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Sept. 25-Oct. 1, 2026

PACIFIC CITIZEN

CELEBRATING 97 Years



Honoree Rachel Maddow with emcees David Ono and Tamlyn Tomita at San Diego JACL's Never Forget Gala.

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

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JACL Applauds Freeze for ICE Detention Facility Construction

Citing environmental concerns, federal judge's preliminary injunction suspends plans for a center near Gilroy, Calif.

By P.C. Staff

The Japanese American Citizens League, in an announcement on Sept. 17, said it "applauds" the Sept. 11 decision by U.S. District Court Judge Eumi K. Lee to pause construction on an Immigration and Customs Enforcement detention center proposed to be built in Santa Clara County, near Gilroy, Calif.

In her ruling, Lee wrote that the federal agency failed to study potential environmental pollution factors that the center would cause if constructed under the National Environmental Policy Act.

The state's attorney general, Rob Bonta, and the county filed a lawsuit over the summer to halt construction, claiming the project violated several state and federal statutes, including the National Environmental Policy Act.

"We're hopeful the court's ruling sends a clear message that this is the wrong process and the wrong place for this facility," Santa Clara County Counsel Tony LoPresti said in a statement. "The federal government's legal violations concealed fundamental flaws with this project — you can't plot a facility like this onto sensitive land that lacks basic infrastructure to support the detention of individuals."

In its statement, JACL commended the county and the state of California for bringing the case, adding: "Detaining people without due process strips individuals both of rights enshrined in the Constitution and of basic human dignity. Japanese Americans were incarcerated by our own government without recourse, and we will continue to demand that no one else suffer that injustice."

A rally was held in front of the historic Issei Memorial Building in San Jose's Japantown on July 29 in opposition to plans for building the detention center in Gilroy. Assembled in unity were members from the Neighbors Not Enemies Coalition of San Jose Japantown, which consists of 15 member organizations, including San Jose Nikkei Resisters, Nihonmachi Outreach Committee, JACL Sequoia chapter, JACL San Jose chapter, JACL Silicon Valley chapter and the Japanese American Museum of San Jose.

The July 29 Japantown rally was held two days after the coalition submitted an amicus brief in support for the lawsuit to block the building of the planned ICE detention center.

"We and the 15 member organizations of the Neighbors Not Enemies Coalition of San Jose Japantown oppose any kind of processing or detention facility by ICE! Today, it's too late to just say Never Again. The thing we feared is happening again NOW. Today, we say Never Again means Show UP! Speak Out! Stand up Together!" said San Jose Nikkei Reisters' Susan Hayase in a statement to JACL.

To read the JACL's entire statement, visit tinyurl.com/2wtuytt7. To read more about the July 29 coalition rally in San Jose Japantown, visit https://tinyurl.com/22zhvn8d.

JACL Urges Opposition to Alter '30 Census

Says proposal would cut representation, erase civil rights data.

By P.C. Staff

The Japanese American Citizens League issued a statement on Sept. 10 in opposition to a proposal being pushed by the White House for 2030 that would see the Census Bureau modify the types of demographic data, including information about race and ethnicity it has collected every 10 years since 1790, and seek to count only U.S. citizens and those with permanent resident status.

Under the status quo, the Census Bureau attempts to count everyone living in the U.S. According to JACL, however, this proposal would cause harm to civil rights advances by leaving potentially millions uncounted. Among its many functions, the constitutionally mandated decennial headcount affects the number of members each state gets in the House of Representatives, how federal funds are disbursed and more. The proposal would exclude people whose legal immigration status is pending, including refugees and asylum seekers, as well as unauthorized migrants and people with Temporary Protected Status.

Regarding how the proposal would end collecting data on race and ethnicity, as well as the more recently added questions on sexual orientation, JACL said such a ban is " … antithetical to the nature of the Census. The data the Census records is meant to accurately represent our nation *(https://tinyurl.com/3r2ca2ht)* and is the basis for the Voting Rights Act, political representation, federal funding formulas and other policies meant to support individual states, counties and municipalities."

The nation's oldest Asian American civil rights organization also invoked the 14th Amendment to the Constitution: "Section Two of the Fourteenth Amendment states clearly that '*Representatives shall be apportioned among the several States according to their respective numbers, counting the whole number of persons in each State*…' The Census Bureau justifies the exclusion in the proposed rule by pointing to these residents' 'lack of a sufficient tie and allegiance to the United States.' While the drafters of the Fourteenth Amendment made an exclusion for 'Indians not taxed,' there was never

» See CENSUS on page 9

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Harry Honda dedicated 61 years to promoting the ***Pacific Citizen***, providing thoughtful coverage of JACL chapter activities, national news and events and issues of general interest to Japanese American and Asian American readers. The fund was launched with a generous donation from author and activist Grant Ujifusa, whose intent was to support the ***Pacific Citizen*** in hiring outside contributing writers. This support helps expand and strengthen coverage from across the country for our national readership.



Editor Emeritus Harry Honda as drawn by Pete Hironaka

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DIAMOND PIN FOR ODA

JACL recognizes the history-making national president for his meritorious service.

By Allison Haramoto, P.C. Executive Editor

At its San Francisco headquarters building, newly elected JACL National President Sheldon Arakaki recently bestowed the organization's Diamond Pin to Larry Oda, the only president to serve a total of eight years in office.

The Diamond Pin is "presented to individuals and organizations in recognition of special meritorious service to National JACL and/or outstanding contributions to the welfare of persons of Japanese ancestry in the United States." It is given with "approval by the National Awards and Recognitions Committee with approval of the National Board" and is given to the JACL national president "upon completion of term of office."

Oda's second-consecutive biennial term ended Aug. 1 at the JACL's National Convention in Las Vegas upon the election of Arakaki. Oda is the first JACL member to hold the distinction of having served eight years at the helm of the 97-year-old civil rights organization.

"JACL is 97 years old, and Larry Oda was president for eight of those years," said Arakaki to the *Pacific Citizen*. "These were not the redress years but just as impactful. His two administrations saw the hiring of two executive directors, guided the organization through the financial fallout of the housing bubble bust, saw the executive director sited in Washington, D.C., and begin the process of building a post-Covid foundation for JACL's 100th anniversary."

Oda first served as president from 2006-08 and again from 2008-10. In 2022, he ran from the floor of the organization's National Convention in a year that saw no candidates running for the position. Despite challenges then, Oda ran again in 2024.



Larry Oda *(right)* receives his Diamond Pin from newly elected JACL National President Sheldon Arakaki at the organization's San Francisco headquarters building.

PHOTO: SUSAN YOKOYAMA

"JACL has been an important part of my life for many years," Oda told the *Pacific Citizen*. "Along the way, I have had the privilege of meeting, working with and learning from extraordinary people across the country. I do not view my service as national president as a personal achievement but as a reflection of the collective efforts of the national board members who served alongside me, as well as the many JACL members, leaders, staff and friends who shared in this work. . . . JACL's strength comes from the people who live its mission and carry out its work every day. . . . Every leadership position brings challenges, but it also brings moments that remind you why the work matters and why the organization is worth preserving."

As for words of wisdom for Arakaki as he leads JACL toward its centennial, Oda offered, "My advice to Sheldon is simple: Stay focused on the mission and make the presidency your own. Every national president brings a different set of experiences, strengths and perspectives to the role. He does not need to replicate what previous presidents have done. Instead, he should build on the foundation that exists today, look toward the future and lead JACL in the direction he believes is best for the organization. . . . Our responsibility is to leave JACL stronger than we found it and prepare it for those who will lead it in the years ahead."

As for Oda? His involvement with JACL has not ended, rather it has evolved into a new chapter.

"I plan to remain engaged and contribute wherever I can be helpful," said Oda. ". . . I have often described JACL as the keeper of the Japanese American legacy flame. The person carrying that flame may change, but the responsibility does not. I look forward to carrying it in a different role and helping the next generation keep it burning for years to come." ■



LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

HAVE A BUNCH OF DAUGHTERS

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

The government knows it can't pay for long-term care for the baby boomer generation. So, the government is making it harder to qualify for Medi-Cal. One day soon, the government is going to shift the financial burden of LTC off the public sector and onto the private sector. "How?" you might ask. By forcing workers to buy long-term care insurance, i.e., privatizing long-term care.

In other words, workers will get their paycheck and look at the deductions. They'll see the standard deductions, e.g., federal and state taxes, Social Security, Medicare. But soon, they'll see another deduction for long-term care insurance. It's already happening in Washington. California and several other states are already writing laws to do the same. But the problem is that the state-sponsored long-term care insurance isn't good.

