THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JACL

July 18-Aug. 7, 2025

PACIFIC CITIZEN

CELEBRATING 96 Years

Napa's Kazumi Wines Honors the Japanese American Farming Legacy.

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DEEP ROOTS, NEW VINES

Michelle Sakazaki of Kazumi Wines

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE SAKAZAKI FAMILY

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'Coroner to the Stars' Dr. Thomas Noguchi

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JACL VP of General Operations Ryan Yoshikawa welcomes JACLers to New Mexico at this year's National Convention, taking place at the Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON/ALLISON HARAMOTO

JACL KICKS OFF 2025 NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ALBUQUERQUE

The organization convenes in the 'Land of Enchantment' for its 'Voices in Unity' confab.

By *P.C. Staff*

Building "upon the need for united voices, especially at a time when our nation is more divided than ever and change is happening quickly," the Japanese American Citizens League, the nation's oldest and largest Asian American/Pacific Islander civil rights organization, kicked off its 2025 National Convention in Albuquerque, N.M., on July 17.

During its opening night festivities at the historic Hotel Albuquerque at Old Town, JACL National President Larry Oda and VP of General Operations Ryan Yoshikawa welcomed attendees to the confab that features a convention first — the exclusion of business sessions, thereby paving the way for the organization to "focus fully on programming meant to help our convention attendees learn, collaborate and build community."

"This year reflects the power of coming together across generations, backgrounds and experiences to carry forward our shared mission of civil rights, community and cultural preservation," said Oda. "This reception is our chance to reconnect, build relationships and set the tone for the days ahead."

Said Yoshikawa, "Whether this is your first convention or your 15th, you are part of something powerful, and we're so glad all of you are here today." He also expressed the organization's appreciation to the New Mexico chapter and the Pacific Southwest District for its warm welcome and support in hosting this year's event, as well as the hard work and dedication of JACL's national staff.

Comprehensive JACL National Convention coverage will be featured in the Aug. 8 special issue of the Pacific Citizen.

Murakawa Communications Honored With Award for Advancing Diversity, Social Change

Murakawa Communications, a leading public outreach and engagement firm in Los Angeles, received the Advancing Diversity and Social Change Award of Excellence from the American Planning Association Los Angeles Section recently.

The honor was presented at the APA Los Angeles Section 2025 Awards Gala on June 26 for the firm's work on Los Angeles County Metro's Vermont Transit Corridor Project Community Engagement Program.

The APA Los Angeles Awards recognize outstanding planning work throughout the region, celebrating projects and programs that demonstrate vision, innovation and meaningful community impact. The Advancing Diversity and Social Change Award of Excellence honors planning efforts that elevate equity, inclusion and authentic engagement.

Murakawa Communications partnered with Metro to deliver a robust community engagement program for the Vermont Transit Corridor Project, which will bring bus rapid transit service to the county's busiest bus corridor with more than 36,000 daily boardings. The program prioritized meaningful dialogue with historically underrepresented communities along the corridor, ensuring the project reflects local needs and values while advancing access, mobility and equity.



Pictured *(from left)* are Trisha Murakawa, principal of Murakawa Communications, with Metro executive team members Patrick Chandler, Lilian De Loza-Gutierrez and Heidi Jackson. PHOTO:

"We're truly honored by this recognition," said Trisha Murakawa, the firm's principal. "Our goal is to help public agencies listen deeply to their communities and design projects that advance social equity. Working with Metro and the communities along Vermont Avenue has been an inspiring opportunity to help shape a more connected and inclusive future for Los Angeles."

Murakawa Communications helped Metro create partnerships with 40 local community-based, faith-based and community development-based organizations to reach stakeholders who have been historically underrepresented in transportation planning. MC and its partners helped host workshops, canvass businesses, gather feedback at bus stops and ensured thousands of residents could weigh in on how the project could serve their needs.

The Vermont Transit Corridor Project is a 12.4-mile BRT line that will bring faster, more reliable and more equitable bus service along Vermont Avenue from Sunset Boulevard to 120th Street.

The BRT will feature elevated stations with platforms, shelters, seating, lighting and real-time arrival information. Following near-term bus lane and service improvements, the full BRT is scheduled to begin operation in 2028, in time for the Summer Olympics. ■

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REFLECTIONS

ALIEN ENEMIES ACT IS BEING DANGEROUSLY MISAPPLIED

By Larry Oda, JACL National President

The Japanese American Citizens League, the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization, was founded in 1929 in the face of anti-Japanese sentiment.

As our community was directly affected and wrongfully prosecuted by the application of the Alien Enemies Act during World War II, we are compelled to protest its use today to apprehend and deport Venezuelan nationals who the Trump administration claims belong to the Tren de Aragua gang.

The AEA is a wartime measure. It reads, in part:

"That whenever there shall be a declared war between the United States and any foreign nation or government, or any invasion or predatory incursion shall be perpetrated, attempted, or threatened against the territory of the United States, by any foreign nation or government, and the President of the United States shall make public proclamation of the event, all natives, citizens, denizens, or subjects of the hostile nation or government, being males of the age of fourteen years and upwards, who shall be within the United States, and not actually naturalized, shall be liable to be apprehended, restrained, secured and removed, as alien enemies."

There is no "war" now; the "invasion" is ordinary migration. No "predatory incursion" is occurring. No necessary conditions for the application of the AEA prevail. The president is wrongfully and dreadfully attempting to apply this late-18-century act.

In our nation's history, the AEA has been used only during the War of 1812, during World War I and against Japanese, German and Italians during WWII.

