean Americans. They learned to navigate a new culture and carved their own niche in American society, and their contributions have enriched communities across the country.

The United States is a nation of immigrants. Here in Northern Virginia, we are proud to have a vibrant and thriving Korean American community, boasting more than 1,000 Korean-owned businesses in Annandale's Koreatown. Their countless successes have made the story of Northern Virginia one of diversity, inclusion, and achievement. We are better for this part of our regional identity.

With this rich cultural and historical context in mind, allow me to once again welcome you to the 18th Annual Korean American Day. Let us celebrate together and remember our duty to welcome new arrivals to the United States. Their strengths are our strengths, and we are grateful for their contributions. Please accept my best wishes and enjoy the event.

Sincerely,

James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress
11th District, Virginia

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Young Kim
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CONGRESSWOMAN MARILYN STRICKLAND
10TH DISTRICT, WASHINGTON



U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
SUBCOMMITTEE ON READINESS
HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
TRANSPORTATION & INFRASTRUCTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS AND TRANSIT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COAST GUARD AND
MARITIME TRANSPORTATION



January 13th, 2026

January 13th, 2026

Dear Friends:

I am honored to welcome guests and participants to this 21st Korean American Day Celebration hosted by the Korean American Foundation— Greater Washington. Thank for your hard work in organizing and hosting this celebration.

This year, we are celebrating 123 years since the arrival of the first Korean immigrants on January 13, 1903. As an immigrant from South Korea myself, I know firsthand the hardships and hurdles many of us have faced embarking on a new path in America.



As a Korean American, I am proud of our heritage and the strong values of family, faith, and hard work that have been handed to us by previous generations. Through all the challenges they have faced, Korean Americans have come far in achieving the American Dream and contributing to every aspect of American society. The Korean American Foundation has played an integral role in making sure Korean American Day is recognized and I want to thank the Foundation for your efforts.

I am honored to be one of the first Korean American women elected to serve in the United States Congress, and I look forward to working with you to celebrate the contributions of our Korean American community and strengthen the U.S.-ROK alliance. Best wishes for a successful event!

Sincerely,

Young Kim
Member of Congress, 40th District

Dear Friends,

Happy 21st Korean American Day! Thank you to the Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington for organizing this celebration and for providing this time for reflection, connection, and community.

Over the past century, Korean Americans have contributed to every facet of American life, from entrepreneurship to education, to advocacy and the arts. These contributions are sustained by strong institutions, like the Korean American Foundation, whose commitment to engagement, service, and cultural connection continues to play an important role.

It is an honor to be one of the few Korean Americans serving in the United States Congress, and a privilege to be part of this exceptional community. I know my story is not singular, but one amongst many shaped by the dedication, perseverance, and civic spirit of hardworking Korean Americans across our nation.

As the relationship between the United States and the Republic of Korea continues to evolve and strengthen, I am grateful for your work to foster unity, opportunity, and a shared sense of purpose. Wishing you a meaningful and joyful Korean American Day.

Sincerely,

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 13, 2026

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
GOVERNMENT REFORM
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC GROWTH,
ENERGY POLICY, AND REGULATORY AFFAIRS

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER, WILDLIFE, AND FISHERIES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE

WES MOORE
GOVERNOR

ARUNA MILLER
LT. GOVERNOR



CHUNG K. PAK
CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE LAW JUDGE

OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATIVE HEARINGS
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Dear Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington,

Thank you for the invitation to join in celebration and to speak at the 21st Annual Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington gathering as you commemorate the 123rd Korean American Day.

Korean American Day serves as an opportunity to honor the generations of Korean Americans who, through resilience, perseverance, and a deep belief in opportunity, have helped shape our nation's economic, cultural, and civic life. The Korean American story is the American story, rooted in resilience, opportunity, and the belief that each generation can build something better for the next. The Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington has played an important role in preserving this history while strengthening community ties and celebrating the accomplishments and culture of Korean Americans throughout the region.

As one of just six Korean Americans elected to serve in Congress, I am deeply aware of the significance of representation and the responsibility that comes with it. My own journey, from the son of Korean immigrants who arrived in the United States in 1970 to a Member of Congress, reflects the progress our community has made, and the doors opened by generations who came before us. I am proud to help carry that legacy forward.