So, if there's no more Medi-Cal (Medicaid in other states), and you don't want to end up in a state-run facility, what should you do? I asked the very same question to Tony Chicotel, senior staff attorney for California Advocates for Nursing Home Reform. Chicotel is at the top of the long-term care community, often asked by legislators for his comments and recommendations on the law. Here's what he said: "HAVE A BUNCH OF DAUGHTERS."

Why daughters? Parents are better off having daughters if they want to be cared for in their old age, suggests a new study by the American Sociological Assn. *(www.asanet.org)*. "Daughters provide as much elderly parent care as they can. Sons do as little as possible," says study author Angelina Grigoryeva, PhD. "This suggests that sons pass on caregiving responsibilities to their sisters." Sons tend to reduce theirs when sisters are present.

Historically, caregiving has been socially expected of women. In the U.S., a 2020 report presented by the National Alliance for Caregiving and the AARP Public Policy Institute shows that the majority of caregivers (61 percent) are still female. Daughters tend to provide more hours of care per week and are more likely to be the sole caregiver or the main provider in a caregiving team *(https://tinyurl.com/5ff6mtn4)*.

According to Psychology Today (March 18, 2025), caregiving remains gendered, with women continuing to take on most unpaid caregiving. In some families, caregiving is shared among siblings, with one child taking the lead but others contributing. Research shows that daughters are more often the primary caregivers for aging parents than sons, though the picture is more complex than a simple "daughters always" rule.

Although caregiving can create stronger bonds within a family, it can also create stress and emotional fatigue. Forty-two percent of those surveyed described caregiving as stressful but manageable. Much of the stress comes from trying to balance multiple responsibilities, including work, personal needs and the needs of each aging parent. Balancing work, family life, self-care and caregiving is a challenge.

In addition to the time that adult daughters put into caring for their aging parents, this role has a significant impact on various aspects of everyday life, such as work. Six in 10 caregivers are employed at some point while providing care, and the majority of working caregivers report having to make workplace accommodations, such as cutting back their hours, turning down promotions and taking time off. Higher-hour caregivers (who are predominantly female) are most likely to report these kinds of negative impacts on their careers.

In many cases, something must give, and family caregivers often choose to put their professional aspirations on hold by quitting or retiring early. This decision can financially hamstring the entire family. In addition to the immediate reduction in household income, caregivers who stop working lose out on months or even years of earnings, benefits and work credits for retirement programs. Giving up a job has a lasting impact on one's current financial situation and plans for retirement and care.

When all siblings in any given family cannot contribute an equal amount to caregiving, some seek financial support to equalize contributions, i.e., money instead of time.

An article in ElderLawAnswers says that "32 percent of respondents earning $150,000 or more think that a sibling should contribute money if they can't contribute time" *(https://tinyurl.com/3ccwasxn)*. This may indicate a growing awareness that time, labor and emotional energy have value.

Now, if you are the primary caregiving child (son or daughter), here's my advice:

First, make sure your parent updates their Powers of Attorney, both for assets and for health care. Even if you got it from an attorney, banks are taking the position that the Patriot Act (Federal Law after 9-11) gives banks the discretion to not honor a state legal POA. Some banks won't honor POAs that are more than three to five years old. If you're not sure if the bank will honor them, take it to the bank and ask them. Also, make sure your aging parent gives you an "immediate" power and not a "springing" power.

Second, since mom and dad probably want to stay at home and "age in place," see if you can get any kind of public financial assistance. In California, In-Home-Supportive-Services is the only public program that will pay for "at-home" care. If the government can keep seniors at home, it saves money by not paying for their care at a 24/7 nursing home. IHSS is run by the county and is available for low-income people only.

Third, in order to qualify for IHSS, you first have to get Medi-Cal (Medicaid in other states). In California, Medi-Cal is a "needs-based" program, i.e., you have to qualify. This is as opposed to Medicare, which is called an entitlement. As a U.S. citizen, you are entitled to get Medicare at age 65, even if you're a multimillionaire. Not so with Medi-Cal, i.e., there's an "Asset Test."

Fourth, make sure your parents' Living Trust is up to date. Many trusts that were created 20 years ago have handwritten cross-outs and changes that are not legally enforceable. Also, if parents own a home, make sure the home is still in the name of the trust. Occasionally, a homeowner will refinance, and the lender will take the home out of the trust but never put it back in. This is important for two reasons. One, to avoid the court process called Probate, a legal nightmare. Second, to avoid a State Recovery Claim.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.

APIAHIP SPOTLIGHT FOCUS: COLORADO

The biennial forum pays tribute to the state's deep history of Asian communities.

By Gil Asakawa, P.C. Contributor



History Colorado Center was the primary venue of the APIAHiP four-day forum.

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA



Bill Watanabe, founding executive director of the Little Tokyo Service Center, helped create the APIAHiP in 2007.



Joie Ha, executive director of CAPU, shows participants the "Big Dreams in Denver's Little Saigon" exhibit at History Colorado Center.

APIAHiP, the only national organization that focuses on preserving the histories of Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander communities, held its biennial forum, a four-day conference that paid tribute to the often-forgotten history of the Asian diaspora through the U.S. with the spotlight focused on Colorado, from Sept. 10-13.

The event was jam-packed with speakers, panels and presentations from morning to night, much of it held at History Colorado Center, a museum that is currently displaying an exhibit chronicling the history of Denver's New Saigon district and the region's Southeast Asian diaspora.

The museum in 2025 also hosted a groundbreaking exhibit that educated the public about the Chinatown that once thrived in the city's Lower Downtown neighborhood and the remnants of Chinese immigration in the mid-1800s. Both of those exhibits were curated by Colorado Asian Pacific United, the nonprofit organization who partnered with APIAHiP, whose full name is Asian & Pacific Islander Americans in Historic Preservation, to bring the forum to Denver.

The event kicked off on Sept. 10 with welcoming words by leaders of APIAHiP, History Colorado and CAPU. APIAHiP Board Chair Rosalind Sagara noted that "in my new role as board chair, I have been reflecting on APIAHIP's impact, our growth as an organization and where we're going. For me, APIAHiP has been like a life raft on my own path into heritage conservation." She embraced the more than 200 attendees as fellow travelers on the journey.

"Our theme this year is 'Emerging Historic Places, Centuries in the Making,' [and it] affirms that our histories are not new but are deep and rich," she said. "We are proud of our histories, our stories, our communities, and we are meeting the moment.

"This theme also speaks to the core of APIAHiP's mission," she continued. "We believe in protecting and investing in living communities, intangible heritage and the cultural touchstones that tell a fuller story of America. Preservation is not just about safeguarding buildings or architecture."

That theme has been at the heart of APIAHiP since its inception in 2007. The organization was the idea of Bill Watanabe, a familiar name to Los Angeles Japanese Americans, as he was the founding executive director in 1979 of the Little Tokyo Service Center, an organization that provides social welfare, community development and housing services, as well as focuses on cultural preservation. Watanabe attended a historic preservation conference in the early 2000s and was frustrated that Asian American history didn't seem important to the movement.

"At the time, the Chinese Historical Society, they were meeting already," Watanabe said at the Denver forum, which he attended as a founding board member. Hoping to engage other Asian American communities to protect their heritage, he attended the 2005 conference of the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"I looked around. I could count the number of Asians on one hand, and I thought, 'Where's all the Asians?' Yeah. It's like we didn't count. We weren't a part of it," said Watanabe.

So, he helped create APIAHiP in 2007. "I thought, 'Oh, maybe we need to start our own organization,'" he recalled.

The first forum was held in San Francisco in 2010. And compared to just a handful of Asians at the National Trust conference that inspired APIAHiP, there were about 100 attendees. This year, he said, 2,018 people registered for the forum.

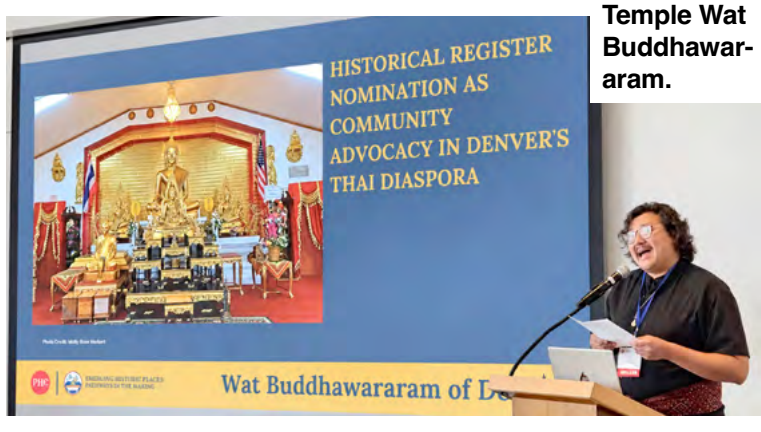
Programming included panel discussions about national topics such as the Asian and Pacific Islander Americans' Most Endangered Places (which included Paul Hiroshi Boyea of the Terminal Islanders Assn. and Barbara Takei of the Tule Lake Committee), challenges facing rural Asian American sites (which included JACLers Rob Buscher and Hanako Wakatsuki-Chong of the Japanese American Museum of Oregon) and a discussion of Lost Chinatowns.

