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# Chinese American Citizens Alliance

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1044 Stockton Street, San Francisco, California 94108 • Telephone/Fax (415)829-9332

National Lodge  
ESTABLISHED 1895

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**DATE: November 15, 2017**

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## **Chinese American Citizens Alliance Remembers San Francisco Law Enforcement Pioneer Herbert Lee**

San Francisco, November 15, 2017—In 1957, 25-year-old Herbert Patrick Lee became the first Chinese American to be a full-time San Francisco police officer. At that time, San Francisco's Chinese population was 24,813, about three percent of the city's entire population according to the 1950 Census. By the time Herb Lee retired from the San Francisco Police Department (SFPD) three decades later in 1987, the Chinese population grew to more than 82,000, or 12 percent of the city's population.

On November 1, 2017, Herb Lee passed away peacefully in Oakland, California, surrounded by family members, following treatment for colon cancer. He was 84.

The Chinese American Citizens Alliance (C.A.C.A.) recognizes the importance of Herb Lee as a trailblazer for Chinese Americans in their contributions to law enforcement, exercise of community leadership and national defense service. C.A.C.A. offers its condolences to the family of Herb Lee and also salutes an exemplary career that esteemed the San Francisco Police Department.

A San Francisco native born in 1932, Mr. Lee joined the police force following a stint with the U.S. Navy and spent his first years working undercover in Chinatown. He investigated gangs and later worked in the juvenile and narcotics divisions. Mr. Lee was promoted to sergeant and became executive director of the Police Activities League (PAL), overseeing athletic and enrichment programs for underprivileged youth.

Mr. Lee was a true pioneer according to statement from San Francisco Police Chief William Scott. "His efforts to recruit more law enforcement officers of color helped make SFPD one of the most diverse police departments in the country. His countless hours of work with youth in our PAL program had an enormous impact on the lives of San Francisco children. He was a beloved friend, mentor and colleague to many SFPD officers and we will hold him as a shining example of how one person can make a positive difference for so many people."

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The Chinese American Citizens Alliance, established in 1895, is among the oldest civil rights organizations in the United States. Headquartered in San Francisco with chapter/lodges in Albuquerque (NM), Boston (MA), Chicago (IL), Greater San Gabriel Valley (CA), Greater New York (NY), Houston (TX), Las Vegas (NV), Los Angeles (CA), Mississippi, Oakland (CA), Peninsula (CA), Portland (OR), Phoenix (AZ), Salinas (CA), San Antonio (TX), San Francisco (CA), Seattle (WA) and Washington, D.C., the Alliance addresses issues regarding voter education, political participation, racial discrimination and hate crimes, and supports youth leadership training programs and equal employment opportunities for all Chinese Americans.