Your organization's continued efforts to connect individuals to their heritage, support civic engagement, and uplift Korean American voices are vital to sustaining the American Dream that brought so many families to this country. That promise of opportunity, fair treatment, and dignity cannot be taken for granted. Korean American Day is not only a moment of pride and reflection. It is also a reminder that participation and leadership are essential to protecting opportunity and ensuring that future generations can continue to build better lives.

Thank you for your dedication to serving the Korean American community and for hosting this meaningful celebration. Please accept my best wishes for a successful and joyful Korean American Day.

Sincerely,

Dave Min
Member of Congress

December 22, 2025

Sent via email: bmsjpark@gmail.com

Rosa Park, President
Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington

Dear Friends,

Congratulations on the upcoming 21st Korean American Day organized by the Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington! This event provides an amazing opportunity to reflect on the Korean American history and acknowledge all of the significant contributions made by the Korean American community.

I am deeply grateful to the Korean American Foundation of Greater Washington for their hard work in organizing this event and am honored to provide congratulatory remarks.

Congratulations!

Warm regards,

Chung K. Pak

Chung K. Pak
Chief Administrative Law Judge



Document #222105



21st Annual Celebration of Korean American Day
Steve Lee (President, Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation)
January 13, 2026

Thank you, Rosa, Michelle, Hannah, and the Korean American Foundation—Greater Washington for bringing us together once again to celebrate Korean American Day. Days like today matter because they remind us that the Korean American story is not separate from America's story -- it is part of how America became what it is today.

As President of the Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation, I have the privilege of helping steward one of the most meaningful symbols of that shared history. Located on the National Mall, the Korean War Veterans Memorial honors the 1.8 million Americans who served during the Korean War, including the 36,634 who never returned home. Their service helped secure the freedom of the Republic of Korea and laid the groundwork for one of the strongest alliances in the world.

The Foundation works with the National Park Service to support the Memorial's care, education, and legacy -- ensuring that 7 million annual visitors understand why the Korean War matters and why the U.S.–ROK Alliance remains so vital today.

That history is also personal for many of us in this room. Because Korea was defended, millions of Koreans were able to live in freedom. Because of that freedom, Korean Americans were able to come to the United States and contribute across every sector of American life -- government, business, science, education, culture, and the military.

For my own family, the sacrifices remembered at the Memorial made our journey to America possible. That is why Korean American Day is not only a celebration of heritage, but also a moment of gratitude and responsibility. So, let us carry forward a shared commitment to enhance the Alliance, to support our Veterans, and to ensure the next generation understands both the cost and the value of freedom.

Thank you for the opportunity to be part of today's salute to Korean Americans, and for all that you do to bring our communities together.

Steve Lee Colonel (Ret.)
President
Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation

Presentation the citations from Maryland Governor Wes Moore at the 21st Korean American Day.
Authored and presented the letter of appreciation from Congressman James Walkinshaw

Maryland Governor Wes Moore's citations presented by to the Korean American Foundation – Greater Washington organization, to Michelle Lee who she was the 9th President of KAF-GW and current Director, John Yoo. Maryland Govnor recognized the Korean American Foundation and the ogranization staff's outstanding leadership and dedicated volunteerism in fostering the success of the Annual Korean American Day events from 2020 to 2026.



Congressman James Walkinshaw authored and presented a letter of appreciation to John Yoo, CEO of the Virginia University of Integrative Medicine. Virginia University of Integrative Medicine (VUIM) was founded in 2004, becoming the first institution in Virginia to offer accredited acupuncture and herbal medicine programs.

The mission of VUIM has been to produce educated healthcare practitioners that are highly skilled in Acupuncture and Integrative Medicine and to enhance the growth of this practice. CEO John Yoo has also been supporting the Korean American Foundation – Greater Washington. He is deeply committed to supporting the next generation and has generously provided the Korean American Day Scholaship since 2023. He has served as the 9th Vice President of KAF–GW.



Outstanding Korean American Leadership



Mark Lee Keam

Mark Lee Keam leads the Korean American Institute, a nonprofit organization which envisions a democracy where Korean Americans matter. To accomplish this goal, KAI produces insightful research and convenes interested organizations and individuals to act together to improve decision making on issues facing Korean Americans.

Mark joined KAI in 2024 after a wide-ranging career in politics, public service, and the private sector.

In the public sector, Mark served in politically appointed roles for two Presidents and two Governors. He was a top legal advisor to a United States Senate Assistant Leader as well as holding career government positions at local and national levels. Mark was elected multiple times to state office in Virginia and has worked on dozens of other political campaigns, including successfully leading a presidential primary campaign in the largest county of a swing state.

