

JIN SOOK LEE (1966-2020)

Jin Sook Lee served as the second Executive Director of APALA from 1999 to 2003. In this role, Jin Sook was crucial in building relations between the labor movement and the Asian American community. She continued the work to recruit and train new Asian American leaders within the labor movement, and strengthened political mobilization within the Asian community. She led APALA's effort to combat racism and discrimination against Muslims, Sikhs and other communities of color in the wake of the September 11, 2001 attacks.

Jin Sook was born in Korea, and moved to Canada at the age of 7 with her family. She went to college in Toronto before moving to the U.S.

Jin Sook was a leader and activist within the Korean American community. She was a member of Young Koreans United (YKU), a grassroots activist organization and the Program Director at Korean Information and Resource Center (KIRC). She helped to link the struggles for human rights and democracy in Korea to the struggles for social justice within the Korean American community.

After serving at APALA, Jin Sook moved to Korea to work with the Korean Federation of Construction Industries Trade Union (KFCITU) and served as the International Director from 2006 to 2009. KFCITU was affiliated with Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU), the confederation that led powerful worker mobilizations, including massive strikes throughout the country. She continued her partnership with APALA, and helped to establish an exchange program between KCTU and APALA organizers.

Jin Sook subsequently served in Geneva as the Global Campaigns Director at Building and Wood Workers International (BWI). Under her leadership, BWI launched successful global campaigns impacting migrant workers' rights, gender equality and trade union rights. She was also responsible for shaping BWI's campaign to safeguard basic worker rights and compliance leading up to and at mega-sporting events such as the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

A pioneering champion of international worker rights, Jin Sook passed away in 2020 at the age of 53 surrounded by her loving family.