

Support of Christine Chin Ryan

From - May Saechao  
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Have you ever attended an event and been in awe of the magnitude of diversity in the room? Have you ever met someone and wondered where they got their knowledge, their experience, how someone found courage or found their voice? Or have you met someone once shy, timid, but now proudly wears their community leader title?

These are just a few things Christine Chin Ryan has done for the community and for others. The smallest giant who dedicated her life to elevating others and uplifting communities to become who they are today. Christine was the bedrock of the API community, a fearless self made advocate who was the epitome of what a leader should ever be. Christine was someone who brought authenticity, honesty, and integrity in every corner, every space, every room she occupied.

People are not made to last forever, but the imprints of what Christine has left will remain with us and continue to impact so many areas of community that has yet to be touched or seen. Gone are the days where we can ask for a letter of support, gone are the days where elected officials and others are one email or phone call away in rallying diverse groups of people. Gone are days where we can access honest and authentic advice. Gone are the days where community leaders will be forced to proudly acknowledge themselves publicly. Also gone are the days where Christine playfully scolds us like mischievous kittens, or even times where her presence has grown men in uniform cowering in fear.

What I know to be true is that we must continue to practice these things despite Christine's absence.

We must learn to support and help one another despite our personal differences. We must uplift each other, there are so little of us. We must continue to speak up for each other and see the overall goal. As elected officials and community leaders, we must learn to keep those important connections and continue to build those relationships. Because for Christine, there was no community left behind. Representation meant everything to her.

As we think back to our conversations, we must also use those important moments as learning tools. Christine loved educational opportunities and this was also her way of showing her love to others. Christine was big on personal growth, as well as community growth.

As community leaders, we must loudly wear our titles and accomplishments. Be proud of who we are and in turn, we can be better leaders for our community who depend on us because we may be all they have.

Lastly, we will remember the fun times and memories created together. Christine is gone physically but the legacy and impact she has left behind will continue to live through our work, our advocacy, our values, and our communities.