



**Name in English:** Heather Jeanne Fong

**Name in Chinese:** 方宇文

**Name in Pinyin:** Fāng Yǔwén

**Gender:** Female

**Birth Year:** 1956

**Birth Place:** San Francisco, CA

**Current location:** San Francisco, CA

**Profession:** Law Enforcement

**Education:** 1977, Graduate, San Francisco Police Academy; 1979, Bachelor of Arts, University of San Francisco; 1988, Master of Social Work, San Francisco State University

**Awards:** 2009, Women of Achievement Award, Legal Momentum; 2009, Leadership, Courage and Commitment Award, Pacific Asian American Women Bay Area Coalition (PAAWBAC); 2003, Outstanding Public Service Award, Asian Pacific American Community Center; 1988, Women Warriors Award, PAAWBAC; 1979, Officer of the Year Award, San Francisco Police Department

### **Contributions:**

Heather Fong was born raised in San Francisco's North Beach, the neighborhood next to Chinatown. She is the second of two daughters of the late Lum and Mabel Fong. Lum emigrated to the United States from southern China when he was 19 and enlisted in the U.S. Army during World War II.

Returning to San Francisco, Lum Fong married Mabel and opened a grocery store in Oakland's Chinatown that he managed until his death in 1997. Mabel worked as a legal secretary and lived to see her youngest daughter become San Francisco's first Chinese-American woman police officer, first woman chief of police, and the first Asian woman to lead a metropolitan city police force in the United States.

During her junior year at St. Rose Academy, an all-girls high school in San Francisco, Heather Fong met a visiting police officer, which led to her decision to pursue police work as a career. While attending the University of San Francisco, where she was a member of the Air Force ROTC, Fong worked as a part-time San Francisco police cadet. She first volunteered as an unpaid Police Activities League Cadet; and had achieved the position of a salaried civil-service Police Cadet by the time she was sworn in as a San Francisco police officer in 1977.

Fong was a recent police-academy graduate and in field training when, at age 21, she was assigned to assist in a major homicide investigation in Chinatown. The incident on September 4, 1977 received extensive national and international media attention; and became known as the Golden Dragon Massacre after the popular Chinese restaurant

where the violence occurred. Five persons were killed and 11 were injured when three armed Chinatown gang members fired indiscriminately at diners in an attempt to strike members of a rival gang. Since the suspects, witnesses, and all but one of the shooting victims were Chinese, Fong's Cantonese language skills were utilized throughout the investigation.

The community and public outrage and media exposure from the Golden Dragon Massacre led to the formation of the SFPD's Gang Task Force; focused on the need to hire more Asians as police officers; increased opportunities for incumbent Asian officers to be promoted or selected for special assignments; and forced the city to pay greater attention to crime and gang violence in Chinatown.

For her work in the Golden Dragon Massacre investigation, Fong received praise from the police chief and her fellow officers for her expert translation of hundreds of hours of live and recorded interviews and conversations from Cantonese to English. Her contribution led to the identification, arrest, prosecution, and conviction of the suspects and masterminds behind the shooting and other Chinatown gang-related crimes.

Heather Fong earned her promotions through her determination and reputation for working as hard as the most dedicated officers. In her 32-year career with the SFPD, Fong served in each of the department's sworn ranks: officer; sergeant-inspector; lieutenant; captain; commander; deputy chief; and assistant chief. In January 2004, she was appointed interim chief of police; and permanent chief three months later. Fong retired in April 2009 after five years as police chief.

In November 2014, after 5½ years of retirement from public service, Heather Fong was appointed an assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and heads the Office for State and Local Law Enforcement.

Assistant Secretary Fong is the primary liaison for the DHS to the nation's 18,000 local, state, tribal, and territorial law-enforcement agencies. Her responsibilities include ensuring the timely coordination and distribution of counterterrorism and intelligence data between DHS and law enforcement across the nation.

*(Revised February 24, 2015 by Gary Gee)*

### **External Links:**

[http://www.sfgov.org/site/police\\_index.asp?id=24103](http://www.sfgov.org/site/police_index.asp?id=24103)

[http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Heather\\_Fong](http://www.bookrags.com/wiki/Heather_Fong)

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/c/a/2004/05/02/FONG.TMP>

<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=3814811>