

BALTIMORE KOREATOWN - TOWSON UNIVERSITY HISTORICAL MILESTONES 1965-2018

1965

Bong Joo Shin and his wife, Young Ae Im, came to Baltimore and Shin became a professor in the Economics Department at Towson University

1969

Several auto body shops fired Korean immigrant mechanics, citing poor performance. After acting as an interpreter in court for their dismissal cases, Bong Joo Shin was inspired to form a Baltimore-area Korean American Association

1973

Professor Ock-Kyung Lee served as Curator (Director) of the Asian and African Art Collection at Towson University through 1976

1975

James Fisher, President of Towson University, became an advisor of the Baltimore Korean American Association

1966-67

The Baltimore Korean United Church rented space for their worship services from Lovely Lane Methodist Church, located at 22nd and St. Paul Street, becoming the first Korean congregation in Baltimore



1972

In March the Korean Society of Baltimore, the predecessor of the Korean Society of Maryland, was founded and had its first general meeting at Towson University with about 100 Koreans participating

The Korean Society of Maryland was founded by John Jong Un Chang

Bong Joo Shin established the Korean American Business Research Center at Towson University

1974

Towson University Professor Bong Joo Shin arranged for Young Sam Kim, chairman of the opposition party against President Jung Hee Park, to receive an honorary doctoral degree from Towson University. This was the first honorary degree Towson University had ever given to a citizen of a country outside the U.S. Mr. Kim later became President of the Republic of Korea

After renting space from the American Methodist Church in Glen Burnie for their services, the Baltimore Korean Methodist Church moved to the Wilson Memorial Methodist Church on University Parkway near Johns Hopkins University

1981

Mr. Kim opened a small restaurant located on 20th Street in Station North, which included one corner for selling homemade rice cakes, and another one dedicated to a homemade display of Korean traditions

1991

Maryland established a sisterhood relationship with the Korean province Kyung Sang Nam Do

H. Smith, President of Towson University, became the chairman of the Maryland– Kyung Sang Nam Do Sister States Committee

The Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Baltimore set up a sisterhood relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry in Busan, Korea through Bong Joo Shin of Towson University

1994

“Koreatown” in central Baltimore was thriving, with diners, shops, and Korean signs

Three hundred Koreans gathered in front of the library at Towson University to demand a re-trial of the case of Jae Hwan (Joel) Lee's death

Towson University placed a marker on campus and hosted a ceremony to commemorate Jae Hwan (Joel) Lee



1993

Jae Hwan (Joel) Lee, a 21 year old senior majoring in Computer Science at Towson University, was killed on the way to see his friend at an apartment complex in downtown Baltimore.

Towson University presented an honorary diploma to Jae Hwan (Joel) Lee's family

1989

Towson University presented an honorary doctoral degree to Mr. Sejik Park, the former president of Seoul Olympic Organizing Committee.

TU's Asian Arts & Culture Center (AA&CC) held an exhibit, The Horizon of Implied Beauty, featuring Korean abstract expressionists Choon-ki Yi and Jae-Im Kim

Towson University presented Music from Korea, Yesterday and Today, a concert of classical and contemporary Korean music organized by Professor Ahn of the Peabody Conservatory

2002

TU's Asian Arts & Culture Center (AA&CC) held the exhibit, Interwoven: Recent Work by Sunghee Kim, with curatorial support by TU Professor Ock-Kyung Lee

Jinhee Kim presented a musical concert on the gayageum

2006

Mr. Saejoo Chang, CEO of Dongkuk Steel Mill Co. and TU alumnus in Economics, received an honorary doctoral degree from Towson University for his leadership in the growth of the Korean steel industry and the development of the economic relationship between the U.S. and Korea.

Multiple Korean artists participated in the AA&CC “Many Moons Festival”

2010

Dr. Ock-Kyung Lee curated the exhibit: The Myth and Symbols in Korean Art, works by regional contemporary artists, in conjunction with the “Many Moons Festival.”

Gyeong Mi Cho's Gayageum (Korean zither) ensemble performed at AA&CC's “Many Moons Festival”

2014

In spring of 2014, Hendrik Beikirch, an artist, participated in Open Walls Baltimore 2. He painted a mural of Jae Won Kim's father, owner of Seoul Rice Cake, in Station North.

Ms. Gabby Cha, a middle fielder of Women's Lacrosse Team of Towson University, was named CAA (Colonial Athletic Association) Rookie of the Year



2018

The Arirang USA Community was established to support the unity and prosperity of the Korean community and present a strong sense of cultural identity among young Korean-Americans in Maryland.



Dr. Ohoe Kim, Professor Emeritus in Mathematics and Computer Science Department at Towson University, was appointed as a standing advisor to the Arirang USA Community.

Establishment of the TU Korean Professors Association (TKPA)

2012

AA&CC presented music by the Sonagi Project

AA&CC presented the exhibition Aggregations by South Korean artist Kwang Young Chun



2008

Artists from WonKwang University in Korea and Towson University held a joint exhibition, Micro Monumentals, at Towson Commons Gallery

Mr. Myung-Won Kwon, donated his work on Heon-Hwa-Ga (Song for Offering Flowers) to the AA&CC

2005

Former faculty and alumni of Towson University, Ms. Sin Yeon Jeon, was selected to display her ceramic work, “Self-portrait,” at the National Craft Forms 2005 exhibition

1997

The Asian Arts & Culture Center (AA&CC) held the exhibit, Korean Ceramic Art, featuring work by ceramicist Dong-Hun Chung who was also invited to teach by TU professor, Thom Supensky

Special thanks to Michelle Lee, Ki Chan Park, Yong-Yeon Ji, Ock-Kyung Lee, Go Eun Kang and Chelsey Holian for their assistance with compiling this timeline.