



Honoring our Past - Building our Future

50 YEARS

of helping the community!



Welcome from the Board Chair



How do you put an elephant into a fridge in three steps? Open the door, put the elephant inside, and close the door, right? It can be a silly way to answer the question. But it is a realistic answer if we just focus on the actions we need to take. When asked, many of us struggle to provide an answer because we are trying to figure out how it's going to fit in a fridge.

In 1972, a group of 10 women started a social network with a singular goal of helping other women in distress. One night at about 2:00am, one of the women in the group received a call from a woman who had been beaten by her spouse. They jumped in to help and brought her into one of the group member's homes. As more members of the women's group brought domestic violence survivors into their homes, they began selling popular Korean food to raise money to help more people in difficulty. The group didn't try to figure out how the huge elephant was going to fit in a fridge. They just opened the door first.

Since its inception, KWA has helped over 4 million low-income people with social services. Today, it helps nearly 150,000 people very year. Our ultimate goal is to see an equitable society where people are not in need of our services anymore. However, the demand for our services are on the rise. To respond to the increasing needs, we are building a stronger platform to increase our impact in the community.

People at KWA will continue moving the mountain by putting our tiny actions together. With your support, we believe we can move it faster. Volunteers at KWA give so generously of their time and talents. Many of the volunteers have given themselves to the organization's mission for over 20 years. Volunteers don't necessarily have time. They have the heart to make time. Life can be hectic, and we could all use 25 hours a day. Yet, we humbly ask for your continued participation.

Thank you to past and current staff and volunteers! Congratulations on your success in bringing sunshine to the lives of others! This celebration is just one small recognition of the many blessings to come of your passion and dedication to community service.

Myung Lae Park
KWA Board Chair

Order of Events

Registration and Cocktail Hour

Opening Remarks by Emcee Mary Nam

Welcome by Board Chair Myung Lae Park

Congratulatory Messages:
Congresswoman Marilyn Strickland
Senator Chris Gildon

Dinner Service with message from
Consulate General of the Republic of Korea

Entertainment: Gook Ak Hanmadang (국악 한마당)

Keynote Speaker: Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl

Video: 50 Years of Caring for Our Communities

Raise the Paddle:
Pierce County Auditor Julie Anderson

Emeritus Recognition

Closing Remarks

Thank You to Our Speakers!



Rabbi Angela Warnick Buchdahl serves as the Senior Rabbi of Central Synagogue in New York City and is the first woman to lead Central's Reform congregation in its 180-year history. Joining as a senior cantor in 2006, she was chosen by the congregation to be Senior Rabbi in 2014. Rabbi Buchdahl was invested as a cantor in 1999 and also ordained as a rabbi in 2001 by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in New York.

She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Religious Studies from Yale University in 1994. Born in Korea to a Jewish American father and a Korean Buddhist mother, Rabbi Buchdahl is the first Asian American to be ordained as a cantor or rabbi in North America.

Rabbi Buchdahl has been nationally recognized for her innovations in leading worship, which draw large crowds both in the congregation's historic Main Sanctuary and via livestream and cable broadcast to viewers in more than 100 countries. Rabbi Buchdahl has been featured in dozens of news outlets including the Today Show, NPR, and PBS and was listed as one of Newsweek's "America's 50 Most Influential Rabbis".



Mary Nam is a longtime evening anchor at KOMO 4 News in Seattle. She anchors the hour long 4pm newscast, KOMO News at 6pm with Eric Johnson, and KOMO News at 11pm with Preston Phillips. She joined KOMO in 2003 as a general assignment reporter. Mary was born in South Korea and moved to the United States at the age of four. After high school, she headed for the rolling hills of the Palouse and found her calling in broadcast journalism at the Edward R. Murrow College of Communication at Washington State University.

She began her career reporting in Spokane at KXLY-TV. Her coverage of the deadly Revelstoke, B.C. avalanche in January 2003 caught the attention of the Seattle station and she joined KOMO that summer. Since then she's covered breaking news stories from both out on the field and behind the desk on set. Her anchoring has earned her several Emmy nominations.