Here is Congressman Jimmy Panetta's (D-CA19) assessment on what is occurring:

"The misuse of the Alien Enemies Act by this Administration is a dangerous distortion of our laws and our history. This statute was never meant to justify mass deportations without due process, let alone in times of peace. We have a responsibility to remember the injustices committed under its previous applications and have a responsibility ensure that we do not repeat them."

The AEA, enacted in 1798, was driven by fears of potential espionage during a period of great friction with France and to provide for the defense of our nation from the possibility of invading French forces.

Soon after the United States went to war with Japan in 1941, 125,000 Japanese Americans, some two-thirds of whom were U.S. citizens, were rounded up and incarcerated (imprisoned) without the due process guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution. Included were hundreds of Japanese Americans in Monterey County.

A small subset included my father, Junichi, who immigrated to this country from Japan in 1917. He was industrious and became the head of the abalone processing cooperative on Fisherman's Wharf. He was classified as an enemy, arrested and was eventually moved to a Justice Department camp in Crystal City, Texas.

My mother, Maki ("Lorraine"), was a native American born in Watsonville, Calif. She was incarcerated at a camp in Poston, Ariz. My parents were separated for one and a half years.

Japanese Americans were sent to internment camps throughout the country, mostly in the West.

Today, a group of immigrants is being targeted and deported without due process. The action of the Executive Branch in overreaching its authority is harmful to all and is appalling. The president is taking undue liberties and interpreting laws to suit his own purpose. Our democracy is being dismantled.

The Supreme Court has not yet ruled on how this president is using the AEA, which is being challenged in lower courts.

Several amicus (friends of the court) legal briefs challenging the president's actions have been filed, with the JACL being involved. These briefs liken what is happening now to actions taken against Japanese Americans in WWII.

We need to pay attention and call out when our liberties are being abridged. Japanese Americans are in a unique position to comment on these kinds of attacks on civil liberties as we were once the targets because of fear, ignorance, racial prejudice and hysteria. It was easy to identify an Asian.

Larry Oda is the national president of the JACL. He was born behind barbed wire in an internment camp near the end of World War II and has subsequently been a lifetime resident of Monterey, Calif. He was a founding member in 2021 of the local Coalition for Asian Justice. Its mission is to achieve racial justice for all Asians residing in the United States.



LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

HOW TO PAY FOR LONG-TERM CARE

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Sixty years ago, President Lyndon Johnson signed Medicare and Medicaid into law. He said, "There is another tradition that we share today. It calls upon us never to be indifferent toward despair. It commands us never to turn away from helplessness. It directs us never to ignore or to spurn those who suffer untended in a land that is bursting with abundance." Recently, however, Congress broke that tradition.

Despite his campaign slogan to "Make America Great Again," on July 4, President Donald Trump signed into law the massive tax and spending bill called the "Big Beautiful Bill." The new bill cuts more than $1 trillion in Medicaid and federally funded health-care programs over the next 10 years, meaning states and recipients could start seeing real changes or funding cuts as soon as next year *(source: www.usatoday.com, Trump Mega-bill, July 3, 2025)*.

The bill also adds a "work requirement" to receive Medicaid benefits for able-bodied, childless adults between the ages of 18 and 64 to work at least 80 hours a month to be eligible for Medicaid.

Republican senators are praising the requirement, saying, "We've got to get back to work."

Unfortunately, that's all "fake news." The Big Beautiful Bill is going to also hurt millions of older Americans who have paid into the system their entire lives. Justice in Aging's Executive Director Kevin Prindiville said, "Cutting Medicaid, Medicare, the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and SNAP is morally indefensible under any circumstance, but this bill is particularly cruel, cutting these programs by well over $1 trillion and taking health coverage from 17 million people. These cuts rob older adults and other people struggling to make ends meet to make the billionaires even richer, setting a dangerous precedent that Congress will use these basic needs programs as a piggy bank."

With the number of Americans over age 65 set to exceed the number of Americans under age 18 by the end of this decade, Medicaid and long-term care is gaining attention as a serious health issue. Long-term care refers to the assistance people receive with activities of daily living (ADLs) due to illness, injury or cognitive impairment.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Administration on Aging, 70 percent of Americans age 65-plus will need long-term care during their lifetime. Since Medicare and private health insurance plans do not pay benefits for long-term care, individuals can expect to pay more than six figures (i.e., $100,000+) per year for private room care. Will Medicaid or Medi-Cal be there when you may need it? Maybe, but probably not.

As an elder law attorney who has been following Medi-Cal for decades, I want to explain what I think is happening. The government, already running a $1.8 trillion deficit in fiscal year 2024, knows it can't afford to pay for baby boomers' long-term care. So, the government is trying to "shift" the financial burden of long-term care off the public sector, i.e., the government, to the private sector by forcing workers to buy long-term care insurance. In other words, the government wants to "privatize" the cost of long-term care by gradually eliminating Medicaid.

In 2022, the state of Washington was the first state to legislate long-term care insurance called the WA Cares Fund. Unless workers have private long-term care insurance, a payroll tax of $0.58 per $100 on income to fund a long-term care benefit of $36,500 over the policy's lifetime and a maximum of $100 per day would be in effect.

Several state legislatures are already considering mandating long-term care insurance. Those states are Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Utah. California has proposed a similar but more flexible insurance program and has created a task force to recommend options for establishing its own state long-term care insurance program.

One day, the government won't pay for long-term care (LTC). So, looking into LTC insurance now can help you take thoughtful steps in securing your future and protecting your loved ones.

