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A History of Asian American Students at Boston College Law School

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From its humble beginnings seventy-five years ago, Boston College Law School strived to provide ethnic minorities—Irish Catholics to Asian Americans—with a strong legal education based on Jesuit values. As the Law School celebrates its seventy-fifth Anniversary, it is a fitting time to look back and document a group of minority students that has not been studied before—Asian Americans.¹ This paper attempts to record the experiences of Asian American students while at Boston College Law School, focusing on their motivations for attending law school, their experiences while studying in Boston, and their drive to form an identity at the Law School through the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association.

¹ For the purposes of this paper, the term “Asian American” includes in the term, “Asian Pacific American” (which identifies over 28 diverse Asian ethnic subgroups and different Pacific Islander groups) “Southeast Asian” (which includes ethnic subgroups with roots in Southeast Asia, including Thai and Hmong), and those from India. See Michael J. Balaoing, The Challenge of Asian Pacific American Diversity and Unity, 2 ASPAMJJ 1, footnote 6, at 1 (1994). It is important to note that my characterization of individuals as belonging to minority groups is not scientific. Since Boston College Law School did not keep record of race or ethnicity during admissions until after 1976, I have based my recordings on surnames and photos.
The most striking difference, when looking at the history of Asian Americans, is the noticeable surge of students beginning in 1975. This paper will look at the experiences of Asian Americans prior to the surge in 1975 and after 1975, when the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association was formed. The first group of law students was comprised of Asian American students, almost all of who hailed from Hawaii. Experiences of this first group will be contrasted with those who entered after 1975, most of who are from the continental United States, and are a part of a nationwide increase in Asian American attendance in law schools. This paper will also study their motivations in forming the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association. The main source for this paper is the oral histories of Asian American students who attended the Law School. There is no other known documentation. It is hoped that through these oral histories, we can learn more about the history of Boston College Law School.

I. The Asian American Experience


3 Percentage of Asian American Enrollment at Boston College Law School

4 The number of Asian American law students dramatically increased in the 1980s as a result of the 1965 Immigration Act, which opened the doors to Asian immigrants that had been nearly shut for the past 40 years. See Grace W. Tsuang, Assuring Equal Access of Asian Americans to Highly Selective Universities, 98 YALE L.J. 659, 660 (1989).
Any study as to why the first Asian Americans to attend Boston College Law School were from Hawaii, must begin with a careful analysis of the circumstances of Asian Americans in Hawaii and the continental United States.

The Asian experience on the continental United States during the late 1800s and early 1900s was arduous compared to the Asian experience in Hawaii. Asian laborers who migrated to the United States worked under harsh conditions and competed with Caucasian, working-class people for many jobs in California. As a result, organized labor groups blamed Asian immigrants for increased unemployment. In 1905, these labor groups organized and formed the Asiatic Exclusion League, whose goal was to exclude Asians, particularly Japanese, from gaining employment. The league lobbied for anti-Asian legislation, conducted boycotts, promoted segregation, and produced propaganda.

As a result of the racism and animosity towards Asians, they faced legal discrimination in varied forms, from the inability to become naturalized Americans to school segregation. In 1882, Congress passed the Chinese Exclusion Act, which brought Chinese immigration to a halt and prevented Chinese from becoming naturalized United States citizens. Asian immigrants were also forbidden from purchasing or leasing farmland in California in order to quell their growing numbers. The co-author of the

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7 Created and led primarily by labor groups, the League’s membership soared to represent 238 affiliated groups with over 100,000 members within three years of its formation. These groups included the American Legion, the California State Federation of Labor, and the Anti-Jap Laundry League. Id.
8 Id.
10 A few savvy Japanese got around the exclusionary Alien Land Law by approaching Japanese-Americans in Hawaii to supply their names for the land to be placed under. For example, Kazuo Miyamoto mentions in his autobiography of how his distant relatives had him lease the farm for them; in
Alien Land Laws of 1913 and 1920 described how these laws were created in order to “limit their presence by curtailing their privileges which they may enjoy here; for they will not come in large numbers and long abide with us if they may not acquire land.”11 Shortly thereafter, in 1884, the San Francisco Board of Education ordered all Chinese public school students to attend the segregated Oriental School, which later included Japanese, Korean, Indian and Filipino children. Segregation of these children did not end until the end of World War II.12

The Immigration Act of 1924 virtually cut off Asian immigration to the United States.13 The Act restricted Asian immigration by denying even the token quota that was afforded to immigrants from other countries because Asians were deemed ineligible for citizenship on racial grounds by a 1922 Supreme Court decision.14 These laws remained largely unchanged until the Immigration Act of 1965 (hereafter, “The 1965 Act”).15

The effect of these conditions challenged Asians, who struggled against such blatant racism. For those who wanted to become attorneys, the conditions were almost hopeless unless they were naturalized Americans—and most Asians on the continental United States were immigrants. Takuji Yamashita graduated from the University of Washington Law School in 1902.16 He passed the Washington State Bar Examination with honors that year, only to be denied admission to the bar because he was not a return, they would guarantee his expense through medical school at Stanford University. ROBERT HIGGS, *Landless by Law: Japanese Immigrants in California* in *JAPANESE IMMIGRANTS AND AMERICAN LAW: THE ALIEN LAND LAWS AND OTHER ISSUES* 218-219 (Charles McClain, eds., 1994).

11 *Id.* at 215.
14 In 1922, the Supreme Court in *Takao Ozawa v. United States* declared that Japanese immigrants were ineligible for United States citizenship. The Court ruled that because Ozawa was neither a “free White person” nor an African, he did not have the right of naturalization as a Mongolian. *Id.*
naturalized American—only persons of “the White or Whitish race” were eligible to become naturalized Americans.\textsuperscript{17} Asians, who were able to attend law school, had no hope of becoming an attorney unless they were United States citizens by birth. Because there were very few Asian women to bear children, there were few children born as United States citizens. In 1930, men comprised 80\% of the Chinese population.\textsuperscript{18} Many Chinese men had no reason to stay in America because there were few Chinese women, and nearly half of the male Chinese migrant workers returned to China.\textsuperscript{19} Despite this, there were a few immigrant families with United States-born children who should have been eligible to pass the state bars. However, the harsh conditions for Asians living in the continental United States did not even invite them to even attend law school.\textsuperscript{20}

The influx of Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and Filipino laborers brought to Hawaii paralleled Chinese migration to California. Between 1850 and 1920, over 300,000 Asians immigrated to Hawaii as def-facto indentured servants for the arduous labor on sugar plantations.\textsuperscript{21} These immigrants radically changed the makeup of Hawaii. Before the importation of Asian laborers, Hawaiians constituted 97\% of the 74,000 inhabitants in 1853.\textsuperscript{22} After this large wave of Asian immigrants in 1920, Hawaiians constituted only 16\% of Hawaii’s population.\textsuperscript{23} The other ethnic groups were as follows: Japanese 42\%, Portuguese 10\%, Chinese 9\%, Filipinos 8\% and Caucasians 8\%. \textsuperscript{24} The “Big Five”

\textsuperscript{17} Coquillette, \textit{supra} note 8.
\textsuperscript{18} Takaki, \textit{supra} note 5 at 243.
\textsuperscript{19} Between 1850 and 1882, 330,000 Chinese migrated to America. During this period, 150,000 of them, or 47\%, returned to China. \textit{Id.} at 116.
\textsuperscript{20} See Coquillette, \textit{supra} note 8.
\textsuperscript{21} Takaki, \textit{supra} note 5 at 132.
\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Id.}
\textsuperscript{23} Takaki, \textit{supra} note 5 at 132.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{Id.}
sugar plantation companies brought these groups to Hawaii and played them one off another in order to maintain control and to prevent labor strikes.\textsuperscript{25}

Hawaii was ethnically very different from the continental United States. In 1920, Asians constituted over 60\% of the population of Hawaii, as compared to only 3\% of the population in California and less than 0.2\% percent of the continental United States.\textsuperscript{26} Asians in Hawaii also enjoyed greater opportunities than their continental counterparts. The Sugar Strike of 1941 ended control by the Caucasian minority, when laborers put aside their differences and united for better working conditions.\textsuperscript{27} Although racial tension existed in Hawaii, it differed from the racial tension faced by Asians on the continental United States. While racial tension in Hawaii ran between Asian groups, these groups collectively formed the majority population and shared a common enemy: the elite Caucasian minority that ran the sugar plantations. Racial tension on the continental United States, however, ran mainly between the Caucasian majority and the Asian minority, which constituted less than half a percent of the population.\textsuperscript{28} While other minority groups were also discriminated against, they did not work closely with the Asian minorities and the opportunity to collectively come together to overcome discrimination did not exist, as it did in Hawaii.

