

Who is Phu Nguyen?

With roots deep in Orange County, Phu Nguyen came from humble beginnings, but has established himself as a successful and motivated businessman and community leader.

When Phu's family first arrived in Orange County, California in 1982, they had exactly \$2. Phu's parents worked tirelessly and were able to provide Phu and his sisters with the opportunity to attend local Catholic schools. An alumnus of Mater Dei High School, Phu exhibited leadership and initiative as president of his class, member of the football team, and represented the school at statewide events, such as the American Legion's Golden Boy's State. Upon graduation, Phu was recognized as the Mater Dei's "Young Man of the Year."

Phu went on to earn a bachelor's degree in political science at the California State University, Fullerton. He was then awarded a Gandhi Fellowship in the Master's program in Peace and Justice at the University of San Diego, where he graduated from this interdisciplinary program in International Relations, Conflict Resolution and Ethics.

As a young adult, Phu served as president of the [Union of Vietnamese Student Associations of Southern California \(UVSA\)](#), an umbrella organization for students from local high schools, colleges and universities. Phu also chaired the Vietnamese American community's annual Tet Festival hosted by UVSA. Under Phu's leadership as president and as chair, this annual 3-day event grew dramatically to become the most prominent Vietnamese New Year's celebration in the United States, with annual revenues going from \$30,000 prior to his tenure to net incomes of nearly \$300,000 a year during his tenure. Phu was instrumental in establishing a grant program, wherein, proceeds from the event are invested back into the community through grants to nonprofit and faith-based organizations in Orange County. In this decade alone, proceeds from the Tet Festival have contributed almost 1 million dollars back to the community.

Phu continues his local community involvement as a Commissioner on the Orange County District Attorney's Vietnamese Advisory Commission and as a member of the Board of Directors for the Orange County Asian Pacific Islander Community Alliance (OCAPICA), a community-based organization that receives grants from government and foundations for health care research and services that target the unique needs of the Orange County Asian community.

Phu also commits time and effort to philanthropic work overseas. He is an active member of the Franciscan Charities, a nonprofit group which has raised about 10 million dollars in the last 5 years to provide education, health care, and skills training to poor and underprivileged youth and seniors in Vietnam. In 2007, Phu founded the People Empowerment through Micro-Credit and Training (PEMCT), an small NGO that provides small loans to women living in poverty in Vietnam with the purpose of encouraging these women to establish their own small businesses and lift themselves out of poverty, rather than relying on charity or government assistance.

Professionally, Phu is the vice president of Saigon Central Post, Inc. (SCPI), a remittance company serving the Vietnamese American Community. From one tiny storefront on Bolsa Avenue in the City of Westminster, SCPI has grown to over 30 branches, with over 100 agents, in 15 states. Every year, tens of thousands of customers trust his business to transfer money from the United States to their loved ones in Vietnam. Phu is also the CEO of My Vietnam Inc., a company that provides cargo and telecommunications services to Vietnam.

Phu is married to Yen Khanh, a math professor at Santa Ana College. They have an active two-year-old named Christopher and are expecting another child in the spring of 2010. Phu's family is a member of Holy Spirit Catholic Church in Fountain Valley.

Phu's outlook on life has been shaped by his family, faith, and the freedoms and opportunities his family embraced when they immigrated to the United States and settled in Orange County. Like so many other Vietnamese immigrants, Phu's family fled Vietnam on a small boat in the early 80's to pursue hope and freedom. Stranded at sea for nearly a month before being rescued by a Hong Kong fishing vessel, nine children died of starvation. By the grace of God and the sacrifices made by his parents, Phu survived the long journey. This experience continues to motivate and inspire Phu to live life to the fullest, never taking a day, or even a breath, for granted.

Phu's philosophy in life can be summed up in a quote by John Wesley: *"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."*