There was also a panel featuring CAPU staff, "After the Buildings Are Gone: Preserving Denver's Chinatown Without Walls." And many of the other sessions turned the spotlight on Denver and Colorado AANHPI preservation efforts as well.

Among the topics: the history of Filipinos in the state; the timeline of Japanese immigration and the development of Denver's "Tiny Tokyo" Sakura Square (moderated by this writer); the rise of the Korean and Vietnamese communities; historic designation for the oldest consecrated Thai Buddhist temple in the U.S., Wat Buddhawararam; the arrival of the Hmong and Nepali populations; and the impact of the area's Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.



APIAHiP Executive Director Huy Pham offers opening remarks



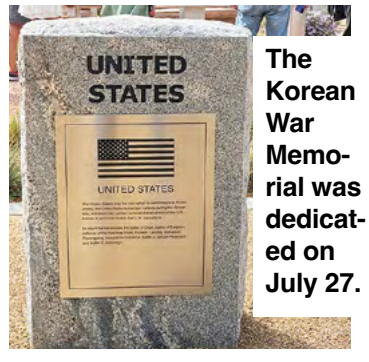
Prof. Ben Cefkin explains the history of the Thai Temple Wat Buddhawararam.

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Sept. 12 was set aside for two field trips, one that featured walking tours of downtown Denver's Chinatown and Sakura Square, then the Far East Center and Little Saigon Business District in west Denver, where the Southeast Asian community flourished. Then, it was on to Koreatown and the eastern suburb of Aurora, which included lunch at a Korean barbecue restaurant and a walking tour of a Koreatown mall, followed by a stop at the newly created Korean War Memorial, which was dedicated on July 27. The trip ended with a reception at the Aurora History Museum, where an exhibit about the history of Filipinos in the city is on display. Other attendees took a bus tour to southeast Colorado to learn about and explore Amache, Colorado's Japanese American concentration camp, which is now a national park historic site.



The Korean War Memorial was dedicated on July 27.

The final day began with a "Beautify Little Saigon" service project to pick up trash in the neighborhood, which was also attended by Denver Mayor Mike Johnston. The forum ended with closing comments at Denver's Botanic Gardens, which includes a large Japanese garden, a historic teahouse and the Bill Hosokawa Bonsai Pavilion, which pays tribute to the longtime *Denver Post* editor and *Pacific Citizen* columnist.

After four days of inspiring discussions and presentations, even cynical know-it-alls have to admit that they didn't know everything, and everyone learned a lot about the history and heritage of AANHPIs in Denver and across the country. ■



Denver Mayor Mike Johnston and City Council candidate Tran Nguyen-Wills *(right)* participate in the Little Saigon cleanup.

GET OUT THE VOTE!

JACL partners with APIAVote and Power the Polls to engage JACLers and help voter turnout.

By Matthew Marumoto, JACL Daniel K. Inouye Policy Fellow

Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander voters are the fastest-growing voter demographic in the U.S. *(see https://tinyurl.com/mszth8wb)*. However, AANHPI voters are the least likely to be contacted by anyone about voting.

According to AAPI Data *(see https://tinyurl.com/22ukz335)*, there are 16 million eligible AAPI voters in 2026, including 1.6 million newly eligible voters since 2022. The JACL wants to turn those numbers into real voter turnout.

This fall, JACL is partnering with APIAVote and Power the Polls to engage JACLers and help turn out voters for the midterm elections. With APIAVote, we are holding two JACL phone banking sessions on the evenings of Oct. 14 and Oct. 28.

Throughout September and October, JACL is also looking for volunteers to staff the APIAVote Multilingual Voter Hotline, where voters can find their polling place, get information about voter registration or report problems at the polls. Both phone banking and hotline shifts can be done entirely remotely and last about three hours, with training provided.

Along with its partners at Power the Polls, JACL is also recruiting members to serve as poll workers to fill staffing gaps in polling locations across the country. There is no better way to learn how elections are administered and see democracy in action than from right where it's happening. Most jurisdictions pay poll workers for training and work on Election Day.

Lastly, JACL is recruiting chapters to host voter registration drives at chapter events or in their local area. Third-party registration rules vary significantly by state, and JACL can provide information on how to set up a drive in your area.

The most important way to engage during the midterm election is to check your voter registration and make a plan to vote. Even if you're sure you are registered, inactivity, address changes, list maintenance and voter roll purges can quickly turn Election Day confidence into dread.

Voter registration deadlines vary by state, with many falling in early October. If you are not already registered, register today!

Make a plan for how you are going to vote. Know where your polling place is located. If you are voting by mail, know your return deadline and whether your state's deadline is by postmark or receipt, and ensure you mail your ballot or drop it off at a collection box by then.

Finally, remind your friends, family, fellow JACLers and neighbors to check their voter registration and plan how they will vote. A reminder from someone you know will always be the most effective way to get your community to the polls.

Election Day is Tuesday, Nov. 3, but the work of getting people to the polls starts now. Sign-ups for every opportunity mentioned above and voting resources can be found at *jacl.org/gotv*.

The Japanese American Citizens League is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) organization and does not endorse, support or oppose any candidate for public office or political party. All voter engagement activities are open to eligible voters.

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SAN DIEGO JACL GALA FETES 'BURN ORDER' TEAM

Rachel Maddow and Michael Yarvitz are honored, as are Teresa Stivers Liong and Wendy Gillespie.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

The award-winning "Rachel Maddow Presents: Burn Order" received yet another accolade for its trophy shelf on Sept. 12 when the San Diego chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League presented the MS NOW podcast's co-executive producers and writers Rachel Maddow and Michael Yarvitz with its 2026 Civil Rights Leadership Award.

The presentation was the highlight of an evening filled with highlights and was the climax of the chapter's Never Forget Gala that took place inside the San Diego Mission Valley Marriott, preceded by a balmy outdoor reception that epitomized Southern California's classic climate.

Yarvitz, who had with MS NOW colleague Kelsey Desiderio already accepted an award for "Burn Order" on May 30 in Los Angeles from the Japanese American National Museum (*see June 19, 2026, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/46a44kfw*), was this time joined in person by his producing and writing partner Maddow.

She felt it was important enough to fly in from the East Coast just for the gala (and return on a 4:30 a.m. return flight), despite admitting to being a "socially awkward" type who doesn't ever "go to things." Speaking for the "Burn Order" team, Maddow said, "It just means the world to us."

Yarvitz told the *Pacific Citizen* that he had remembered reading the "paragraph in a textbook," like many American school kids did when learning about Japanese American incarceration during World War II. Noting that MS NOW spent more than a year producing the six-episode "Burn Order," he said, "As we started to dig into the research on this, we started to realize that there are all of these stories embedded in the larger story of Japanese incarceration that certainly are not known by the amount of people that should know it."

Maddow told the *Pacific Citizen* that there was no "one thing" that made the MS NOW team decide to focus on the Japanese American incarceration experience of WWII and that there were actually a couple of other "worthy ideas that we may yet produce."

"Part of the reason that we decided that this was the one we would do … ahead of those other two ideas is honestly because of the resonance of this before the 2024 election," Maddow said. "We could sort of see around the corner and see the way that Trump was campaigning and the way that he was talking about immigrants, and we thought there was going to be domestic mass incarceration."

The sense of urgency to tell the story relayed in "Burn Order" was apparent. "With everything going on in the country right now, it was a story that we needed to tell right now," added Yarvitz, who also noted that the series has also won the Radio Television Digital News Assn.'s Edward R. Murrow Award in the Network TV-Podcast category, to be presented on Oct. 12 in New York City.

Maddow, Yarvitz and "Burn Order" were not, of course, the event's only honorees. San Diego JACL board of directors member Janet Hamada Kelley presented the chapter's 2026 Community Leadership Award to Walden Family Services CEO Teresa Stivers Liong, whose résumé also includes leading the Child Abuse Prevention Foundation and serving as deputy chief of staff to former San Diego Mayor Susan Golding.

