

NEVADA TRAILBLAZERS

Meet Meng Zhong:

Zhong Gives Back by Helping Children in CAP Cases

BY MARY BACON, ESQ.

People often know Meng Zhong for his generous pro bono work. But for Zhong, that generosity is compelled by the charitable community in which he was raised.

Zhong's parents grew up in a rural town in Shanxi, China. Through diligence and hard work, they were able to obtain a higher education and leave their farm communities to seek opportunities in Beijing, where Zhong was born. His family built a good life there. His mother worked as a chemistry researcher, and his father was a prosecutor who frequented the highest court of China. To their small hometown, his parents were a success story. Yet they did not settle. When his mother was offered a position abroad at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas, the family faced a difficult choice. They would be leaving familiar faces and stable lives behind to venture into a foreign country, to learn a new language, and to adopt unfamiliar traditions and customs. More importantly, his father's law degree would not transfer, and his mother would become the primary breadwinner—a change that might be unconventional even now, let alone 30 years ago. But Zhong's parents took up the challenge to provide their only son with opportunities that did not exist in Beijing at the time.

Zhong immigrated to Las Vegas when he was 8 years old, not speaking a word of English. His family settled

into an apartment on Cottage Grove next to UNLV, and he attended Jack Daily Elementary School nearby. Despite not speaking English, he was put in traditional elementary school classes.

Always a quick (and determined) learner, Zhong became conversational in English in six months—a feat he partially attributes to watching “Reading Rainbow.” When asked if he felt like he “fit in” at that point, he laughed and said, “Sort of. At one point, I remember the teacher asked us to draw what we had for breakfast. And I drew a whale. I did not eat whales for breakfast, so I knew I still had a while to go.”

Nevertheless, he found solace in the fact that a significant portion of his classmates and neighbors spoke Spanish as their first language and were learning English as well.

Zhong's family eventually moved to Henderson, and he attended Green Valley High School. He excelled academically and enjoyed the comradery of being on the swim and wrestling teams. His hard work in school paid off, and he graduated at the top of his class to earn a seat at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

There, Zhong majored in math. To get more involved in campus life, he took up fencing at the university's fencing club. Looking back, it was easily one of the best decisions of his life. He met his now-wife, local attorney Jing, at the fencing club. Like many in college, however, Zhong was lost about what he wanted to do after



graduation. As often the case when he needed guidance, Zhong talked to his father. His dad was a prosecutor in China, but due to his unfamiliarity with English and the lack of a local law school – William S. Boyd School Law had not yet opened when they arrived in America – he could not continue his career. His dad suggested he pursue a legal education because it would not only teach him the law, but more importantly, how to be thoughtful, analytical, and empathetic to others – simply put, how to be a better person.

Zhong attended law school at UC Berkeley, but knew he was coming back to Las Vegas upon graduation. In fact, while in law school, he only applied for jobs and externships in Las Vegas. He spent his 2L summer as a summer associate at Lewis Roca’s office in Las Vegas. The summer went so well that, upon graduation, Zhong joined Lewis Roca and has been there ever since.

“Meng embodies the perfect balance of legal prowess and unwavering integrity,” colleague Chris Jorgensen said. “He vigorously represents his clients while maintaining a demeanor of approachable professionalism. I have worked with Meng for over 20 years, and he has never disappointed in his dedication to achieving the best outcomes for our clients.”

While Zhong’s primary practice is intellectual property litigation, he is most proud of his pro bono work representing children as part of Legal Aid Center’s Children’s Attorney Project (CAP). On average, he has four CAP cases at any given time. He also spends considerable time doing pro bono recruitment at Lewis Roca, knocking on the doors of other attorneys in his office to discuss accepting a pro bono case. The pitch is simple: there’s an opportunity to help a child who could benefit from our advocacy, and if the attorney is not familiar with CAP cases, he will co-counsel the case with them to teach them the ropes. Not surprisingly, their answer is usually, “yes.”

“The decision to stay at Lewis Roca was easy,” Zhong said. “Among other reasons, Lewis Roca

institutionalized pro bono service. It is part of who we are, and what we want to be as a firm. The commitment is from the top-down.”

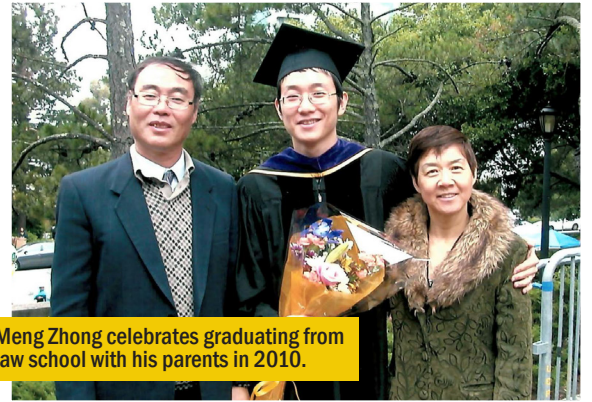
His deeply ingrained commitment and dedication to volunteerism has not gone unnoticed. In 2019, Lewis Roca recognized Zhong with the firm’s John P. Frank Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year award, while the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada recognized him with the Myrna Williams Children’s Pro Bono Award. Four years later, in 2023, for dedicating more than 350 hours of work to pro bono cases that year and Zhong’s prior contributions, the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada awarded him with their highest individual honor—the 2023 Pro Bono Attorney of the Year.

One wonders where he finds the time. Zhong is a busy partner with Lewis Roca focusing on complex intellectual property litigation.

“We find time for what’s important,” he said.

To Zhong, giving back is one of his priorities because he considers himself an extraordinarily lucky person—he was born into a family that raised him with love and care, he grew up in a town that gave him a joyful childhood and a stellar education, and he works at a firm that echoes his commitment to pro bono. Giving back is his way of sharing his luck with the community that raised him and that continues to provide a home for him and his family.

Zhong hopes he can inspire others to do the same and with everyone’s help, we can plant the seeds that will shade our community for generations to come.



Meng Zhong celebrates graduating from law school with his parents in 2010.



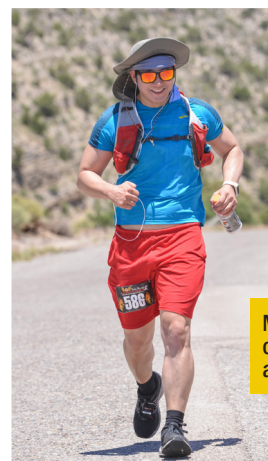
Meng Zhong receives the Myrna Williams Children’s Pro Bono Award from Nevada Supreme Court Justice Michael Douglas.



Meng Zhong attends the Renaissance Festival in Las Vegas with his family.



Meng Zhong was born in China before immigrating to the U.S. when he was 8 years old.



Meng Zhong competes in a marathon.