



UC San Diego Foundation Trustee



Susan Lew

When you talk with Susan Lew about her involvement in her community, the conversation may take you as far as China. Susan has long understood the importance of big, global ideas and their impact on our region, and she has invested a great deal of time and enthusiasm in many good ideas.

At UC San Diego, it started in the 1980s when she heard that the University of California had plans for a new graduate school. “I was really excited that UC started an international school focused on the Pacific Rim and put it in San Diego, so I have been involved in the school since its groundbreaking.” Susan has served in the capacity of advisory board member to the Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS).

She’s ideally suited to do so. Born in Canton, raised in Hong Kong, Susan came to the U.S. in 1965 and enrolled at San Diego State College. “I’m a Pacific Rim person,” she says. “I’m quite active in the international relations area for San Diego. When IR/PS was opening, I was forming the sister city relationship between San Diego and Yantai, China. I was also very active in the World Trade Association in San Diego, which later became the World Trade Center when I convinced my fellow Port Commissioners to fund and purchase the World Trade Center Charter for San Diego.”

A savvy businesswoman, Susan founded her own real estate firm, S. Lew & Associates, in 1978; she now manages a real estate portfolio of over \$100,000,000. Susan served on the Board of Directors for the Bank of Commerce until the bank was sold to U.S. Bank. She is a founder, director and Vice-Chairman of 1st Pacific Bank of California, where she chairs the Compensation and Corporate Governance committees in addition to her role as Chairman of the Advisory Board. As an amateur restaurateur, she has cultivated her creative side with her Emerald Seafood Restaurant and Pearl Chinese Cuisine.

Passionate about her community’s economic and civic advancement, Susan served as Port and Airport Commissioner from 1993 to 2001, and was elected Chairman of the San Diego Unified Port District Commission in January 1995. She also served as a member of the California Economic Strategy Panel appointed by and as advisor to Governor Pete Wilson of California.



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Susan is active in a number of non-profit organizations in addition to the UC San Diego Foundation Board and IR/PS Advisory Board. She serves on the boards of Sharp Memorial Hospital, the Union of Pan Asian Communities Development Circle, the Asian Business Association's Advisory Board and the San Diego Library Foundation.

And she's a proud mom. She and her husband, Dee, are parents of two successful UC San Diego graduates – Deegan, an optometrist, and Stephen, director of community outreach for Mayor Jerry Sanders.