In the private sector, Mark was a lead in-house lobbyist for a Fortune 15 company, president of a national Asian American chamber of commerce, DC representative of a community-based nonprofit organization, entrepreneur, and business consultant.

Born in Seoul, Korea, Mark immigrated to the United States as a teenager. With bilingual and bicultural skills, he has worked with dozens of community-based organizations that serve the immigrant and minority communities. Mark received political science and law degrees from the University of California system.

The award plaque was presented to Mark Keam by Albert Kim, the event chair of the 21st Korean American Day celebration, on Jan 13, 2026.



Outstanding Korean American Community Service



Seong Ok Baik

Seong Ok Baik was born in Seoul, South Korea. She and her husband immigrated to the United States with their two children in 1975. Her first community service was as an office manager for the Korean Society of Maryland in 1978. Since then, Ms. Baik has been serving the Korean community in the Greater Baltimore and Washington, D.C. region for 47 years.

She founded the Korean Women Golf Association of Maryland in 1994, and served 3 terms as its president. She also served as the 34th and the 35th president of the Korean Society of Maryland, where her duties included organizing Korean regional festivals. The festival attendance grew to nearly 40,000 by 2019 during her tenure. She worked to designate a portion of Route 40 in Ellicott City "Korean Way". She also was featured as one of a distinguished group in 2020 that were recognized for their contributions in the "Year of the Howard County Women" by the Howard County Historical Society.

She served for 12 years as an advisor, committee member and the senior vice president at the Peaceful Unification Advisory Council-Washington Chapter, and also she served Co-chair of the Korean Sister Maryland State Committee from 2016 to 2023. She was recognized and honored for her service by former Maryland Governors Larry Hogan and Martin O'Malley, U.S. Senator Chris Van Hollen, former Maryland State Senator Susan Lee, former Howard County Executive Allan Kittleman, and former Baltimore Mayor Catherine Pugh.

The award plaque was presented to Seong Ok Baik by Rosa Park, president of the KAF-GW, at the Korean American Day Celebration event on Jan 13, 2026.



Outstanding Korean American Community Service

Korean American Scientists and Engineers Association Washington D.C. Metro Chapter

The Washington Metro Chapter of the Korean-American Scientists and Engineers Association (KSEA) Washington DC Metro Chapter is recognized for their engagement in local community activities and mentoring the next generation of STEM leaders. Their activities include hosting meetings and activities that provide opportunities for students to present their work and interact with local scientists for collaboration and information about present and future research activities. Recent activities included math competition, work on drones, and a youth science competition at Johns Hopkins University, that led to presentations of projects at Princeton University. The award plaque was presented to President-elect Haksung Lee, Ph.D., by the 21st Event Chair Albert Kim at the Korean American Day Celebration event on Jan 13, 2026.



Alice Shin
President, Youth Group
Korean American Foundation-Greater Washington

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen.

I am a high school senior at Battlefield High School in Haymarket, Virginia. I am extremely grateful and blessed to be given an opportunity to speak at the 21st Korean American day event.

For the past two years leading the youth group, within STEM activities, our members participated in the International Drone League, a global youth initiative through the Korean Scientist and Engineers Association, in which they coded Arduino-based drones, designed structures, and collaborated on projects addressing wildfire response and rescue operations. Their work was presented at conferences such as Princeton University’s IEEE and AIAA YPSE at Johns Hopkins University, made possible through the mentorship of Professor Yungjun Yoo and the dedication of our volunteers. Our group volunteered for the campaigns of Delegate Irene Shin and Supervisor Moon Illryoung, gaining firsthand experience in civic engagement and advocacy. Our members learned from inspiring figures ranging from STEM professionals to public servants, war survivors, and young entrepreneurs. They also led a six-month project on the U.S.–Korea Alliance, engaging the public through creative initiatives.

The Korean American Foundation–Greater Washington presented to me and Isabell Cho youth scholarships for our work. We are grateful to Rosa Park and the organization for giving us this opportunity to serve and learn.



