

"LOS ANGELES CHINATOWN SCHOOL CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION"

by: Howard Quon

A large eventful Centennial Celebration is being planned to commemorate the founding of Los Angeles Castelar Street School, 840 Yale St. on Tuesday, November 9th and 10th from 8:30 AM to 1:00 P.M. Secretary of State, March Fong Eu will be the keynote speaker among the many dignitaries attending the ceremonies honoring the historic occasion.

Nestled in the center of the Chinatown Community, the second oldest school in the Los Angeles School District has had a long history of service to an Asian community. Unique in this Elementary educational facility are creative new classes designed to aid new immigrants and their children's assimilation into the American mainstream.

English as a Second Language, Special Tutoring, Visual Aids, Tri-Lingual Instructions in English, Spanish and Chinese are among the many innovative programs offered. Founded in the City of Los Angeles on September, 1882 with just four rooms, the Castelar School has undergone many structural changes, expanding as enrollment grew.

The original buildings were destroyed by fire in 1903 and in ensuing years, the reknown wooden frame classrooms were built. Finally, in 1973 due to the necessity for modernization and the need to meet mandated Earthquake Standards, the remaining wood frame buildings were demolished.

In its place, a 2.4 million dollar two story modern structure was erected on the site that was completed in 1977 with a underground garage. The school now has 33 classrooms, a special Children's Center and among its many distinction houses the Chinatown Library, the most used city Library on the grounds.

Limited to a capacity of 800 students on the 2.7 acre of land, Castelar St. School began a year-around-program in the 1981-82 school year to accommodate the growing influx of Asian and Indo-Chinese immigrants as enrollment climbed to 1100 students.

Dr. William Chun-Hoon became Castelar's new Principal in 1973 in becoming the first Chinese American in the field of School Administration in the Los Angeles School System to do so. Under his responsive leadership, new programs were developed to provide for the expanding needs of these immigrants. Instructors are able to communicate in Spanish, Mandarin, Cantonese and Vietnamese.

Beginning their 100th year, Castelar is still the only Public School in the Los Angeles Chinatown area, having served the community's residents into the 3rd and 4th generation. Resolutions from the State, City and the Board of Education will be presented along with the many festivities held for this celebration.

For further information, please contact: Ella Quan at (213) 626-3674

Enclosed is a Schedule of Events: