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A first for New Jersey

Tue, Jan 19, 2010 at 12:32 pm

News

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By **ROBERT LINNEHAN** | *The Cherry Hill Sun*

When Susan Shin Angulo raised her right hand and put her left on the Bible last week, she broke through a barrier in New Jersey that had never been shattered before. After being sworn in by Assemblyman Louis D. Greenwald, Angulo became the first Korean-American woman to hold a seat in government in the state.

While there have been several Korean-American men to hold various governmental positions in the state, the Center for American Women and Politics in Rutgers University's Eagleton Institute of Politics said Angulo is the first female government official of Korean descent to serve in any of the state's elected public offices.

"It was a tremendous honor to win a seat on council," she said. "But the awareness that I represent a portion of the population who has never seen a Korean-American woman in office before makes this accomplishment even more meaningful to me and my family. I am both proud and humbled that the residents of Cherry Hill have granted me the privilege of representing them, and I plan to do this historic honor justice."

Members of her family, friends, and the Korean community of Cherry Hill surrounded the first generation Korean-American as she accepted the seat to council last week.

Angulo's mother and father moved from South Korea to America in 1974, she said. Her father, originally from North Korea, was brought to the south by his father before the Korean War. However, after the war split the country, he was unable to return to the north and never saw his mother, sister, or brother again.

While living in the south he met Susan's mother, who was born and raised in Pusan, the second-largest city in South Korea. The family emigrated from South Korea in the early seventies and settled in Philadelphia.

The honor of being the first Korean American woman to hold office in the state is indescribable, she said. Continuing the growth of the local Asian communities and helping others become involved in all levels of government is one of her top priorities, she said.

"It was a tremendous growth process for me during the campaign. It was a great honor. Even though I'm the first, I hope I'm not the last. I hope this momentum continues so that all of our residents have a voice in government," She said. "It's not just the Korean-American community, but it has to be all of the Asian community. I did receive tremendous support in all of the Asian communities, and I want their voices to be heard."

Angulo and her husband Michael settled in Cherry Hill in 1999, attracted to the tightly knit community and strong business sector.

While she has received a strong local media push for her accomplishment, South Korea is also picking up on her accomplishments.

"I've been so humbled by this coverage throughout the campaign and the election, not only locally, but nationally as well. In fact, my aunt, my mother's sister, saw me on the Korean news," she said. "It's been such an honor; I hope it brings a lot of positive attention to Cherry Hill."

Cherry Hill has a well-defined Korean population, accounting for nearly 10 percent of township residents as of the 2000 Census Report. With the 2010 Census questionnaires set to arrive in mailboxes across the country by mid-March, local officials predict that it will show this figure has risen over the last decade. Angulo said she is excited to work with every segment of the township's demographics, but is eager to shine a spotlight on the diversity that is an inherent part of the Cherry Hill community.

Angulo is a 10-year resident of Cherry Hill and previously served on the municipality's Zoning Board and plays a role in Mayor Bernie Platt's diversity outreach efforts.

 [Angulo, cherry hill, council](#)