

Tommy Woon Collection



Third World News Editor Column

Collection Summary

Creator: Tommy Woon

Dates: 1970s-1980s

Quantity: 10 linear ft

Extent: 7 boxes

Dimensions: 11 x 14 x 12

Organized By: Stacey Salinas

Genre Format: photographs, journals, notes, pamphlets, fliers, newspapers, papers

Language: English

Abstract:

Tommy Woon was a UC Davis, Asian American Studies, alumni who participated in the early years of the Asian American Studies department's founding. The Tommy Woon Collection is a series of written items that showcase Asian Pacific Islander Desi American (APIDA) student-activist paraphernalia produced during the Third World Liberation Front Movement (TWLF) and the student organizing that followed into the 1980s. The items consist of written personal experiences and community activist work from the UC Davis Asian American students who participated in the TWLF, worked alongside and helped to found local Asian American community organizations alongside the department founding chair of Asian American Studies, George Kagiwada, as well as student-run newspapers and magazines.

Repository: University of California, Davis
Kagiwada Library, Hart Hall
Asian American Studies Department

Tommy Lee Woon's Biography and Notes On their Collection At the Kagiwada Library

When I think about life changing events, I cite the sustained personal support I received from Dr. George Kagiwada. I view him as a second father. He arrived at UC Davis in the fall of 1970, and I arrived on campus at the same time and took his first class, AAS 33, The Asian American Experience. He walked into the evening class in Olson Hall with denim pants and jacket. He wore sunglasses in the classroom and had a pipe in his mouth. He introduced himself to about 50 Asian American students by saying, "hi, I'm George." He was nervous and trembling a bit.

I was not a model minority. I learned all my English as a child of immigrants in school. I was humiliated, traumatized, and unable to speak in front of a class when I graduated high school. I graduated from high school with a C+ average and low SAT scores. However, I attended a community college and to my surprise graduated with a B average and transferred to UC Davis.

I discovered I was completely unprepared for almost all the classes at UCD. I always learned new English words outside of my home where we spoke Chinese. At Davis I didn't understand what faculty were saying in their lectures and couldn't understand assigned reading. After being traumatized by studying harder than ever for an exam and receiving an F, I dropped out with shame and suicidal thoughts. I dropped out for a year. I was uncertain about returning. I managed to complete the minimum requirements for a psychology degree, but I flunked the English composition exam required for graduation 3 times and the University

changed the exam to a multiple choice exam for people like me to graduate.

My motivation for attending college was to be dutiful in fulfilling family expectations. Life had no other purpose. I only graduated Asian American Studies classes and that helped me to understand myself. I discovered from them a relevant history and heritage. I graduated only because Asian American Studies and Dr. Kagiwada gave me support, self-worth, and a purpose in life. It helped me overcome the chronic sense of inadequacy and shame.

I enrolled in numerous Asian American Studies independent and group studies courses led by George Kagiwada that supported others and me as campus and community activists. I participated in anti-Vietnam War protests, workshops to educate the Davis and Sacramento community about Asian American history, and the first national Asian American Studies Conference Dr. Kagiwada helped to create, and Dr. Kagiwada's unconventional but successful epic battle for tenure that secured the future of Asian American Studies at UCD. I was the only male to enroll in the first Asian American Women's class.

Dr. Kagiwada's wife Nina and their family also played a key role in supporting students and me. He created a social space in his offices and established a practice of holding potlucks at their home when we had no cultural centers. I had lunch with him regularly. He shared his writing with me, and we had dialogues about major issues. He played the role of faculty mentor, counselor, and community networker for countless students.

In more than 20 years after I graduated, I visited him frequently and always enjoyed a dinner with his family. He and Nina invited my wife and me to join them in their annual Japanese American New Year's party. He visited me with his family for a vacation in the late 70's when I was working in Bellingham, Washington after I finished graduate school. At a national Asian American Studies conference we attended, he always prioritized having dinners with me. When he received a national Asian American Studies award, he gave me credit as a student who helped him create his success in Asian American Studies

People who meet me now assume I was a high achieving student and lived a blessed life. I started slowly in my career and eventually worked at several elite universities (Oberlin, Brown, Stanford, Dartmouth, Macalester, and Naropa University (the first Buddhist University in the U.S.) in dean level multicultural affairs administration and education positions. I was the first person in the country with a title of Assistant Dean of Asian American Affairs, a position I negotiated with student support at Oberlin College. I also taught emotional self-care classes at the Stanford University and Dartmouth Medical Schools, became certified Compassion Cultivation Teacher from the Stanford University Medical School and a trauma healer from Somatic Experience International. I worked as an invited diversity consultant presenting at national conferences and many schools across the country. A career highlight was being invited as a diversity consultant for 2 two-week visits to Stellenbosch University in post-apartheid South Africa. Wherever I worked with students, I tried to emulate the way Dr. Kagiwada supported me.