"What stands out most are not these titles and accomplishments. It's the fact that Teresa shows up," said Kelley, be it for "families navigating incredibly difficult moments," young people, colleagues, partners and community leaders or the San Diego JACL.

After "so many years of being told I'm too much, I'm too big, I'm too loud," Liong told the audience that she was thankful for being recognized by the chapter for "using my voice on behalf of children who don't have a voice."

Chapter Co-President Michael Kurima introduced the next awardee, theatrical producer Wendy Gillespie, whose credits include "Allegiance: A New American Musical," which had its pre-Broadway debut in San Diego in 2012. Before presenting Gillespie with the 2026 Media Arts & Culture Award, Kurima noted that she was the chapter's "only two-time honoree," having won its Civil Rights Leadership Award in 2015.

Gillespie recalled how "Allegiance" came into her life in 2009. "I said, 'If that show is going to play somewhere, it's going to be in my town.' She noted how "30,000 people here in San Diego saw that show in 2012 at the Old Globe." Later, it would be performed on Broadway *(see 'Allegiance' to Close on Broadway on Feb. 14, Jan. 14, 2016, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/3rvcdv2p)*. "We did the show in Japan. We did the show in London in 2023," she said. "Hard to believe 20,000 people saw it in London."

Closing on a serious note, Gillespie said, "We're living in a time where people are trying to erase history. We're trying to pretend that terrible things didn't happen, and any great society will recognize that we've made mistakes. And how do we move on and create a better world? So, I just want to reiterate: Never forget."



San Diego JACL Chapter Co-President Michael Kurima *(left)* with *(from near left)* honoree Rachel Maddow, speaker Dale Minami and honoree Michael Yarvitz.



Pictured are Peter Irons (seated) and *(from left)* Bonnie Irons, Rachel Maddow and Michael Yarvitz.

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



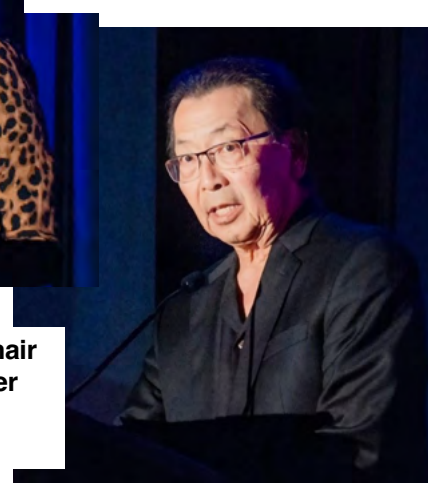
"Allegiance" producer and honoree Wendy Gillespie accepts her award from San Diego JACL's Michael Kurima.

JACL San Diego's Janet Hamada Kelley *(left)* with honoree Teresa Stivers Liong, CEO of Walden Family Services

PHOTOS: SCOTT NORLAND



Honoree Maggie Tokuda-Hall, past president and founder of Authors Against Banned Books



Gala Committee Co-Chair and Executive Producer Lane Nishikawa

PHOTOS: SCOTT NORLAND

"Burn Order" executive producer Michael Yarvitz and his wife, Kristina Kishimoto





Enjoying the evening and their commemorative totes are *(from left)* JACL Executive Director Lilly Simmering, JACL National President Sheldon Arakaki and JACL VP of Planning and Development and San Diego chapter member Carol Kawamoto.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

Another highlight of the evening was a speech by Maggie Tokuda-Hall, author of "Love in the Library." Her 2022 children's book tells the story of how her maternal grandparents met while incarcerated at Idaho's Minidoka War Relocation Center. When a major children's book publisher offered her a licensing deal for it but insisted she remove the word "racism" from her remarks about the book, she refused, finding the mandate "deeply offensive."

"Because of the whole Scholastic incident, there was a brief window when my full-time job was speaking about it all around the country, including Idaho," Tokuda-Hall said. "I was invited there to keynote the Idaho Library Assn.'s conference and speak to donors of Friends of Minidoka. It was there, not two hours from where my grandparents had been wrongfully incarcerated, that I first came face-to-face with the violence of book bans.

"It wasn't until I got to know the librarians in Idaho that I realized these book bans and the accompanying right-wing frenzy that surrounded them were ruining people's lives," Tokuda-Hall added, relating how librarians she spoke with were faced with harassment, doxxing and death threats. "After that, I told myself, 'I'd be damned if I let them fight alone.'" She co-founded and was the first president of AABB — Authors Against Book Bans.

Tokuda-Hall described it as a "coalition of over 5,000 creators all across the country, united under a single guiding principle that it is not the government's place to tell us what we are allowed to read."

The gala's other speaker, who introduced Maddow and Yarvitz, was attorney Dale Minami. He led one of the three coram nobis legal teams that in the 1980s revisited and overturned WWII-era Supreme Court cases originally brought — and lost — by Gordon Hirabayashi, Fred Korematsu and Minoru Yasui.

Hearkening back to what Japanese Americans faced in 1942, Minami spoke of the ill-intentioned influencers of that era, newspaper opinionists like Walter Winchell and Walter Lippman who advocated that Japanese Americans "be banished from the West Coast and incarcerated." Lippman went further, Minami said, claiming that Japanese Americans were "prepared to commit sabotage."

"He made this brilliant argument that the very fact that no sabotage has yet occurred is disturbing evidence that it will imminently occur. . . . In other words, the fact that you didn't commit a crime means that you're surely going to."

Minami also noted how, with the exception of the Quakers and a group of socialists led by Norman Thomas, Japanese Americans in 1942 had no allies. "Nobody stood up for us, and we had a civil rights disaster. So, we hear those echoes of history today," he said.

Before bringing Maddow and Yarvitz up to the stage to receive their awards, Minami called on someone in the audience to be recognized: "Peter Irons, would you stand up?"

Irons not only was one of the prominent voices heard in "Burn Order," as a law professor and legal historian who had researched what had happened to Japanese Americans during WWII, but he also knew the importance of the document Aiko Yoshinaga-Herzig stumbled across at the National Archives: the one mislabeled, damning copy of the original "Final Report on Japanese Evacuation From the West Coast" that had been ordered to be incinerated yet had somehow escaped being burned. Minami also related how Irons generously insisted that Japanese American lawyers lead the effort to relitigate the three WWII Supreme Court cases.

On the stage, Yarvitz said, "On behalf of Rachel and myself and our colleagues, Kelsey Desiderio and Jen Mulreany Donovan, we're just so incredibly grateful for your decision to recognize 'Burn Order.' We made this series to try to understand how exactly a country can go down the darkest of dark paths, how we can allow the mass targeting and the mass incarceration of a minority group strictly on the basis of their race.

"What the Japanese American community suffered more than 80 years ago remains a stain on this country that can never be forgotten," Yarvitz continued. "It can't be rewritten or sanitized or whitewashed by history or scrubbed from textbooks or taken off of plaques at national monuments. We can't let any of that happen. It's a history. It's a history that needs to be understood by every new generation of Americans, so that it's never repeated."

During her turn at the mic, Maddow said, "The whole reason we wrote 'Burn Order' was so more Americans will understand what our government did, what Karl Bendetsen and John DeWitt cooked up and why they did it, but also the fight that they had on their hands at the time to get it done, how it might have been stopped, the lies they had to tell, the evidence that yes, they indeed had to burn in order to get away with it."

In her closing, Maddow said, "The persecution of immigrants today by our government is not the same as the mass incarceration of Japanese Americans in 1942, but at MS NOW, previously known as MSNBC, today when we cover the protests and the legal challenges and arrests . . . and the venom of our government in deploying a lawless and totally uncontained force against them, as we cover the protests of Americans of every stripe against that abuse, I think every day of the mass protests that never broke out in the spring of 1942 and the hell that might have been avoided if we had had those protests then.

"It is up to us right now in 2026 to learn from what was done right in 1942 and to learn from what was done wrong to make sure we are not going to live through it again," Maddow concluded. "The work that you do here at JACL helps ensure that Americans know that we can't take anything for granted. It helps ensure that we never forget."

