**PRACTICE OF LAW IN FIGHTING SPIRIT**

**Early Years of Education and Training: Against All Odds**

When I graduated from the National Taiwan University College of Law in 1961, I had no idea what I was heading for. After graduation, I worked as a reporter for a local newspaper. My first assignment was to interview Robert F. Kennedy at the Soon Shan Airport in Taipei. I remember Robert Kennedy looked tired after he landed. His voice was low and his speech was scattering. He uttered some words like “civil rights” and hurried away. Few could hear or understand him, including me. Next year, I left Taiwan for the LLM program at University of Chicago Law School.

I went to study Library Sciences after the LLM program, and then decided to get into a J.D. program seriously. I worked as a law librarian in order to sustain myself during the time of my law school. In 1971 I received my J.D. degree and was admitted to practice law in Illinois, later the District of Columbia and the U.S. Supreme Court. The different systems of legal education and training had caused me to walk through ten years of experiences. Had I known the difficulty and the length of time involved, I may have returned to Taiwan or chosen another career. No wonder no one takes this route.

**No Job Opportunities to Learn the Trade**

In 1975, only 6% of the law student body was women. Even if one passed the bar exam, there were only a few who could land a job in a law firm. As to the government positions, they were even more limited. It surely was a man’s world. Being a female and a foreigner, my chances to learn the trade of law practice were slim.

My first legal job at Chicago Title and Trust company gave me solid training in real estate law. Then I was selected among one hundred and three (103) lawyers to be the Legal Counsel to all five Illinois State Universities. This was my official entry to the laws of labor and discrimination in a University setting. When I got married and our first daughter was born, I had to quit the legal counsel’s position at the Universities. Since my husband worked full time as an Anesthesiologist, I decided to jump into private practice so that my time would be more flexible for our family.

**The Path to Happiness**

One of my law school classmates started his practice with some practitioners. I joined them for the purpose of sharing an office at One North LaSalle Street in Chicago. To this date, my law office is still located at this building. In the beginning I did not even have a secretary; I would meet clients at their convenience whether that was on the street or in a restaurant. I wrote my briefs on the corner of a desk. Eventually clients began to come to the office, and I assisted them with real estate purchases and closings. Later they presented me with their immigration and naturalization problems. Then I got into the areas of divorce and adoption, business, discrimination and litigations. I would go to jail often to assist those who lost their freedom. Pretty soon my practice became a full range of general practice for immigrants. Our office has expanded to a mid-size boutique firm and my practice has thrived ever since.

**You Are What You Represent**

Lawyers do work like brick layers who lay the bricks according to plan, based on blueprints and designs, and must have the house to build in mind at all times, or the building will fall. In fact, a lawyer’s work is even more specific and articulate in nature. The client’s need must be completely understood, measurements must be taken within the boundaries of the law, and results, although cannot be guaranteed, must be produced efficiently and inexpensively. You are what you represent, and your work reflects what kind of lawyer you are. In my many years of practice, I have developed my own motto: Communication is the key, understanding human psychology is a must, and honesty is the only policy.

**Run for Political Offices Four Times in Illinois**

Coming from a family of politicians, I am familiar with the politics in Taiwan and China. In the United States, I was curious and wanted to explore what American politics were all about. I took interest in the activities of the Democratic Party, since Chicago has been mostly run by Democrats. In the early 1980’s, I was actively participating in Democratic activities for the purpose benefiting my clients, Asian Americans or others. Although I have run for political offices four times, but have not won any, the process interests me more than the results. Networking and making connections for the benefit of my clients is my true motivation. I want the next generation participating more in American politics in order to assist immigrants to Americanize further into this melting pot of the U.S. I also want Americans to be more aware of the contributions of immigrants to this country. It is really a time consuming and long term goal for me.

**Tao v. University of Arizona**

In 1984, I met my high school classmate from Taiwan, Professor Cha Lin Bao Tao at San Francisco Democratic Party function when I was the Illinois Delegate to the Convention. She told me about her fight with the University of Arizona for the discrimination she had suffered for years. Three years later, she called me again and told me that she was still in the middle of her fight and wanted me to represent her case in Arizona. With her persistence, I finally took her case despite its complexity and the distance between Tucson and Chicago, I assisted her in suing the University in a U.S. District Court in Arizona, and the Defendant University was charged with various counts of violations of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The University eventually backed off and finally settled the case with Professor Tao. We got her a position of an Associate Professorship with the tenure track. I remember that I had to fly to Tucson, Arizona to finalize the case.

**What is the Practice of Law?**

People often ask me how I could survive in the field of law which has been dominated by men for years. My answer is simple: “I just want to do a good job.”

Ten years of intensive studying in law in the U.S. helps me at all times because my education and training was solid as a rock.

I have trained myself to pay attention to details in order to avoid errors so that my clients will not suffer.

To me, the Practice of law is in a way, a Practice of life. I often teach the young people who are interested in taking law as their career: Read everything, pay attention to world news and events, focus on the issues, make quick decisions intuitively but based on logic and reasoning. Never take NO for an answer when you are forced into a corner. Always take an alternative approach when the road comes to an end in front of you. It is good to win, but it is better to lose, because losing teaches you to win again.

In spite of everything I have said I would like to add:

**“LAWYERS NEVER DIE, THEY JUST LOSE THEIR APPEALS”**

It is an honor to be here, and I want to thank AACS for giving me this opportunity to present my case.