

WASHINGTON, DC – This week, the U.S. Congress honored a pioneer in California’s Asian American community, when it named the Lundy Avenue Main Post Office in Santa Clara after Gordon N. Chan, a leader in the area’s agricultural industry and in community service.

At the request of Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA), the U.S. Congress named the post office to honor a man whose accomplishments, and his family’s, were pivotal to the region’s Asian American, community and to Santa Clara County as a whole.

“Gordon served in many entities of importance in our valley and was the living example of a business leader who understood that giving back to his community was an honor and a duty for successful citizens such as him,” Honda said. “I thank my colleagues in the House and the Senate for voting to recognize Gordon Chan.”

Chan was the owner of the T.S. Chan Nursery, one of Santa Clara County’s largest commercial flower growers, with roots in the family farm established in the early 20th Century.

Chan was the only Chinese American president of the Santa Clara Farm Bureau, which represents all farmers in the County. In the 1980s, Chan became the first and only Chinese American to be appointed to the Santa Clara County Planning Commission. In the 1990s, he served on the County Redistricting Commission and the County Trail Commission. Not one to shy away from hard work, Chan also served on the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, the Cut Flower Commission and the County Fair Board.

Honda said even with his many commitments, Chan always made sure he was home to share dinner with his family and traveled every Sunday to the same San Francisco church his family had attended for three generations.

The story of the Chan family in the United States began in 1880 when Chien Lung, Chan’s grandfather, arrived as a teenager. He learned English at the First Chinese Baptist Church in San Francisco, and later became one of the most successful potato farmers in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta. His fortune was taken from him when the “Alien Land Laws” forced him to sell his land.

The family did not give up. In 1948, Gordon Chan’s father, Ted Chan, started a flower-growing business in East Palo Alto. Chan grew up helping in the family farm full time while attending school.

After graduating from Menlo-Atherton High, Chan earned a B.S. degree in ornamental horticulture from California Polytechnic University in 1959, which he applied to the family business. That year he also married Anita, who he met at their church.

“Gordon’s family history is one of success in the face of adversity. ‘Giving up’ was not in the family lexicon and Gordon supplanted that with ‘giving back.’ His generosity was boundless.” Honda said. “It is only fitting that someone so important to our community be honored, so his life story can be preserved and inspire others to follow in his footsteps.”

In addition to his business and government contributions, Chan also served as executive director of Asian Americans for Community Involvement (AACI), as executive board member and founder of the Chinese Historical and Cultural Project (CHCP), and as president of Hee Shen Benevolent Association.

Chan's sudden and untimely death in 2001 left his wife, Anita and his daughters, Angela, Juliet and Janet, to carry his legacy through continued community service, philanthropy and activism.