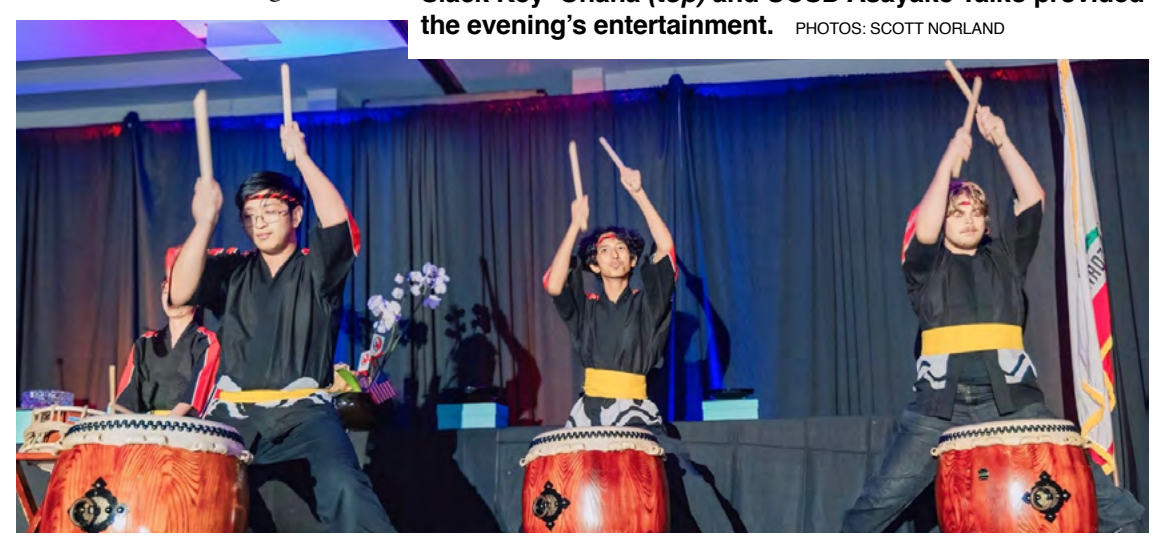
The gala was emceed by KABC-TV news anchor David Ono and actress Tamlyn Tomita. During the course of the evening, they not only announced that the Pledge of Allegiance would be led by Aiden Yamashiro and that the taiko performances were by UCSD Asayake Taiko, but they also recognized special guests in the audience: San Diego County Supervisors Monica Montgomery Steppe and Joel Anderson; San Diego City Council President Joe LaCava and City Council members Henry L. Foster III, Marni von Wilpert, and Kent Lee; Oceanside Mayor Esther Sanchez; Honorary Consul of Japan in San Diego Kate Leonard; San Francisco Superior Court Judge Ai Mori; San Diego County Superior Court Judge Selena Epley; Catherine Carr-Lynch, the granddaughter of Colorado Gov. Ralph Carr; National JACL Executive Director Lilly Simmering; National JACL President Sheldon Arakaki; National JACL VP of Planning and Development Carol Kawamoto; former JACL National Presidents Ken Inouye and David Kawamoto; San Diego Deputy Chief of Police Shawn Takeuchi; San Diego Police Capt. Carissa Doherty Edwards; actor Derek Mio; and director Paul Daisuke Goodman.

The evening ended with words from the event's co-chair and executive producer, Lane Nishikawa, who showed some footage of his documentary about JACL, "League of Dreams."

"Burn Order's" Yarvitz may have best encapsulated why both he and Maddow prioritized attending the gala. "I think the things that are almost more meaningful to us are events like this, where the Japanese American community has embraced us and this series. An honor like this means the world."

For more on "Burn Order," see related story at tinyurl.com/2php9uwv.





Slack Key 'Ohana *(top)* and UCSD Asayake Taiko provided the evening's entertainment. PHOTOS: SCOTT NORLAND

NENE ROYAL REIGNS SUPREME ON *'AGT'*

The teen from Thailand is crowned as the talent show's Season 21 queen.

By Gil Asakawa, P.C. Contributor

She has been a viral sensation mesmerizing anyone who watches the reality-TV competition "America's Got Talent" on NBC, as well as heavy metal rock fans who might think that the show's too corny and mainstream Vegas-y. But Nene Royal, a 16-year-old from Phuket, Thailand, has upended all stereotypes and expectations, and on Sept. 23, she was crowned the season's Grand Champion, taking home the show's $1 million prize and a headlining gig in Las Vegas.

Rattikarn Amloy, who has gone by the stage name Nene Royal since she was 12, was just 15 when she appeared before the "AGT" judges for her audition performance.

Dressed in a demure lacy black dress and holding an electric guitar, she appeared shy and nervous, grateful for the opportunity to play her music. She told the judges — Mel B, Simon Cowell, Howie Mandel and Sofía Vergara — when they asked how old she was that the next day was her birthday and she would turn 16. She was adorable and polite, like an Asian stereotype.

When she began her audition, though, her reserve melted away, and she shocked the judges, the audience and the world with raging guitar riffing that exploded into a full-throated heavy-metal scream the likes of which just don't appear on primetime network television.

Judges and audience members were slack-jawed with disbelief that this young woman was cranking out such an unexpected blast of raucous rock.

Then, she slowed the song down to the verse and chorus of the Cranberries' postpunk classic anti-war track "Zombie." The judges all voted "yes" to pass her on to the next round. Mandell even said that he would get in trouble, but NBC should give her a million bucks right then.

Her talent, passion and commitment, as well as professionalism, was a surprise for viewers, but in her hometown, she'd been honing her chops literally for years.

Royal started plucking her guitar strings when she was just 7 years old, and by the time she was 10, she was learning to sing Western rock songs, sometimes with the help of an English teacher friend who danced to her performances. She also took music classes in school but mostly learned guitar from watching and listening to videos of her favorite songs online.

There are more than a thousand videos of Royal playing on YouTube (1,256 just on her channel, *https://www.youtube.com/@neneroyalmusic*). She covers the bases of all her favorite metal music, from Metallica and AC/DC to Deep Purple, Guns N' Roses and Led Zeppelin. She also has stylistic range, playing blues, country rock, Queen (she got an approving comment from Queen guitarist Brian May for her version of "Bohemian Rhapsody"), Santana, '80s rock like Bon Jovi and more modern rockers like the Cranberries, Green Day, Linkin Park and White Stripes.

For her judges' callback song, she ripped into Muse's "Hysteria," then for the quarterfinals, she destroyed Soundgarden's intense "Black Hole Sun," which led to judge Mel B slamming the Golden Buzzer to send her straight to the Grand Finale.



Heavy metal singer Nene Royal was crowned "AGT" Season 21 champion.

Nene Royal has become a viral sensation, mesmerizing audiences with her unique voice and raging guitar riffing. PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NBC

In the Part 1 finale on Sept. 22, Royal performed the White Stripes' "Seven Nation Army," which almost every sports fan across the world now recognizes for its wordless rhythmic baseline as a chant or marching band melody.

She rocked it out with the Whites Stripes' words and her own shrieking guitar. The next night, she jammed with Mike Shinoda's band Linkin Park. Following that and other post-finale performances, "AGT" announced that Royal had received the most votes from U.S. viewers to win the title of Season 21 champ.

She's already a superstar with the U.S. Thai community and in her home country. A couple hundred people welcomed her back to LAX for the finals, and for the performance, she wore a Thai-style dress conceived by her mom (her parents traveled with her for every trip) and made using deep-red Thai silk.

Now, her silky career is paved with gold. But with her years of woodshedding — she'd been playing at Phuket

>

The Japanese American Experience

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Or you can scan the QR Code to visit!

Our History, American History

The Japanese American Experience is JACL's acclaimed curriculum guide with a summary of the history of Japanese Americans, a chronology of important dates, a resource list, learning activities, and more, now available in an online format! We're also excited to bring our new video series alongside the website launch! Check them out today!

night markets, often with her schoolmates, calling themselves OZONE Band — she's not facing the challenges of being a rock star as a rookie.

It has been her goal all along, and she even was able to fly the members of OZONE Band to Los Angeles to join her to play an aftershow party at a Thai restaurant following her crowning. She has already been named a tourism ambassador by the Thai government, and she was awarded a long-term scholarship for her education by a Thai billionaire and has an American benefactor who has set up a website with merchandising and handled her application and contract negotiations with "AGT."

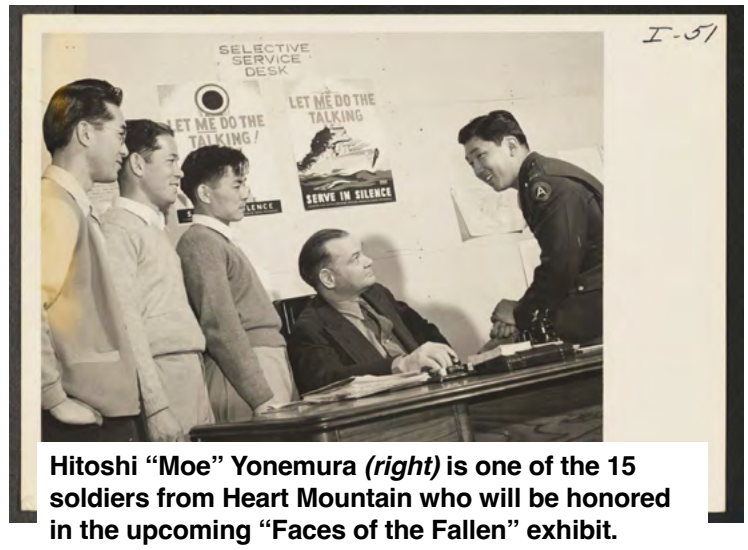
And if her video of her first original song on YouTube, "Real Verse," a bluesy metal instrumental that's catchy enough to hook listeners, is a peek at her talent as a songwriter, her life won't be about covering her favorite rock 'n' roll songs. She'll be making her own kind of music and leaving a legacy for the next generations of musical dreamers to latch on to as well.

