

Gary Yu on AAPI Advocacy, Cultural Leadership, and Political Engagement: An In-Depth Interview

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES, February 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- As the newly elected Vice Chair of the Asian American & Pacific Islanders Commission of Massachusetts (AAPIC), Gary Yu has dedicated himself to advocating for the AAPI community, ensuring their voices are heard in policymaking, cultural initiatives, and political representation. From securing official recognition of Lunar New Year in Boston to leading large-scale civic engagement efforts, Yu's work reflects his commitment to empowering AAPI communities across Massachusetts.

A Vision for the AAPI Community Taking on the role of Vice Chair at AAPIC is both an honor and a responsibility for Yu. He sees this position as an opportunity to expand resources for AAPI communities, strengthen cultural and educational programs, and promote leadership development for young AAPI individuals. Under his leadership, AAPIC has successfully advocated for increased funding for AAPI organizations, collaborated with state officials to address racial equity and economic opportunities, and played a key role in achieving official recognition of Lunar New Year.

However, Yu acknowledges that AAPI representation in leadership positions remains a challenge.



"Many AAPI individuals still face barriers in government, media, and corporate leadership," he says. By promoting civic engagement, encouraging voter participation, and fostering educational initiatives, Yu aims to break these barriers and elevate AAPI voices in decision-making spaces.

One of Yu's proudest accomplishments was leading the effort to secure legislative recognition of Lunar New Year in Boston. "It took years of advocacy, coalition-building, and community organizing," he recalls. "Seeing our efforts culminate in official recognition was an incredibly rewarding moment. It strengthens our cultural identity and sets a precedent for recognizing other diverse traditions."

Building Bridges Through Cultural Celebration

Beyond policy work, Yu has played a significant role in cultural promotion, particularly as the initiator of the Boston Lunar New Year Festival Gala. His vision for the event was to create a celebration that showcases Asian heritage while fostering cross-cultural understanding in Boston.

"The Lunar New Year Festival Gala serves as a bridge between generations, Asian cultures, and the broader Boston community," Yu explains. Through performances, cultural workshops, and storytelling sessions, the event has provided a platform for AAPI artists and leaders while also educating non-Asian communities about the richness of Lunar New Year traditions.

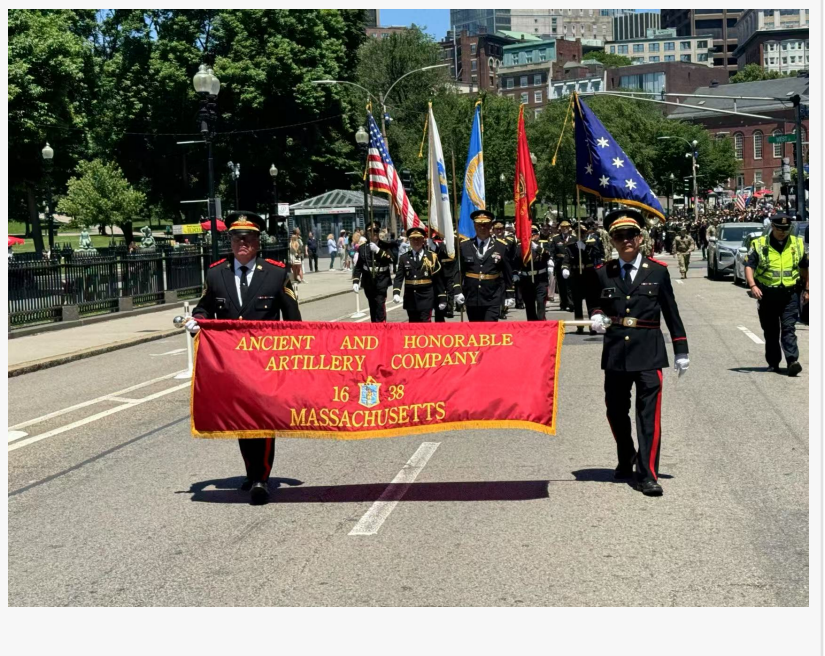
With the 2025 Boston Lunar New Year Festival Gala on the horizon, Yu promises even more interactive experiences, including traditional and modern performances, influential guest speakers, and hands-on cultural activities. His leadership in organizing these large-scale events has strengthened community ties and encouraged greater appreciation for AAPI heritage across



the city.

Political Advocacy and Civic Engagement

Yu's commitment to AAPI empowerment extends into politics, where he has been actively involved in campaign efforts for the Mayor of Boston, the Governor of Massachusetts, and even the U.S. President. His journey into political advocacy began with grassroots organizing and voter registration efforts, driven by a desire to ensure AAPI voices are represented in policy discussions.



One of Yu's most impactful contributions has been organizing AAPI voter outreach events, where he helped mobilize first-time voters, particularly young Asian Americans. "Seeing young people become engaged in the political process is incredibly rewarding," he says.

When asked about the key policy issues affecting the AAPI community, Yu emphasizes the importance of education, economic opportunities, anti-discrimination laws, and healthcare access. "We need policies that address language barriers and systemic inequities, ensuring that AAPI individuals have equal opportunities to thrive," he says.

For young Asian Americans interested in politics, Yu's advice is straightforward: "Start by getting involved in your community—volunteer, network, and educate yourself on policy issues. Politics begins at the local level, and small efforts can lead to real change."

A Symbolic First Pitch at Fenway Park

In May 2023, Yu was given the honor of throwing the first pitch at Fenway Park, a moment he describes as "surreal and deeply meaningful." Representing the AAPI community at one of Boston's most iconic sports venues was a recognition of AAPI contributions to the city's cultural and civic life.

"The opportunity came through my community work," Yu explains. "Standing on that historic field symbolized the growing visibility and respect for AAPI voices in all areas of society, including sports."

For Yu, Fenway Park represents tradition, excellence, and community spirit. His participation in the event reinforced the message that AAPI individuals are an integral part of Boston's history and future.

Looking Ahead: Strengthening AAPI Leadership and Representation

Looking to the future, Yu remains focused on developing young AAPI leaders, expanding cultural programs, and ensuring greater AAPI representation in government and corporate leadership. He envisions a Massachusetts where AAPI voices are not only included but actively shaping policies, businesses, and community initiatives.

"If I could see one major change, it would be increasing AAPI representation in leadership positions," Yu says. "It's not just about inclusion—it's about having a voice, influencing decisions, and making an impact."

Through his work in community service, cultural promotion, and political engagement, Yu continues to pave the way for a more empowered and visible AAPI community in Massachusetts and beyond.

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