2026 21st Annual Celebration
KOREAN AMERICAN DAY

Moderator: Hannah Kim



- INTRODUCTION Moderator
About 21st Korean American Day and
Korean American Foundation-Greater Washington
organization
- NATIONAL ANTHEMS Britone Gerald Moon
U.S.A. and Republic of Korea
- ANNOUNCEMENT TO Eun Ae Lee Board Chair of the KAF-GW
BEGIN THE CEREMONY
- OPENING PRAYER Rev. Jin Chung Chung
President of American Wheat Mission of the Greater Washington
- WELCOMING REMARKS Albert Kim the 21st Event Chairperson
- GREETING REMARKS Rosa Park President of the KAF-GW
- VIP INTRODUCTIONS Moderator
- CONGRATULATORY REMARKS
 - Donald Trump U.S. President
(Read by Mark Keam President of the Korean American Institute)
 - Lee Jae-myung S. Korean President
(Read by Kijong Cho Minister and Consul General Korean Embassy)
 - James Walkinshaw U.S. Congressman
 - Presentation of Congressman Walkinshaw citation to
the Virginia University of Integrative Medicine
 - Suhas Subramanyam U.S. Congressman
 - Young Kim U.S. Congresswoman
 - Dave Min U.S. Congressman
 - Marilyn Strickland U.S. Congresswoman
 - Chung Ki Pak Maryland State Chief Administrative Law
 - Presentation of MD Governor Wes Moore citation to
the KAF-GW and Michelle Lee
 - Steve Lee Colonel (Ret.)
President, Korean War Veterans Memorial Foundation
 - Jun Park
President, Washington D.C. Chapter of Peaceful Unification Advisory Council
- KEYNOTE SPEAKER Mark Keam President of the Korean American Institute
Topic: " From Half to Full: The Korean American story and America's history"



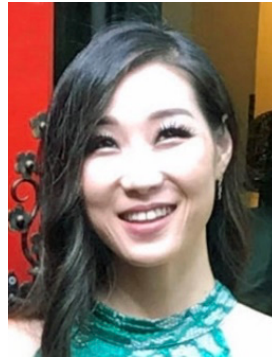
- OUTSTANDING KOREAN AMERICAN LEADERSHIP AWARD PRESENTED TO Mark Keam
PRESENTED BY Albert Kim
- OUTSTANDING KOREAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD-INDIVIDUAL PRESENTED TO Seong Ok Baik
PRESENTED BY Rosa Park
- OUTSTANDING KOREAN AMERICAN COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD-ORGANIZATION PRESENTED TO Korean American Scientists and Engineers Association
Washington D.C. Metro Chapter, president elect-Hakseung Lee
PRESENTED BY Albert Kim
- YOUTH LEADER SPEAKER Alice Shin 12th Grader Battlefield High School
Topic: "The identity of Korean Americans in the MZ generation"
- INTRODUCTION TO KOREAN AMERICAN YOUTH LEADERSHIP SCHOLARSHIP PRESENTED TO Alice Shin, Isabelle Cho
PRESENTED BY Rosa Park



PERFORMANCES

- HAEGUM Performed by Grace Leekyung Kang , Ph.D.
Danny Boy: "Danny Boy" is a poignant Irish ballad about love, loss, and longing, often interpreted as a parent's message to a son leaving for war or the Irish diaspora to America, expressing hope for return amidst inevitable separation and death, with the speaker promising to wait in the fields, even in their grave, for their beloved to return.
Peony Song(모란): The song is about the anticipation and patient waiting for the peony to bloom, capturing the fleeting beauty and emotional depth of spring
- GIWON-MU (기원무) Performed by Soo Kyung Jung,
Korean National Intangible Asset Seungmu in Washington DC Training Center Instructor, Director of Di Dim Sae Korea Traditional Art Institute Giwon-Mu is a special performance to celebrate America's 250th anniversary.
Choreographed by Mae-Ban Lee, Giwon-Mu presents the ritual for rain, one of the important national events during the Monarchs periods. This dance makes the spectators involved in it by way of the magnificent court costume and the various music based on shamanism.
- TOREADOR SONG Performed by Baritone Gerald Moon
He is a Resident Artist at Opera Delaware, conductor at the Maryland Garden Church and a Board Member of the All Nations Mission Center. He has performed leading roles in nearly 30 operas at renowned international venues.
One of the greatest arias of all time. "Toreador Song", also known as the "Toreador March", is the popular name for the aria "Votre toast, je peux vous le rendre" (I return your toast to you) from the French opera Carmen, composed by Georges Bizet in 1875 to a libretto by Henri Meilhac and Ludovic Halévy. In it, the bullfighter (French: toréador) Escamillo sings about the various situations in the bullfighting arena, the cheering of the crowd, and the glory that comes with victory.
- CLOSING REMARKS Rosa Park President of the KAF-GW
- GROUP PICTURE All