If you can't get private long-term care insurance, you could end up with the state-sponsored long-term care insurance. That state-sponsored insurance will not be as good as private long-term insurance. However, with private LTC insurance, the policyholder can receive care in various places, including their home, a nursing home, an assisted living facility or an adult daycare center.

Suze Orman, a financial adviser, author and podcast host, suggests long-term care insurance as a crucial part of a comprehensive financial plan, particularly for those over 60.

However, she warns to buy only what is affordable. Orman says to focus on what is safely achievable: Better to buy a policy that will cover 25 percent to 50 percent of future costs than no policy at all.

The traditional argument against long-term care insurance is that if you don't need long-term care, your years of costly premiums will be spent for no benefit except peace of mind.

To overcome the "use it or lose it" argument, financial adviser and radio personality David Ramsey recommends bundling LTC insurance with life insurance so that upon your death, the unpaid portion of the death benefit — that was not used to pay long-term care benefits — will be paid to your beneficiaries on a tax-favored basis.

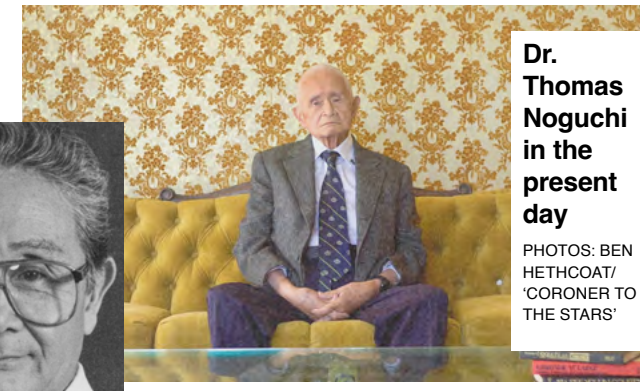
Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of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

RESURRECTION: CORONER DR. THOMAS NOGUCHI'S COMEBACK

A new documentary and book examine the impact, challenges faced by the groundbreaking medical examiner.



A young Dr. Thomas Noguchi



Dr. Thomas Noguchi in the present day

PHOTOS: BEN HETHCOAT/ 'CORONER TO THE STARS'



Poster art of "Coroner to the Stars"

By Gil Asakawa, P.C. Contributor

At 98, Dr. Thomas Noguchi is back.

That's thanks to a new documentary, "Coroner to the Stars," co-directed by Ben Hethcoat and Keita Ideno, and a new book, "L.A. Coroner: Thomas Noguchi and Death in Hollywood," by Dr. Anne Soon Choi *(see sidebar story)*.

A case of synchronicity, two utterly unrelated Noguchi projects arriving at roughly the same time? Perhaps — but it's safe to say that both the filmmakers and the book's author wanted to make sure Noguchi's legacy is secure and that younger generations will appreciate how the Japanese American community rallied to support the Japanese immigrant as he faced institutional obstacles just to keep his job.

For those too young to know his place in history, Noguchi came to the U.S. in 1952 after earning his medical degree in Tokyo in 1951, and he eventually found employment as deputy coroner for Los Angeles County, home to Hollywood and its surfeit of stars.

When Marilyn Monroe — especially then and still now one of Hollywood's brightest heavenly bodies — died in 1962, it was Noguchi who conducted her autopsy. His conclusion, that she had died of "acute barbiturate poisoning" and was probably a suicide put him on the map to becoming a star of sorts in his own right, which would in the years to come put him in the crosshairs of those who didn't cotton to him becoming the center of attention.

Today, when drug-related causes of a celebrity's death — think ketamine for actor Matthew Perry or propofol for singer Michael Jackson — are shared with news outlets pro forma, the documentary shows how Noguchi's decades-ago candor about what killed a particular superstar did not endear him to a dead star's outraged, still-living celebrity pals.

Nevertheless, by 1967, Noguchi rose to become the county's chief medical examiner. Some of the celebrities whose postmortems he oversaw during his tenure, which lasted until 1982, included blues-rocker Janis Joplin, actors John Belushi, William Holden, Natalie Wood and Sharon Tate, as well as presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy. Even after retiring, he returned to the spotlight during the O.J. Simpson trial in the 1990s, when he served as an expert witness.

The documentary has been making the rounds of film festivals and is making Noguchi a celebrity of sorts yet again. The film features Noguchi himself in interviews, as well as actor George Takei sharing his memories about the coroner to the stars.

For his part, Noguchi is matter-of-fact about his reputation, even at the start of his career, as a notable Asian working on celebrity deaths, and a pioneering role model for those who came after him. (His own fame would spawn TV's "Quincy, M.E.," starring Jack Klugman; co-star Robert Ito as Sam Fujiyama was in today's parlance, "not like us." She also spotlights Hawaii-born Jeffrey Matsui, who at that time served as JACL's national associate director based in Los Angeles, as a forgotten community leader who had to prod Los Angeles' mainland-born JAs to wake up to a reality they (and Noguchi himself) seemed reluctant to face, that Noguchi's termination attempt was blatantly racist and yet one more instance in which fair play and due process had been subverted.

Another person Choi credits in getting Noguchi to fight for his career and, by extension, for Japanese Americans, is Dr. Hisako Nishihara, his Terminal Island-born Japanese American wife who had been incarcerated at Colorado's Amache concentration camp and understood what was happening to her Japan-born husband in a way he simply could not.

In a nutshell, Noguchi's trial to be reinstated was not just a cause célèbres that some in L.A.'s Japanese American establishment had to be compelled reluctantly (initially at least) into supporting, it was also a referendum on how much progress or lack thereof had really been made postwar and post-incarceration, whether Japanese Americans in Los Angeles were OK with being seen as the model minority that didn't rock the boat and accepting of what amounted to second-class citizenship status.

