

**VIVIAN FEI TSEN**  
**LOEB FELLOW 1988**  
**URBANIST**  
**SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA**

Like many Loeb applicants, Fei Tsen had a demanding professional and personal life and looked to the possibility of the fellowship as a key time for reflection in a rich learning environment while freed of many day to day responsibilities. She had a real estate and development consulting firm, was active in local politics, teaching at UC Berkeley, and had started a family. Separating from work was an issue. "I had associates willing to take up the slack but it was hard to stay in touch back then with no email or cell phones," she says, "it meant a lot of late night faxes and phone calls due to the time difference, but you just figure out how to make it work."

Fei thrived in the freedom provided by the Loeb Fellowship to pursue any and all interests during the year. She sat in on a range of classes and enjoyed sampling them and being encouraged and excited by everything happening at Harvard. "Selfish in a good way" is how she describes the ability to pursue your own studies without regard to course requirements, grades or assignments. "The Loeb Fellowship gives you this privileged time of life and plenty of room and independence," she says, "you can use the experience as you see best."

Fei returned to the west coast after the fellowship and stepped up her civic and professional responsibilities. Among other projects, she served as Commissioner and Vice-President of the San Francisco

Redevelopment Agency and Director of Real Estate for the Port of San Francisco. In 2006 she was recognized by the Chinatown Community Development Center of San Francisco for lifelong service to the Chinatown Community.

Lasting friendships are one of the most important benefits of the Loeb Fellowship for Fei. She stays involved with the fellowship, recently serving as President of the Loeb Fellowship Alumni Association. And she points out that the fellowship is a confidence builder and a validation of one's work, and is very valuable for someone in mid-career.

Now the Managing Director of several real estate investment portfolios, and a board member of the Bay Area Greenbelt Alliance, Fei is still looking for future challenges....a lasting legacy of the Loeb Fellowship. She says, "Even today I'm always interested in the next thing in store for me."



*"I moved from the west coast with my four year old daughter during the fellowship and you see a city a different way with a child. I brought that experience back with me and it helped me with the founding of Zeum at Yerba Buena Gardens, a multimedia arts and technology center for children."*