A full-length version of this article can be found online at www.pacificcitizen.org.

Heart Mountain Receives NPS Grants

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation has received two National Park Service grants that will support projects to honor the sacrifices of Japanese American soldiers, support educational work with 10 partners and restore its historic hospital complex.

A $987,737 grant from the Norman Y. Mineta Japanese American Confinement Education program will support "Patriotism Under Fire: Expanding the Public's Understanding of the Japanese American Incarceration," which includes "Faces of the Fallen," an online and physical exhibit dedicated to the Japanese American soldiers who were incarcerated in U.S. concentration camps and then died while fighting for the United States overseas. The program will also support educational work and public events conducted by Heart Mountain's 10 partners, the Amache Alliance, Bainbridge Island Japanese American Exclusion Memorial Foundation, Fred T. Korematsu Institute, Friends of Minidoka, Historical Museum at Fort Missoula, Jerome Rohwer Committee, Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium, National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, Poston Community Alliance and the Topaz Museum.



Hitoshi "Moe" Yonemura *(right)* is one of the 15 soldiers from Heart Mountain who will be honored in the upcoming "Faces of the Fallen" exhibit.

PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

"Norm taught me the importance of coming together and collaborating with fellow stakeholders," HMWF Board Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi said. "That is why I am thrilled that our 10 partners — ranging from sites of conscience and museums to individuals — are able to join together to tell our collective stories. We will tell the stories of our fallen American heroes listed at the National Japanese American Memorial, while connecting them back to the 10 American concentration camps to amplify what our mothers, fathers, uncles, aunts and grandparents endured."

A $454,790 grant from the Japanese American Confinement Sites program of the NPS will enable Heart Mountain to begin work on the restoration of the surviving buildings of the camp's hospital complex. ■

CENSUS » continued from page 2

any mention of excluding someone based on citizenship or immigration status."

The statement concluded with the following: "JACL urges our chapters, members and allies to submit comments, and we call on the Census Bureau to withdraw this proposal." It is open to public comment for 30 days.

To read the proposal, visit *tinyurl.com/jthpdkjy*. To comment on FDMS Docket number USBC-2026-0628 electronically, go to *https://www.regulations.gov* and enter USBC-2026-0628 in the Search box. Click on the "Comment" icon, complete the required fields and enter or attach your comments. To submit written comments by mail, write to 4600 Silver Hill Road, Designation: ADDEMO/FRN, Washington, D.C. 20746.

The JACL's statement may be read in it entirety at https://tinyurl.com/mr2x37m8.



"The blood that has soaked the sands of a beach is all of one color. America stands unique in the world; the only country not founded on race, but on a way and an ideal." **- 1945 Ronald Reagan**

The United States is a nation built by immigrants who were guided by hope. For generations, people crossed oceans in search of opportunity, leaving behind everything familiar to pursue a better life. That journey has never been easy—our Issei ancestors knew this well. Arriving nearly a century after America's founding, they came with faith in the American Dream and the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Despite relentless efforts to exclude, disenfranchise, and push them out, the Issei held fast to their belief in America and inspired the Nisei to do the same.

The JACL was created by the Nisei to demonstrate that Americans come from every ethnicity, belief, and culture. Although the 14th Amendment guaranteed their citizenship, our community knows too well that rights on paper are not always rights in practice. Racism, economic greed, and political failure led to the forced removal and incarceration of over 125,000 people of Japanese ancestry, stripping them of the very rights that were supposed to protect them.

Even as America grows more diverse, the threat of racial injustice and bigotry persists. Today, many communities face renewed or newly emboldened attacks, echoing the same rhetoric and fears that once targeted Japanese Americans. During WWII, JACL accepted the unjust conditions imposed on our community when Japanese Americans had their citizenship revoked. In the 84 years since, we have continued to reckon with that history while standing firmly for the protection of birthright citizenship. We refuse to allow anyone in this country to be denied their constitutional rights again. This commitment is why JACL invests in policy fellows who educate national partners, monitor harmful proposals, and advocate for legislation that upholds justice and equality for all.

Over the last 250 years, America has transformed in countless ways. What keeps the American Dream alive is our Constitution and the enduring human drive for a better life. As our nation continues to evolve—and as JACL approaches its centennial—we are committed to evolving with it. We strive to preserve America's history, uplift its ideals, and ensure that the mistakes of the past are never repeated.

Help us protect the American Dream and defend the rights of all who call this country home. Please consider making a donation today and help us reach our summer fundraising goal of $30,000.

Sincerely,
Ariel Imamoto
JACL Membership Manager

*Campaign ends September 7, 2026

Please send checks to
Attn: JACL Summer Appeal
PO Box 45397
San Francisco, CA 94115-0397

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

Ireicho Tour to Former Confinement Sites & Other Places
National Stop:
Oct. 10-11: St. Paul, MN
Info: Visit https://www.janm.org/exhibits/ireicho/venues.

NCWNP

'Telling New Nikkei Stories': In Conversation With Tamiko Nimura and Jennifer Morita
Sacramento, CA
Oct. 13; 6 p.m.
Buddhist Church of Sacramento
2401 Riverside Blvd.
Price: Free
Two Japanese American writers talk about sharing stories in new ways, with Tamiko Nimura talking about "A Place for What We Lose" and Jennifer Morita discussing "Ghosts of Waikiki."
Info: Register by Oct. 11 to https://forms.gle/1uE9jdroJTDdzBAk9.

NLF's 13th Annual Big Steps for Little Friends 5K Run/Walk
San Francisco, CA
Oct. 18; 9 a.m.
Lindley Meadows in Golden Gate Park
1054 John F. Kennedy Dr.
Price: $50 Adult Registration; $30 Youth Ages 17 and Under
This family-friendly event brings together runners, walkers and community supporters for a morning of fitness and connection to benefit Nihonmachi Little Friends' programs.
Info: Visit www.nlfchildcare.org to register.

Waku Waku Japanese Culture Workshop
Stockton, CA
Oct. 24; 10 a.m.-1 p.m.
Buddhist Church of Stockton
2820 Shimizu Dr.
Price: Free
This workshop, hosted by the Stockton JACL, French Camp JACL and Lodi JACL, will offer a Japanese culture experience for kids through storytelling and hands-on activities. This workshop is funded by a JACL Legacy Fund Grant.
Info: Email egirxbass@yahoo.com or text (707) 357-1236.

'I Am an American: The Nisei Soldier Experience'
Honolulu, HI
Nov. 7-March 13, 2027
The Hawaii State Art Museum
250 S. Hotel St., Second Floor
Price: Free
This traveling exhibit tells the storied history of American soldiers of Japanese ancestry who demonstrated their loyalty through service in the U.S. military during WWII. Visitors will witness first-hand accounts, view historical photos and artifacts and more. This exhibit is presented by the National Veterans Network with the National Museum of the U.S. Army and supported by the Army Historical Foundation.
Info: Visit https://www.capitolmodern.org.

PSW

Oishii! Japanese Food & Sake Festival
San Diego, CA
Oct. 4; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum
2125 Park Blvd.
Price: $35 JFGM Member; $50 General Admission
Bring your appetite and enjoy an unforgettable afternoon of delicious food and sake while strolling through the garden's peaceful paths and scenic landscapes.
Info: Visit www.niwa.org.

2026 Poston Pilgrimage 'Celebrating Cultural Art in Camp'
Parker, AZ
Oct. 16-17
Blue Water Resort & Casino
11300 Resort Dr.
Price: Pilgrimage Registration
This year's pilgrimage will feature a visit to the Poston sites, workshops, performances by the Grateful Crane and a presentation by Densho Executive Director Naomi Ostwald Kawamura on "Creativity Under Constraints." A banquet will be held at the Blue Water Resort & Casino.
Info: Visit postonpreservation.org.

