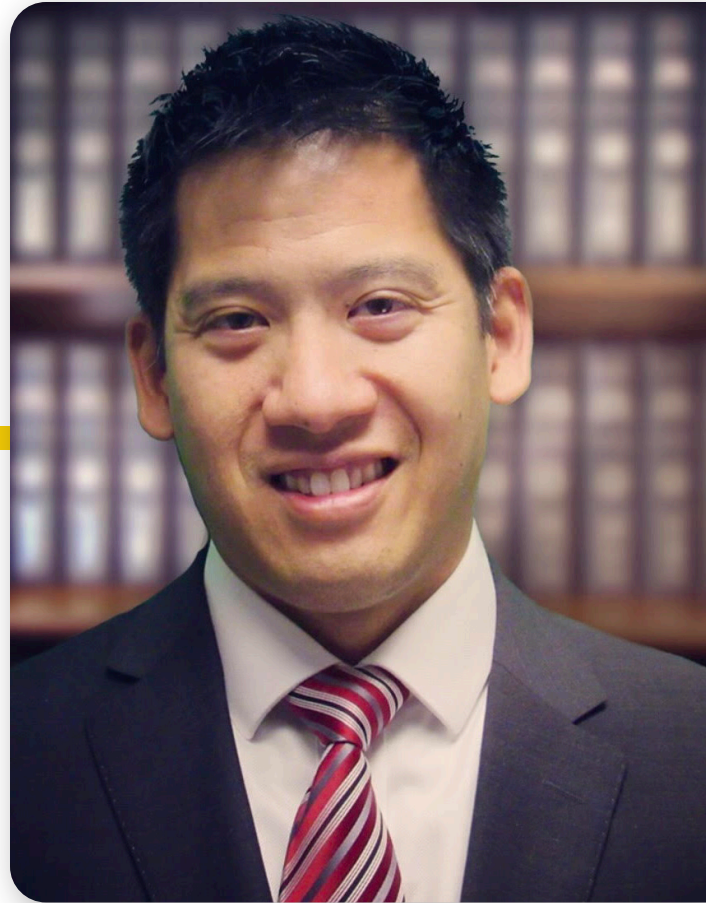


# Meet Alexander Chen:

## Mock Trial Leads First-Generation American to District Attorney's Office

BY MARY BACON, ESQ.,  
AND RYAN GORMLEY, ESQ.

**After three years of law school at The Ohio State University, Alex Chen's graduating class named him the friendliest student, and after speaking with him for a couple of minutes, it is easy to see why. His quick smile and humble demeanor instantly make you feel at ease.**



“Alex has high emotional intelligence. He has the kindness that most people wish to achieve. There is no one more thoughtful than Alex,” said Shanon Clowers, a fellow chief deputy district attorney.

Chen is a first-generation American. He was born in Philadelphia after his parents immigrated to the U.S. from Taiwan. As immigrant parents, they hoped their children would take advantage of all the opportunities the U.S. had to offer. While their children were young, they encouraged seizing opportunities by doing well in school and playing the piano. Chen, the youngest of their three children, happily indulged both goals.

In third grade, Chen's parents moved to Ohio for a job opportunity. While Chen enjoyed school, piano, and trying sports, no sport or activity felt like it really clicked for him.

In high school, that changed. Chen was drawn to mock trial. He enjoyed its strategy, critical thinking, and advocacy. It was not long before the hundreds of hours he devoted to mock trial was acknowledged with statewide recognition. After only two years in mock trial, he won a state championship.

After his experience with mock trial, Chen started to consider law school. Surprisingly, his next task was to get his parents on board with the idea. His parents had previously had several poor experiences with lawyers, so they were not keen on the idea of law school. Luckily, Chen was able to use the strategy and persuasive skills he honed in mock trial to convince them he would be a different kind of lawyer.

After graduating from high school, Chen moved to North Carolina to attend Wake Forest University. While there, he worked as a resident assistant to help pay for room and board. Since Wake Forest did not have a mock trial team, he found other ways to be involved in campus life while keeping his eye on law school. One of the items on his checklist for a well-rounded college experience was seeing the world.

As a political science major, Chen decided to study abroad in China. After acting as a research assistant to a Wake Forest professor, he was also invited to work on human rights projects in Chile for a summer. As an added benefit to seeing the world, Chen is now conversational in Mandarin and Spanish.

