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ASIAN JACKSON DELEGATES AND STAFF SUM UP
1988 DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION

Eddie Wong was the National Field Director of Jesse Jackson '88. He travelled with the Jackson campaign for eleven months and directed the field operations key to Jackson's wins in Virginia, Michigan, South Carolina, and other states. Wong summed up the Democratic National Convention as follows, "Considering Jackson was the second runner, we were treated as well as could be expected, even better. The Party Platform was clearly influenced by Jackson, and we were able to air our issues before a national audience," Wong said in reference to the minority planks discussion.

The Asian presence at the Convention was "...mature and one of the largest at any Convention or any Party gathering. There was a broad cross section, people who have been involved for years, and people new to the political process."

"It remains to be seen how well the Dukakis campaign follows through on its commitment to inclusion," he stated in looking down the 110 days to the November general election. Further, he stated, "We need to defeat Bush and look at it broadly. We need to pay attention to the top of the ticket and the rest of the elections, especially the local and state races. We need to look at the elections as a way to energize new voters and activists. There are many races on the horizon."

Beyond the 1988 general election, Wong went on to say, "We need to elect progressives and look down the road to the 1990 census and resulting reapportionment work...We can't win the Presidency without institutionalizing our changes. We need to continue to find a way to broaden our base."

Wong's immediate plans are "...to go home (to Oakland, CA) and sleep for a week."

Donna Kotake, San Francisco Sansei Jackson delegate reflected on the week's past events. She had a "mixture of feelings" about the 1988 Democratic National Convention which is the first she has ever attended.

"It was exciting with all the partying, but I've learned a lot in terms of the whole process and what it means to wage a campaign at this level," she said.

"A lot of what Jesse Jackson stood for is empowerment, and that is really true for the Asian American community. All of us (the Asian delegates) are going to go back to our communities to continue to work for empowerment. We'll work on electing local officials and getting involved in city politics so that in 1992 we can come with more delegates and more power," she said.

In speaking about Asian support for Jesse Jackson, Kotake noted that in the four years since 1984, Asian Americans have "quadrupled" the vote for Jackson. "So we have a lot to look forward to in 1992," Kotake said.

"In California, the Asian vote for Jesse was actually very high in 1988," she said referring to the recent Los Angeles Times poll which showed that 46% of the Asian vote went for Jackson. "This tremendous support was due to the campaign that Asian Americans for Jesse Jackson has been able to wage."

"As Asian Americans both for Dukakis and Jackson, we still have a lot of work we need to do to make the Democratic Party sensitive to Asian issues...and I really want to see a Democrat get elected in November!" declared Kotake.

Cindy Ng, At-Large Jackson delegate, and Director of Communications and Research for the Manhattan Borough President's Office said she felt some of the major victories for the Jackson campaign are changes in the Democratic National Committee (DNC), the leadership body of the Democratic Party. "The Rules Committee did away with the large number of super delegates. This will have a big impact... Jackson won many states in the South and elsewhere but the super delegates outnumbered the democratically elected Jackson delegates in some state delegations, skewing the vote both for the minority planks and presidential nominee."

Additionally, "The DNC is adding another Vice Chair for Voter Registration and Education, and adding 18 new seats," Ng stated.

As far as the impact of Jackson's campaign on New York City politics and Asian political empowerment Ng said, "One thing high on Jesse's agenda is the Conyers Bill. This bill provides for same day, on site voter registration. Jesse is very aware that the reason he won Michigan is because the campaign was able to register a large number of high school students on election day. Passage of this bill will have a big impact on Chinatown where we are aware of many election day irregularities and violations of voting rights."

On another issue affecting Asian empowerment Ng said, "Jesse has urged his supporters to look toward the 1990 census and resulting redistricting...We know that Chinatown is gerrymandered and we're working with state legislators to create a Chinese Assembly District. This is another key thing raised by Jackson."

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