If a biopic about Noguchi ever were made, "L.A. Coroner's" Chapter Five ("A Wrongful Dismissal") and Chapter Six ("The Fight for Reinstatement") could be the central story, set amidst changing times, replete with colorful

Book Resets Noguchi's Place in History

Author Anne Soon Choi's 'L.A. Coroner' makes compelling connections.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor

Marilyn Monroe. Janis Joplin. John Belushi. Natalie Wood. Robert F. Kennedy. In the Venn diagram of those celebrity names, in the center is another that ties them together in history, news accounts and notoriety.

That name is Thomas Tsunetomi Noguchi, M.D.

As noted *(see main story)*, the former chief medical examiner-coroner of Los Angeles County, aka the "Coroner to the Stars" and inspiration for TV's "Quincy, M.E.," which begat the "C.S.I." franchise, is having a moment, still living and well in Los Angeles, just a couple of years shy of age 100.

On that note, the documentary revisits and reframes a name and career that is likely largely unknown to an audience under, say 50 — and likely semiforgotten but vaguely familiar to those now receiving Social Security benefits.

To Dr. Anne Soon Choi, however, Thomas Noguchi was name to a man worthy of re-evaluation that only a well-researched book could provide in terms of being able to dig deeper, provide more context — and elevate him to his rightful station among the pantheon of Americans, of Asian ancestry or not, native-born or immigrant, who have made an outsize impact on this nation's constantly evolving struggle to make life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness accessible to all.

That book is "L.A. Coroner: Thomas Noguchi and Death in Hollywood" *(Third State Books, ISNB 979-8-89013-005-5, 256 pages, SRP $29.99, Copyright 2025)*.

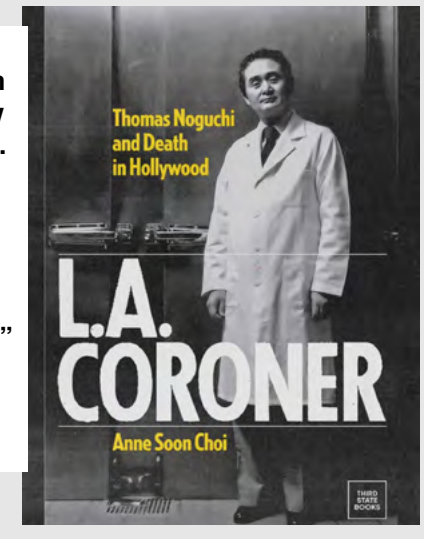
According to Choi, assistant vp of Faculty Programs and Initiatives at California State University, Northridge, where she is also a professor at its Asian American Studies Department, the book expands on her award-winning scholarly article titled "The Japanese American Citizens League, Los Angeles Politics and the Thomas Noguchi Case," which appeared in the summer 2020 edition of "Southern California Quarterly" and is definitely worth seeking.

For *Pacific Citizen* readers, Noguchi's story as told by Choi carries particular resonance: The *P.C.* is among the exhaustive list of sources cited in the article's footnotes and in the book's bibliography that helps convey the larger picture of the challenges faced in the late 1960s by Noguchi, then the highest-ranking Los Angeles County employee of Japanese descent.

"I used the run of the *Pacific Citizen*, particularly starting in about '65 all the way through the early '70s where the JACL was heavily, heavily involved in the Noguchi case," Choi said.

Although more than two decades had passed since the end of World War II, the top of the Los Angeles power structure, city and county, was male and WASP (or WASP adjacent), some of whom found the decidedly non-white Anglo Saxon Protestant Noguchi and his perceived penchant for press coverage off-putting. He also earned the enmity of a bureaucrat in charge of county purse strings by going directly (and successfully) to the powerful L.A. County Board of Supervisors to get more funds for his department.

Choi also relates how some in the L.A. Japanese American community also found Noguchi — a Shin-Issei who could be seen as haughty and self-aggrandizing — to be,



Cover of Anne Soon Choi's new book, "L.A. Coroner: Thomas Noguchi and Death in Hollywood"

PHOTO: THIRD STATE BOOKS

a nod to Noguchi.)

"Looking back, I was the first Japanese pathologist selected to work on a number of high-profile cases . . ." he said by email. "Later, I was appointed head of the L.A. County Coroner's Office. While I considered it a great honor, I didn't realize I would be paving the way for future medical examiners, whose field was relatively unknown at the time."

Although he understood his barrier-breaking role, Noguchi said he didn't feel pressure during his tenure to be the role model, or to be "more Japanese" or "less Japanese."

"Although I was born and educated in Japan, when I came to the United States, I was determined to be accepted as an American," he said. "It was important for me to adapt to the independent spirit and culture of this country."

Having arrived in the U.S. just seven years after the end of World War II, Noguchi said he didn't face racism in his work. "In terms of my Japanese background, I didn't feel I was discriminated against in my day-to-day work as chief medical examiner-coroner of L.A. County," he said. "My American colleagues were always kind and professional in working with me throughout my career."

But when his career came under fire for some of his medical pronouncements as well as his penchant for publicity (he was working on dead celebrities, after all), it was the Japanese American community that came to defend him and lobbied for him to keep his position. The *Pacific Citizen* digital archive contains many articles about Noguchi where Japanese American leaders defended his work.

