



Connecticut Immigrant & Refugee Coalition



DENISE MERRILL

SECRETARY OF THE STATE
CONNECTICUT

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- PRESS RELEASE -

SECRETARY MERRILL JOINS CONNECTICUT IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE COALITION IN HONORING IMMIGRANTS AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

RENOWNED HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA DIRECTOR CAROLYN KUAN
GIVES KEYNOTE ADDRESS FOR 17TH ANNUAL IMMIGRANT DAY CEREMONY

HARTFORD: Secretary of the State Denise Merrill today joined the Connecticut Immigrant and refugee Coalition (CIRC) in hosting the 17th annual “Immigrant Day” ceremony at the State Capitol in Hartford. Immigrant Day honors immigrants and naturalized citizens from Connecticut, and celebrates their long lasting contributions to their communities and professions. This year’s ceremony honored 15 individuals from 13 different countries. Jeevan Vittal, a news anchor and reporter for FOX CT, a native of Washington, DC and son of immigrants from India, served as master of ceremonies for this year’s Immigrant Day observance.

“It is such an honor to pay tribute to hard working citizens who contribute so much to our communities who in some cases overcame very difficult circumstances to come to America, just like my family did 100 years ago,” said Secretary Merrill. “Our strength as a Democracy comes from our diversity and the fact that anyone – from anywhere in the world – can succeed in this country if you work hard enough. Each of those honored on Immigrant Day have not only done well for themselves and their families, but they have also had a lasting impact in their community. Our entire state has benefitted from their talent and tireless efforts.”

The Keynote Speaker for Connecticut Immigrant Day 2014 was Carolyn Kuan, the renowned Music Director of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Kuan – the first woman and first Asian American to hold the prestigious post – was born in Taiwan and left her family at the age of 14 to immigrate to America. She knew few English words yet went on to graduate cum laude from Smith College with a dual degree in music and

economics. Kuan has won numerous awards for being a revolutionary woman in her field. As a proud Taiwanese immigrant, she has worked to integrate both cultural and social issues into her work, helping launch a program with San Francisco community leaders to represent eight Asian cultures through music and art called *Celebrate Asia!* Carolyn Kuan has conducted for the Seattle Symphony Orchestra, the New York City Ballet, the Baltimore Opera Company and more.

The Connecticut Immigrant & Refugee Coalition is an association of volunteer ethnic and social service organizations working to promote the rights and opportunities of immigrants and refugees in Connecticut, and to foster their civic participation. These immigrants and refugees, like many of us, have come from around the world to this country and to Connecticut and have made invaluable contributions to our state and our communities.

April 2nd, 2014 – 17th Annual Immigrant Day Honorees

Country of Origin

CT Residence

Keynote Speaker

Carolyn Kuan	Taiwan	Hartford
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Honorees

Mark Bailey	Jamaica	East Hartford
Miguel Barreto	Colombia	Bethel
Professor Luiz de Moura Castro	Brazil	Avon
Ray Gawendo	Russia	Waterford
Mario Jaimes	Mexico	Hartford
Dee La	Burma	Hartford
Soe Naing	Burma	Hartford
Dr. Saqib Naseer	Pakistan	Glastonbury
Mary Oo	Thailand	Hartford
Lina Osho-Williams	Sierra Leone	Manchester
Reverend Adam Subocz	Poland	Southington
Kunwar Umesh Vig	India	Bolton
Judge M. Nawaz Wahla	Pakistan	Glastonbury
Laura M. Wilbur	Scotland	Southport
Nichelle G. Woodson	Trinidad and Tobago	Bloomfield