

**Speech by Connie Tran, 2007 APIASF Scholarship Recipient
@ May 15, 2007 Press Event in Washington, DC**

Ladies and gentlemen...

It is with great honor that I stand before you this evening. To begin, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Bindi, Janice, and Genny for their knowledgeable assistance in making this trip possible and so well organized.

As my journey through high school is coming to an end, I have come to realize that each person in this world has a distinct passion that they are striving to perfect. For one person, they might have been blessed with an artistic hand, and for another, an athletic ability that will score them a spot on a renowned professional sports team. For me, however, it is neither one of these, but rather, it is through my faith in education that I hope to positively impact our society one day.

After I complete my four years at Louisiana State University, I hope to gain acceptance to a prestigious medical school to further fulfill my life-long dreams of becoming a pediatrician and working with kids.

I would also like to take this time to address a very personal obstacle that has, perhaps, made one of the biggest impacts on my life thus far.

Nearly a year and a half ago, as Hurricane Katrina tore through the Gulf of Mexico, she was, more importantly, tearing through my stability, my community, and the place I call "home." However, with the help of selfless volunteers and donors worldwide, I am proud to announce that Mississippi has once again flourished. Never will I forget Katrina's infamous legacy, but I will also never forget America's immediate response to our most somber days, which also serves as my primary source of motivation to succeed and give back to this noble country. Therefore, on behalf of my wonderful state, I would like to thank those whom sent gifts of inspiration, donated money or your valuable time in the recovery efforts; you guys perfectly exemplify America's integrity through your unselfish willingness to help others.

Now how is it possible to forget to thank the organization itself? To the founders, contributors, and staff of APIASF—from the bottom of my heart, Thank You for sparking another milestone in my life by bringing a Southern Belle to the heart of this country. Thank you for making me realize that my dreams are not too far-fetched—that anything is indeed possible. And finally, thank you for bringing me one step closer to the American Dream that my mom has sacrificed so much for in order to see her children reach. When we found out that I am a receiver of this scholarship, just like any good mother, I knew my mom felt like all her hard work is finally paying off. And as her daughter, what more could I ask for?

Have a great evening everyone.