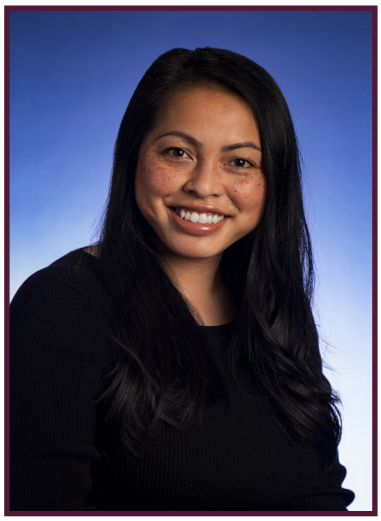
Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month

May 1 - 31, 2021

The Civil Rights Division is recognizing Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month



Employee Spotlight

Veda Nguyen

Civil Engineering Manager 2, Multimodal Planning Office within the Multimodal Division.

She spends most of her time outside of work with her husband, Shawn, and their two boys, Bodhi and Zen. They enjoy walks in the park and hitting the local playgrounds. When she has time for herself, she enjoys dance and yoga.

Joined TDOT Family January 2016

Tell us about a moment in Asian American History that influenced or shaped your career/life?
Shortly after the Vietnam War, a Communist government came to power in Laos. As a result, during the late 1970's and early 1980's many Lao people, including my parents and my two older sisters, immigrated to the United States as refugees. Because of their courage and sacrifice, I was privileged to be born in the United States which obviously has a huge impact on who I am today.

Who within or outside TDOT has been influential in your career? Are they a mentor today?
I have been fortunate to have worked with many outstanding engineers with both great technical skill and character. Don Yarbrough (outside TDOT) and Brad Freeze (within TDOT) have been the most influential in my career. Both lead with respect and kindness and both work as hard if not harder than any one else on their teams.

Which of the TDOT Values (Stewardship, Integrity, Safety, Consistency, Development, Innovation, Collaboration & Family) that are listed within the Strategic Plan, resonates with you and with diversity? State why?
Definitely Collaboration & Family because both inside and outside TDOT, we need each other, we need to work together to make the world a better place for everyone. We may be different and have different roles, but everyone has purpose and is worthy of respect and kindness.

Why is it important to recognize Asian American Pacific Islander Heritage Month, especially in 2021?
I think it is important to recognize and celebrate who we are authentically. Like many other people of color, I have always felt like I have had to conform to be successful, to be liked, and to even just not be attacked. But it is nice to just be me and to celebrate my history, my culture, and my family as we are authentically.

TN TDOT Department of Transportation