KWA Board of Directors

Myung Lae Park, Chair

Yoni Yi, Vice Chair

Kyung-Ja Shin, Secretary

Chongsun Abbott, Treasurer

Dori Synn, Volunteer Committee Chair

Sulja Warnick, Senior Advisor

Young Goering

Eunsung Kelly Liu

Kyong Suk Kim Arbeeny

Kelly Sim

50 Years of KWA's History



What a miracle! It all started with a group of Korean women having the goal of helping other women adapt to their new U.S. culture. Over time, it has grown and evolved into a robust and sustainable non-profit organization with over 1,600 employees in fourteen counties in Western Washington.

In the 1970s as a social club, the original group shared meals, sang Korean songs, told stories to ease homesickness, and leaned on one another as we acclimated to our new home. We noticed there were many Korean women married to servicemen at Fort Lewis and McChord Air Base who were struggling to adjust to American culture. Some could not read or speak English well. KWA members realized that they could serve as a bridge by helping them to improve their English and develop common life skills. On occasion, domestic violence occurred and KWA members assisted as interpreters on the base.

In the 1980s, the organization's non-profit status allowed it to solicit Korean businesses more easily and apply for funding of essential programs. KWA offered classes for behavioral health, citizenship, and English language development. The first Korean senior meal site in Washington started during this time followed by In-Home Care programs in Pierce County. Due to the strong interest in these programs, services then expanded to several counties.

In the 1990s, the focus turned to securing suitable housing for seniors, as this had become a big issue. KWA successfully applied for a \$2.2 million HUD grant, for its first low-income senior housing project with 25 units. People doubted this dream would come true, but we achieved our goal!

In the 2000s, the Korean Women's Association saw tremendous growth. Multicultural and multilingual social service programs expanded in size and breadth, In-Home Care programs expanded throughout Western Washington, and behavioral health services were added. Also during this time, four more low-income housing projects with 249 dwelling units were added, funded with over \$61 million in HUD, state housing grants, and other funding sources.

I am so happy and grateful I have had the chance to serve for 46 years at KWA. For myself, I have learned so much about life, its successes and disappointments, joys and heartbreaks, and meaningful purpose here in Tacoma and Washington State. Throughout it all, I have valued integrity, equity, and connectedness. From the bottom of my heart, thank you so much to all the people who have helped KWA in our journey together. When there is a will, there is a way.

Sulja Warnick, Co-founder and Senior Advisor

Message from Volunteer Committee Chair



It amazes me that it has already been 50 years since the founding of the Korean Women's Association. If you compare this to a person's life span, a child is born, lives out their childhood, enters adulthood, marries, and raises a family in those years. Even for a marriage, celebrating fifty years is considered a golden jubilee anniversary. KWA has now arrived at its 50th year anniversary. Remembering the years I have spent with Korean Women's Association brings about flashbacks of a special time in my life and the

ways KWA grew into a large non-profit organization servicing the minorities in our community. This brings out a lot of emotions for me. My first experience with KWA was in 1980 when I visited to pick up my driver's license guide. This was the beginning of my providential 42-year long journey with KWA.

Currently as a fourth term chair, I am grateful to have been able to serve in the various departments of KWA over the last 42 years. Being able to help people from similar backgrounds receive the resources and services they need has given me a sense of deep kinship with my own people and with others who are going through similar challenges as immigrants. This has shaped my philosophy in life: to find happiness and meaning through serving others. Every organization has departments which are assigned different tasks that work together to accomplish the organization's goals. I have had the privilege of serving as library director, low income housing committee chair, president, volunteer chair, and a former board chair. I am fully aware how each person plays an important role in making this organization be successful. Last year I received the 2021 Korean National Medal Peony Award. I am so grateful to God and my beloved family. I want to acknowledge and give honor to the members of the Korean Women's Association for all the support and encouragement you have given to me all these years.

At the beginning of my KWA journey, I remember there was a time when we were struggling to pay the rent in our small office. We have now grown into a large, impactful organization with many resources including a seventy-million-dollar budget, various multi-ethnic programs, a 200-unit senior living residence, a home care program, a domestic violence program, and community center operations. As the KWA celebrates its 50th anniversary, I wish its members a joyful and prosperous next 50 years. I am excited to pass the legacy of service we have built to the next generation of community leaders. I would like to conclude by thanking my colleagues and seniors for their dedication and hard work these past 50 years.