"I'm very grateful for the support I received from the Japanese American community throughout my career. Figures like George Takei and organizations such as JUST (Japanese United in Search for Truth) were among those who stood by me," Noguchi said. "Today, I remain involved with the Japanese community and continue to gather with groups like the Fukuoka Kenjinkai. At 98, it's a wonderful thing to have community and to celebrate together."

The two men responsible for the documentary have been honored to work with Noguchi. Hethcoat is the writer, director and producer of the film, and Ideno is a writer, director and editor on the project.



Noguchi reinstated with all back pay

By HARRY HONDA

LOS ANGELES — First thing Dr. Thomas T. Noguchi did when he returned to his county coroner's office in the Hall of Justice last week (July 31) was to sit at his desk and remove the nameplate reading Russell Henry, M.D., who had been acting coroner since mid-March when the Japan-born pathologist was summarily dismissed by the County Board of Supervisors.

There he assured reporters and fellow workers that no changes are anticipated in the operations of the department.

"I feel great, I feel good," he continued to say after the Civil Service Commission declared the "County did not carry the burden of proof to sustain the charges against Dr. Noguchi and that he should be restored to the position of chief medical examiner-coroner, and that all back salary be paid."

Dr. Thomas Noguchi

JUST committee was considering whether to remained organized. It was also hopeful that the Nisei Week Festival committee would have Dr. Noguchi, his attorney Isaac and their wives appear in the Ondo Parade.

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Lesson of Hearing

The lesson of the Noguchi hearing, according to Raymond Uno of Salt Lake City, national JACL civil rights coordinator, is whether minorities should measure up to the standards of the majority white community. Failure to conform could mean loss of status and jobs, Uno feared, when the greatness of America demands otherwise.

After Isaac and Noguchi addressed a meeting sponsored by the San Francisco JACL civil rights committee, editor Howard Imazeki of the Hokubei Mainichi said it was about

An article about Dr. Thomas Noguchi by Harry Honda that appeared in the *Pacific Citizen* on Aug. 8, 1969 PHOTO: PACIFIC CITIZEN DIGITAL ARCHIVES

"Growing up, my father was a coroner medical examiner, so I've always sort of been involved in some way with the medical examiner community," Hethcoat said. "And then I had a producer who had found a book that Dr. Noguchi wrote, 'Coroner,' on a dollar bookshelf, and he's like, 'Huh, this is interesting. I wonder what this guy's up to these days?' And, you know, we reached out to Dr. Noguchi to see if he was interested."

Hethcoat told Noguchi, "We really want to tell your story and for people to see who you are beyond the sensational headlines and beyond just these celebrity cases."

Hethcoat started working on the project a decade ago, and he asked Ideno to join the team long after it was under way. "Keita came in years after we had already been filming, but he came in at a very pivotal time and in a very important role to help craft a story out of all this material that we had gathered over the years, and yeah, he was an essential collaborator," he said.

Ideno acknowledged that the fact that he's Japanese was an asset for the documentary because he felt empathy for Noguchi's experiences.

"Coming from Japan, just seven years after WWII ended, and what he's done and his journey is just amazing," Ideno said. "I came to the U.S. in 1999. I mean, I'm living in a different era, but it's so hard to be accepted by the American community. So, I just wanted to make sure that his feelings, as a Japanese [were shown], and also Ben and I talked about the deeper theme of this movie is love and support, love from his wife, Hisako, and support from the Japanese American community."

One thing Noguchi won't talk about? Which of his cases he is most proud. He becomes downright coy when it comes to the most notable of the deceased stars he examined, though it would be hard to ignore Monroe, whose autopsy put him in the spotlight for the first time.

"Every death is a tragedy for the family, and sometimes for the broader community as well," he said, diplomatically. "That's why, in my role as chief medical examiner-coroner, I always tried to be mindful of the family's needs — especially in cases of sudden or unexpected death. I don't believe one death is more important than another.

"For medical examiners, death is something we face every day. And that's why each case must be treated with dignity and respect." Wise words from the coroner to the stars.

This article was made possible by the Harry K. Honda Memorial Journalism Fund, which was established by JACL Redress Strategist Grant Ujifusa. To make a donation to this fund, email busmgr@pacificcitizen.org and put Honda Memorial Journalism Fund in the subject line.

characters, good guys and bad guys, a journey from hubris to humility, allies in the Black and Mexican American communities, courtroom drama and a timeless story of a David taking on a Goliath.

Choi also posits an interesting theory, that the activism that took place (the formation of JUST or Japanese United in the Search for Truth, a community advocacy group supporting Noguchi that wasn't officially connected to JACL — but just happened to have several JACLers involved, including Matsui) was a trial run for the redress movement, since many of the same organizing skills were learned and later employed.

Ultimately for Choi, Noguchi's story is an immigrant's story, one that is curiously timely. And, though she wrote the book without ever meeting Noguchi (though not for lack of trying), as fate would have it, she actually met him in a way so random that it must have been meant to be, when they both happened to have appointments at the same time at the same eye surgery clinic. In a happy ending that didn't make the book, they became friends.

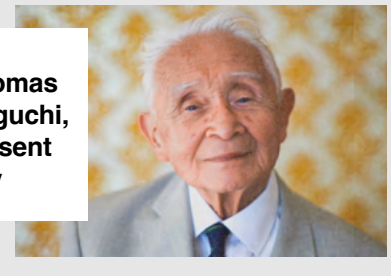
"He's still very incisive and sharp," Choi told the *Pacific Citizen*. "He's just a lovely person. . . . The people who were so adamantly opposed to him, who were his political enemies, every one of them have all gone."

