



## **Paul Cheng**

Paul Cheng was born in Guangzhou, China and lived for seven years in Hong Kong before immigrating in 1956 at age 9 to New York under auspices of the Refugee Relief Act of 1953. He went to public schools in White Plains, N.Y. and earned his BA in political science and an MAT in social sciences/secondary education from Harpur College/SUNY-Binghamton. Paul attended college during the late 1960s, a period of immense political and social upheaval in America that greatly influenced his outlook and career choice. He worked two summers as an intern with the Urban Corps' anti-poverty programs in New York City (Manhattan and Bedford Stuyvesant) and changed his views on the Vietnam War after attending a peace rally featuring civil rights leader Julian Bond. In November 1969, Paul rode an overnight bus with fellow classmates to Washington, D.C. to take part in the largest anti-war demonstration in U.S. history. Upon graduation, he served as a VISTA Volunteer in San Diego. In later years, Paul settled in the Bay Area and earned his second MA in educational administration from San Francisco State University.

Paul is currently a part-time consulting administrator and was an associate superintendent of administrative services with the Fremont Union High School District (FUHSD) headquartered in Sunnyvale, California. Prior to working for FUHSD, he served 34 years with the San Francisco Unified School District in various school site and central office capacities—classroom/resource teacher, department chair, curriculum specialist, planning specialist, project manager, assistant principal, and principal. For 9 years, Paul was principal of Newcomer High School, which provided a unique model program for immigrant and refugee students that received much media attention in the 1980s. After Newcomer, he spent 16 years as principal of Lowell High School, the oldest public high school west of the Mississippi. During his tenure, Lowell was recognized as a California Distinguished School three times, as well as a National Blue Ribbon School twice. After Lowell, he spent a year as a principal-on-special assignment at Thurgood Marshall Academic High School helping to ward off impending state sanctions, strengthen its academic/student support programs, and restore faith among various constituent groups in the school community.

Throughout his 39-year career, Paul has been active in numerous professional, community, civic, and educational organizations. In 2012-2013, he was a member of the San Francisco Civil Grand Jury that annually investigates the efficiency and effectiveness of city government. He also signed on as an alumni advisor for the Graduate College of Education at San Francisco State University and was recruited by a Lowell alum to be among the founding sponsors of the Asian Women Leadership University (AWLU), a collaborative project with Smith College, set to open in Penang, Malaysia in 2015. He continues to promote global citizenship as a co-coordinator and chaperone in the student exchange program between Lowell High School and Hong Kong Baptist University Affiliated School.

A very personal preoccupation is Paul's research into his family roots in 19<sup>th</sup>/20<sup>th</sup> century Guangdong Province. On a recent trip to China, he discovered that his maternal grandfather Li Sai Kuei, a Qing military officer, was once put in charge of collecting gambling taxes in Guangzhou by statesman Li Hung Chang (not related), then Viceroy of "Liangguang" (Guangdong and Guangxi provinces). Li Hung Chang abruptly left this post in June 1900 for Peking in midst of the Boxer Rebellion to represent the Qing government in negotiations with foreign powers occupying the capital. Through further research of this tumultuous period in China's history, Paul hopes to uncover greater details about his grandfather's life, fate, and legacy.