While both groups immigrated to the United States at roughly the same time, conditions necessary to enable youth to attend law school occurred in Hawaii, but did not readily occur on the continental United States. Upward mobility was more attainable in Hawaii than in the continental United States for several reasons. Rather than discourage people, the harsh conditions of the sugar plantations drove workers to aspire

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{25} Id. at 26.
\textsuperscript{26} Id. at 132.
\textsuperscript{27} See id.
\textsuperscript{28} Id.
\end{footnotesize}
for a better life; the key was education. Parents scraped and saved to keep their children in school until they graduated from high school. A few even sent their children away to college on the continental United States, which was considered a financial luxury at the time.\textsuperscript{29} In spite of daily toil, immigrant’s feelings for Hawaii changed. “With my bare hands and calloused heart and patience,” a worker boasted, “I helped build Hawaii.”\textsuperscript{30} Such was the new feeling. The successful combined Sugar Strike of 1941 brought Asians together as never before. As Japanese workers marched for higher wages, they said their work was *kodomo no tame ni*, “for the sake of the children.”\textsuperscript{31}

The opportunities for Asians in Hawaii to make a place for themselves were much greater than their counterparts on the continental United States. The Asians in Hawaii lived in a society where the elite included dark-skinned Hawaiians. They lived in stationary plantation communities where they formed a critical mass and collectively constituted a majority.\textsuperscript{32}

One of the most important conditions that enabled upward mobility in Hawaii was the presence of Asian women, who were brought in as “picture brides” by the plantation owners through a legal loophole in order to keep the male population from returning to Asia.\textsuperscript{33} This enabled Asians in Hawaii to establish families much sooner than their counterparts on the continental United States, who were unable to establish families due to the transient nature of labor on the west coast and to the shortage of women.\textsuperscript{34} It is important to note that Asians on both the continental United States and Hawaii were unable to become naturalized citizens. While the Organic Act of 1900

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{29} See id. at 175.
\item \textsuperscript{30} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{31} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{32} Id.
\item \textsuperscript{33} Robert S. Chang, *Disoriented: Asian Americans, Law and the Nation-State* 83 (1999).
\item \textsuperscript{34} Id. at 175, 243.
\end{itemize}
extended citizenship to most citizens of the Republic of Hawaii during annexation, this did not apply to Asians because they were excluded from citizenship in the Republic, and thus were not citizens of the United States.\textsuperscript{35} While both groups faced difficulty in becoming naturalized citizens, Asians in Hawaii had a greater chance of bearing children born on American soil with rights and privileges that legal exclusionary acts could not take away.\textsuperscript{36}

In later years, these conditions set the stage during for Hawaiian Japanese Americans to volunteer for the United States military during World War II in record numbers.\textsuperscript{37} Japanese Americans returned home as some of the most decorated war heroes of World War II, and proved their worth and loyalty to America. The Democratic Party Revolution of 1954 served as a catalyst for change in Hawaii, when Asian Americans took control of important seats in the territorial legislature. These seats were previously occupied and controlled by the Caucasian minority since the mid 1800s. This feeling of upward mobility and change encouraged Asian Americans to travel to the continental United States to pursue a law degree and a better life.

II. Early Asian Americans at Boston College Law School

In 1929, Boston College Law School opened its doors and provided an opportunity for minority Irish Catholics in Boston to get a legal education centered on Jesuit values. This was just the beginning of a diverse student body at Boston College


\textsuperscript{36} In 1895, the United States Supreme Court ruled that Wong Kim Ark, born to Chinese parents on American soil was a United States citizen because citizenship conferred by measure was, “general, not to say universal, restricted only by place and jurisdiction, and not by race.” See FRANK H. WU, YELLOW: RACE IN AMERICA BEYOND BLACK AND WHITE 93 (2002).

\textsuperscript{37} See Takaki, supra note 5 at 399.
Law School. Within the next 20 years the student body also comprised of Jewish, Black, Asian American, women and Latino students.

The first Asian American student to attend Boston College Law School was James M. Morita in 1937. There is little known as to what factors led to the admission of the first Asian American. What is known is that the first Black student, Harold A. Stevens, graduated one year prior to Mr. Morita’s arrival. A native of South Carolina, Mr. Stevens originally planned on attending Boston University in 1933, but Rev. John B. Creeden, S.J., a Boston College regent and one of the “founding fathers” of Boston College Law School, convinced him otherwise.\textsuperscript{38} While Mr. Stevens was personally recruited by Fr. Creeden to attend Boston College Law School, it appears that there was no set policy for recruiting minorities or for obtaining geographic representation.\textsuperscript{39}

James M. Morita was born in rural Captain Cook on the Kona Coast on the Island of Hawaii. Mr. Morita attended Boston College Law School for his first year of law school from 1937-1938.\textsuperscript{40} It is important to keep in mind that no law school existed in Hawaii until the University of Hawaii created the William S. Richardson School of Law in 1973. Mr. Morita, like other Hawaii residents, was forced to look elsewhere on the continental United States for a legal education. Mr. Morita transferred to

\textsuperscript{38} Harold A. Stevens attended the evening program at Boston College Law School from 1932-1936. He later fulfilled his dream of becoming a judge and worked his way up to become the presiding Justice of New York’s Supreme Court, Appellate Division. Todd F. Simon, \textit{BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL AFTER FIFTY YEARS: AN INFORMAL HISTORY}, 1929-1979 11 (1980).

\textsuperscript{39} The first effort to recruit on at least a geographic basis began under the leadership of Dean William J. Kenealy in 1939. \textit{Id.} at 18.

\textsuperscript{40} James Morita graduated from Georgetown University Law Center in 1940. He returned to Hawaii and served as a public prosecutor, special counsel for the City of Honolulu. He combined law and banking when he helped found City Bank in 1958 and later became President of the Hawaii Bankers Association. Georgetown University Law Center endowed an Asian Legal Studies Chair in honor of Morita, enabling a full-time law center faculty member to concentrate on enhancing Georgetown’s Asian Legal Policy Studies Program. He passed away at the age of 84 on June 4, 1998. I have attempted to locate his surviving family but have been unable to locate them in the phone book. I was able to locate a Morita family with ties to Kona, however they were not related to James Morita. \textit{Obituaries, HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN} (Jun. 10, 1998) at http://starbulletin.com/98/06/10/news/obits.htm.
Georgetown University Law Center after his first year for unknown reasons.\textsuperscript{41} Several hypotheses could be presented as to why Mr. Morita left the Law School. First of all, the attrition rate at Boston College Law School was extremely high around this period, graduating as few as 50% of its incoming students.\textsuperscript{42} Another factor is that Mr. Morita may have been displeased with Boston College and sought a different law school experience. Boston College Law School had exchanged hands between five deans in a period of four years, including the period when Mr. Morita was a first-year student.\textsuperscript{43} Although the Law School received a prestigious “Class A” ranking when it was accredited in 1932, the constant change of leadership during this period took its toll.\textsuperscript{44} Professors recalled its effect on the students: “The student body was bewildered, faculty morale was impaired, the public and the profession were confused. Progress came to a halt and the main effort was directed not to forging ahead, but to stopping the slide backward.”\textsuperscript{45} Furthermore, Fr. Creeden, who oversaw Boston College Law School, revered Georgetown. Prior to serving at Boston College, Fr. Creeden was the President of Georgetown University and he often mentioned how he wanted Boston College Law School to be the “Georgetown of the north.”\textsuperscript{46} Mr. Morita may have also desired to attend Georgetown because of its strong connection to Hawaii. As Ralph S. Inouye, Class of 1950, points out, the top three schools that people from Hawaii attended were

\textsuperscript{41} See \textsc{Boston College Bulletin—The Law School} (1929-1967).

\textsuperscript{42} Under Dean Dooley, half of all entering first year students either failed or did not pass, due to the rigorous academic standards that he set to ensure that Boston College Law School would be known as an elite law school. This policy continued and standards were tightened even more under Father Kenealy, where Boston College Law School graduated only one-third of its incoming students. See \textsuperscript{Simon, supra} note 38 at 10, 24.


\textsuperscript{44} \textit{Id.} at 13.

\textsuperscript{45} Faculty committee report in 1945. \textit{Id.} at 15

\textsuperscript{46} \textit{Id.} at 4.
Georgetown, Harvard Law School and the University of Michigan Law School. While it remains unknown whether Boston College Law School deliberately sought Mr. Morita because of his unique background or whether his acceptance was happenstance, the next Dean had a clear vision for the Law School—to make it a nationally recognized school.

