

1 [Honoring Chinese American Women]

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3 **Resolution honoring the historic contributions of Chinese American Women in San**
4 **Francisco on the occasion of Women’s History Month 2021.**

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6 WHEREAS, According to the Chinese Historical Society of America and its curriculum
7 guide on California Chinese American women, on file with the Clerk of the Board of
8 Supervisors in File No. 210222, which is hereby declared to be a part of this Resolution as if
9 set forth fully herein, few Chinese women immigrated to California during the nineteenth
10 century, and between 1850 to 1900, 15,000 women immigrated to the United States from
11 China compared to 30,000 men; and

12 WHEREAS, Many of the immigration documents related to women during the Chinese
13 Exclusion Era (1882-1943) indicate the difficult process that Chinese women faced when
14 attempting to enter the United States, and when Angel Island Immigration Station, in the San
15 Francisco Bay opened in 1910, it became one of the major entry points for Chinese women
16 entering San Francisco and California; and

17 WHEREAS, The patriarchal system in China and the United States only allowed
18 Chinese women to travel if they were related to men of stature, contributing to few women
19 migrants unless they were working-class women married to Chinese immigrant men or
20 American-born Chinese men, or were smuggled in to be servants or prostitutes; and

21 WHEREAS, In San Francisco the Methodist’s Oriental Home and School helped
22 Chinese women escape abusive conditions and helped Chinese American women recognize
23 that education was a powerful tool for equality, and in 1884, Mary Tape sued the San
24 Francisco Board of Education after Spring Valley School denied her daughter enrollment due
25 to her Chinese ancestry; and

1 WHEREAS, The San Francisco school system finally desegregated in 1971, and
2 Chinese American women focused on fighting for equality in the City’s education system and
3 by the twentieth century, Chinese American women began to engage in civic affairs and
4 increased their rate of working outside of their homes; and

5 WHEREAS, Mabel Teng, who was born in Hong Kong, migrated to San Francisco and
6 became an immigrant rights activist in Chinatown; and

7 WHEREAS, In 1994 Mabel Teng was the first Chinese American woman elected to the
8 City’s Board of Supervisors, opening the way for representation and leadership for Chinese
9 American women for generations to come, and in 2000, she became the City’s first Chinese
10 American Assessor-Recorder and officiated the first same-sex marriage ceremony in San
11 Francisco of Phyllis Lyon and Del Martin on February 12, 2004, and personally presided over
12 500 same-sex marriage ceremonies thereafter; and

13 WHEREAS, Portia Li, who was born in Hong Kong, migrated to San Francisco and
14 became a reporter for World Journal, a San Francisco Bay Area Chinese language
15 newspaper, and is greatly respected for her journalistic ethics, integrity and dedication to fair
16 reporting; and

17 WHEREAS, In April 2020, during the novel Coronavirus pandemic, Portia Li was laid
18 off by World Journal after 33 years as senior reporter and, in August 2020, she became the
19 first Chinese American woman to publish her own newspaper - Wind Newspaper, a free
20 bilingual Chinese and English newspaper reporting critical news stories impacting Chinese
21 American communities throughout San Francisco Bay Area and serving as a bridge for these
22 communities at large; and

23 WHEREAS, Judy Yung, who was born in 1946 and passed away at age 74 in
24 December 2020, was born and raised in San Francisco’s Chinatown and worked as a librarian
25 at the Chinatown Branch Library; and

1 WHEREAS, After obtaining her PhD in ethnic studies, Judy Yung became a professor
2 of American Studies at University of California, Santa Cruz and established the first program
3 in Asian American studies for the entire U.C. system; and

4 WHEREAS, Judy Yung, as a Chinese American historian, wrote multiple books and
5 spearheaded many projects on Chinese American history with a focus on detailing Chinese
6 American women’s roles and experience, including the first traveling exhibit on Chinese
7 American women; and

8 WHEREAS, Chinese American women, like Mabel Teng, Portia Li, and Judy Yung,
9 have been making history in San Francisco and throughout California, fighting for equality,
10 honoring immigrants and working families and raising awareness of racial and gender
11 injustice, all for the betterment of humanity; now, therefore, be it

12 RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San Francisco
13 celebrates and recognizes the achievements and dedication of former Assessor-Recorder
14 Mabel Teng, journalist and publisher Portia Li, and the late Chinese American historian Judy
15 Yung; and, be it

16 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San
17 Francisco commits to support programming and services that will nurture young Chinese
18 American and Asian American women so they can develop leadership skills to fight against
19 racial and gender injustice and thrive in our City; and, be it

20 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Supervisors of the City and County of San
21 Francisco, in recognition of Women’s History Month 2021, particularly honors the
22 contributions and leadership of Chinese American women in the history of our City and the
23 State of California.