Moderator and Performers



Hannah Y. Kim Moderator

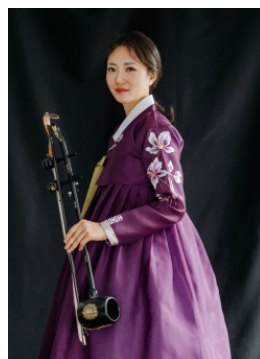
Hannah Y. Kim most recently served as a policy advisor at the White House and as the Deputy Assistant Secretary in the Office of Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, where she also served as the Strategic Advisor for the COVID-19 Public Education Campaign. Previously, Hannah was the Chief of Staff and Communications Director to the late Congressman Charles Rangel. Personally, Hannah founded Remember727 in 2008 to honor Korean War veterans and spearheaded the historic passage of federal legislation that created a memorial day for Korean War veterans on July 27, 2009. She trekked across six continents to visit Korean War Memorials and thank more than 1000 veterans in 30 countries that participated in the Korean War – including North Korea – plus all 50 states and 4 U.S. territories. A proud pastor's kid, Hannah remains committed to public service, lifetime learning, and fitness.

SPECIAL PERFORMANCES TO CELEBRATE AMERICA'S 250TH ANNIVERSARY



Gerald Moon BARITONE

Gerard Moon, baritone, is recognized for his rich and lyrical baritone voice. He has studied and performed in the United States, Italy, Austria, Czech Republic, New Zealand, Australia, Brazil, and Asia. In praise from Operawire, "From the moment he walked on stage it was evident that this was a singer with authority and command and incredible stage presence." A native of South Korea, Mr. Moon earned a Master of Music in Voice Performance from University of Kentucky with numerous scholarships including the National Society of Arts and Letters Award. His performances have included Figaro in The Barber of Seville, Germont in La Traviata, and many others. He is currently a company artist at Opera Delaware.



Grace Leekyung Kang, Ph.D. Haegum & Voice Artist

Grace Kang is a National Intangible Cultural Heritage Gasa (Korean traditional vocal music) inheritor. Currently she is a member of the fusion Korean traditional music band G-hwaja. She earned a Ph.D. in Music (Korean Traditional Music Performance Haegum) from Hanyang University. She is a winner of the Gold Prize in the University Division at the 25th National Nangye Korean Traditional Music Competition. She was a former instructor at National Gugak High School and Gye-won Arts High School. Her Haegum worship album "Holding in My Heart" in 2022 was released. The Haegum creative album "Beautiful and Brilliant" Part 1, 2, and 3 as singles were released in 2023-2024.



Soo Kyung Chung

Director of DI DIM SAE Korean Traditional Art Institute

SooKyung Jung is an intangible cultural treasure Seungmu apprentice, a Korean National Intangible Asset #27 Seungmu instructor in the Washington, D.C. Training Center, and was a Fairfax High School Korean Dance / Korean Drum Teacher. She was the winner of the 12th International Asian Art Competition Prime Minister's Award.



About the Korean American Foundation Greater Washington and Korean American Day



The Korean American Foundation–Greater Washington (KAF–GW) was originally established in 2001 as the Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States–Greater Washington (CCKI–GW), a Virginia non-profit organization. CCKI–GW was created to celebrate January 13, 2003, the centennial of Korean immigration and to engage in other educational and cultural activities. It was incorporated on October 30, 2001 by founding member Mark Keam. CCKI–GW was granted federal tax-exempt status under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) in June 2003.

In 2001, CCKI–GW founding member Harold Pyon worked with Virginia’s U.S. Senator George Allen and U.S. Representative Tom Davis to pass resolutions through Congress to commemorate the centennial. Eventually, CCKI–GW members became interested in establishing a Korean American Day that could be celebrated annually. The committee and one of its founders, Sekwon Chong, motivated the work to designate an annual Korean American Day by congressional resolution. In December 2004, CCKI–GW filed amendments with the Internal Revenue Service and the Commonwealth of Virginia to change its name to KAF–GW. The revised mission of the renewed organization included the goal of establishing an annual Korean American Day.