In 1939, William J. Kenealy, S.J. was selected to “begin a new era” for Boston College Law School. During his service as Dean, Fr. Kenealy admitted the first group of Asian American students. These students were not recruited for the racial diversity they would add, but for the geographic diversity they would bring in keeping with Fr. Kenealy’s goal to become a nationally recognized school. The 1939-1940 school session was a “banner year” for the Law School because its student body greatly diversified. Forty-nine colleges and universities were represented in the student body and that “students from Hawaii, Tennessee, Alabama, and may other distant locations made the long trip to study at Boston College.” Up until this point, the majority of the student body was comprised of Boston College graduates.

Ralph “Munro” Matsumura was the first Asian American graduate from Boston College Law School in 1941. Born in 1915 to immigrant parents from Japan, Mr. Matsumura’s daughter, Sue Taira, describes her father’s childhood:

My Dad was the first Student Body President from Kawananakoa Intermediate School and said he helped plant the trees in McKinley High [School]’s front yard. For a small man at 5’2”, he had a stentorian voice

47 Interview with Ralph S. Inouye, Chairman of the Board, Ralph S. Inouye Co. Ltd., in Honolulu, Haw. (March 31, 2004).
48 Simon, supra note 38 at 16.
49 During 1939-1956 when Fr. Kenealy served as Dean, nine Asian Americans attended Boston College Law. See Bulletin, supra note 2.
50 Simon, supra note 38 at 13.
51 Id.
52 Id. at 18.
53 Id.
54 See Bulletin, supra note 2.
and the personality to match. Very assertive and confident for a Nisei (second-generation Japanese American), my father was not the type to back down. He said as a high school student, he and his friends would walk around with brass knuckles in case they ever had to defend themselves.\footnote{Correspondence with Sue Taira (May 23, 2004).}

Mr. Matsumura’s family stressed the importance of education. After graduating from high school, Mr. Matsumura attended the University of Hawaii for his undergraduate education and earned his master’s degree from the University of Michigan.\footnote{Id.} Ms. Taira recalls that her grandfather, who was the equivalent of an attorney in Japan, hoped to one day set up a law practice with her father.\footnote{Id.} This may have been part of the motivation for Mr. Matsumura to attend Boston College Law School in 1938, soon after receiving his master’s degree. Ms. Taira recalls her father’s experience at the Law School:

Transportation [from Hawaii to the continental United States] was via ocean liner, the \textit{Lurline}, and by train cross-country. He had to work during school and worked in Maine in the summers, not coming home until he earned his degree. [His] younger siblings had to work to send my father to the mainland (continental United States) for law school. He said that BC [Law School] was tough and he was poor, but I don’t remember any stories about prejudice. My Dad loved Boston and Maine. He was the type to relish new experiences and make the most of them.\footnote{Taira correspondence, \textit{supra} note 55.}

Upon graduating from Boston College Law School in 1941, Mr. Matsumura returned to Hawaii and took the bar exam, receiving the highest scores that summer—one of his proudest moments. Unfortunately, Mr. Matsumura was unable to fulfill his father’s dream of setting up private practice together because the United States entered World War II after Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in December of that year. Ms. Taira recalls this time, “Being educated, my Grandpa was one of those rounded up after the
Pearl Harbor attack and incarcerated at Sand Island. He was eventually taken back to
Japan with his younger children after a stay at Crystal City Internment Camp (in
Texas).\(^{59}\)

Mr. Matsumura was a practicing attorney until he retired in his sixties. During
his career he handled adoptions between Japan and the United States. He made several
unsuccessful bids for public office as a “card-carrying” Republican in heavily
Democratic Hawaii.\(^{60}\) Mr. Matsumura spoke fondly of his experiences in law school and
he is credited for inspiring the next Asian Americans to attend Boston College Law
School. Kwan Hi Lim, who attended the Law School during 1947-1948, remembers Mr.
Matsumura:

Munro was a better than average lawyer, tremendous personality, short,
shorter than me, bouncing around. He had an easy way about him and
spoke exceedingly well for an Oriental. At that time at our age, we all
spoke broken English, but he spoke very well. Everybody liked him. I
think he’s one of the reasons I chose Boston College, because he said that
they were very good to him there.\(^{61}\)

Mr. Lim was one of four students from Hawaii who made up the next Asian
Americans to attend Boston College Law School after Mr. Matsumura.\(^{62}\) One trait that
the men shared was a desire for adventure and a new challenge away from everything
they knew in Hawaii. For most of the men, attending Boston College Law School was
their first trip outside of Hawaii. Mr. Lim recalls his reasons for leaving Hawaii to
attend law school:

The reason why I wanted to go to the East Coast to go to school was
because I wanted to improve my English. I wanted to get away from the

\(^{59}\) *Id.*

\(^{60}\) *Id.*

\(^{61}\) Interview with Kwan Hi Lim in Honolulu (March 31, 2004).

\(^{62}\) Alfred Sun Yen Fong, Ralph S. Inouye and Kwan Hi Lim entered Boston College Law School in
local people to live in an environment that was very different. In
California, you go to law school--you mix with the same people. When
you go to the east, you don’t know anybody, you’re just alone, you
know, its lonesome.63

Ralph S. Inouye, Class of 1950, also wanted an adventure and attending law
school appeared to be a good way to achieve this goal:

I was working in construction with my engineering background. Then in
1944, I lost my wife. My wife passed away giving birth to my son. So I
was kind of lost, so I wanted to go to the mainland (continental United
States) and see America, the United States. So I thought the best way is
to go down East, so you see the whole country. So that is what I say I am
going to do; [and since it is] good to be there for awhile to look around, I
might as well go to school, and that’s how I ended up at Boston College
Law School. It was very interesting because Boston had a long history
and it was an interesting town to live in. That’s the story of how I got to
go to law school.64

While the students in this group shared a common desire for adventure and to see
the country, they each had very different reasons for becoming an attorney. Kinji
Kanazawa, Class of 1950, attended Boston College Law School after his work in saving
the Moilili Japanese Language School building from government confiscation during
World War II. Japanese immigrants founded the language school as a way of preserving
their culture. In an address at the 100th Anniversary of the Japanese Language School,
Mr. Kanazawa described his work:

You have to realize that back then, people were very suspicious of us
Japanese. Even the military governor at that time wanted to take the
property away from us. So he first refused to let the community have it
unless I changed the Board of Directors of the Japanese School from
Japanese names—those who were the original founders of the school—to
more acceptable Caucasian names. He wouldn’t allow the original
members of the association—my father was one of them—to sit on the
board, and I was not about to hide and say I’m ashamed to be Japanese. I
insisted that it should go to an entity of the association.

63 Lim interview, supra note 61.
64 Inouye interview, supra note 47.
It took awhile but we persevered, and finally I got the names of very prominent Caucasians who supported us. Names like Hememway, who was the Chairman of the Board of Regents at the University of Hawaii, and the President of Bishop Trust, and the President of the Hawaiian Trust and the President of Castle and Cooke—all of the so called “Big Five” companies of that time. All of them, plus Ernest Kai, Secretary of the Territory of Hawaii, agreed to serve on the Board of Directors. And what really made me have faith in the integrity of these people was that when their term was over, and the land was safely converted back to the association, they voluntarily gave their positions on the Board back to the association’s original members.\footnote{Tribute to Kinji Kanazwa, Moilili Community Center Board of Directors, Trustees and Staff, Honolulu, Haw. (Oct, 13, 2003) (on file with author).}

While the United States government forbade the continuation of the Japanese language school, the building was saved and retained by the community as a result of Mr. Kanazawa’s determination. In its place, Mr. Kanazawa organized the Moilili Community Center in 1942. He recalls his vision:

> What I envisioned in those days was for the center to be a “great leveler.” It was a place where everyone could come together and could experience being equal; no one was higher than the other—like a fine tuned orchestra, everyone has something of importance to contribute. And so I look to the association today in the same way: to continue to be the great leveler of the community, and to bring all of our now diverse cultures and ethnic contributions in bringing about what is best for the community in general.\footnote{Tribute, supra note 65.}

Mr. Kanazawa enrolled in Boston College Law School five years later.

Another member of this group, Mr. Lim, had different motivations for attending law school. Mr. Lim, who grew up as one of ten siblings on a sugar plantation, discusses how his humble beginnings led to a career in law:

> From poverty…I wanted money. Law was the quickest way. That’s an awful way to put it. I should say, for the recording, I wanted to help humanity. That’s full of crap. I wanted to educate myself so I could make some money. You know, I am tired of living poor, [you] see? I was always hungry, actually hungry. You know, ‘cause I had to budget what I eat and I’d only eat twice a day, sometimes only once a day. I was a very aggressive boy, very tired of being poor. To give you an example
of being poor, you know [how large is] a big bowl of saimin (ramen noodles)? We would all go to this restaurant when there was a celebration of some kind and two hungry boys would have to share one saimin. So, later in life, when I ate my bowl of saimin by myself, I never forgot that, you know. But hunger is good; it drives you.”