Dori Synn, Volunteer Committee Chair



CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE KOREAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

It is my great honor and pleasure to congratulate the Korean Women's Association (KWA) on celebrating 50th anniversary in year 2022.

The Association was formed with only around ten Korean women in the early 1970s with the vision of serving multi-cultural, multi-lingual communities to make a positive difference in people's lives. Now it has grown remarkably to become an organization with over 2,000 staff and volunteers to help more than 15,000 people of all ages, minorities, refugees, and immigrants in Washington State.

KWA has stood as a beacon of hope for tens of thousands of diverse people in the community seeking a positive change in our lives. Representing the Republic of Korea, I am so proud of and grateful for the Association to spread and share in the Pacific Northwest the old Korean value of '홍익인간 (*Hongik-in-gan*)', the Korean humanitarian spirit of spreading happiness of life. I firmly believe that the pursuit of this noble cause together with the achievements of 50 years will echo in millions of hearts and minds in Washington State and beyond. I look forward to seeing the social cause the Korean Women's Association greatly helps in the future.

Sincerely,

Eunji Seo
Consul General of the Republic of Korea in Seattle



KOREAN WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION 50TH ANNIVERSARY

Congratulations to the Korean Women's Association on your 50th anniversary!

This is quite a milestone. I have fond memories of KWA, especially in the early days. From 1977-1980, I was the Executive Director of the Asian American Alliance. Around 1979, The Asian American Alliance moved into the Lakewood Community Center. KWA moved in next door. At the time, KWA was all volunteer and focused on providing a social space for Korean women, married to American men, who didn't have a support system. I remember Sulja Warnick creating a large library of Korean language books, so these immigrant women could have books in their language. I don't know how or where she got the books, but it was a big collection!

KWA expanded its services over the years. When the Asian American Alliance sadly closed its doors in the late '80s, KWA took over some of its programs. One of the early programs was meal sites for immigrant elders. They had one for Koreans of course, but also Filipinos, Pacific Islanders, and others. These programs provided not only a meal but a place to socialize, get information and access health care services. This program continues to this day, serving Korean, Cambodian, Vietnamese and English-speaking seniors. From this program sprang the many other services for seniors that are offered today by KWA. It is amazing to see the growth over 50 years-from an all-volunteer program to a multi-million dollar, multi-county organization serving thousands of people from all ethnic and racial groups.

I've always been impressed by the leadership at KWA. Korean women founded the organization for other Korean women and have been strong leaders, both as board members and staff. Many of the board members have served decades, showing their dedication and commitment to serve the community. I congratulate KWA for all that you have accomplished over 50 years and wish you all the best for the future!

Liz Begert Dunbar



Dear Friends of KWA,

The Korean Women's Association has touched so many lives over the past 50 years. From humble beginnings, you have helped grow an organization that continues to do so much good for the communities you serve. It's an honor to join you in the celebration of this achievement – Congratulations!

Building relationships to support our neighbors is so important. Grant County, where I live, has developed ties with Gunpo City as a sister city. My sister-in-law, who is of Korean descent, and I were part of a delegation visiting there to further strengthen ties with the Korean community in our state.

I wish the KWA continued success and look forward to opportunities to work together. The tree you've planted has indeed blossomed and as you celebrate 50 years of serving our communities, the roots remain strong.

Sincerely,

Senator Judy Warnick
13th Legislative District



Congratulations to the Korean Women's Association (KWA) for 50 years of service, support, and leadership in Western Washington! As one of the largest social service agencies in the state, your broad array of coordinated, multi-cultural services has served over 150,000 clients in 14 Washington counties. Tacoma Public School (TPS) has benefited from the KWA work in multiple ways, specifically via the relentless efforts of Ms. Sulja Warnick, one of KWA's founding members.

Like so many of KWA's leaders, Ms. Sulja Warnick is a true international hero who has been the primary catalyst to promote and assure that the Korean language and culture courses be taught and sustained as a world language in our school system. Our first Korean language program was offered in 1995 and has expanded into multiple secondary schools.

Sulja and KWA are driven in their approach to honor and sustain Korean culture. Ms. Warnick led a drive to raise funds to help sustain the Korean Language and Culture Program. TPS received \$36,500 in 2008, allowing us to continue the Korean language program at both the middle and high school levels.