Asked what she thought was behind the harmonic convergence-like timing of her book and an unrelated documentary on the same person many may have presumed had already shuffled off this mortal coil decades ago, Choi speculated that it might have been because of the growth of the true-crime genre — think the Manson murders — and conspiracy theories surrounding Monroe, Kennedy and, again, Manson — may have played a part.

"There are a number of things being revisited," she told the *Pacific Citizen*. "People are talking about the Manson case again." Noguchi, she observed, "is very much the footnote to all these famous cases."

As for what Noguchi himself truly thinks of this renewed interest in his interesting life's twilight, one can only speculate. He is, as Choi noted, the last man standing among those who sought to remove, silence or degrade him and his career. Maybe the saying, "He who laughs last laughs best" explains his wry, Mona Lisa smile.

EDITOR'S NOTE: A conversation between Dr. Anne Soon Choi and author Naomi Hirahara that was postponed due to the recent unrest in downtown Los Angeles and Little Tokyo has been rescheduled. It is now set for 10 a.m.-Noon on Aug. 9 at the Little Tokyo Branch of the Los Angeles Public Library. To RSVP, send an email to ltokyo@lapl.org or sign up at the reference desk.



Dr. Thomas Noguchi, present day

JOIN THE SEARCH

Help Marsha & Others Find a Lifesaving Stem Cell Donor

Marsha Aizumi, a beloved community leader, advocate, and founder of Okaeri, is seeking a life-saving stem cell donor.

YOU CAN SAVE LIVES!



Earlier this year, Marsha was diagnosed with Myelodysplastic Syndrome (MDS), a form of pre-leukemia that requires a stem cell transplant. **A matching donor could save her life**—but like many patients of Asian descent, finding a match is especially difficult due to **underrepresentation in the national registry**.

Marsha has dedicated her life to creating safe and inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ individuals and families, particularly in the Asian American & Nikkei community. **Now, she needs our help.** Support Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) and Okaeri in registering stem cell donors to find a match for Marsha!

YOU CAN HELP!

By joining the NMDP registry to be a potential donor, you could be a life-saving match for Marsha—or someone else! All it takes is a **simple cheek swab**.

To register, you must be:
- Between the ages of 18 and 40
- A resident of the U.S., its territories, or freely associated states
- Able to meet NMDP's health guidelines
- Not already registered through another U.S. organization

Attend an in-person registry event with LTSC and Okaeri:

June 6-8, 2025: 4PM-11PM
Orange County Fairgrounds
June 21, 2025: 9AM–1PM
Ripple Effect: Walk for Suicide Prevention
June 28, 2025: 10AM–7PM
Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute Matsuri
July 11-13, 2025: 4PM-11PM
Santa Anita Park
July 19-20, 2025: 2PM–8PM
Orange County Buddhist Church Obon Festival
August 2-3, 2025: 3PM–9PM
Gardena Buddhist Church Obon Festival

More info: www.LTSC.org/MatchforMarsha

Scan to learn more

Little Tokyo Service Center · nmdp · Okaeri



"It was destiny," said Michelle Sakazaki about her decision to nurture Koshu grapes from vine to wine.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE SAKAZAKI FAMILY

DEEP ROOTS, NEW VINES

Michelle Kazumi Sakazaki honors more than a century of Japanese American farming with every bottle of Napa-grown Koshu.



Kazumi wines



Kazumi Koshu is more complex than its Japanese counterpart.

By Lynda Lin Grigsby,
P.C. Contributor

The Koshu grape is a delicate contradiction — thick-skinned, yet fragile. In its native Japan, where the grape has been cultivated for thousands of years, some growers protect the fruit by gently crowning the pink clusters of grapes with folded paper hats.

Thousands of miles from its ancestral home, Koshu has found an unlikely advocate in California. Kazumi Wines is the first boutique brand in the United States to produce Koshu wine from American-grown vines.

Michelle Kazumi Sakazaki, the Yonsei proprietor of Kazumi Wines in Napa Valley, Calif., sees facets of herself in the grape. Both are descendants of transplants from another land. Both are shaped by new soil and finally appreciated for what they became — Japanese Americans.

In Napa, Michelle oversees more than five acres of thriving Koshu grape vines. The natural question arises: Do the American vines also wear paper hats?

"No, we don't use hats for our Koshu grown in Napa," said Sakazaki, 46.

In a world plagued with increasing incidents of unpredictable weather, Koshu's thick skin makes it a varietal of the future. Its American brand ambassador also charts a trailblazing course. In California's wine world, Sakazaki represents a new wave of Japanese American leaders who are leveraging ancestral farming legacies and business acumen to create products that represent their cultural roots.

"She's really expanding what is possible for JA people in the wine industry," said Ken R. Minami, a wine industry veteran and vp and deputy general counsel of Delicato Family Wines, which is based in Napa.

Rooted Legacies, Unwritten Histories

For Sakazaki, who was once a fashion designer, the path to the wine industry was circuitous. She worked for brands such as Missoni and Armani Exchange but longed for change. The verdant hills of Napa — where her father, Jack Sakazaki, had established a start-up wine club business — beckoned.

In 2009, Michelle Sakazaki began working with her father as the general manager of the 90 Plus Wine Club, an international subscription service that curates and exports premium California wines to members in Japan and Asia.

But she wanted more. She wanted something to call her own.

So, Sakazaki launched Kazumi Wines in 2015, making her presence as a Japanese American woman in the wine world feel downright revolutionary. The number of Asian American Pacific Islander female leaders in the industry could be counted on one hand — despite the Japanese American community's storied history of innovation in wine and agriculture.