For Alfred S. Y. Fong, becoming an attorney was a means to becoming a success in his community. Education was highly stressed in his family, which included Hiram Fong, who became the first Asian American to serve in the United States Senate. Mr. Fong’s parents wanted him to get the best education, which at the time, only private schools could offer. The only private schools that would admit Chinese immigrants at the time were Catholic schools, so Mr. Fong enrolled in St. Louis High School. He later converted to Catholicism during this period, and may have been drawn to Boston College Law School for its Jesuit teaching. He was also drawn to its location, as Senator Fong previously graduated from Harvard Law School, which was across the river from Boston College Law School.68

Not everyone in the group necessarily wanted to become an attorney. When asked why he went to law school, Mr. Inouye answered:

I don’t know why, I can’t tell you why. I thought of doing something; go to school. I really don’t know why I went to law school, instead of doing a Masters in Engineering or something like that. Maybe it was Munro [Matsumura’s] influence, I don’t know.69

The men have fond memories of their years at Boston College Law School, despite the amount of work involved. Just prior to their arrival, Fr. Kenealy instituted a system of objective grading combined with a high failure rate. “He just jacked the

67 Lim interview, supra note 61.
68 Alfred Sun Yen Fong graduated from Boston College Law School in 1950. His relative, Hiram Fong, graduated from Harvard Law School in 1935 and later became the first Asian American elected to serve in the United States Senate in 1959, when Hawaii gained statehood. One of his surviving nephews, Peter C. K. Fong, later attended Boston College Law School, Class of 1980. Interview with Peter C. K. Fong, Fong & Fong Attorneys at Law, Honolulu, Haw. (March 30, 2004).
69 Inouye interview, supra note 47.
standards up,” a professor recalls. His plan established a reputation for tough academic standards, so that the school’s alumni would gain stature in the legal community, which in turn would reflect back upon the Law School. Mr. Inouye recalls his introduction to this policy on his first day of law school, “The first day in class as a freshman, the professor said, ‘Look to your right and look to your left,’ he says, ‘You are not going to see one of them next year.’ So I thought, I hope am not the one!” Indeed, Fr. Kenealy’s plan worked. Observers could count heads from one September to the next and conclude that Boston College was indeed a tough law school, as only one-third of the entering class were awarded diplomas. Students admired this tough policy as it forced them to do their absolute best. Shimeji Kanazawa, wife of Mr. Kanazawa, who entered Boston College Law School’s two-year accelerated program, recalls how her husband did nothing but study:

For the two years he really buckled down and just studied. Except when our friends came, but even at that, he let me entertain them. He couldn’t keep away from his studies, so it was hard for him. Kinji would even study while taking a bath. [He] goes into the bathtub, he had an old fashioned laundry board and put it on top (across the tub), then he puts his books on and studies. He read the whole time. When he was up, when he’s sleeping, he’s always reading because he was so far behind because they started late. But he went through because he said, ‘I’ve got to make it because I’m much older than the rest of the boys and I don’t have the background that they have so I’ve got to try my best.’

Mr. Inouye also recalls his days studying and even kept his law books and his typewritten notes for the past 57 years, even though he actually practiced law for only six years before starting his own contracting company:

70 Simon, supra note 38 at 23.
71 Id.
72 Inouye interview, supra note 47.
73 Simon, supra note 38 at 23.
74 Interview with Shimeji Kanazawa, wife of the late Kinji Kanazawa, in Honolulu, Haw. (March 30, 2004).
You know, Boston College is a case law school, not a textbook [school]. So you had to read a lot of cases. So being from out of town I guess you have more time, you know, you don’t have family distractions so you sped a lot of time studying. Also, when I went to law school, I was a little older, that’s why you work harder, you see. These young kids, they don’t work as hard. [Laughter]75

One thing that all the students recalled was the location of the law school in Scollay Square, which leaved much to be desired. During WWII, the enrollment at Boston College Law School fell dramatically, graduating just a handful of students.76 Acting Dean William J. O’Keefe recounted these war years, “We never knew from one day to the next how long we were going to keep going, but somehow we managed to keep the school alive.”77 Enrollments were so low that the large rented space could no longer be justified. Acting Dean O’Keefe noted, “If necessary, we’ll meet in my living room. But meet we will.”78 In 1945, he found a new building for Boston College Law School at 18 Tremont Street, adjacent to Scollay Square.79 Ironically, just as it moved into its smaller quarters, the war ended, and the Law School saw an exponential growth in the student body, which put a strain on the school’s resources. Mr. Lim recalls his first trip to the school’s new location:

I went to Boston and I was disappointed because their law school was in a business building on Tremont Street, and I said “Aww, Christ.” You know, so I lived right on Scollay Square, the cheap area there. Scollay Square was all where the druggies and the drunks [stayed], but the rooms were cheap so I rented a room.80

Since Boston College Law School was in just one building and had no student lounge, Scollay Square became its campus. While the close proximity to the local courtrooms

75 Inouye interview, supra note 47.
76 Simon, supra note 38 at 21.
77 Id.
78 Id.
79 Id.
80 Lim interview, supra note 61.
allowed students to watch law in action, it still left much to be desired.\footnote{Simon, supra note 38 at 28.} Downtown drivers apparently honked their horns even more than they do today; fire engines, ambulances and police wagons set off their alarms in nearby stations.\footnote{Id.} Fr. Kenealy even had a bit of a pleasant feud with Mayor James Michael Curly, who was fond of speaking on sound trucks and set up numerous noontime concerts at City Hall, just around the corner.\footnote{Id.} These noisy interruptions frequently resulted in the rescheduling of classes.\footnote{Id.}

Despite its location, all of the alumni had nothing but the fondest memories of Boston College Law School. When asked if the felt they ever experienced racism or discrimination during law school, the former students replied that they had no such experiences. Their fellow classmates and professors treated them with the same respect that they would to anyone. In fact, Mrs. Kanazawa recalls that her husband was actually treated with more respect because he was a few years older than most of the other students, who attended law school directly from college.\footnote{Id.} They were, however, acutely aware of their race and about other tensions at Boston College Law School. Mrs. Kanazawa, who actually aided Japanese nationals during World War II for the Swedish Consulate, describes her experience as a Japanese-American in Boston at that time:

I loved Boston! They treated us so well and I thought, “Gosh, with the war and I was Japanese.” They knew, too, that I was the Executive Secretary for the Swedish Consulate and that we took over the Japanese consulate with the Japanese files. I had to go through them because I was the Executive Secretary. When the Prisoners of War came in on the big ship, I had to speak Japanese to them. I had to go to the FBI and CIA and ask them, “Why [did you take] this person.” I was helping the families—find work for them, be sure they had some help from the Red Cross—for three years during the war. So the Chamberlain [secretarial school] Director (in Boston) knew my background, but she never mentioned it to

\footnote{Kanazawa interview, supra note 64.}
the other students. Some of them knew but they never mentioned it and in fact, they liked me more because of that. I traveled through 35 states as a gift from the Red Cross, the military government and the Swedish government—they all got together to get me that trip. So if they really analyzed it, I was really helping the Japanese people so that they could at least live harmoniously with other people here. But I never had that kind of feeling [of discrimination] when I went to school and mingled with all the Boston people—not once.  

Mr. Inouye also mentions that he never felt that he was treated differently because of his race. However, he did recognize a distinct religious tension between his Catholic and Jewish classmates. He recalls:

I didn’t realize when I was in Hawaii, but when I got to Boston for the first time I realized the Catholics and the Jews were so against each other. There’s a distinct, and you can see that. When you live in Hawaii, you don’t see much of that, I didn’t realize it until I went to Boston. Nobody tells you, but you can just see that they didn’t get along.  

What Mr. Inouye describes was a reflection of the tension in Boston on a smaller scale. According to historian Thomas O’Connor, Boston experienced an outbreak of anti-Semitic violence during the early 1940s. Whether because of anti-Semitic charges by Father Charles Coughlin, a Catholic priest who preached on national radio, or the increasing number of Jewish moving into Irish neighborhoods, bands of Irish youths raged through Jewish neighborhoods harassing shop owners, beating up Jewish boys, and scrawling swastikas on Jewish temples in the early 1940s. This social and religious climate in Boston did not change until well after World War II, when local politicians felt the changing times allowed them to speak out against anti-Semitism. In fact,

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86 Id.
87 Inouye interview, supra note 47.
89 Id.
90 Id. at 205.
Mayor Curley would often boast that Boston was the “strongest Coughlin city in the world.”

