

A Night of Pride: 2nd Witherspoon Gala Honors Chinese American Leaders in Arts & Education

BOSTON, MA, UNITED STATES,
September 26, 2025 /

EINPresswire.com/ -- On September 22, 2025, the 19th Anniversary Celebration of The Witherspoon Institute (WIN) and the 2nd Annual Witherspoon Gala, co-hosted by the New England Chinese American Alliance (NECAA), was held successfully at the Roxbury Branch of the Boston Public Library. The event brought together leaders, scholars, artists, and community members in an inspiring evening dedicated to honoring excellence and fostering cultural dialogue.

This gathering served not only as a celebration of achievements in education, arts, and business, but also as a testament to the growing presence and impact of the Chinese American community in Greater Boston and beyond.

The Gala was organized and hosted under the leadership of Alda Witherspoon, Founder and CEO of The Witherspoon Institute and the visionary behind the GET LIT! BOOK BAND Tour. As an experienced leader in community engagement and cultural development, Ms. Witherspoon has spent decades working at the intersection of literacy, social justice, and creative expression.

In her opening remarks, she emphasized the power of words and the transformative potential of education and the arts: "Literacy is liberation. Art is advocacy. Tonight, we recognize those whose



work is not only outstanding, but whose stories inspire future generations.”

A Cultural Celebration in the Heart of Boston

The evening began in the library’s outdoor garden, where guests were welcomed by Alice Zhou (周琪琪), a doctoral candidate at Harvard University, who served as the master of ceremonies. Accompanied by live music, curated buffet-style dining, and a festive yet elegant atmosphere, the opening reception reflected the inclusive and multicultural spirit of the event.

Musical performances by featured guests including Angelina and Lucas Xiang brought the audience to life, with a program that highlighted the rich contributions of Asian American artists to the cultural fabric of the city. Interactive activities, informal networking, and community engagement rounded out the opening portion, setting a celebratory tone for the evening ahead.



Recognizing Distinguished Achievement

The highlight of the Gala was the award ceremony, where individuals of Chinese heritage were honored for their exceptional accomplishments across various fields. The awards were presented by Alda Witherspoon, whose commitment to community empowerment added a personal and meaningful dimension to the honors.

The 2025 Witherspoon Award recipients are as follows:

Yi Zheng – International Education Leadership Award

Professor at Northeastern University

Anny Chan – International Education Leadership Award

Harvard University (Award accepted by Alice Zhou)

Lu Huang – Cultural Arts: Youth Inspiration Award

Harvard University

Dr. Louise Ruihua Liu – International Business Leader Award

Chief Executive Officer, Hill Research

Chef Tony Cao – Culinary Arts: Best Chef Champion
(Award accepted by Iverson Guo, Owner of Yoshida Omakase)

Lucas Xiang – Performing Arts: International Vocalist

CJT Dream Dance – Performing Arts: Best Cultural Dance Award

President Jessica Tang – Literary Champion Award, Massachusetts

Each recipient's recognition reflected both personal excellence and a broader acknowledgment of the contributions made by the Chinese American community in the areas of education, entrepreneurship, artistic innovation, and civic engagement.

Reflections from the Honorees

In a moment of sincere gratitude, Lu Huang, doctoral student at Harvard University and recipient of the Youth Inspiration Award, shared her thoughts: "I am honored to receive this award. I thank the Witherspoon Institute, my mentors, my family, and the community for their support. Growing up in a multicultural environment has taught me to embrace challenges and speak up for myself and others. This recognition belongs to all of us. To the younger generation: pursue your dreams with courage—your voice matters."

Commitment to Continued Impact

Guoliang Yu, President of NECAA and a member of the Gala Organizing Committee, spoke on behalf of the co-hosting organization, reflecting on the event's mission and impact:

"This is my second year supporting the Witherspoon Gala and my first time participating in the awards nomination process. It is a powerful experience to see outstanding Chinese Americans being recognized on such a visible and meaningful platform. We hope to continue building pathways that connect cultures, generations, and communities."

The evening concluded with strong applause, closing remarks from Ms. Witherspoon, and a shared commitment from all partners to continue uplifting communities through education and cultural development.

Looking Forward

The Witherspoon Gala is more than an annual event—it is a growing movement dedicated to equity, expression, and opportunity. Together with NECAA and its community partners, The Witherspoon Institute continues to advance its mission of empowering individuals through literacy, leadership, and the arts.



As Ms. Witherspoon noted in her final words: “This is not just a celebration. It is a promise—that through reading, through art, and through culture, we will light the way for future generations.”

Gary Guoliang Yu

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