



OCA-GREATER SEATTLE STATEMENT ON THE DEATH OF DONALD “DONNIE” CHIN

“Donnie Chin: A Man of His People”

We at OCA-Greater Seattle are stunned, shocked, and saddened by the loss of our friend, Donnie Chin. Our condolences go out to his family. Donnie embodied what is best about our community. He was selfless, caring, hard-working, and modest; a true hero for all of us in the Asian American community. Donnie dedicated his life to serving the people in the Chinatown/International District and the Asian Pacific American community.

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Donnie was particularly passionate about preserving the vitality and character of the Chinatown/International District. Donnie’s dedication to community service was inspired by his family’s long history of involvement in the neighborhood. His father, Donald Chin, Sr., was an outspoken activist who served on the board of the Chinatown Chamber of Commerce and became an early president of the board for the InterIm Community Development Association.

In 1880, Donnie’s ancestors founded the family store, Sun May, a hand laundry company that evolved into a **jewelry store, then a gift shop**. The store anchored local life on South King Street until its relocation to Canton Alley. Young Donnie worked at the family store, and grew up surrounded by the stories, struggles, and triumphs of his neighbors.

Donnie originally founded the International District Emergency Clinic (IDEC) at Canton Alley. Over the years, he mentored hundreds of young people, especially the children who grew up in the Chinatown/International District, about Asian American history, the history of the area, and the importance of community service. Through Donnie, the IDEC became a hang-out, drop-in spot for many young people, and people just trying to learn about the Chinatown/International District.

Less than two years ago, OCA-Greater Seattle honored Donnie with a Golden Circle Award for his dedication to the community. Initially, he refused the individual recognition. So we modified the award to present it to Donnie Chin and the IDEC. Then he accepted.

Currently, in memory of Donnie, OCA-Greater Seattle joins others in an effort to rename the International Children’s Park the “Donnie Chin Children’s Park,” and to establish a memorial or salute to Donnie at the park. In the 1970s, Donnie had an idea to create a children’s park in the neighborhood because he loved children and saw the need to create an area for them to play. In 1981, the International Children’s Park was built. By renaming the park inspired by Donnie’s vision, Donnie will always be with us, and never leave the Chinatown/International District he loved so much.

From his work at Sun May Company, to his **midnight** patrols around the neighborhood, and his tireless efforts tending others, Donnie courageously served the Chinatown/International District. We will always remember him as an outstanding man and a heroic public servant. Donnie was truly a “man of his people.” His death is a tremendous loss for all of Seattle, most especially the Asian American community.

*Founded in 1973 as the Organization of Chinese Americans, OCA is a national organization dedicated to the social, political, and economic well-being of Asian Pacific Americans in the United States.*