



Activism Springs from County Legislator

David IMAMURA'S

Family History

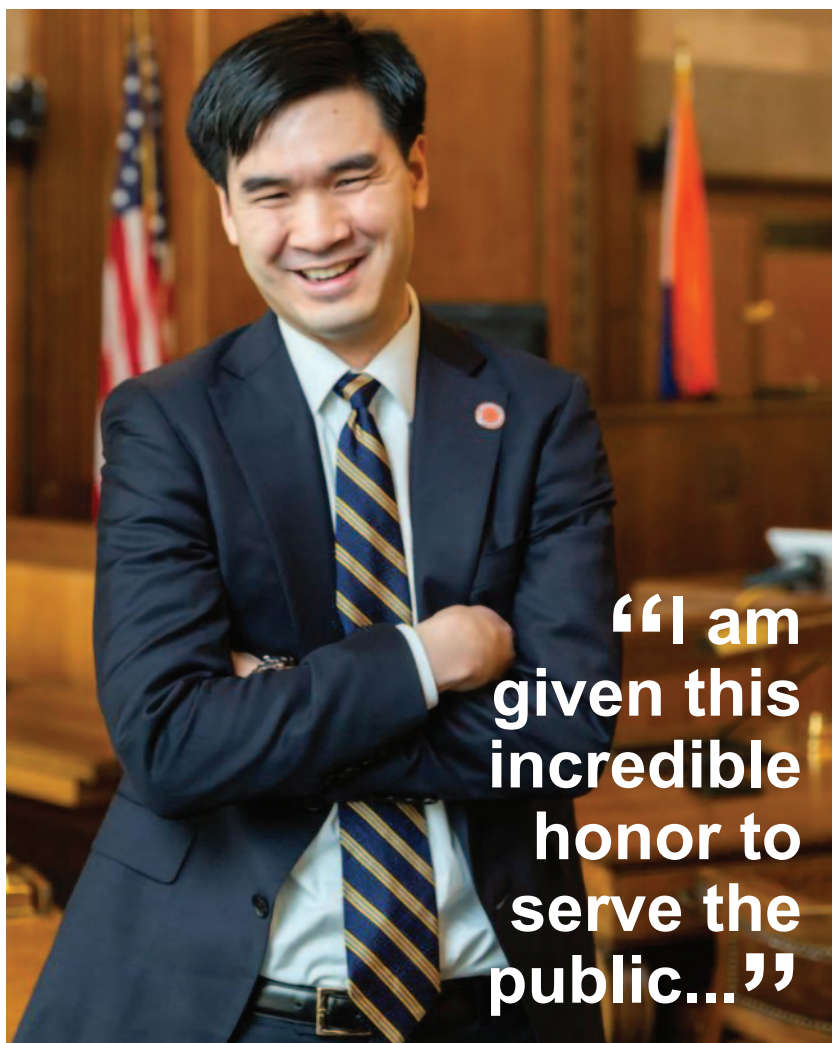
By Ken Valenti

It's easy to see why David Imamura, Westchester's first Asian American County Legislator, believes in public service.

More than 40 years before he was born, his grandfather, Lim Poon, made history by surviving 133 days on a raft after the British merchant ship he served on was sunk by a German torpedo. Despite the recognition that Poon's achievement brought him, and his jobs with American companies after the war, he was blocked when trying to immigrate to the United States because the quota on Chinese immigrants was filled. That was until U.S. Senator Warren Magnuson arranged for him to receive a special dispensation. Poon gained citizenship in 1952. "I was very cognizant as a kid that somewhere, someone in Congress spent 20 minutes helping us, and that completely changed my family's trajectory forever," said Imamura, 36.

In addition, during World War II, his other grandfather fought with a Japanese American unit battling Nazis while many Japanese Americans were held in concentration camps here in the United States. "My family has seen America at both its brightest and

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(Aiko Austin.)



(David Imamura.)

darkest moments and has seen the government’s ability to help and to hurt,” Imamura said.

The Democratic legislator came to Irvington at age 8 and has lived there ever since, except for his years attending Dartmouth College and earning a Columbia University law degree as well as the subsequent four years he spent in New York City. He returned to Irvington in 2019 and lives there with his wife Kate Farley and their 3-year-old son and 5-month-old daughter.

Imamura joined the Board of Legislators last year, taking the District 12 position that was vacated by MaryJane Shimsky, who took a seat on the New York State Assembly. His advocacy, however, began before then. Active in politics, he helped pass Westchester County’s Immigrant Protection Act, which was signed into law on March 20, 2018, by County Executive George Latimer. The law “prevents Westchester County from using any of its resources to assist in federal investigations based on race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity or national origin,”

according to the county’s website.

Imamura also played a major role in the drafting and passage of the Westchester Discriminatory Harassment Law that lists 16 categories, including those above, protected from discrimination. The county’s Safety Measures for Survivors of Domestic Violence Act, which Latimer signed in June, “was the first bill that I sponsored and I carried,” Imamura said. His many appointments include chair of the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission and co-chair of the Westchester Asian American Advisory Board. In June, he was appointed to the White Plains-based Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center. Imamura also has led efforts to help constituents collect unclaimed funds from the state comptroller’s office.

Imamura is not, however, the only activist in his household. In March, U.S. Senator Charles Schumer (D-NY) invited Farley, an attorney, as a guest to President Joseph Biden’s State of the

Union Address. Pregnant via in-vitro fertilization with her and Imamura’s daughter, Farley was invited to represent support of reproductive rights. Their daughter was born 12 days later.

For Imamura public service blends seamlessly with his professional life, for which he was recently named a law partner at Abrams Fensterman, a firm of approximately 100 attorneys. At the law firm, he is involved in two lawsuits—against Mount Pleasant and Newburgh—under New York State’s John Lewis Voting Rights Act passed in 2022.

“I am given this incredible honor to serve the public,” Imamura said. “It is on me to maximize that.”

For contact information, see Legislator Imamura’s page on the Westchester County Board of Legislators website:
<https://westchesterlegislators.com/district-12>.