Harold Pyon led the effort by requesting Senator Allen’s and Representative Davis’ support for establishing an official annual Korean American Day. They were very receptive to the idea, and began their work on passing House and Senate resolutions. Harold worked with Paul Unger on Senator Allen’s staff to prepare the resolution. Mark Keam, who worked for Illinois’ Senator Dick Durbin, recommended his co-sponsorship and helped to navigate the legislative process. On December 16, 2005, the United States Senate passed Senate Resolution 283 of the 109th Congress, recognizing January 13 as Korean American Day.

On December 13, 2005, the U.S. House of Representatives passed House Resolution 487 of the 109th Congress, recognizing January 13 as Korean American Day. The lead sponsor of the House version was Representative Tom Davis. New York’s Representative Charlie Rangel served as lead co-sponsor. Many other Senators and Representatives and their staffs, as well as numerous Korean American community leaders and organizations worked cooperatively in a bi-partisan effort led by Representative Tom Davis and Senator George Allen to pass these historic resolutions. This was the first time that Congress had officially recognized the history and contribution of an entire ethnic group of immigrants to America.

Beginning in 2006, KAF–GW celebrated January 13th of each year as Korean American Day to memorialize more than a century of Korean Americans’ journey to the United States. Former Senator George Allen and Former Representative Tom Davis received the Guanhwa Award from the government of the Republic of Korea for their outstanding leadership in support of the Korean American Day resolutions. On November 3, 2023, KAF–GW received the Korean Presidential Merit Award from President Yoon Suk Yeol for its contributions.

Note: Mark Keam and Harold Pyon contributed valuable details to this brief history.

KAF–GW Korean American Day Celebration Event History

* CCKI–GW = A Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States–Greater Washington
* ICKS = The International Council on Korean Studies (icks.org)

KA Day Event	President	Year	Day	Time	Korean American Day Event Venue	Room #	Address
Kick-off Celebration to announce CCKI-GW	Dr. Yoon-Soo Park	2001	10/19	7pm	Han Sung Oak Korean Restaurant		6341 Columbia Pike Falls Church, VA 22041
CCKI & ICKS Joint Conference 2002	Dr. Yoon-Soo Park	2002	8/16 -8/18	Evening	Fairview Park Marriott Hotel	The Grand Ballroom	3111 Fairview Park, Falls Church, Virginia 22042
Centennial Celebration National Gala	Dr. Yoon-Soo Park	2003	5/9	6pm	Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill	The International Ballroom	525 New Jersey Ave NW, Washington, DC, District of Columbia, 20001
1st	Sekwon K. Chong	2006	1/9	Evening	Rayburn House Office Buiding		45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515
2nd	Sekwon K. Chong	2007	1/8	5pm	Fairfax High School	Auditorium	3501 Lion Run, Fairfax, VA 22030
3rd	Sekwon K. Chong	2008	1/11	Evening	Northern Vignia Community College/Annandale	Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center	8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
4th	Sekwon K. Chong	2009	1/17	4:30pm	Northern Vignia Community College/Annandale	Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center	8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
5th	Eun A Leel	2010	1/10	5pm	Northern Vignia Community College/Annandale	Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center	8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
6th	Eun A Leel	2011	1/16	4:30pm	Northern Vignia Community College/Annandale	Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center	8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
7th	Eun A Leel	2012	1/14	5pm	Northern Vignia Community College/Annandale	Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center	8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
8th	Eun A Leel	2013	1/13	5pm	Northern Vignia Community College/Annandale	Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center	8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
9th	Eun A Leel	2014	1/19	7pm	Messiah Presbyterian Church of Washington	Main Service Center	4313 Markham St., Annandale, VA
10th	Inwook Hur	2015	1/13	5pm	Northern Vignia Community College/Annandale	Richard J. Ernst Community Cultural Center	8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22003
11th	Inwook Hur	2016	1/11	5:30pm	Cannon House Office Building	Cactus Room	27 Independence Ave SE, Washington, DC 20003
12th	Mi Schill Kim	2017	1/12	5pm	US Capital Vistor Center	HVC-201AB	First Street, N.E. Washington, DC 20515
13th	Mi Schill Kim	2018	1/10	4pm	Raburn House Office Buiding	Gold Room	45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515
14th	Mi Schill Kim	2019	1/11	4pm	Raburn House Office Buiding	Gold Room	45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515
15th	Mi Schill Kim	2020	1/14	5pm	Raburn House Office Buiding	Foyer	45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515
16th	Michelle Leel	2021	1/13	5pm	Live Streamed Hybrid Event	Online site	20271 Goldenrod Lane, Suite 2026, Germantown, MD
17th	Michelle Leel	2022	1/13	4pm	Hybrid Event	Korean Community Center	6601 Little River Turnpike, Annandale, VA 22312
18th	Rosa Park	2023	1/10	12pm	Raburn House Office Building	Room 2075(B369)	45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515
19th	Rosa Park	2024	1/10	5pm	Fairfax High School for Public Cultural Event	Auditorium	3501 Lion Run, Fairfax, VA 22030
20th	Rosa Park	2025	1/13	11am	Cannon House Office Building for Ceremony	Caucus Room	27 Independence Ave SE, Washington, DC 20003
21st	Rosa Park	2026	1/13	4pm	Bethel Church for Public Cultural Event	Auditorium	3165 St Johns Ln, Ellicott City, MD 21042
			1/13	5:30pm	Raburn House Office Buiding	Gold Room	45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515
			1/13	4pm	Raburn House Office Buiding	Rayburn Room 2043 & 2044	45 Independence Ave SW, Washington, DC 20515