I was also a board member of the Asian Pacific Federation of Northeast Ohio, the California Third World Counselors Association, and chair of a board of directors for an

international trauma healing institute operating in over 25 countries.

As a retiree while battling stage IV metastatic cancer, I designed, co-led, and researched with two Indigenous women and three white assistants a pilot yearlong anti-racism meditation program in 2021 - Breaths Together for a Change: An Indigenous-centric Approach for Creating A World of Feeling and Seeing No Stranger. Our science poster for it won second prize at an International Meditation Conference at Dongguk University, the first Buddhist University in Seoul, Korea.

I believe I have proven the system of education I experienced wrong in assuming grades and test scores determine success. I have proven Dr. George Kagiwada's right in fighting to reimagine education that is holistic, community minded, and justice oriented to produce socially responsible citizens and leaders.

Tommy Woon
Asian American Studies Alumni, 1970-1974
August 31st, 2022

[Access Restrictions](#)

All records in this series are open. If you would like to review the items for research and educational purposes, please submit requests for materials at least 10 business days before visiting the library to allow time for this review to the Asian American Studies department's coordinator. An archivist will respond within 10 business days to let you know if the materials are available for review.

Scope and Contents

Box #	Years	Item Types
<p>1.</p> <p>Newspapers:</p> <p>Third World News The Atlantic East - West: Chinese American Newspaper Asian American Concerns, Asian American Studies Pamphlets</p>	<p>1970s</p>	<p>Newspapers</p>
<p>2.</p> <p>Newspapers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Third World News • California Aggie: University of California Davis • East - West: Chinese American Journal • Chinatown: 1971 The Chinese American • Kalayaan International: Pilipino Community News Service • The San Francisco Examiner • Triple Jeopardy: Racism, Imperialism, Sexism 	<p>1970s</p>	<p>Newspapers</p>
<p>3.</p> <p>Publications Reports Notes Personal Justice Denied (Japanese American Internment)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K.W. Lee, Asian American Journalism, lectures, syllabi, publications • Getting Together, San Francisco Newspaper 1977 • George Kagiwada biography and history • Asian Americans in higher education, notes • Filipino American History, notes, readings • Mixed Race Studies, notes, publications • Ethnic Studies Bibliographies • East Coast Asian Student Union, pamphlet, notes • Letters of Recommendation, Asian American Studies • East/West Newspaper, 1985 	<p>1970s-1980s</p>	<p>Reports, Articles, Asian American Studies Literature, Letters, Club and Meeting Notes, Newspapers</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese Association Communicator papers • Chinese American Literature • International Examiner Newspaper • Asian American Resource Workshop, notes, pamphlets, budgeting • Black Student Persistence, Oberlin College, Letters, Notes • Black-Chinese relations, 19th-20th century histories • Asian American elderly, healthcare articles, notes • Oberlin College, Creative Writing Program, letters, notes • Anti-Asian Violence, papers, publications, Reports • Asian American Journalist Association • Asian American Studies Readings, UC Davis, 1980s 		
<p>4.</p> <p>Asian American Women's History, Reports, Publications, Data , Women: Pan-Asian News, Women: Feminism, Women: Concerns of Asian Americans, Asian American Dance Theater, Essential Cantonese Grammar Reader Books, Asian Americans in Higher Education, Violence Against Asian Pacific Americans, MU: One Ocean One World, Japanese Legend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asian Women United AWU Newspaper • Pan Asia News: Organization of Pan Asian American Women • The Asian in the West • Asian Martial Arts Studio Pamphlets • Ethnic Minority Newsletter: National Association for Women Deans, Administrators, and Counselors • Asian Immigrant Women Advocates • With Silk Wings: Asian American Women at Work 	<p>1975-2013</p>	<p>Papers, Articles, Notes, Pamphlets, Women's Pamphlets Newsletters, Books</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>1970s-1980s</p>	<p>Newsletters, Notes, Forms, Student</p>