In college, if Chen was not traveling, he could usually be found playing basketball against the Wake Forest women's basketball team as part of their practice squad. After college, and a summer working the 4 a.m. until 1 p.m. shift at a McDonald's outside of Cincinnati, he was on his way to Ohio State for law school.

Not surprisingly, Chen gravitated to moot court. More surprisingly, he gravitated toward criminal law and planned his summers and internships around it. He worked at the Maricopa County District Attorney's office, the federal public defender's office in Columbus, and the Columbus City Attorney's Office. After law school, he applied to jobs all over the U.S. He did not know where he would be, but he knew what he would be – a district attorney. He wanted to work for the people. In 2007, never having been to Las Vegas, he accepted a job at the Clark County District Attorney's office. He has been there ever since.

In his more than 15 years at the district attorney's office, Chen has become a jack-of-all-trades. He started in the Appellate Division as a law clerk and was promoted to the general litigation teams as a deputy, the Domestic Violence Unit, and the Special Victim's Unit. He has tried many prominent cases to verdict, including prosecuting a doctor who drugged his patients and a case where a man had murdered his ex-girlfriend. Having worked with the families in those cases, he still maintains a relationship with them.

"When people are interacting with the DA's office, they are usually often going through one of the worst times of their lives and are asked to interact with a system they are unfamiliar with," Chen said. "It can be overwhelming. Being able to help people navigate the system and support people in a time of crisis has always been the most impactful part of my work."

In addition to his work at the district attorney's office, Chen has lectured about prosecutorial issues before the Nevada Council for Prosecuting Attorneys, and he has served on multiple multi-agency committees dedicated to improving the administration of justice. Previously, he was a member of the Commission for Statewide Rules of Criminal Procedure, the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council Subcommittee on Probation Process, and he currently serves on the Commission on Nevada Rules of Appellate Procedure. He also served as a member of the City of Henderson's Parks and Recreation Board.

After racking up more than 35 jury trials, Chen was promoted to team chief of the General Litigation Track, then team chief of the Criminal Appellate Division. He is now the appellate chief over the Post-Conviction unit, which coincidentally is where he started as a law clerk. Although the majority of his job focuses on appellate strategy, his favorite part of the job is training law clerks and new deputies. He also enjoys seeking clarity from the appellate courts so that the parties involved with litigation are aware of the parameters.

Since moving to Las Vegas, Chen has been committed to making it his home and is an active part of the community. He is involved in Candlelighters-Childhood Cancer Foundation, the Just One Project, and co-founded and runs a night golf fundraiser for Families for the Effective Treatment of Autism. He is also a member of the Las Vegas Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Las Vegas Class of 2019. Given the impact his high school mock trial team had on his life, he coached Clark High School's mock trial team for years.

Most recently, Chen was appointed to a three-year term to the State of Nevada Athletic Commission. The commission regulates all contests and exhibitions of unarmed combat, including licensure and supervision of promoters, boxers, mixed martial artists, kickboxers, and others.

When Chen is not at work or in the community, he loves to golf and ski.



A young Alex Chen poses with his family Alex Chen (from left), Phil Chen (brother), Ker Chen (dad), Li Chen (mom), and Michelle Chen-Lee (sister).

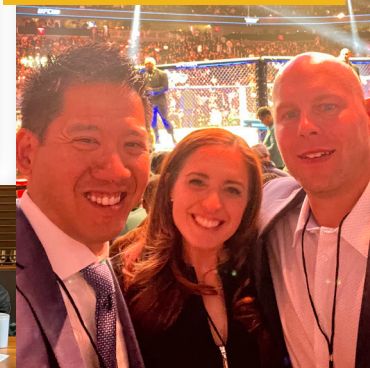


Shanon Clowers, Tierra Jones, and Alex Chen show off a signed Magic Johnson jersey.



Christian Morris and Alex Chen prepare for a run.

Alex Chen, Felicia Lindquist, and Tyler Crawford attend a UFC fight



Alex Chen enjoys sushi with his Leadership Las Vegas friends, Jason Mattson, Connie Yeh, and Colleen Birch.



Alex Chen takes a photo with Vegas Golden Knights mascot, Chance, at the Candlelighters Super Hero 5K.