KWA does not rest, fostering relationships with the Korean Consulate in Seattle and Tacoma Community. The Consulate has been an invaluable partner to TPS in assuring the implementation of culturally relevant and appropriate approaches toward teaching our Korean students and understanding the Korean community. Ms. Warnick, KWA, and the Consulate helped arrange field trips for our non-native-speaking Korean language students to visit many Korean cultural sites within the Region. These opportunities helped introduce students to the tastes, spirit, style, and uniqueness of Korean culture. These experiences also stimulated students' interest in becoming more enthusiastic about visiting Korea and being engaged in all things related to Korea, its beautiful people, language, and culture.

For over a decade, KWA and Sulja have arranged the subsidization of costs to allow twenty students and several Tacoma Board Members/Principals to visit Korea for two weeks in the summer. Then, in the subsequent winter TPS would host twenty Korean students and their school officials in Tacoma for a reciprocal visit for up to two weeks as a participant, these experiences have changed my life. To see the beauty and rich history of South Korea and the Korean Peninsula has shaped my perspective of our world and community. I will always be grateful for Ms. Warnick and KWA. Thank you, KWA, you make us a better community, region, and world!

Sincerely,

Dr. Joshua J. Garcia
Superintendent Tacoma Public Schools



Dear Korean Women's Association,

Congratulations on momentous Korean Women's Association's fifty-year anniversary. That is quite an accomplishment. As a Pierce County resident, I am especially proud of the work you do for our community, like the low-income housing projects throughout the county and the Domestic Violence shelter in Tacoma.

It has been my honor to attend several events your organization has hosted. Experiencing your enthusiasm and passion for serving others has been inspiring. Communities all across our state are better served because of your efforts.

I sincerely congratulate you all on this momentous occasion and wish you continued success in the future.

Sincerely,

Chris Gildon
Senator
25th Legislative District



Greetings friends,

I am honored and privileged to welcome you to Korean Women's Associations' 50th Anniversary celebration.

Our state is blessed to have diverse cultures that contribute to our shared economic success and greater cultural understandings in Washington state.

The people, the culture, the rich history, traditions, and spirit of the communities this organization represents and celebrates is inspiring and admirable. I applaud the Korean Women's Association for bringing different generations and cultures together to celebrate this joyous occasion. Your efforts promote a greater understanding and enrich our community and state.

Korean Women's Association has served our community through their numerous social services programs, cultural education, community engagement and their work with senior citizens. Your work promotes harmony and values the sense of community throughout our region. Congratulations on the 50th Anniversary celebration, and I look forward to many more to come!

Sincerely,

Derek Kilmer
6th District, Washington



Dear Friends of KWA,

Looking back at the accomplishments of the Korean Women's Association over the past 50 years, there is a great deal to celebrate. Congratulations on this impressive milestone. Service is at the heart of your organization, and the programs run by the KWA have become integral parts of communities around the region.

The story of the Korean Women's Association exemplifies the best of Washington State, where immigrants can flourish and in turn give back to their neighbors in need. From supportive housing programs for the elderly, to literacy programs, or providing necessities like food; the work you do is invaluable.

I wish you the best on this significant achievement and hope that the next 50 years for the KWA in Washington is just as bright and inspiring.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark Mullet". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Sen. Mark Mullet
5th Legislative District



Dear KWA and Friends:

Please allow me to extend my sincerest congratulations to the Korean Women's Association on the occasion of its 50th "birthday." The story of the KWA is incredibly inspiring, and what your association has accomplished in its first half-century of service is beyond remarkable.

As a former middle-school teacher, I especially appreciate how the KWA has long answered the need among new residents of our nation for life skills, particularly English-language learning. As a state senator involved in ensuring and improving access to behavioral-health services, affordable housing and a stable food supply, I am grateful that the KWA continues to step forward and nurture residents of our state in those areas as well. I have deep respect for the emphasis your association places on citizenship, and the concern for equity that enables the KWA to now touch the lives of so many different language groups. And as a charter member of the Washington State Women's Commission, I am delighted that all of this is being done by a group of WOMEN!