"It was destiny," said Sakazaki about her decision to nurture Koshu grapes from vine to wine.

Sakazaki's story is not an outlier — it's a continuation.

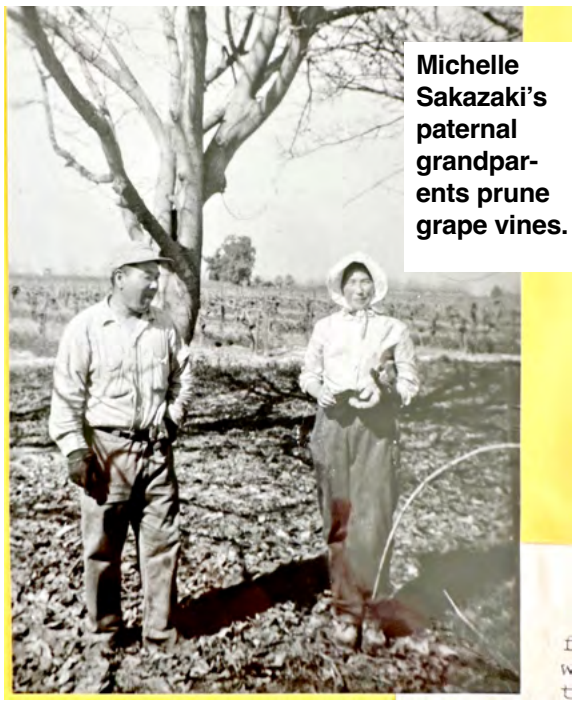
Japanese Americans have long tilled the soils of California's farmland and shaped the state's agricultural history. But their contributions are often obscured.

In the early 1900s, Kanaya Nagasawa, known as the "Wine King," turned the Santa Rosa, Calif.-based Fountaingrove Winery into one of the state's most influential. In Sacramento, George Shima became known as the "Potato King" for his innovative farming techniques. In Gilroy, before the beginning of the Second World War, Issei farmer Kiyoshi Hirasaki became known as the "Garlic King" for being the country's largest garlic grower.

"I mean, we have almost everything covered," joked Minami, 64, about the dominance of Japanese American farmers.

For generations, the Sakazaki family traveled between Japan and the United States. Their migration stories are shaped by global and domestic upheaval — war, anti-Asian sentiment and mass incarceration.

Michelle Sakazaki's paternal Issei great-grandparents, Sakuzo and Sueme Shimasaki, worked



Michelle Sakazaki's paternal grandparents prune grape vines.

as migrant farm workers before settling in Los Angeles before World War II, where they ran the produce section of a supermarket chain called the Piggly Wiggly. In 1942, their lives were upended when both Sakuzo and Sueme were incarcerated at Amache near Granada, Colo.

Two generations later, Jack Sakazaki, who grew up in Fresno, spent summers picking fruit, before moving to Japan to run a sports marketing company.

Being of the land runs in the family — so is running a family business.

The kanji characters for *Kazumi* mean "harmonious beauty" or "peaceful beauty." Kazumi is Michelle Sakazaki's Japanese middle name — a blend of her parents' Japanese names, Kazunori and Mayumi.

But the wine company's origin wasn't always harmonious. To the people who know them best, the father-daughter pairing as business partners was improbable.

"We were all really nervous about them working together," said Margot Sakazaki, Michelle's older sister. "Are they gonna' kill each other?"

The friction in their relationship is attributed to their similar personalities. Both are stubborn, driven and competitive. Both have innovative spirits.

"We explode, and then we're fine," said Michelle Sakazaki. "And then we carry on as if nothing happened."

They have the right personalities for the wine business, said Margot, 48. "You kind of need to have that bigger personality."

To launch Kazumi Wines, Michelle Sakazaki bought a half-ton of Sauvignon Blanc grapes — a venture that made her father wring his hands with worry. She could make 25 cases of her own wine.

It's 25 cases, she assured him. Not much by wine production standards.

"If I don't sell it out, mom and I will drink it. No big deal," she said.

All the bottles sold out.

A New Expression of Identity in Every Bottle

Japanese Koshu, a lighter citrusy white wine, is largely unknown to American consumers.

After a 2017 wildfire swept through Napa Valley and destroyed community homes and vineyards — including the Sakazaki's backyard vines (their house was spared) — Jack Sakazaki searched for viable replacements to graft onto his surviving vines. At the University of California, Davis, he discovered Koshu, and his body tingled with excitement. It's the most well-known of three native varietals from Japan.

Jack Sakazaki purchased all the Koshu canes they had available. What if they could introduce Americans to Koshu wine?





Napa Koshu grapes in 2023. Koshu's thick skin makes it a varietal of the future. *(Below)*

Koshu harvest

He told every winery owner and winemaker about the Koshu vines and eventually found two growers in Napa Valley who agreed to grow the Koshu grapes. Kazumi makes wine in partnership with growers without owning a winery, an increasingly common approach that allows independent winemakers and boutique brands to produce high-quality wine without the massive capital investment required to own a vineyard and winemaking facilities.

Today, Koshu grapes grow in 5.5 acres across South Napa and Oak Knoll.

Michelle Sakazaki's Koshu is not a copy of its Japanese counterpart — it is a reinvention and a Japanese American story in a bottle.

The Napa version has more body, said Minami. When he received a bottle of the first release of the Kozumi Koshu, he also bought some Japanese Koshu to compare the two. The Japanese version is refreshing but not necessarily complex.

"Kazumi, to me, had more complexity, so it had a little more body," said Minami. "The pioneering aspect of this wine is the attraction to me."

