



On April 18, 2023, invited by my dearest friend Ying Pu, I attended the Induction Dinner Ceremony for the 2023 Class of the Cleveland International Hall of Fame (CIHF) at Windows on the River. The purpose of the ceremony was to induct individuals who have made significant and lasting contributions to their own ethnic culture's heritage, and beyond that to Cleveland multicultural society as a whole. The 2023 inductees are Pierre Bejjani (Lebanese), Sudarshan Sathe (Indian), Councilman Mike Polensek (Slovenian), Mayor Georgine Welo (Serbian), Pat Dowd (Irish), and Joyce Mariani (Italian). The inductees and speakers were all well prepared for their speeches. The listeners were attentive. As a sold-out event, the energetic and enthusiastic crowd of over 450 from different ethnic backgrounds shared a blast of a night. I was humbled to be introduced by Ying to organizers, inductees and many other distinguished people.

It Is All About People

Zheni Jackson



Dan Hanson

Dan and his sister Debbie are founders of Clevelandpeople.com. In 2010, they initiated the Cleveland International Hall of Fame. The mission of both organizations is to promote Cleveland cultural diversity and community volunteer work and leadership. As seen in the event night, Dan and Debbie have a magic wand to bring people together to celebrate diversity.

The first time I met Dan was at his novel - Murder in the Cultural Gardens - book signing event on March 8, 2020, right before the pandemic. (At that time, my hair was very long.) At the Hall of Fame Induction Event, Dan told me his newest novel - Murder in Asian Town-- will come out soon. Looking forward to reading it!

Debbie Hanson

Ying introduced me to Debbie. She seemed to prefer keeping a low profile and shied away from the spotlight. But I can tell Debbie is the power lady behind the scenes. I felt so privileged to take a photo with both Debbie and Dan.

It amazes me that, in the United States, individuals like Dan and Debbie can execute people power and organize a largescale social gathering, which includes politicians, religious leaders, different ethnic groups (Jewish, Arabic, European, Latino, Asian), artists, business people, and social activists. In China, and in many other countries, one would either need to obtain a permit from a government agency or it would have to be a government agency organizing such an event itself. But in the United States, the grassroots ownership of real people power can balance out the government bureaucracy, protecting the foundation of the democratic society.

Bishop Edward Malesic

Bishop Edward Malesic, who has been serving as bishop of the Diocese of Cleveland since 2020, gave the invocation to the induction ceremony. My husband Kevin Jackson and my daughter Wenlan Jackson are both

Catholic. Bishop Malesic has been working to enrich Catholic elementary education throughout the diocese. His Keeping the Faith Initiative brings together teams of experts to study and recommend models to make sure Catholic education remains accessible and affordable.

Ying told me that she visited The Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist on Easter this year. Bishop Edward Malesic proclaimed that no matter what religion you happen to believe in, we are all family.



Ying appreciates the way that Bishop Edward Malesic aims to bring people together cross their religious differences, rather than isolating people on the basis of their separate faiths.

Pierre Bejjani

Pierre is one of the inductees for the 2023 class of CIHF. Ying and I congratulated him with a bouquet of flowers. Ying introduced Pierre and his wife Mary to me at an event of CAMEO (the Cleveland American Middle Eastern Organization) two years ago. Pierre is the president

for CAMEO. Since then, I have come to know Pierre as a well-connected, highly respected leader. His influence is not limited to his native Lebanese community and Arabic circles, but also reaches far beyond. Pierre is the 2022 recipient of the Trail Blazer Award from Arab America Foundation, Washington DC and the 2020 recipient of Crain's Cleveland Business notable Immigrant Leaders. In 2020 he was appointed to the Governor Board for Reopen Ohio for the Bar and Restaurant Committee; in 2019 he was appointed to the Governor Board and Commission for the 2020 census; and in 2019 he was assigned to serve on Ohio Secretary of State Frank La Rose's Diversity and Empowerment Council.

