

Awardees

Anh Joseph Cao

ACHIEVEMENT IN POLITICS



Anh "Joseph" Cao was born in Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City), Vietnam. His father, an officer with the South Vietnamese Army, was imprisoned by the Communists.

At the age of eight, Joseph escaped to America with two of his siblings. He learned English, thrived in school, and earned a physics degree from Baylor University before he began studying for the priesthood.

Joseph first arrived in New Orleans in 1992. He left to earn a Master's degree in philosophy from New York's Fordham University, returning to Loyola University to teach philosophy and ethics. As he prepared for priesthood, his faith was strong.

However, his confidence in government's ability to care for those in need weakened by the day. Before long, Joseph ended his quest for priesthood in a personal crusade for social justice.

In Washington, DC, he became an advocate for refugees, future Americans who embody a can-do spirit and strong work ethic. In pursuit of justice for all, he attained a law degree from Loyola Law School. He became the in-house legal counsel for Boat People S.O.S, Inc., an organization helping poor Vietnamese and other minorities. In 2002, he was chosen by Archbishop Alfred Hughes to become a member of the National Advisory Council of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, addressing women's rights in the Catholic Church, social justice, child abuse, and the Catholic response to Hurricane Katrina.

Joseph Cao lost both his home and law office

to Katrina. With his wife and two daughters, he moved temporarily to Westwego and began rebuilding. Like so many others, Joseph battled insurance companies and government bureaucracy to restore his home and business.

He helped residents of New Orleans East stop plans for a landfill that would have devastated their community. He helped lead the fight to get electricity and telecommunications restored for returning residents.

In 2007, Governor Jindal appointed Joseph Cao to help ensure fair voting as a member of the Board of Elections for Orleans Parish. He was also elected to lead the Louisiana Republican Party both on the parish and state levels. And earlier this year Joseph Cao was elected delegate to the Republican National Convention.

Joseph Cao has lived through war and disaster, never surrendering his determination to make things better. A teacher of ethics, held in the highest regard for his dogged pursuit of truth and justice, he now serves as Louisiana's 2nd Congressional District Representative.