DO YOU KNOW BRUCE?

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A Message from the Executive Director

Telling the story of Bruce Lee, a larger-than-life international Asian American icon, and how he inspires fans and aficionados in unexpected places has been a story in itself. Visiting Louisville, Kentucky, I was brought to the Muhammad Ali Center by Bryan Warren, Executive Director of Asia Institute Crane House, a local Asian American organization founded by Seattle native and Wing Luke Museum donor Helen Lang. Talking about The Wing's Bruce Lee exhibition, I found myself on common ground with Muhammad Ali Center's Executive Director Donald Lassere. Donald immediately recognized the parallels between the Ali family's quest to build Muhammad's legacy as both an extraordinary athlete and humanitarian, with the Lee family's desire to establish Bruce's full legacy. Donald recalled growing up on Chicago's south-side, remarking, “Don't let anyone tell you Bruce Lee isn't a social justice story. There we were, a bunch of six and seven year-olds outside together practicing our version of kung fu. Bruce was the first to tell black kids to eat right, take care of their bodies, and be somebody.”

Recent events regarding a Seattle production of Gilbert and Sullivan's Mikado remind us that the issue of media stereotypes of Asian Americans which Bruce Lee battled is persistent and pervasive. Kudos to community members for bringing this to public attention and not accepting time-worn stereotyping. Hearing theatre-goers tell renowned artist Roger Shimomura standing on the proverbial line to “go back to where you come from,” was not Seattle’s finest moment. Roger responded mildly, “Beacon Hill?” Sometimes people think Roger is making up his experiences but he fights the fight through his powerful art, all part of building America’s cultural voice.

For The Wing, the new Bruce Lee exhibition also provides the opportunity to finally renovate a historic storefront, unfinished for the past six years. As the economy crashed, we held out for a use of this space that would be of greatest benefit to the neighborhood and museum. This storefront is the former home of Pacific Garden restaurant, and over 100 years ago was the site of the Sew Ying and museum. This storefront is the former home of Pacific Garden restaurant, and over 100 years ago was the site of the Sew Ying Chong Co., owned by neighborhood activist Ron King's grandfather Chin Gee Gow. We marvel to see this historic storefront find a new future as the site of the Bruce Lee exhibition. It is taking the proverbial village to make the magic happen, with thanks for their leadership support to the Lee family, the Ford Foundation, and 4Culture, to community instigators Jenny Lee, Perry Lee, Betty Fujikado, Matt Chan, and Virginia Anderson, to trustees Mimi Gan and Ellen Ferguson, to MulvannyG2 Architects and Marpac Construction, and to early lead sponsors Delta Air Lines and Comcast.

We are just at the beginning of an important three-year initiative that culminates in The Wing's 50th Anniversary in 2017. Come by to see the story grow.

Béth Takekawa, Executive Director

Thank you & Welcome

Please welcome new staff members who recently joined the museum: Jennifer Butler-La Rue, John Eklof, Maya Hayashi, Jutl Ignacio, Polly Kang, Tiffanie Lam, Jintana Lityouvong, Clarissa O’Francisco, and Wei Wheeler.

Thank you to staff members who recently concluded their service to the museum: Leigh-Anne Chung, Annika Firn, and Man Kim.

BEHIND THE SCENES OF AN UPCOMING EXHIBITION
DO YOU KNOW BRUCE?

The number one question we have heard while preparing for our upcoming exhibit is why is Bruce Lee buried in Seattle? This became a key question for us in our research—finding photos of Bruce in Seattle, reading letters from him to friends here, looking at his poetry and writings, and ultimately interviewing his wife Linda to find out why Seattle held such special meaning for them.

Here are some highlights from his Seattle Years:

September 1959
Arrives in Seattle, lives above and works at Ruby Chow’s Restaurant

May 1961
After finishing high school at Edison Technical School, enters University of Washington (Spring Quarter) and majors in Philosophy

August 1963
After a brief time in Hong Kong, returns to Seattle and opens his first martial arts school in the Chinatown-International District, eventually moves his school to the University District

October 25, 1963
Has first date with Linda Emery, one of his martial arts students, at the Space Needle restaurant

May 1964
Leaves the University of Washington to establish martial arts school in Oakland

August 17, 1964
Marries Linda at Seattle Congregational Church

For more information, please visit http://DBeknowBruce.com

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Bojagi, a traditional Korean wrapping cloth, is used to carry everything from precious objects to everyday goods and foodstuff. The CAC (Community Advisory Committee) that helps create the exhibit is much like the patchwork bojagi—pieced together from scraps of fabric, using various shapes, and juxtaposing vibrant colors. Koreans of different generations, ages, and backgrounds worked together on this project, creating a common bond.