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President



Sookyung Chung
Vice President



Myung Ok Kim
Secretary



Michelle Lee
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				William Lee

January 13, 2026

This is the 6th time I have helped to organize our annual Korean American Day (KA Day) celebration. For the 16th and 17th KA Day events, I was serving as the 9th President of KAF-GW. I recall that those two years were challenging times to have the events from the confines imposed by the Pandemic. However, we were able to execute the events where many people could gather to experience the culture of Korea and an invitation-only forum with distinguished guests but broadcast via the web. This KA Day is especially significant, given it coincides with the 250th anniversary of American independence.

We decided to add special performances to our 21st KA Day celebration. The special performances were "Toreador Song", one of the greatest arias of all time performed by Baritone Gerald Moon who has performed leading roles in nearly 30 operas at renowned international venues. The other special performance was "Giwon-mu". This traditional dance is a ritual dance for important national events during the Korean Monarchs period. Soo Kyung Jung performed the Giwon-mu. She is Vice President of KAF-GW and Director of the Di Dim Sae Korean Traditional Art Institute. A Korean traditional instrument called the Haegum was also played by Grace L. Kang, Ph.D.

We are honored to receive congratulatory letters from U.S. President Donald Trump and Republic of Korea President Lee Jae-Myung to read at our event.

We were grateful to have Congressman James Walkinshaw, Congresswoman Young Kim, Congressman Suhas Subramanyam, and Congressman Dave Min as well as other VIP speakers at our event. They have extremely busy schedules, but were able to graciously share their time and thoughts with us. We appreciate their assistants' efforts as well to make it happen.

We researched the history of Korean American Day and added a brief summary in this year's booklet. Our goal was to celebrate the remarkable achievements of Korean Americans and the Korean culture. We hope that through dedication to our work and the community that we as Korean Americans will continue to make America and the world a better place for all to peacefully live our lives.

Michelle Lee

21st Event Director

Korean American Foundation-Greater Washington



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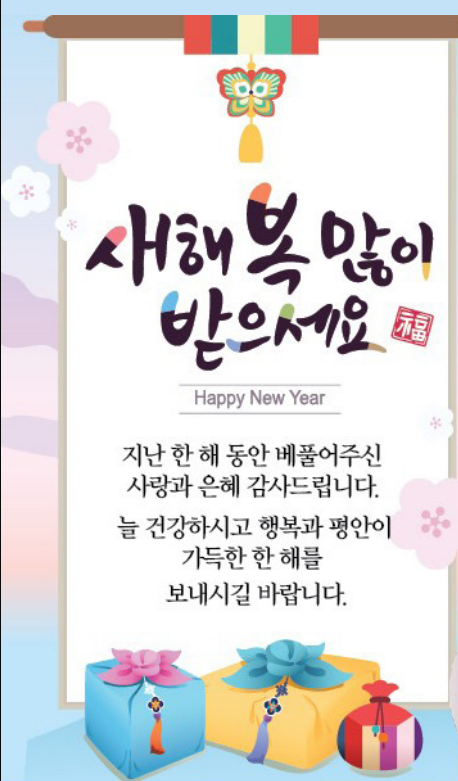
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Korean American Foundation – Greater Washington

Establishment

The Centennial Committee of Korean Immigration to the United States - Greater Washington was established in October, 2001 as a Virginia non-profit organization to provide programs relating to the history and future of Korean immigration to the United States, and to engage in other educational and cultural activities. The organization was recognized as tax-exempt under IRC Section 501(c) (3) in June 2003. The organizational name was changed to the Korean American Foundation - Greater Washington (KAF-GW) on January, 2004. KAF-GW at the time was vigorously seeking the designation of Korean American Day as January 13, the date that the first Korean immigrants arrived on the shores of America in Hawaii in 1903. This goal was realized in 2005, when the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate passed resolutions designating January 13 as Korean American Day. Since then, the foundation has been actively supporting and organizing special events on January 13, Korean American Day.

