



Name in English: You Chung Hong

Name in Chinese: 洪耀宗

Name in Pinyin: Hóng Yàozōng

Gender: Male

Birth Year: 1898-1977

Birth Place: San Francisco, California

Philanthropy: No

First Chinese American lawyer in California

Profession(s): Attorney, Community Leader

Education: LL.B. (Bachelor of Laws), 1924, University of Southern California; LL.M. (Master of Laws), 1925, University of Southern California

Awards: 2005, Chinese American Pioneers in Law, Chinese Historical Society of Southern California; 2001, Dr. Dan Louis, Jr. Award for Lifetime Achievement, Chinese American Museum

Contributions: You Chung Hong was the first Chinese American attorney admitted to practice law in California, passing the bar examination in 1923 before he even finished law school. He became the first Chinese American to graduate from the University of Southern California Law School and the first to practice law in California.

Hong worked tirelessly to try to repeal the Chinese Exclusion Act and testified before the U.S. Senate against discriminatory immigration laws before the age of 30. In 1933, Hong became the first Chinese American to be admitted to argue before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Hong worked to better the lives of the Chinese community through his legal work and was a prominent leader in many organizations. At the age of 28, he became president of the Los Angeles chapter of the Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.). He served as the first Chairman of the Board of Directors of *The Chinese Times* newspaper. He was president of the Los Angeles Chinatown Association, and was chairman of the Chinatown War Finance Committee fundraising for the Chinese war effort during World War II. He served as legal advisor to the Chinese Benevolent Association of Los Angeles for two decades from 1937 to 1957.

When the construction of Union Station in L.A. destroyed the old Chinatown, Hong played an instrumental role in the development of the New Chinatown in the 1930s. He provided legal advice and personal investments and was a major developer. He designed the neon-lit main gate on Broadway, Chinatown's signature landmark, and three buildings on Gin Ling Way, one of which was housed his law office. Hong, along with other community leaders, helped create a new Chinatown that was the first Chinatown to be owned entirely by Chinese.

Specializing in immigration law, Hong established his law office in the New Los Angeles Chinatown, the first Chinese American to run a law office in Los Angeles. As the country's foremost Chinese American attorney his office was the only place the national community could find immigration advice for decades. At a time when exclusionary laws were still in full force and politics separated families across the ocean, Hong enabled scores of family members to reunite, including the family of Ronald S.W. Lew, who later became a lawyer and a United States District Court Judge of the Central District of California.

In memory and honor of Hong, the Southern California Chinese Lawyers Association (SCCLA) sponsors two fellowships at \$1,500 each at the Asian Pacific American Legal Center of Southern California, in Los Angeles. Because no lawyer organization in the United States wanted a Chinese member in his lifetime Hong was only honored with awards after his death in 1977.

External Links:

<http://www.cityprojectca.org/blog/archives/89>
<http://www.chssc.org/honorees/2005/Hong.htm>
<http://www.camla.org/usc/ychong.htm>
www.chssc.org/NewsNotes/2007Oct.pdf