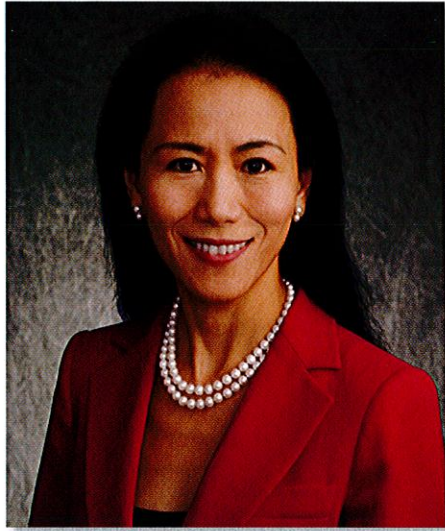


Y. Ping Sun

Shining Community Volunteer



By Christopher D. Porter

While driving to an event one evening in 2004, Y. Ping Sun gazed out over the Houston skyline and said to her husband, "This is home." Given that the couple had only recently moved to Houston from New York City after Ping's husband, David Leebron, accepted the position to become the seventh president of Rice University, this was a major declaration. In the short time they had been in Houston, Ping felt the openness, diversity, and energy that the city exuded. She was excited by the possibilities Houston presented, and the genuine commitment of its citizens to make the city a better place through service. Ping shares in this commitment, and it is something that she practices on a daily basis.

It is difficult to describe a "typical" day for Ping, because she is involved in such a vast array of activities and organizations. Her day may begin by dropping her children, Daniel and Merissa, off at school, before heading to the law firm Yetter Coleman LLP, where she is of counsel, and then on to host guests at Wiess House, the Rice University president's residence, for lunch. After lunch, she will have a full afternoon that can include meetings for some of the boards on which she sits, including the Texas Children's Hospital and the Asia Society Texas Center, and then on to an event at the Baker Institute, where she serves as an Honorary Chair for the

Roundtable, or to a student event at Rice. She may then go to meet with children in an underprivileged school, where she discusses the importance of education, and lets them know that through hard work, they can become anything they choose. Afterwards, she heads home so that she can spend time with her children while they do their homework and have dinner, and then it is off to a gala event such as the Texas China Leadership Gala where she is honored for her work with Rice University and the City of Houston. While a schedule such as this may seem overwhelming to some, Ping manages it with remarkable ease. When asked if she had any complaints about the many demands on her time, Ping could not think of any. Well, that's not entirely true, because she does complain that "there are only 24 hours in a day."

To find the root of Ping's deep-seated commitment to community, one need only look to her childhood. Growing up in Tianjin, China, a city on the outskirts of Beijing, Ping observed firsthand her grandmother's active involvement in the local community. Ping viewed her grandmother as her personal hero, and she learned from her the importance of service and helping to make the community in which you live a better one. Ping took these lessons to heart, and has carried them with her throughout her life. Ping came to the United States after earning a full scholarship to Princeton, where she was involved in community activities including international student organizations and Student Health Aid. Ping also worked jobs in the library and the cafeteria to help make ends meet. With her heavy course load, jobs, and extracurricular activities, Ping described her time at Princeton as a juggling act. But she managed to find ways to make it work. Indeed, when writing her thesis, Ping would arrive so early to the Woodrow Wilson School to use its computers that the building would be closed. Ping, not easily deterred, was able to receive a key to the building so that she could continue her early mornings in order to fit everything into her

busy schedule.

After graduating from Princeton with honors, Ping attended Columbia University Law School. She went on to practice international transactional law in New York, and in 2004, Ping and her family moved to Houston. Since her arrival, Ping has been actively engaged in a number of community organizations. With her commitment to children and education, Ping serves on the board of trustees for the Texas Children's Hospital, the board for St. John's School, the Houston regional board of Teach For America, the advisory board at Rice's Shepherd School of Music and the Kinder Institute for Urban Research, and the board of the United Way of Greater Houston. Ping also has an interest in fostering and maintaining strong ties between Houston and Asia, which has led to her serving on the board of the Asia Society Texas Center, the advisory board of the Asian Chamber of Commerce, and the advisory board of the Chinese Community Center, as well as being named to the Mayor's International Trade and Development Counsel for Asia/Australia. Ping's passion for Rice University and the City of Houston is demonstrated through her many activities as a Rice University Representative, and through her service on the honorary board of Houston Greeters.

Although Ping herself will not talk about all that she does for the community, her service has not gone unnoticed. Ping was invited by Judge Keith Ellison to address nearly 1,400 new citizens in 2008 at a naturalization ceremony; was one of three recipients for the 2009 Arrival Awards from the University of Houston Center's Immigration Clinic; named one of the 50 Most Influential Women of 2010 by Houston Women Magazine; named one of the 2010 Ten Women on the Move by Texas Executive Women; honored, along with her husband, as the 2010 International Executive of the Year; honored, along with her husband, by Teach For America for their educational efforts for children in low-income schools; and the recipient of the 2010 Texas China Lead-

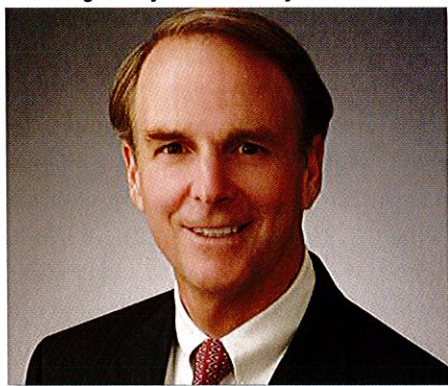
ership Award. Recently, Ping received the Asia Society Texas Center's Asian American Leadership Award at the 2011 Tiger Ball. And touching upon her lighter side, Ping was elected Rice's Homecoming Queen by students in 2005.

With all of her accolades, Ping continues to serve Houston with her trademark grace, modesty, and good humor. She is passionate in her spirit of service and works diligently toward the causes in which she believes. The early lessons Ping learned from her grandmother have stayed with her. She works to make every community in which she is a member a better place and encourages others to do so as well. Since 2004, Ping has shared her grandmother's lessons on service with a community that she and her family soon came to call home. Houston could not be more pleased. 🍴

Christopher D. Porter is an associate at Yetter Coleman LLP where his practice focuses on complex commercial litigation.

Clark Thompson

Breaking the Cycle of Poverty



By Caroline Pace

Clark Thompson, a transactional attorney and partner at Bracewell & Giuliani LLP, freely gives his time, effort and talent to the operation, management, and growth of Yellowstone Academy. Not wanting to overshadow the institution he serves, the thoroughly humble and private Thompson deflected the personal spotlight by discussing the school to which he has so generously devoted himself.

Since its inception in 2002, Yellowstone

has exclusively served children who live under the most extremely impoverished circumstances. The median annual income of families whose children are served is \$8,088. Thompson explains that by combating the circumstances that perpetuate poverty with educational, spiritual, social and practical resources, Yellowstone empowers children to transcend their circumstances and break the cycle of poverty.

Yellowstone is a faith-based, non-denominational Christian school that does not accept state or federal funds. It endeavors to create an edifying and nurturing environment which fosters excitement for learning for the 320 children who attend pre-school through seventh grade. An eighth (and final) grade will be added next year, bringing the total number of students at Yellowstone to 352. One key to the academy's operational success and continued growth is a multitude of volunteers who, like Thompson, use their professional expertise in areas such as contract negotiation and project financing to serve Yellowstone.



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