While it appears that none of the students experienced racism at Boston College Law School, one student does remember an encounter he had with a racist remark. Mr. Lim recalls standing in line at a butcher shop waiting for his meat:

I’d be irritated by the fact that maybe I’m there waiting in line and I am say, second in line, and somebody else comes in and he takes their order first. So I took that the first couple of times. [Then] he’d call to me, “Hey Charlie Chink, what can I get for you?” I took that for about two or three times and I went behind the counter and I grabbed him by the neck. I said don’t you ever call me ‘Charlie Chink’ you [expletive]. The Butcher, after that incident, you know, I went in the next time to buy something and he said, “Hey how are you, Kwan. I got some corned beef and cabbage my wife is cooking, come over for dinner.” And we became best friends. You see, some people are that way, they look at you and you’ve got slant eyes and they form a picture of you.

Overall, Mr. Lim mentions that such incidents were very rare, and that most of the people in Boston were very polite, especially compared to the students and the experiences he had at Duke University, where he transferred after his first year. He describes this transition:

I enjoyed Boston and the students were very friendly. After my first year I got married and I couldn’t pay the tuition for the second, so knowing that I applied for scholarships so I asked Boston College for help, but most of the aid programs at the time were restricted to Jesuits or Catholics, naturally it’s a Jesuit school. So I applied to Duke and Michigan and Duke is the first one that answered, said “I’ll give you a scholarship.” I went to Duke and my first semester I had a hard time because the ones who were in that school were the sons of the rich. Boston was more academic and diverse. But at Duke, we had a lot of rich kids, and I didn’t get a long with them, and I got into a couple of fights. But after a while, they settled down and they seemed to like me, because I was very outspoken, you know. I was not a typical local quiet Oriental.

\(^{91}\) Id.  
\(^{92}\) Id. interview, supra note 61.  
\(^{93}\) Id.  
\(^{94}\) Id.
Mr. Lim attributes the different experiences he had in Durham from Boston because there were more Asian Americans in Boston. In Durham, he experienced a lot of prejudice:

[In] 1947, ’48, ’49, racial prejudice, you know, was bad. Like when I hitchhiked to go to Duke with my wife. Do you know why the truck stopped for me? Because I looked funny, I looked strange. They stopped, picked me up, said, “Where are you [from]?” or something like that. I told them I am from Hawaii, you know, and they liked that. They formed a different impression, when I said I was from Hawaii. You know, because I was pretty tan.

[My wife and I] lived out in the old military housing which is very cheap and they used to have hillbillies that come in where there was a swimming pool at that camp. I remember swimming there in the summer almost everyday and I remember that these hillbillies with these small donkeys. They came out from the hills of North Carolina, they came down to look at me. They lived in the mountains—they were true hillbillies. I was a curiosity, really. Because there were hardly any Orientals. At that time, racial prejudice was bad.

While racial prejudice in North Carolina was much more overt than in Boston, Boston still had its problems with prejudice. During the 1940s, ethnic groups in the city accepted the unwritten law of residential segregation. According to this law, it was possible for many different ethnic groups to live together harmoniously, so long as each group stayed within their clearly defined geographic boundaries and socialized only with members of the same group. At work, in political affairs, and in community activities, people were expected to meet and work together on an equal footing. This lasted until World War II, when large numbers of Black workers from all over the country came to

95 Id.
96 Lim interview, supra note 61.
97 O’Connor, supra note 88 at 240-41.
98 Id.
99 Id.
Boston to work in factories, industrial plants and naval shipyards. Consequently, Boston’s Black population doubled by 1950 and continued to rise. This expanding Black population burst out of its geographical boundaries and began settling along the fringes of Caucasian, Irish-Catholic neighborhoods. For the first time on a large scale, the unwritten laws had been repealed; Caucasians saw this as a direct threat to their welfare and security.

After this initial group of Asian Americans graduated from the Law School in 1950, four others that attended during the 1950s, followed by just two students in the 1960s. During this time, the Boston College Law School began its first official effort to recruit racial minorities and women. Dean Robert F. Drinan, S.J. anticipated that applications from these groups would increase rapidly in the 1960s and 1970s. Therefore, he initiated informal programs to entice Blacks and women to attend the Law School. He also worked to provide financial aid and scholarships for minority students. Despite his efforts, minorities and women remained underrepresented during the 1960s. In fact, more Asian Americans attended Boston College Law School in the 1950s than in the 1960s. Interestingly, up until 1960, all of the Asian Americans to attend the Law School were from Hawaii.

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100 Id.
101 Id.
102 O’Connor, supra note 88 at 240-41.
103 Id.
104 See Bulletin, supra note 2.
105 Simon, supra note 38 at 48.
106 Id.
107 Id.
108 See Bulletin, supra note 2.
109 During this period, there were two Asian students who attended BC Law. Shi-Ching Wong of China attended during the 1940-41 school year and Kwang Lim Koh, a former Korean diplomat graduated in the Class of 1960. *Id.* He is the father of Harold Hongju Koh, the current incoming Dean of Yale Law School.
Everett Fukushima was one of the two Asian Americans to attend the Law School during the 1960s. Despite the extra attention paid to race during 1966-1967, when he was a student, he also had a similar experience at Boston College as the students attending in the 1950s. He explains:

I never felt discriminated against, even at Colgate where I went to college [before coming to law school in New York]. I never thought that I was different. I can’t even remember or recall one instance where I felt discriminated against because of my race. While in Boston and New York, I went to bars, restaurants, dated girls, and never for one instance did I feel like I was any different. I was one of the guys with my White friends…I talked like them, they accepted me.  

There are several factors that may explain why only two Asian Americans attended Boston College Law School in the 1960s. One factor could be attributed to the negative publicity of racial prejudice and discrimination during the Civil Rights Movement. At the time, Boston Public Schools refused to desegregate and virtually ignored the decision in Brown v. Board of Education. Just a few years later, Boston was known as the most “racist city in the nation.” While Mr. Fukushima joins the students who attended during the 1950s who did not experience racism, the common perception in Hawaii was the exact opposite. For example, Mrs. Kanazawa describes how she absolutely loved Boston and how everyone treated her so well there. However, when she told this to her friends in Hawaii, they were in “disbelief.” A related factor could be the events of the 1960s, a turbulent chapter in American history. President John F. Kennedy had been assassinated, there was the looming threat of a nuclear attack during the Cold War, and students were drafted to fight in Vietnam. Perhaps during moments like these, students from Hawaii may have chosen to stay closer to home to

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110 Telephone interview with Everett Fukushima (May 12, 2004).
111 O’Connor, supra note 88 at 256-57.
112 Id.
113 Kanazawa interview, supra note 74.
attend law school. It is also important to note that during these years, overall enrollment at Boston College Law School was down, so perhaps the issues that discouraged Asian American students from attending the Law School were the same as the issues that affected other non-minority students.

While there were few Asian Americans studying at Boston College Law School during the 1960s, two very important events took place then that would dramatically increase Asian American attendance at Boston College in future years—the Civil Rights Movement and The 1965 Act, which opened the doors to Asian immigration. Ever since the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 and the Immigration Act of 1924, a disproportionately small number of Asians were allowed to immigrate to the United States.\textsuperscript{114} The Civil Rights Movement began to awaken the moral conscience of Americans that racism in all its forms should be condemned, including immigration policies. In 1954, the United States Supreme Court in \textit{Brown v. Board of Education} held that separate was not equal and that racial segregation based on prejudice was unconstitutional.\textsuperscript{115} One decade later, Congress outlawed racial discrimination due to the valiant protests and marches led by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and other civil rights activists. The notion of equality for all Americans logically implied equality for all immigrants seeking a better life in our country. “Everywhere else in our national life, we have eliminated discrimination based on national origins,” said Attorney General Robert Kennedy to Congress, “[y]et, this system is still the foundation of our immigration law.”\textsuperscript{116} The Cold War increased pressure for the legislation of fair and just immigration policies, which would present America as a democracy to people engaged

\textsuperscript{115} Takaki, \textit{supra} note 5 at 418.
\textsuperscript{116} Takaki, \textit{supra} note 5 at 418.
in anti-Communist struggles around the world, including Asia.\textsuperscript{117} Subsequently, Congress passed The 1965 Act, which abolished national-origins quotas and provided for the annual admission of 170,000 immigrants from the Eastern Hemisphere; 20,000 immigrants per country.\textsuperscript{118} Family members of United States citizens were exempt from this quota. The 1965 Act was not expected to change the complexion of future immigrants because it was assumed that since Asian Americans accounted for less than half a percent of the population in America, that they would sponsor few relatives.\textsuperscript{119} Surprisingly, however, the opposite effect occurred. Apparently since most European immigrants had come to the United States much earlier than Asians, there weren’t many immediate family members left to reunite.\textsuperscript{120} Furthermore, Europe was experiencing healthy economic boom during this period, so many families were not eager to leave.\textsuperscript{121} As a result, in a twenty-five year period, the Asian American population soared from 877,000 (0.5\% of the total United States population) to over 5 million (2.1\%) in 1985.\textsuperscript{122} While the national increase of the general population grew 34\% during this period, the Asian American population grew by an astounding 577\%.\textsuperscript{123} As a result, the 2000 United States Census reports that over 60\% of all Asian Americans are immigrants.\textsuperscript{124} All of these events set the stage for the children of recent Asian American immigrants to attend colleges and law schools in record numbers.