<p>Research, Data, Reports, coalition building notes, Asian Diaspora, Oberlin and Berkeley Student Papers on Race and Asian American Awareness Program, Chinese American History, Japanese American History Articles, Anti-Asian Violence articles, Sociology, Healthcare, Psychology Research Notes and Articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expressions: A Publication of the Tufts Asian Students Club ● A2C2 Flash ● Asian American Amplitude: A Publication of Asian American Arts and Media, Inc. (Washington) ● Asian Pacific Student Alliance UC San Diego ● Asian Americans for Action Newsletter ● Chinese Progressive Association Newsletter ● Japanese American Newsletter 		<p>Pamphlets, Papers</p>
<p>6. UC Davis Asian American Studies (curriculum, Affirmative Action), Sacramento Asian American reports and letters, Third World News, Third World News Student Journals and Meeting Notes, Student Activism, AAPI News Articles, San Mateo Asian American Studies Publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amerasia 1971-1972 ● Asian Pacific Students Unite Newspaper, Berkeley Asian Student Union ● The Asian Experience in America, Asian American Concern, UC Davis ● Emergence, Asian American Students Association of the San Mateo Union High School District ● Asian American Services News ● California Aggie ● Noticias del Tercer Mundo ● San Francisco Chronicle ● Black Family Day ● Liberated Guardian ● The Peninsula Bulletin ● East West: The 	<p>1969-1970s</p>	<p>Personal Journals, Articles, Newspapers, Meeting Notes, Photographs, Papers</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chinese-American Journal • Getting Together • Deganawidah Quetzalcoatl University • Kalayaan: Progressive Pilipino Monthly • Asian Week • May 4, 1919 1969 An Open Letter • Gidra: The Monthly for Asians In America • Third World News 		
<p>7.</p> <p>Asian American Community Organizing Pamphlets, Anti Asian Violence Papers, Institutionalized Racism Articles, News articles, Psychology, Tenure Struggles for BIPOC, College Admissions Newsletters for Asian Americans, Overseas Refugee Training Program, Refugee Policy Group Papers, Japanese American Articles, Filipino American Articles, Korean American Articles, Chinese American Articles, Internment (Asian American Studies Coursework, syllabus, papers, and resources).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yale Daily News • East Wind 	<p>1970s-1990s</p>	<p>Articles, Organization Papers, Pamphlets, Newspapers</p>
<p>Digital Folder (Google drive, Kagiwada Collections Guides)</p> <p>George Kagiwada's tenure review appeal for UC Davis' to consider different standards, processes, and personnel to be applied to his tenure review in 1977.</p> <p>A. George's Personal Record</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vita 2. Open Statement Of My Work At Work At The University Of California, Davis. 3. An Open Letter To The Tenured Faculty Of The Department Of Applied Behavioral Sciences. 10.15.1977 4. Thoughts on the Political Economic Context of Japanese America <p>B. Notes from Various Meeting to Address Tenure Appeal Campaign</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Notes from ad-hoc committee 		

<p>meeting on organizational structure and strategy (for tenure review campaign). 12/3/76</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">2. Open Steering Committee Meeting. 1/6/773. Proposed Agenda for Steering Committee Meeting. 2/13/774. First Negotiating Meeting. 2/15/775. Summary of Negotiating Meeting. 2/15/776. Minutes of Steering-Rally Committee Meeting. 2.23.777. Negotiating Meeting. 3.1.778. Asian American Studies Support Committee Meeting. 4.18.779. Asian American Studies Support Committee/Steering Committee Minutes. 5/1/77 <p>C. Miscellaneous Documents</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ad-Hoc Committee Members (unclear whether they were potential or actual members listing 4 non-UC Davis faculty and 8 UC Davis Faculty. 13/14 of them are faculty of color).2. Academic Personnel Manual, Section 51-1 d.(1) – One page of UC Davis Standards for Tenure for Research and Creative Work <p>Talk Story Transcription Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tommy Woon Talkstory: Reflecting on the Reflection and George Kagiwada’s Legacy, with Dr. Wendy Ho and Stacey Salinas of the Bulosan Center, July 5th, 2022• Tommy Woon and Albert Balingit Talkstory: Reflecting on Asian American Studies at UC Davis, 1960s-1970s, with Stacey Salinas of the Bulosan Center, 2022• Tommy Woon’s poem remembering George Kagiwada		
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