

Corky Lee, known for photographing Asian America, dies at age 73

By Terry Tang
The Associated Press

Corky Lee, a photojournalist who spent five decades spotlighting often ignored Asian and Pacific Islander American communities, has died. He was 73 years old.

Lee died January 27 in New York City’s Queens borough of complications from COVID-19, his family said in a statement.

“His passion was to rediscover, document, and champion through his images the plight of all Americans but most especially that of Asian and Pacific Islanders,” his family said.

The self-described “undisputed unofficial Asian-American Photographer Laureate,” Lee used his eye to pursue what he saw as “photographic justice.” Almost always sporting a camera around his neck, he was present at many seminal moments impacting Asian America over a 50-year career.

He was born Young Kwok Lee in New York City to Chinese immigrant parents. He was the first child in his family to go to college, graduating from City University of New York’s Queens College.

A self-taught freelance photographer, Lee aimed his camera lens on a slew of subjects from anti-Vietnam war protests to police brutality. Over the years, his photos appeared in *The New York Times*, *TIME* magazine, the *New York Post*, *New York Daily News*, The Associated Press, and Asian-American outlets. Most recently, he was documenting anti-Asian racism brought on by the pandemic.

Lee was there when Asian Americans took to the streets to protest the lack of jail time for the killers of Vincent Chin. The 27-year-old Chin was beaten to death in Detroit in 1982, a time when Japan was being blamed for the U.S. auto industry’s decline. The two laid-off



POIGNANT PHOTOGRAPHER. In this May 10, 2014 file photo, photographer Corky Lee shouts to the Chinese community posing near the Golden Spike re-enactment ceremony, in Promontory, Utah, as he creates a photo of them to honor Chinese immigrants who built the railroad from the west. Lee, a photojournalist who spent five decades spotlighting often ignored Asian and Pacific Islander American communities, passed away on January 27, 2021 in Queens, New York, of complications due to COVID-19. (Scott Sommerdorf/The Salt Lake Tribune via AP, File)

white autoworkers who killed Chin — who was Chinese — assumed he was Japanese. They were convicted of manslaughter but got just three years of probation.

In 2017, Lee organized a vigil outside the Nevada home of one of Chin’s attackers.

An event that had an indelible influence on Lee’s desire for more Asian representation was the building of the Transcontinental Railroad. In previous interviews, Lee spoke of being in junior high and coming across a picture from the 1869 completion of the railroad in Utah. The iconic “Champagne Photo” featured almost no Chinese workers, even though they made up the majority of the labor.

In 2002, Lee gathered some of those laborers’ descendants in the same spot for a reenactment. More than a nice gesture, Lee felt the anniversary photograph was restoring Asians into

the history of the country they helped build. He went on to re-create the photo on more than one anniversary.

Lee also believed in paying it forward to Asian-American journalists coming after him. He was a founding member of the New York chapter of the Asian American Journalists Association (AAJA). He is credited with helping raise more than \$100,000 in scholarship funds through annual photo auctions.

“AAJA is heartbroken over the loss of our beloved Corky Lee, a trailblazer whose career has been instrumental to our collective understanding and appreciation of the history, triumphs, and struggles of Asian America,” AAJA president Michelle Ye Hee Lee said in a statement.

A private funeral service will be held at Wah Wing Sang Funeral Home in New York.

Lee is survived by his brother John.

Teens tutor peers online to fill need during pandemic

By Cedar Attanasio
The Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. — When her suburban Dallas high school was forced to move online last spring because of the coronavirus pandemic, Charvi Goyal realized that the schoolmates she’d been informally tutoring between classes would still need extra help but wouldn’t necessarily be able to get it. So she took her tutoring online, as well.

Goyal, a 17-year-old high school junior from Plano, roped in three classmates to create TutorScope, a free tutoring service run by high schoolers for other kids, including younger ones. What started with a handful of instructors helping friends’ siblings in their hometown has blossomed into a group of 22 tutors from Texas, Arizona, and Ohio that has helped more than 300 students from as far away as South Korea.

“I could foresee that schools were going to go virtual. And with that there were a couple of problems because the interactions between students and students, and students and teachers, would be weakened,” Goyal said.

TutorScope provides the one-on-one support that teachers have traditionally given while roving the aisles of their classrooms but now

often can’t because of the time and technology constraints posed by online schooling.

On a night near the end of the fall semester, tutor Avi Bagchi worked with seven-year-old twins Monika and Massey Newman on a reading comprehension lesson about discerning between fact and opinion. During their half-hour video chat, the 16-year-old Plano West Senior High School student provided the children from nearby Corinth with examples — it’s a fact that the pen is red but an opinion if one doesn’t like it — and reined them in when they got off topic a bit: Can’t it be a fact that someone holds an opinion?

“I love candy. That’s a fact ...” said Massey, “... because it’s true,” he and his sister said in unison.

Their mother, social worker Sarah Newman, said the twins’ TutorScope sessions have been really helpful and have freed up her and her 17-year-old son to focus on their own work.

“With these tutors, I realize they have time,” she said. “I think they are very patient with these younger kids, which I do not even have as a mother. I have patience in other things, (but) I don’t have patience in the teaching.”

Newman discovered TutorScope a few weeks into the fall semester on Nextdoor, a neighborhood-based social-media app, and signed up her twins for sessions, which can be up to

an hour each week per subject.

“At the time I was even looking for tutoring for them, like private tutoring, and every spot that I hit was too costly for those two kids. I’m like, I can’t afford it,” Newman said.

TutorScope isn’t the first nonprofit to offer online tutoring and is just one of the workarounds people have come up with to educate kids during the pandemic, from a teacher in Nigeria who grades homework from around the world to a so-called sidewalk school in Mexico that offers online instruction to children, including some stuck at the border awaiting decisions on U.S. asylum requests.

What makes the TutorScope effort unique is the bond between the teenage volunteers and the peers they’re helping.

“We kind of want to keep the whole ‘for students by students’ thing really prominent since it provides a sort of solidarity. Because everyone is going through the same thing, you know that your tutor is also having the same struggles learning right now that you are,” Goyal said.

The group accepts donations from adults but limits volunteers to students, including at least one college undergrad.

Now in their third semester, the TutorScope board has secured nonprofit status from the IRS and

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Difficulty level: Hard #49524

Solution to last issue’s puzzle

Puzzle #26497 (Medium)

All solutions available at www.sudoku.com.

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9	2	7	6	1	4	3	8	5
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6	7	4	1	9	2	8	5	3
3	1	9	8	5	7	2	6	4
8	5	2	4	3	6	9	1	7

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