Ebb and Flow: Community Mental Health Conference
Los Angeles, CA
Oct. 17; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Terasaki Budokan
249 S. Los Angeles St.
Price: $30 General Ticket; $20 Senior Ticket
This 4th annual community conference welcomes the Asian American community to address, examine and undertand mental health in its various forms through panel discussion, workshops, art and movement.
Info: For tickets, visit https://tinyurl.com/32ahktue.

'Washoku: Nature and Culture in Japanese Cuisine'
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Oct. 18
Japan House Los Angeles
Ovation Hollywood Complex
6801 Hollywood Blvd.
Price: Free
This exhibit invites visitors to explore the rich culinary heritage at the heart of Japan. It offers an in-depth look at the ingredients, evolution and inspirations behind this UNESCO-recognized cultural tradition.
Info: Visit japanhousela.com.

Haunted Little Tokyo Scavenger Hunt
Los Angeles, CA
Oct. 24; 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Terasaki Budokan
249 S. Los Angeles St.
Price: Free
Visit the Terasaki Budokan for this free family-friendly Halloween scavenger hunt throughout Little Tokyo! Collect all of the stamps for a special treat at the end. In addition, there will be ghost tours and a block party for all.
Info: RSVP at www.terasakibudokan.org.

'Reclaiming the Future: The Legacy of Japanese American Incarceration'
Santa Fe, NM
Thru May 31, 2027
New Mexico Museum of Art
404 Montezuma Ave.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit brings together a multigenerational group of Japanese American artists whose work confronts the forced incarceration of JAs during WWII, including at four camps in New Mexico.
Info: Visit nmartmuseum.org.

'AI: Rain Drawings in Natural Indigo' Exhibit
Los Angeles, CA
Sept. 30-Jan. 23, 2027
The Japan Foundation, Los Angeles
5700 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 100
Price: Free Admission
This solo exhibition of Miya Ando's works showcases words used to describe rain in Japanese literature, a project that culminated in "Water in the Sky: A Dictionary of 2,000 Japanese Rain Words." Using natural indigo, this exhibit features 14 drawings selected from that project.
Info: Visit www.jflalc.org.

PNW

The Nisei Paradox: Japanese American Draft Resisters During WWII
Portland, OR
Oct. 4; 2 p.m.
Mission Theater
1624 N.W. Glisan St.
Price: $15 General Admission; $10 Seniors/Students
Presented by the Japanese American Museum of Oregon and the Oregon Law Foundation, this multimedia stage reading tells the story of 42 young JAs who chose to resist the draft and fight injustice through civil disobedience.
Info: Visit jamo.org/event/nisei-paradox/.

'DISplace'
Seattle, WA
Thru Jan. 4, 2027
Wing Luke Museum
719 S. King St.
Price: $24.95 General Admission
This exhibit features visual art by regional Native Hawaiian creatives, family stories and ephemera, historical photographs and archival objects to honor these histories and reclaim the narrative through the voices of families and descendants.
Info: Visit www.wingluke.org.

CCDC

The Incredible History of Nikkei Farmers in the San Joaquin Valley
Fresno, CA
Oct. 3; 2-4 p.m.
Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple
2690 E. Alluvial Ave.
The Fresno Betsuin is hosting this presentation by the Kansha History Project that documents and celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of Nikkei farmers prior to WWII, a legacy that continues to this day. All are welcome to search for your family record and learn about the scale of Nikkei farming.
Info: RSVP at bit.ly/FresnoKansha.

IDC

2026 Japanese Cultural Bazaar!
Colorado Springs, CO
Oct. 24; 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
PPUW Family Success Center
1520 Verde Dr.
Price: Free Admission and Parking
All are welcome at this family-friendly event to explore authentic Japanese goods, connect with local vendors and discover traditional crafts and unique gifts, there is something for everyone at this event!
Info: To register for free, visit https://www.japanamerica.org/event-6746693/Registration.

MDC

Kansha Project Go Go Go! 15th Anniversary & Reunion
Chicago, IL
Oct. 18; 1-4 p.m. CST
Kamehachi Northbrook
1320 Shermer Road
Price: $75-$150 Tickets
Come celebrate 15 years of Kansha for a fun afternoon with JACL Chicago to reconnecct, celebrate community and support the future of the Kansha Project. Honorees are Bill Yoshino and Pat Harada. All fundraiser proceeds benefit this special program.
Info: To RSVP, visit https://bit.ly/kansha15th.

'Pokemon Fossil Museum'
Chicago, IL
Thru April 11, 2027
Field Museum
1400 S. DuSable Lake Shore Dr.
Price: Special Event Tickets Required
This one-of-a-kind experience brings together the worlds of Pokemon and paleontology, inviting visitors to compare fossil Pokemon with real-world fossils, including SUE the T.rex.
Info: Visit https://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibition/pokemon.

EDC

'The Artistry and Reunion of Two Surimono Albums' Exhibit
Providence, R.I.
Thru Oct. 4
Rhode Island School of Design Museum
20 N. Main St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit explores the stories within two special albums of privately commissioned Japanese woodblock prints that were compiled in Japan in the 1820s-1830s.
Info: Visit https://tinyurl.com/wz9admn7.

'Stories on the Planet: Asagi Maeda'
Brockton, MA
Thru Nov. 8
Fuller Craft Museum
455 Oak St.
Price: Admission by Donation
This exhibit features the wearable art of Japanese metalsmith Asagi Maeda, who creates miniature sculptural worlds designed to be worn on the body using materials such as wood, plexiglass, resin, enamel, silver, gold and more.
Info: Visit https://fullercraft.org. ■

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In MEMORIAM

(Note: Boldfaced names in blue in the PDF version of this are active hyperlinks.)



Adachi, Michael Raymond Naoki, 43, Cleveland, OH, March 10.

Aoyama, Aiko, 93, Lodi, CA, Feb. 6.

Arakaki, Wayne, 70, Kapaa, HI, April 25.

Erabi, Sachie, 98, San Francisco, CA, May 22.

Fukushima, Marvin Dell, 70, Lemon Grove, CA, Aug. 9.

Hakozaki, Junko, 52, Honolulu, HI, June 9.



Hayakawa, Pauline Iyoko, 98, Torrance, CA, Jun 21.



Hayashi, Shiro Roy, 90, Woodinville, WA, June 29.



Horiye, Charlie, 97, San Diego, CA, Dec. 11, 2025.

Ikeda, Tok Hui, 78, Smyrna, DE, April 3.



Jitchaku, Barbara 'BJ' Emiko, 87, Hilo, HI, Sept. 7.

Kanemoto, Marion Masako, 98, Sacramento, CA, July 29.



Katayanagi, Natalie, 99, Richmond, CA, June 18.

Koyama, Robert, 69, Lodi, CA, July 17.



Kiyota Kulp, Yasuko, 89, Blaine, MN, July 24.

Kunitomi, Dale, 83, Camarillo, CA, Aug. 29.



Kurokawa, Timothy James, 78, Wolf Point, MT, Sept. 16.

Mizono, Dorothy, 97, Walnut Creek, CA, Sept. 4.

Moritsugu, Ruiko, 92, Mineola, NY, May 22.

Nitz, Yoshiko, 85, Maple Valley, WA, Aug. 20.

Niwa, Ujinobu, 99, Santa Barbara, CA, April 11.

Saito, Kiyoko Okinaka, 95, Kahului, HI, May 12.



Takahashi, Hiroshi, 72, Ridgewood, NJ, June 21.

Takahashi, Hisae, 77, Madison, WI, April 13.

Tomikawa, Myron Masato, 83, Los Angeles, CA, March 27.



Tominaga, Ray, 68, Blackfoot, ID, March 12.

Tsuchikawa, Pete Katsumi, 73, Seattle, WA, April 18.



Watanabe, Nancy, 93, Torrance, CA, July 16.

Yamada, Magdalena, 92, Yuba City, CA, April 22.

Yamane, William Tadamasa, 90, Torrance, CA, July 23.

Yoshimura, Hisako, 98, Pahala, HI, March 29. ■

News Briefs

Former JACL Executive Director Tateishi Among Cohort Saluted by Japan

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan announced that John Tateishi, (*see March 6, 2020 Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/2b2pzk6n*), who served the Japanese American Citizens League as executive director, National Redress Committee chair and National Redress director, was among the many who will be awarded Foreign Minister's Commendations on Oct. 1 for his "promotion of mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S.A." The commendations are awarded to individuals and groups with "outstanding achievements in international fields, in order to acknowledge their contributions to the promotion of friendship between Japan and other countries and areas." For FY 2026, there were 159 individuals and 67 groups recognized. The complete list of awardees is at *tinyurl.com/3jfpn5hv*. In related news, on Sept. 18, Principal John Hopper of Colorado's Granada High School was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Silver Rays, from the Consulate General of Japan in Denver. He founded and has served as the president of the Amache Preservation Society. During WWII, a War Relocation Authority Center, also known as Camp Amache, was located near Granada, Colo. Between 1942-45, it incarcerated 7,318 people of Japanese heritage, including U.S. citizens. It was named a National Parks Service National Historic Site in 2024.

