

CONDOLENCE MOTION

Moved by: Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

Seconded by: Councillor Chin Lee

The Mayor and Members of Toronto City Council are deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Gim Wong on July 29, 2013.

A loyal Canadian veteran and advocate for equality, Gim was the son of parents who immigrated to Canada in the early 1900's, just before the Exclusion Act was put in place. Born in 1922, Wong grew up during the depression.

Those, like Gim's family, who found themselves just beginning to build a life in a new country when the depression began, suffered the most. Many were barely getting by and had the added weight of a debt from the head tax required to enter into Canada as well as financial responsibilities to relatives left behind.

Despite the inequalities he and his family faced, Wong and three of his brothers served their country during World War II. As a skilled air gunner he served in the Royal Canadian Air Force, and became the youngest commissioned officer from the Chinese Canadian community at the age of 22. Although Wong proudly served, he was vocal about the injustice of drafting Chinese Canadians, who in 1944 were still barred from voting.

In 1959, Wong faced the challenges of exclusion that the generation before him had experienced when he returned from Hong Kong with his new bride. Having gone to a communist school in Guangzhou, his wife was declared a "communist" and denied entry into the country. Gim fought for a year before she was able to enter Canada.

Gim Wong was a part of more than two generations of Chinese Canadians who had been governed under discriminatory policy, yet he still made incredible contributions to his country as a veteran and activist. He led the fight for equity rights for Chinese Canadians by rallying against unjust policies with strength and courage. Gim Wong will be remembered as a man who lived by his beliefs and a man who will continue for many years to come to be an inspiration to all Canadians fighting for equality.

The City Clerk is requested to convey, on behalf of the Members of Toronto City Council, our sincere sympathy to the family and friends of Gim Wong.

October 8, 2013