I am honored to know Pierre at a personal level since he became Gingie Spa's client in 2021. He is a very compassionate and amiable person, treasuring traditional family values and genuine friendship.

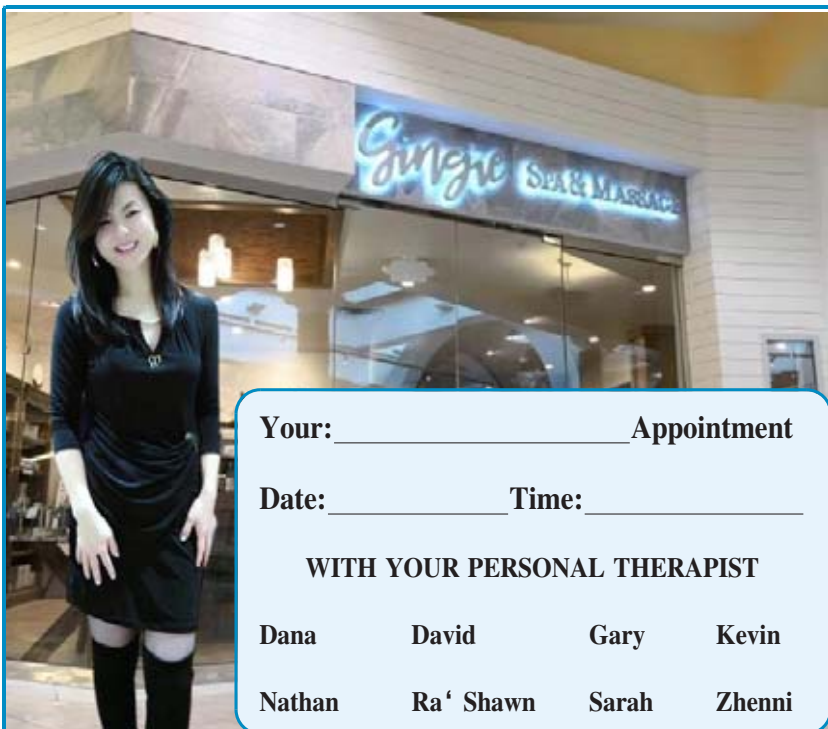
Sudarshan Sathe

It was pleasant to see Mr. Sathe as one of the six inductees for the 2023 class of CIHF in the event. Mr. Sathe has patronized Gingie Spa before. Before the event, I only had the impression that he was a dapper-dressing, courteous and generous gentleman. Through the introduction of Baiju R. Shah, the President and CEO of Greater Cleveland Partnership, I acquired the complete portrait of Mr. Sathe: businessman, inventor, philanthropist, and leader for the Indian American community. As an inductee, Sudarshan delivered an eloquent, thoughtful, and well-structured speech, shining his virtuosity in business, philosophy, history, engineer, culture, language, and math. He expressed a deep gratitude towards American society contributing to his own success, while he saluted his Indian heritage and legacy. I appreciated Mr. Sathe concluding his speech with philosophical enlightenment: "The clarity and calming of the mind is indispensable even in the modern age. Because after all the battles and conquests, all the gadgets and scientific discoveries, one last struggle remains, and that is for the moment of pure inner peace and containment."

Joe Cimperman

Ying introduced me to Joe Cimperman, President and CEO of Global Cleveland. Global Cleveland helps to incorporate immigrants, refugees and foreign-born entrepreneurs into Cleveland society, workforce and business. Mr. Cimperman is charismatic. His light radiates out to people around him. He has won many awards including the Temple Emanu El Tikkun Ha'Olam Award, LEDI International Life-Changer award, the Morton L. Mandel Leadership in Community Development award, Crains' Cleveland Business Power 150 list, the 2023 Charles Eisenman Award for exceptional civic contributions, the Rotary Club of Cleveland's International Service Award, and the Greater Cleveland Partnerships 2022 Best in Class and Hall of Fame awards for Board Diversity.

I just couldn't agree with Mr. Cimperman more on the idea and idea that **we strengthen our city by welcoming our world.**



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