III. APALSA: Creating a face for Asian Americans

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{117} Id.
\bibitem{118} Id. at 419.
\bibitem{119} Id.
\bibitem{120} C. N. Le, \emph{The New Wave of Immigration}, \textsc{Asian-Nation: The Landscape of Asian America}, at http://www/asian-nation.org/new-immigration.shtml (viewed May 5, 2004).
\bibitem{121} Id.
\bibitem{122} Takaki, \textit{supra} note 5 at 5.
\bibitem{123} Id.
\bibitem{124} Le, \textit{supra} note 120.
\end{thebibliography}
Richard G. Huber began his term as Dean of Boston College Law School in 1970, just as minority students began to visibly increase for the first time in the school’s history. Dean Huber continued actively recruiting minority students and the minority base substantially increased during his term. For the first time since the entering Class of 1950, there was a solid group of Asian Americans that entered the Law School in 1975. This base of minority students allowed for changes that would shape the face of the school for decades to come.

In 1975, Asian American students at Boston College Law School formed the Asian American Law Student Association, which later became the Asian Pacific American Law Students Association (hereafter, “APALSA”). The organization strove to provide support for first year students and to serve in community affairs, such as volunteering for the Greater Boston Legal Services’ Chinatown Outreach Program. Other minority student organizations formed as well, including the Black American Law Student Association (hereafter, “BLSA”) in 1972 and the Latin American Law Students Association (hereafter, “LALSA”) in 1976.

Dean Huber gave tremendous support for these new student associations. Each organization received a budget as well as office space in the Law School’s new campus.

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125 During the 1970s, there was a visible increase in all minorities at Boston College. Comparing minority enrollment in first year classes in 1968 and 1976 reflects this increase. BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL FACE BOOK OF ENTERING STUDENTS (1968, 1976).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Asians</th>
<th>Blacks</th>
<th>Latinos</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1968</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4 (2%)</td>
<td>2 (1%)</td>
<td>22 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1976</td>
<td>9 (3%)</td>
<td>15 (5%)</td>
<td>13 (4%)</td>
<td>91 (22%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Data used in calculating percentage of Black students to the total entering class is based upon only students with photos.

Simon, supra note 38 at 60.

BALSA was later renamed to the Black Law Student Association (BLSA). Id.
Perhaps one of the most important ways that the Dean showed his support for minority students was the opportunity he gave the organizations in the admission of minority applicants, which continued into the mid-1990s. Dean Huber invited these organizations to actively participate in the admissions process by allowing them to review the files of students whose applications put them in a ‘grey area.’

Douglas Inouye, Class of 1991, explains this process:

The school admissions committee would have a pool of candidates who were in the grey area. Good LSAT, but not so great grades or [vice-versa]. Just for some reason or other in the grey area, that they couldn’t or didn’t feel that they could make a solid offer, because there were others that deserved the offer. And so they would refer all those applicants to us if they had written anything Pacific Asian. So we would get together and go through those applications, discuss and advocate for one or two each month. So we would go through long discussions and heated debates about who deserved to get a second shot. And sure enough, we had at least two that the admissions committee would recognize and admit.

The one theme that really got everybody was if you overcame adversity, and one applicant who did get in we advocated and he got in and he deserved it. He had been an orphan in Korea, incredibly hard life initially and then became a success story, wanted to come back to law school for all the right reasons. That was a no-brainer, everybody said you know what, some people almost had tears, really thinking, “Oh my god! How come he didn’t make the first cut on this.” And some asked, “Does this person write well?” You know, at a minimum, they should be writing at a good, decent level because if not, they wouldn’t survive in law school. It was a great experience because it was fascinating to see how everybody viewed different things. In the end we brought in people who added to the diversity and the mix and we were very grateful to admissions to allow us that.

Professor Ruth-Arlene Howe, who worked closely with BLSA and sat on the Admissions Committee, explains that students were asked, “Is there somebody who is going to bring something to your organization?” and to ponder, “What is this person

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128 Id.
129 Id.
130 Interview with Douglas H. Inouye, Corporate Counsel, The Queen Emma Foundation, in Honolulu, Haw. (April 1, 2004).
going to do with their education?”  

Professor Howe noted that despite the opportunity to advocate during the student admissions process, because only one or two students were admitted as a result of the efforts of the student groups, sometimes talented and deserving students would not get in because of a score that was below average. She notes that, “The 90-pound gorilla in the room was the U.S. News and World Report law school rankings.” APALSA continued to grow as an organization, in part because of this direct admissions process, which continued until the Hopward decision in 1996 banned affirmative action in Texas. While APALSA and the other student organizations were unable to directly affect the minority admissions process as they had before, they were encouraged to remain recruiting the accepted students to enroll in Boston College Law School. This was an important way for students to connect to future members and help them with their selection of schools as well as in preparation for law school.

In addition to recruiting prospective students, APALSA played an important role in providing a support network for its members. Ingrid Chiemi Schroffner, Class of 1995, recalls that this included panels on creating outlines, tips on professors, and networking with mentoring and support when she was a member. Beth Aarons, Class of 1998, recalls:

APALSA provided a basis for interaction with other students. As 1Ls, we would probably not have much interaction with students from other sections without extra-curricular activities. Having members from all

131 Interview with Ruth-Arlene Howe, Professor, Boston College Law School, in Newton, Mass. (Apr. 28, 2004).
132 Id.
133 Id.
three years was helpful for defining our expectations for the upcoming years.\footnote{Completed APALS Survey from Beth L. Aarons, Attorney at Law, Newtonville, Mass. (March 29, 2004) (on file with author.)}

As the organization grew, so did its member base. Prior to 1975, nearly two-thirds of Asian Americans at Boston College Law School were from Hawaii. After 1975, Asian American students from all over the country began to attend, and there were noticeably fewer students from Hawaii.\footnote{This could be partially attributed to the creation of the University of Hawaii William S. Richardson School of Law in 1973. Prior to this, students who wanted to practice law in Hawaii were forced to go to law school on the continental United States. \textit{See History of the School of Law}, William S. Richardson School of Law (May 10, 2004) at http://www.hawaii.edu/law/general/history.html.} This diverse base provided for a great exchange of ideas. Mr. Inouye recalls:

[APALSA provided for an] exchange of ideas and exchange of backgrounds. I got my eyes opened up to what it was truly like to be oppressed growing up or picked on because you’re Asian. I remember one woman—she just really, really had something against Japanese, she was Korean. Possibly partly because of the war and stuff that she had experienced vicariously through her ancestors who told her stories. But I don’t know what she thought of me or any of the other Japanese. But I did my best to try and make her realize that there are other good people and it doesn’t matter what their race is. But it was a challenge.\footnote{D. Inouye interview, \textit{supra note 130.}}

A natural step for APALSA to take was to provide for a formal exchange of ideas at Boston College Law School. This included inviting prominent Asian Americans to speak as well as join in on discussions about issues relating to minorities. When asked what the most memorable moment in law school was, Mr. Inouye described the Dean’s involvement on a forum on minority-related issues:

The most memorable moment was when Dean Coquillette stood up to this speaker and took him apart. This guy was a special speaker invited by the Federalist Society who traveled from school to school speaking about maybe dismantling affirmative action and a whole bunch of conservative, minority related views. Then Dean Coquillette showed up, as did a bunch of other professors, which was so comforting and impressive. I think it was seven at night and they were still there. And so the Federalist guy said, “Well, you know, the playing field is kind of level already, there’s...
not much disadvantage to being a minority.” At which Dean Coquillette took offense and said, “You know what, you’re wrong...because firms are probably getting very conservative (during the Gulf War) and they won’t take that chance, even though any one of my students in this group could stand head to head and toe to toe to anyone else. They’re talented, they’re intelligent, but they won’t get that chance, because they are minorities, and that’s not right, and you can’t tell me that the playing field is level—it isn’t.” At which there was a dead silence after that for a while. And [it gave me] chicken skin (goose bumps), you know, all over. It was just incredibly good to know that the Dean of our Law School is behind this, and so positive and supportive, just incredible. And I think that’s always been a defining moment in law school for me and to realize that you have people that inspirational. 