Maria Kang, who grew up in Japan before moving to Los Angeles, described herself as very alienated from the Korean community before participating in the CAC.

“I never learned to speak Korean as a child. After moving to the U.S. when I was 6 years old, I was very confused about who I was. The CAC placed me in a room full of Koreans but it was a very new concept for me. I met some great people. I cried. A lot. And the most important thing I learned was that I was not alone. Our experiences may have been different and we didn’t always agree. But the CAC was a safe place where I knew about survival and lasting integrity, dignity, pride, and all that there is to know about understanding one another. I am extremely optimistic.”

Koreans but it was a very new concept for me. I met some great people. I cried. A lot. And the most important thing I learned was that I was not alone. Our experiences may have been different and we didn’t always agree. But the CAC was a safe place where we could honestly discuss what it means to be Korean in America. It was, and continues to be, a life changing experience.”

“The most important thing that I want to pass on to my children and grandchildren is the resilience of the Korean people. If they can understand that, then they will know integrity, dignity, pride, and all that there is to know about survival and lasting endurance. My hopes for the IA community in the future, is to bridge language and generation gaps, and to be more diligent about trying to understand one another. I am extremely optimistic.”

This was the most successful gala for The Wing yet! A HUGE thank you to our sponsors, table captains, attendees, donors, and volunteers for supporting the 2014 Dinner and Auction, Celebrate Year of the Horse. It was an amazing evening in celebration of our youth programs and our next generation of leaders. We couldn’t have done it without you – with your generous support, we raised $408,000!

The evening was emceed by KCTS 9’s Enrique Cerna and attendees enjoyed a fabulous dinner with lively bidding on artwork from artists such as Mira Nakashima, Etsuko Ichikawa, and Benjamin Moore, as well as business class tickets to anywhere in the world from Delta and a robust wine auction!
Roger and Marlene's relationship with The Wing has grown and changed throughout the years. They have supported the Museum, first as visitors, then as members, and now also as donors. Here, Roger and Marlene share their thoughts on why they support the Museum.

Marlene: Although I've lived in Seattle most of my life, I'm a latecomer to The Wing. Roger encouraged me to begin to discover more about this unique institution with him. Like many non-Asian Americans because each generation is different and faces unique challenges. It's important for young people to discover more about a martial arts icon. Bruce Lee was more than just a martial arts icon. He was an innovator. In 1973, he gave his high school graduation speech, “I'm going to be famous, and you're going to be famous.” He was so confident. He was ahead of his time. His was a life of passion and integrity, and he didn't care about who didn't like him, he was true to himself. Bruce Lee lived in the late 60s. Ever since, I've supported the Wing.

Roger: I got to know Bruce Lee's wife, Linda Emery, at the High School. My senior year, a year after she graduated, she and Bruce held a martial arts demonstration for students in the library. Bruce Lee broke the stereotype of the weak Asian American male that was effeminate and weak. He was strong in every area. At the time, there was a strong caricature of Asian American masculinity that was effeminate and weak. He was strong in every area.

Marlene: I'm excited about the forthcoming Bruce Lee exhibit. You bet! I'm especially looking forward to her upcoming exhition and I do you solato-political views. I know he was so much more than just a martial arts icon.

LEADERSHIP CIRCLE FUTUREBUILDER $25,000+ Ellen L. Ferguson* Jennifer T. and Terence L. Kim* Nancy Skinner Nordhoff* Roger Mizumori and Marlene Nordhoff* Roger and Marlene were both guests at the Museum for many years. They have supported the Museum, first as visitors, then as members, and now also as donors. Here, Roger and Marlene share their thoughts on why they support The Wing.

Leader: It's important for young people to discover more about this unique institution with him. Like many non-Asian Americans because each generation is different and faces unique challenges. It's important for young people to discover more about an Asian American male. At the time, there was Bruce Lee. So I met him briefly but even in the library, he was strong in every area. He didn't care about who didn't like him, he was true to himself. Bruce Lee lived his Was a life of passion and integrity, and he didn't care about who didn't like him, he was true to himself. Bruce Lee lived in the late 60s. Ever since, I've supported the Wing.

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Our Mission is to connect everyone to the rich history, dynamic cultures and art of Asian Pacific Americans through vivid storytelling and inspiring experiences. The Wing is a proud Smithsonian Affiliate, a partnership with the Smithsonian Institution.

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Tuesday–Sunday, 10am–5pm
First Thursday of the month, 10am–8pm
Closed Monday

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SAVE THE DATE
THE WING’S 2015 DINNER & AUCTION
Saturday, April 4, 2015
The Westin Seattle Hotel

Interested in getting involved?
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Arundhati Gupta and Anjulie Ganti