



**DD Mark Quinn, Judy Ishizu, Michael Chong and RA Elizabeth Echols:** 40-year awards for Ishizu and Chong

Michael Chong's first job with the federal government was in 1961 when he held a summer civilian position with the U.S. Army at Fort Shafter in Hawaii. After briefly attending college in Hawaii and later at Modesto Junior College in California, Chong returned home and got a job with Military Sea Transportation Service where he worked as a shipping clerk. He returned to the Army as a civilian worker in 1964 at Schofield Barracks, then joined the Hawaiian National Guard. When his unit was activated, Chong continued his posting at Schofield Barracks until he was sent to Vietnam for nine months.

With an early-out granted by the Army, Chong headed to San Francisco and initially took business classes at Heald College before transferring to Golden Gate University where he graduated with a B.S. degree in business management. He held a number of jobs at the Oakland Army Base and the VA in San Francisco before coming to SBA in the early 1980s.

"I've worked at a number of agencies but SBA is the best," says Chong, 68, who plans to participate in three half-marathons in 2011. "We help people everyday and there's a lot of satisfaction in that."

## When Three Equals 105

### Staffers recognized for years of service

Three district office staff members were recognized January 4 for their length of service with the federal government. The recipients of framed longevity certificates included Secretary Judy Ishizu (40-years), Information Assistant Michael Chong (40) and BDS Bennie Gutierrez (25).

Judy Ishizu still remembers the exact date when she started her SBA job: June 26, 1968. Just weeks before, the Merritt College student had taken a typing test at the Oakland Post Office. The results were shared with local federal agencies and Ishizu received interview calls from SBA and the Oakland Army Base. Though born in Berkeley and raised in Oakland, Ishizu headed for the job offer in San Francisco and has remained with SBA ever since.

Ishizu started her career with SBA at a time when it wasn't even a district office. There was a regional director and more than 50 employees. SBA was still involved with direct lending. There were no guaranteed loans with commercial lenders. There wasn't an 8(a) program. There weren't Small Business Development Centers or Women's Business Centers. There was SCORE, though, and ACE (Active Corps Executives). SCORE was strictly retired volunteers while ACE used working executives to help entrepreneurs.

Squeezed in between Ishizu's more than 40 years of SBA service is one marriage (1975), two children and six district directors.

"I've seen a lot of people come and go," says Ishizu, who started out as a clerk-stenographer, "but SBA and the staff have always been my second family."

A 1981 political science graduate of San Jose State University, Benny Gutierrez was attending the New College of California law school when he learned of an employment program that assisted young Hispanics like himself with job opportunities with the federal government.



**Benny Gutierrez:** 25-year recognition

Gutierrez took a position with the U.S. Customs Service in 1982, then later transferred to SBA on a year-to-year contract working with loan liquidations. He accepted a job with the FDIC as a loan officer in the late 1980s, then returned to SBA in 1993 as a permanent employee, this time working as a loan specialist involved with portfolio management. For the past six years, he's been involved with the 8(a) program and Hispanic outreach.

With a son in college in New York and a daughter in graduate school in Cleveland, Gutierrez has no plans of retiring any time soon.

"Actually," he says, "I love my work with SBA."