While APALSA served the many needs of its members, over time, the nature of the organization and the ease of friendship may have resulted in reducing the desire for members to seek outside friendships. APALSA members they felt comfortable around each other because they could relate to each other’s cultural and life experiences.

Reese Nakamura, Class of 1988, explains:

Although I, and everyone around me were "aware" of my ethnicity, I didn't really make a big deal about it. As you know, when you grow up in Hawaii you aren't as self-conscious about your ethnicity as you might be if you grew up elsewhere (where you would more than likely be a noticeable minority). I think growing up in Hawaii gives you confidence about your ethnicity or, conversely precludes you from growing up with self-consciousness about being a minority. These traits seemed to me the biggest difference between myself and other Asians who did not grow up in Hawaii.

Non-Hawaii Asians definitely seemed to have more of a chip on their shoulder about racial matters than I did. They also tended to socialize more exclusively with other Asians. I tended to socialize with students from all ethnic groups. It seemed to me that making an issue over one's ethnicity had an impact on a variety of social factors such as whether you socialized more (or less) with other Asians and how non-Asians perceived you. That is still probably true today.

139 Id.
140 Correspondence from Reese Nakamura, General Counsel, Sen Plex Corporation (May 13, 2004) (on file with author), Interview with Douglas H. Inouye, Corporate Counsel, The Queen Emma Foundation, in Honolulu, Haw. (April 1, 2004).
141 Id.
Mr. Nakamura’s insightful comments shed light on a larger issue—the tension that Asian Americans have when their traditional cultural values may not necessarily support the adversarial system in law school. For example, the Asian emphasis on the family as the central unit, avoiding confrontation, and maintaining proper harmonious relationships with others are largely inconsistent with the pluralist, individualist, self-oriented ethos that forms the foundation of the adversarial system which is competitive and combative.142 As a result, Asian American law students may experience a tension between the two sets of values and may feel less comfortable with the adversarial system than their Caucasian counterparts.143 When placed in the law school setting, Asian Americans may feel uncomfortable with the Socratic method and classroom debate. Debra W. Yang, Class of 1985, came from a “traditional Chinese family” where it was unthinkable to challenge your parents’ authority.144 When she arrived at Boston College Law School, she felt a tension between her traditional Asian values and the values of the adversarial system. Ms. Yang avoided speaking in class and felt uncomfortable because the Socratic method encouraged debate with the professor, a person of great authority, which is incredibly disrespectful in traditional Asian culture.145 She also felt that she was at a bit of a disadvantage as compared to her Caucasian classmates, who may have grown up debating issues at the family dinner table.146 After graduating from law school, Ms. Yang encountered these issues as a prosecutor, where she learned to master the adversarial system. Ms. Yang is the first Asian American female United States

142 Carolyn Jin-Myung Oh, Questioning the Cultural and Gender-Based Assumptions of the Adversary System: Voices of Asian-American Law Students, 7 BERKELEY WOMEN’S L.J. 125, 127 (1992).
143 Id. at 128.
144 Debra W. Yang, Address to the Asian Pacific American Law Student Association at Boston College Law School (March 12, 2004).
145 Id.
146 Id.
Attorney. She heads the Central District of California office—the second largest United States Attorneys office outside of Washington, D.C.

The degree to which an Asian American may feel uncomfortable with the adversarial system depends upon the degree to which they hold traditional Asian values and their assimilation to American culture.\textsuperscript{147} A look at a conceptual model created of assimilation and character development explains this further. Based on Chinese Americans, this model focuses on three types of characters: the Traditionalist, the Marginal Man, and the Asian-American:

The Traditionalist possesses strongly internalized Asian values and attempts to be a “good” son or daughter by conforming to parental values. This may take the form of high educational achievement, occupational status, obedience to family elders, or other means of bringing honor to the family. In contrast, the Marginal Man seeks to assimilate into mainstream American and defines himself primarily in terms of acceptance by Caucasians. Hence, he rejects traditional values espoused by his family and adopts Western values as his own. The bicultural Asian-American, in contrast, tries to formulate a new identity altogether by integrating aspects of both Asian and American culture that she believes are necessary to her self-esteem and identity. Hence, the bicultural Asian-American cannot unquestioningly accept parental values but does not view full assimilation to Caucasian culture as her goal. The bicultural Asian-American considers herself acculturated but chooses to retain positive values from both cultures and strives to participate actively in the American mainstream. In doing so, she may experience tensions with parents who focus on her “Americanness,” as well as with mainstream Caucasian culture which may reject her “Asianness.”\textsuperscript{148}

It is important to note, however, that this model simplifies these characters and some Asian Americans may exhibit characteristics of all three models. Despite this, the model serves to generate discussion about how Asian Americans assimilate to the American culture. This model also provides insight into the tension Asian Americans in law school may face with the Socratic method and the values stressed in the adversarial

\textsuperscript{147} Oh, supra note 142 at 138.  
\textsuperscript{148} Id. at 138-139.
system. As such, APALSA serves to diffuse this tension by allowing members to discuss their cultural background and their law school experiences. For example, panels on course selection serve as a way for first year members to see how much professors adhere to the Socratic method and their political views. This enables members to select their classes according to which professor they feel most comfortable with. As such, a member like Ms. Yang, who was raised with traditional Asian values, may select a professor who prefers to lecture over one who cold-calls and encourage debate with students when offered the choice between professors for the same course.

Today, APALSA focuses on the needs of its members by working closely with the administration. Boston College Law School, together with APALSA, BLSA, and LALSA, holds an annual Students of Color Retreat, which brings together incoming Asian, Black and Latino students prior to the start of their first year.149 Over the weekend, students learn the basics of briefing a case by professors, studying tips from upper classmen, and personally meet with the administration prior to the start of orientation. The program is now in its fourth year. The administration also focuses on the importance of diversity to all incoming students. This year, APALSA worked with the administration to initiate a new diversity session as part of the school’s annual student orientation program.150

As Asian American students increased at Boston College Law School, the administration felt a need to similarly add diversity among its faculty over the past 20 years. Currently, five Asian American professors teach at Boston College Law

149 Correspondence with Yukie Tokuda (September 5, 2004).
150 Id.
The school recently hosted the 10th Annual Conference of Asian Pacific American Law Faculty in 2003, organized by Boston College Law School Professor Alfred Yen. The professors offer guidance to Asian American students at the school and regularly attend APALSA events.

The organization faces new challenges as its members continue to diversify beyond its traditionally East Asian members. APALSA President Yukie Tokuda discusses these challenges:

There has been much more diversity within APALSA than what it seems to be reported historically. The challenge is to make sure that no member is marginalized based on the ethnic diversity that they bring to the organization. This year, we are hoping to make APALSA much more welcoming to all members of various ethnic backgrounds. For example, we are no longer using the [original] APALSA logo, which is East Asia-centric with its depiction of Chinese characters. We are also hoping to expand our food selection, to bring in Middle-Eastern, Indian and other traditionally non-APALSA cuisines to our meetings. By brainstorming with a larger and more diverse group of people in the decision-making portion of speaker events, we hope to have a list of invitees that is more diverse than previous years.

Over nearly three decades, APALSA has provided its members with the support needed during their years at Boston College Law School. Through shared experiences in academic forums, community service projects, and socials, the bonds formed in APALSA last well beyond law school. Mi-Rang Yoon, Class of 1998 describes this best:

I had a nice experience in APALSA. In the long run, I think the friendships that you make and keep are very important. Its personally satisfying to stay in touch to support each other as we’re trying to establish our careers, make important decisions about balancing a family

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151 Associate Professor Dean Hashimoto, Associate Professor Joseph Liu, Associate Clinical Professor Evangeline Sarda, Associate Clinical Professor Carwina Weng and Professor Alfred Chueh-Chin Yen, who also served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs during 2000-2002.
152 CAPALF: 10 Years Past & Future, Boston College Law School, (October 17, 2003), at http://www2.bc.edu/~liujr/special/capalf.
153 Tokuda correspondence, supra note 149.
and career, deciding to change our careers, negotiate salaries, etc. My experience with APALSA was very positive—the most significant being the friendships that I formed.  