George, Brad Takei Pledge to Bequeath Estate Valued at $21M to JANM

The Japanese American National Museum has announced that George Takei and Brad Takei have pledged that the museum will be the sole beneficiary of their estate, presently valued at more than $21 million. "It is an honor for the Japanese American National Museum to be the sole beneficiary the Takei estate," said JANM President and CEO Ann Burroughs. "George's and Brad's commitment to our mission and their iconic leadership in tackling the toughest civil rights issues in our country continue to inspire the work we do every day." Best-known for being a member of the ensemble cast of the original "Star Trek" TV series, actor George Takei (*see Dec. 19, 2019, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/ybm5dj9r*) has a résumé that also includes books and graphic novels, as well as movies and live theater. Read more at *tinyurl.com/bdhb936u*. In related news, on Oct. 7, the Los Angeles Chapter of the Society of Professional Journalists will present its Freedom of Information Award to JANM CEO and President Ann Burroughs. Among the six journalists to be awarded 2026 Distinguished Journalists Awards are ESPN's Mina Kimes and *Gardena Valley News* and *Culver City News* editor Gary Kohatsu.

Duly Noted: OC Black Chamber to Honor Past JACL Nat'l Prexy Ken Inouye

On Oct. 1, the Black Chamber of Orange County will honor Kenneth Inouye with its 2026 Distinguished Service Award at its 42nd annual banquet for his years-long record of exceptional leadership. It will take place at 5:30 p.m. at the Costa Mesa Hilton. ¶ TV director Hiro Murai won an Emmy in the category Outstanding Directing for a Comedy Series at the 78th Emmy Awards on Sept. 14 for an episode of Apple TV's "Widow's Bay." On the technical side, winning an Emmy in the category Outstanding Stunt Coordination for Drama Programming for the Prime Video series "The Boys" was supervising stunt coordinator John Koyama. Other Emmy winners: character designer Takashi Okazaki for Outstanding Individual Achievement in Animation for "Star Wars: Visions" (Disney +); producer Claire Tadokoro for Outstanding Short Form Comedy, Drama or Variety Series for "Colbert Before Air" (YouTube); and key costumer Kellie Ishisaki for Outstanding Contemporary Costumes for a Limited or Anthology Series or Movie for "Beef" (Netflix).

— P.C. Staff

PLACE A TRIBUTE

'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. **Tributes** honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of $25/column inch.

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BIPARTISAN BILL PROPOSED TO HONOR *'SONGBIRD OF MANZANAR'*

The legislation seeks to name an USPS facility after Mary Kageyama Nomura.



Mary Kageyama Nomura

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE NOMURA FAMILY/ PACIFIC CITIZEN ARCHIVES

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Rep. Dave Min (CA-47) introduced legislation on Sept. 16 to designate an United States Postal Service facility located in Irvine, Calif., as the "Mary Kageyama Nomura Post Office Building," honoring the life and legacy of Nomura, widely known as the "Songbird of Manzanar."

If enacted, the legislation would make the Irvine facility the first U.S. post office named in honor of a Japanese American who was incarcerated in a concentration camp during World War II.

"Mary Kageyama Nomura lived through one of the darkest chapters in our nation's history, but she never allowed that injustice to extinguish her hope or her commitment to others," said Min. "At Manzanar, her music brought comfort and joy to a community that had been stripped of its freedom and dignity simply because of its ancestry. Naming this Irvine post office in her honor is a small but meaningful way to preserve her extraordinary legacy of resilience, hope and community for generations to come."

Born in Los Angeles in 1925, the fifth of the six children of Tomitaro and Machi Kageyama, Nomura was a teenager when the U.S. entered WWII. After losing both of their parents within four years, Nomura and her siblings were living on their own in Venice, Calif., when the federal government forcibly incarcerated them at the Manzanar War Relocation Center along with thousands of other Japanese Americans.

While incarcerated, Nomura became known for her remarkable singing voice. Her performances offered joy and comfort amid the hardship of camp life.

Following the war, Nomura and her husband, Shiro, built a life in Orange County, opening Shi's Fish Mart in Garden Grove. She remained deeply involved in the Southern California Japanese American community and continued singing and participating in Manzanar reunions.

Nomura passed away on April 6 at the age of 100.

Min's legislation is supported by Reps. Ken Calvert (R-CA-41), Judy Chu (D-CA-28), Brad Finstad (R-MN-01), James Gallagher (R-CA-01), Darrell Issa (R-CA-48), Kevin Kiley (I-CA-03), Young Kim (R-CA-40), Kimberlyn King-Hinds (R-MP-At Large), Mike Levin (D-CA-49), Zoe Lofgren (D-CA-18), Celeste Maloy (R-UT-02), Aumua Amata Coleman Radewagen (R-AS-At Large), Linda Sánchez (D-CA-38), Brad Sherman (D-CA-32), Mark Takano (D-CA-39), Mike Thompson (D-CA-04), Jill Tokuda (D-HI-02), Derek Tran (D-CA-45) and Maxine Waters (D-CA-43). ■

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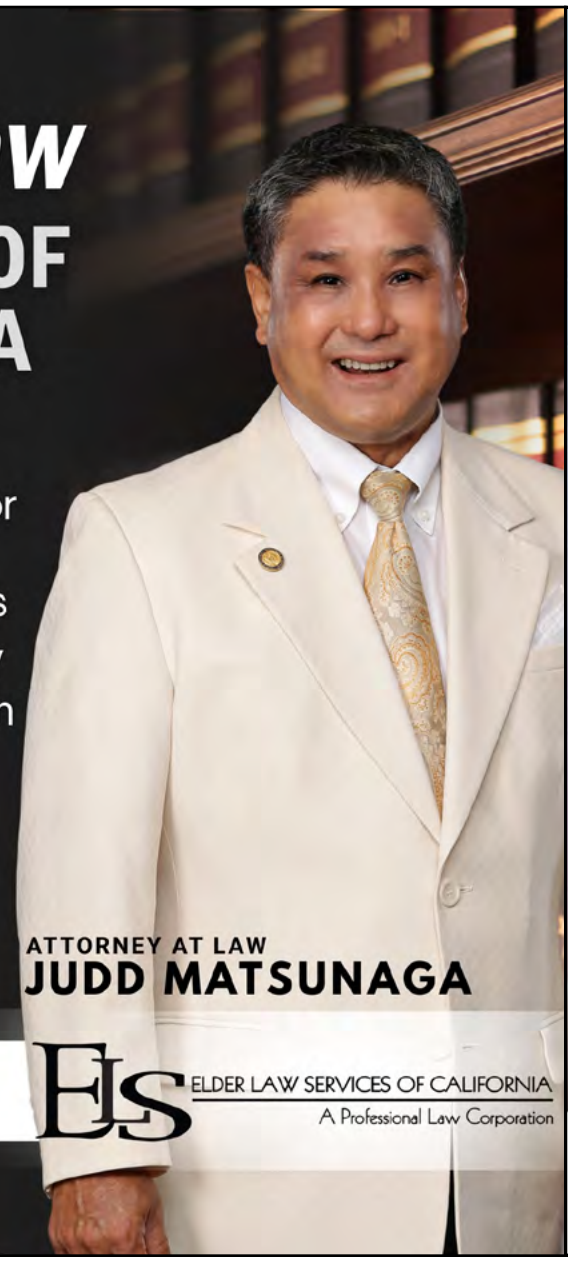
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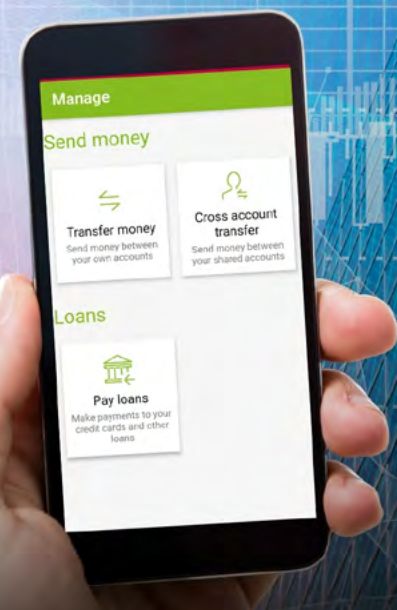


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