I am familiar with many non-profits in our state, and not one has earned my admiration more than the Korean Women's Association. I compliment you again on its many achievements and wish the KWA continued success in its next 50 years.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ann Rivers". The signature is cursive and elegant, with a large, flowing "A" and "R".

Ann Rivers
State Senator
18th Legislative District



FRIENDS OF KWA- A COMMUNITY TREASURE

Congratulations to the Korean Women Association (KWA) on this magnificent milestone, your 50th anniversary of providing outstanding social services to the citizens of Western Washington. It is an honor to offer my best wishes to you on this joyous occasion. May you continue your journey of success with satisfaction and pride. Best wishes for many, many more years of achievement. As an administrator of Tacoma School District (TPS) and community member of Tacoma, I have witnessed firsthand the excellent work of KWA through my close connection and collaboration with Sulja Warnick, a founding member of KWA. Our district and community have benefited from the far-reaching range of hers and KWA's services.

Sulja is a community treasure who has inspired generations of women and girls through her prolific exemplary volunteer work, and her promotion of civics engagement for a better community and world. Sulja's servant leadership is characterized by a passion to sustain the Asian cultural traditions within the American cultures. She has volunteered for KWA since 1976. Sulja was employed as an ESL and Korean language teacher in the Global Education Department of Tacoma Public Schools from 1979 to 2008. I have known and admired her for over forty years, both as an educator, and as a person promoting the ideals and goals of the communities she serves.

Sulja Warnick has two Bachelor of Arts degrees from Korea; one is in English Literature from Hyosung Women's University, and another in Library Science from Yonsei University. She also attended Korea's Ewha Women University's graduate school in education for one year. She is certified by Seattle Pacific University as a Bilingual Education Teacher. Mrs. Warnick, with much experience in teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), in the 1990s became the first teacher of Korean language in the Tacoma School District. Through hers and KWA's efforts, Korean Language began to be offered at the middle school, then soon after, at the high school level as an elected world language. In 1995, the Korean Language and Culture Foundation in Los Angeles, cited the Korean language class at Baker Middle

School as being the first public school, and public school district, in the country to ever have offered Korean as an elected world language. She also taught ESL at Pierce College from 1977 to 1981.

Additionally, in May 2011, Sulja was instrumental in forging a partnership for Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the South Korean Consulate in Seattle to become the first public school in the United States to offer the Test of Proficiency in Korean (TOPIK). Most recently, Sulja was a poster feature on TPS calendar for the district's 2021-2022 school year.

Sulja has been involved in creating transformative educational systems in Western Washington that honor all students in a holistic manner – validating their various worldviews, languages, learning styles, cultural heritages, and multiple intelligences. In addition to KWA, Sulja has been on the boards of multiple organizations. Some of these include the Asian Forum, the Chinese Reconciliation Project, the Tacoma Sister City Commission, and the MultiCare Foundation. Appointed by the state governor, Sulja served for fourteen years as a Board Member of the Washington State Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs. Through the decades, Mrs. Warnick has earned a reputation as a devoted and dignified community leader especially amidst the Asian Pacific American community- strengthening KWA in all its endeavors.

Sulja's exemplary leadership serves as a gold standard for others to follow. Her innovative ideas and commitment influence many multicultural community programs. Sulja's effective interpersonal skills and adaptability to diversity also have sustained her trailblazer status. Her efforts have enabled KWA to be recognized as a prominent member of not only the Asian Pacific community, but also in many various areas of the city, county, and state. Sulja has our profound gratitude, admiration, and appreciation.

Minh-Anh Hodge, Ed.D.
Executive Director, Global Education Department
Tacoma Public Schools
Community Member, Pierce County, Washington State



**CONGRATULATIONS TO THE KOREAN
WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION (KWA)
FOR 50 YEARS OF SERVICE!**

We have been so blessed to have KWA as a part of our community for the past 50 years! Your commitment to providing quality programs and services to members of our community is to be commended.

We are so grateful for your work in the areas of affordable senior housing options, health care and workforce support, senior center activities and support, and direct financial support to families. No matter the need, KWA has is always there to support Tacoma families with excellence. I am so grateful and proud of the work KWA has done, and I look forward to our continued partnerships in the future!

Yours in services,

Victoria Woodards

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