



Name in English: Margaret Chin
Name in Chinese: 陈倩雯 [陳倩雯]
Name in Pinyin: Chén Qiànwén
Gender: Female
Birth Year: 1953 or 1954
Birth Place: Hong Kong
Current location: New York, New York

New York City Council Member, District 1 Manhattan/Chinatown

Profession(s): Politician, Community Activist

Education: B.A., Education, City College of New York (CCNY)

Awards: 2003, Fannie Mae Foundation Fellow, Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University.

Contributions: On November 3rd 2009, veteran community activist, Margaret Chin, became the first Asian and Chinese-American elected to the New York City Council to represent the 1st Manhattan City Council District that includes New York’s Chinatown. That a district where Asian Americans make up over 40% of the population had never before had an Asian American representative had become an embarrassment for New York City. Chin received 87% of the vote, speaking out about issues such as affordable housing, immigration reform, and improving the services for senior citizens. Her victory is a proud milestone for the Asian-American community.

As a young child, Chin’s father moved from Hong Kong to America in pursuit of a better life for their family. In 1963, 9-year-old Margaret Chin and the rest of her family joined her father in NYC. Like many immigrant Chinese he worked in a Chinese restaurant as a waiter and dim sum maker.

Chin grew up in Chinatown. While attending the City College of New York, Chin became interested in Asian Studies and became involved in community organizing. After college, Chin worked for 14 years at the LaGuardia Community College’s Division of Adult and Continuing Education to help immigrants get college educations. In 1974, Chin served as a founding member of AAFE, “Asian Americans for Equality.” Chin led the organization’s effort to aid in affordable housing development and provide social services for Asian Americans and others. She led the organization as board president from 1982-1986.

Chin has also served on the boards of many non-profit organizations. She was on the board of the Association for Neighborhood and Housing Development (ANHD), an organization that has helped to rebuild neighborhoods and preserve poor and working class communities as safe places to live. She is the former Chairperson of the New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC), an umbrella policy and advocacy organization for more than 200 New York groups that work with immigrants and refugees. In 2000, Chin served as chair of the US Census Bureau’s Race and Ethnicity Advisory Committee on the Asian and Pacific Islander Population. Chin is also a founding member of

Chinatown Partnership Local Development Corporation (CPLDC), a partnership striving to bring residents, community groups, and business owners together to help rebuild Chinatown and keep local businesses alive after the 9/11 attacks in 2001.

Advocating voter education and participation, Chin was elected to the Democratic State Committee from 1986-1990. She ran for the New York City Council in 1991, 1993, 2001, and 2009. Her first two races were crippled by a lack of funding. In 2001, she faced a field in which three Asian American candidates helped divide votes and all of them lost. Chin left the AAFE to run for City Council in 2008, making it her full time job to raise the necessary money and political endorsements to run a serious and successful race. In a New York Times interview after finally winning, Margaret Chin said, "Chinatown has been around for over 150 years. For the first time it's a Chinese-American representing the area."

External Links:

<http://dnainfo.com/20091104/chinatown/chinatown-margaret-chin-makes-new-york-city-history>

<http://www.apaforprogress.org/margaret-chins-victory-speech>

<http://www.margarechin.com/biography.html>

<http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/10/30/chinatown.candidate.chin/>

<http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/17/nyregion/17asians.html>