Mission Statement

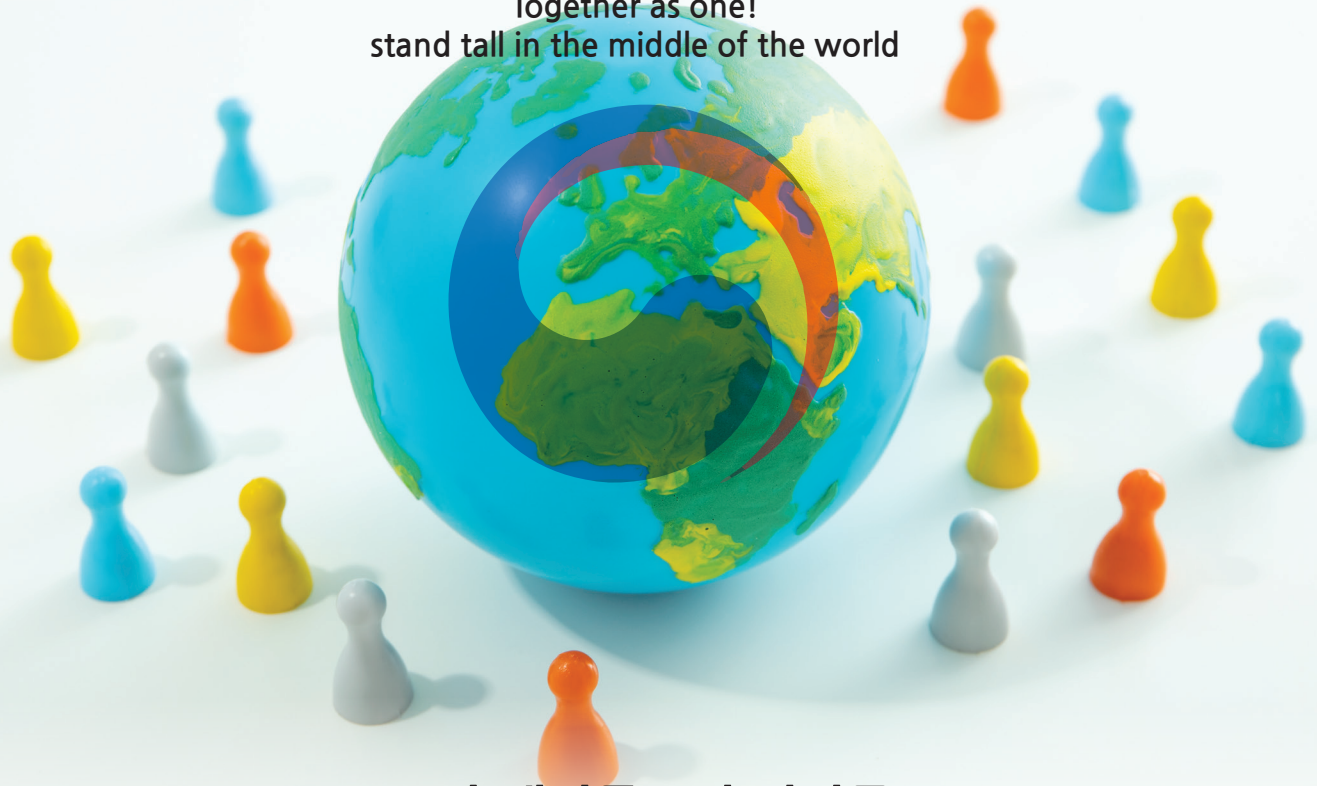
Our mission is to honor the achievements of the Korean American community and to express our gratitude to American citizens for the opportunity to live in freedom and prosperity. We also seek to illuminate the pioneering efforts of our immigrant predecessors, to organize a Korean American Day celebration on January 13, and to pass on an awareness and appreciation of the accomplishments of Korean immigrants to future Korean American generations.

Please visit us at <https://kafgw.org>.

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