IV. Concluding Thoughts

The Asian American experience at Boston College Law School has been positive. A common thread shared by all graduates is that none of them appeared to experience any form of discrimination. When comparing the Asian Americans that attended in the 1940s-1960s from those that attended during the formation of APALSA, it appears that there are several differences between these groups based largely upon cultural differences. It is important to note that the biggest difference between these groups is that the first group was comprised almost entirely of students from Hawaii, whereas the majority of students who attended after 1975 were from the continental United States.

Of the first group of Asian Americans who attended Boston College Law School, most could not recall a single incident of discrimination that they faced while attending law school, although many attended on the heels of World War II. It appears that this could be a result of several factors, including the individual’s personality and how they perceived their Asian American heritage in law school. All of those interviewed said that their race did not appear to be an issue when attending law school. However, it appears that this may have been a product of society at that time. While race is a commonly discussed issue in today’s culture, it appears that certain issues were not commonly discussed prior to the Civil Rights Movement, even though cultural differences were clearly observed at the Law School between the Catholic and Jewish students. For example, student organizations listed in the 1950 yearbook are comprised

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154 Completed APALSA survey from Mi-Rang Yoon (April 2004) (on file with author).
of issue-based clubs competitions, such as the Law Club Competition (including the Taney Law Club), which prepared students in trial advocacy and the *Nisi Prius* Club, devoted to the study of courtroom procedure. While a non-issue based club existed, the St. Thomas More Club, it served as a reflection of the Law School’s commitment to its Jesuit heritage. Thus, while there were several Jewish students in attendance at the time, there was no Jewish Law Student Association. Moreover, there were nearly as many Asian Americans in the Class of 1950 as there were in 1975 when APALSA was formed, but these earlier students chose not to form an APALSA. Perhaps it was not socially acceptable to call attention to race during those times, as evidenced by the fact that there existed no Jewish Law Student Association. Furthermore, Boston historian Thomas O’Connor notes that little ethnic tension took place during this time because while feelings of prejudice existed, people observed an unwritten rule—people of different ethnic groups could live harmoniously, so long as each group stayed within their defined boundaries. Exempted from this rule were associations for work, political and community affairs, which would most likely include law school, where people were expected to meet and work together on equal footing. Avi Soifer, former

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155 While more research needs to be done, the existence of a Taney Law Club could possibly send a message about societal norms at the time. The club was one of eight clubs named after justices that comprised the Law Club Competition. Under the direction of practicing attorneys, the clubs served to prepare students on writing legal briefs and presenting legal arguments. The Taney Law Club is most likely named after United States Supreme Court Justice Roger B. Taney, who was the author of the infamous *Dred Scott* decision that denied citizenship to all Blacks and declared the 1820 Missouri Compromise unconstitutional, thus permitting slavery in all of the nation’s territories. Justice Taney noted that the “all men are created equal” phrase in the Declaration of Independence did not apply to Blacks because “it is too clear for dispute, that the enslaved African race were not intended to be included, and formed no part of the people who framed and adopted this declaration…” *Scott v. Sanford*, 60 U.S. 393 (Sup. Ct. 1857), *see SUI JURIS BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL YEARBOOK* (1950).

156 There were four Asian Americans in the entering Class of 1950 and five Asian Americans in the entering Class of 1978 when APALSA was formed in 1975. *BOSTON COLLEGE BULLETIN—THE LAW SCHOOL* (1947-1950) and *BOSTON COLLEGE LAW SCHOOL FACE BOOK OF ENTERING STUDENTS* (1975).

157 O’Connor, *supra* note 88 at 240.

158 *See id.*
Dean of the Law School, explains the complexity of race-relations back in those days and why many minorities of those times deny that any racism existed:

Talking to people, my father-in-law, for example, about was there discrimination among Jews. He was in the fire department—he was the only Jewish fireman in Des Moines, Iowa. So, most of the time, he would tell you, if you were interviewing him, he would say, “Oh no, there was no discrimination,” but if you know the story, you know that he was passed over for promotion over and over again. And he would sometimes tell you that, but he doesn’t even put the two together. And that was kind of “Oh yeah, of course I was.” because it was so widespread. So in a way, it was hard to pinpoint discrimination. It was so common that people didn’t notice it and take individual offense. It was sort of expected, almost. And then there was a lot of discrimination in Hawaii too. So in a way the answer you are getting taken has to be taken in context and complicated answer. And people were certainly nice to Kinji because the way he was, but I am sure there was still people being discriminatory to Japanese in abstract will say, “Oh, Kinji was an exception.” There was a lot of that, you know, “Some of my best friends are ____” or, “I have a friend who’s Asian.” So its complex thing. So when they say, “I don’t remember discrimination,” it’s a different understanding of discrimination it doesn’t mean there wasn’t discrimination. It was so pervasive or it wasn’t noticed or repressed so you can say a lot about that earlier generation. In part, sort of what they’re saying is, “Discrimination is different now from then” and it’s hard to have the conversation. So it’s almost that the word ‘discrimination’ may mean something different to you from what meant to them, and they’re not connecting.159

This could explain why the first group of Asian Americans largely thinks that APALSA is not necessary, or a step in the wrong direction. After explaining the functions of APALSA to Mr. Lim, he commented, “I think that’s wrong. I think they are going back to this quota system, discriminating and equalizing the Blacks with the Whites.”160 Similarly, Mr. Fukushima notes that, “Now there’s a lot of attention paid to race. The pendulum has swung too far—it wasn’t like that before.”161 However, part of

159 Interview with Aviam Soifer, Dean, University of Hawaii at Manoa William S. Richardson School of Law, in Honolulu, Haw. (April 1, 2004).
160 Lim interview, supra note 61.
161 Fukushima interview, supra note 110.
this may be due to the fact that the first group of Asian Americans at Boston College all hailed from Hawaii. Since Asian Americans always constituted a majority of the population, they were not treated like a ‘minority.’ As Mr. Nakamura, Class of 1988 pointed out, “I think growing up in Hawaii gives you confidence about your ethnicity, or, conversely, precludes you from growing up with self-consciousness about being a minority.”

Another factor to consider in discussing APALSA is the members who comprise the organization, who were largely from the continental United States. Many members were products of The 1965 Act, which finally re-opened the doors to Asian immigration. As such, they may have had more tension in dealing with their Asian American identity than their Hawaiian counterparts, who did not feel a need to create APALSA. This could be the result of growing up as a minority in America, where they were constantly confronted by conflicting values. On the other hand, since Asian Americans in Hawaii account for the majority of the population, traditional Caucasian values were not as strong as they are on the continental United States. The Asian Americans from Hawaii who attended in the 1940s through the 1960s knew they were returning home and never considered permanently staying in Boston. Thus they may have looked at their law school experience in Boston as temporary, whereas most Asian Americans on the continental United States felt a need to address the tensions that were always present as a minority. As such, they created APALSA to meet these needs and lessen the tension between their traditional Asian values and the adversarial system.

Although Asian Americans now comprise of 10% of Boston College Law School, tension continues to exist between their Asian and Caucasian American values.

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162 Nakamura correspondence, supra note 140.
A moment during an Asian American Lawyers Association of Massachusetts meeting in 2001 captures this tension.\textsuperscript{163} Justice John T. Lu, the first Asian American to serve on the Boston Municipal Court, reflected upon the first six months of his term. During the meeting, several law students and attorneys reflected their disappointment in the few Asian American judges in the Commonwealth and asked Justice Lu for his opinion on the matter.\textsuperscript{164} Justice Lu responded by asking the audience of approximately 35 people, “How many of you in this room either are in litigation or are planning to enter litigation?”\textsuperscript{165} Only two people raised their hands. Judge Lu explained that in order to increase Asian Americans judges in the Commonwealth, Asian Americans need to pursue careers in litigation in much larger numbers, as the majority of Asian American attorneys in the Commonwealth are transactional attorneys.\textsuperscript{166} This example may reflect the discomfort that some Asian American law students may face with the confrontational nature of litigation, as opposed to transactional law, in which is less adversarial in nature. This reflects the need for APALSA as a forum for Asian American students to discuss these issues as they enter the legal world in greater numbers.

From its humble beginnings nearly seventy-five years ago, Boston College Law School has strived to provide ethnic minorities—Irish Catholics to Asian Americans—with a strong legal education. In reflecting upon the history of the Law School, it is important to capture the memories and experiences of Asian American students through oral histories. It is hoped that this paper provides insight into the experiences of these students, in recent and past years, and encourages discussion about the role that Asian

\textsuperscript{164} Justice John T. Lu, Address to the Asian American Lawyers Assoc. of Mass. at Foley Hoag LLP (Oct. 25, 2001).
\textsuperscript{165} *Id.*
\textsuperscript{166} *Id.*
Americans and other minorities will play as Boston College Law School looks forward toward the future.