In 2024, Kazumi produced 900 cases of Koshu — small by production standards.

Now, Kazumi is planning to expand the planting of Koshu vines in Lodi. More sparkling Koshu is also in the works. To scale the business, Michelle Sakazaki works with an all-Asian team, including winemaker Kale Anderson, who is of Filipino descent.

As she deepens her roots in the industry, Sakazaki is not alone. A growing number of Asian American and Pacific Islander winemakers, sommeliers and entrepreneurs are reshaping the wine landscape. This year, a group of industry professionals established the Asian Wine Association of America, an organization aimed at increasing visibility, mentorship and representation for AAPI voices in the wine industry.

Michelle Sakazaki and Minami both serve on the AWAA's board of directors.

She doesn't work the land, but she is from it. In the shade of the vines or the hustle of the business, she often thinks about her maternal grandmother, Hatsue Doioka, with whom she shared a close relationship. Hatsue saw Michelle in action taking notes, tasting and working with growers.

This business was meant for Michelle, said Hatsue, who died in 2014. Others would say Michelle Sakazaki is meant for the wine business.

Some vines, it turns out, were always destined to grow here.

For more information, visit www.kazumiwines.com.



Harvesting Koshu grapes



Michelle Sakazaki's paternal Issei great-grandparents, Sakuzo and Sueme Shimasaki, worked as migrant farm workers before settling in Los Angeles before World War II, where they ran the produce section of a supermarket chain called the Piggly Wiggly.

FLORIN JACL CHAPTER AWARDS SCHOLARSHIPS

The Florin JACL chapter announced its 2025 scholarship awards during its annual Ice Cream Social on May 18. This year's recipients hailed from Sacramento-area high schools and California State University, Sacramento, and were judged on achievements in JACL involvements, academic and scholastic honors, extracurricular activities, community service, work history and Japanese cultural activities.

Following are this year's winners:



JUSTIN HITE is a recent graduate from California State University, Sacramento. He will be pursuing a master's and eventual doctorate at San Diego State University, with the hopes of attaining professorship in the English department. He has been a student assistant at the CSUS Asian Pacific Islander Desi American Center, researcher at the CSUS Center on Race, Immigration & Social Justice and a public relations manager for the Hmong University Student Assn. He is the inaugural recipient of the CSUS/Ayad Al- Qazzaz Outreach Scholarship Endowment. Hite also has a record of reaching out beyond the Japanese American community and works to bring diverse communities together. He attended the 2024 and 2025 Florin-Manzanar pilgrimages, where he learned about Israel-Palestine conflict and the far-reaching impacts of the JACL. Within his interview, the Florin chapter's 2025 Scholarship Selection committee was inspired by his zeal for doing what is right and helping others.



MADISON LEE is a graduate of West Campus High School. She plans to attend the University of California, Irvine, this fall as a biology major. She is actively involved in her community and school, holding leadership roles such as vp of the Asian American Association Club and secretary of the California Scholarship Federation. Lee has also volunteered extensively for organizations such as the JACL, Saint John's Shelter Program and West Sac Kids Give Back. Through JACL, she had the unique opportunity to participate in the grand opening of the "Uprooted" exhibit at the California Museum. Inspired by the exhibit, she began collecting historical data from her grandparents. Lee's dedication to preserving her Japanese heritage and fostering community connections is evident through her volunteer work and leadership roles.

MANA NOZUE is a graduate of Davis Senior High School, where she was involved in the Japanese Culture Club, Greenpeace Club, California Scholarship Federation, National Honor Society, two years on the Diving and the Water Polo teams serving as captain and a lifeguard aide. She plans to attend the University of California, Santa Barbara, as a marine biology major. She has participated in the Kansha History Project, reaching out to the community with information about the Nikkei farm history.

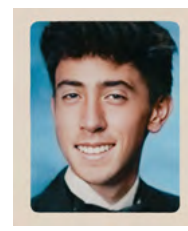


Nozue believes that education is key and has been instrumental in educating people outside of the JA community regarding the internment experience during World War II by informing, connecting and sharing cultures. In so doing, it has helped her learn more about herself, as well as others. In a short period of time, Nozue has become active in the Florin JACL as a Manzanar Ambassador, member of the planning committee for the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage and numerous other Florin JACL events.

AKIRA RANSIBRAHMANAKUL is a graduate of Folsom High School and plans on attending California State University, Fresno, as a computer science major. He has volunteered for Florin JACL events since the age of 13, including events at the California Museum. Ransibrahmanakul believes in the power of community, honoring the values of respect and resilience and the importance of intergenerational collaboration. He has been active in a number of clubs in high school, including Stock Market Club, Water Shed Club, International Film Club and Folsom High Golf Team. He grew up attending a Japanese International School at CSUS, where he learned kanji, calligraphy, Japanese history and traditional arts. In addition, he is fluent in reading, writing and speaking Japanese and has spent several summers as an exchange student in Japan.



ROBBIE UNO is a graduate of River City High School in West Sacramento where he maintained a 4.0 GPA over his four years while providing leadership roles on his track and field teams and in the music programs. His musical talents were evident as he played in the marching band, wind ensemble, honor band and the high school Golden State Band and Rising Musicians, and he was recognized as Rookie of the Year and recipient of the Director's Award. In addition to music and sports, Uno participated in the Interact Club and Link Crew. He also attended Jan Ken Po Gakko Japanese cultural program from grades 2-6, participated in the Parkview Presbyterian Church youth group and helped Florin JACL with the Mochi Madness, Scholarship Hot Dog event and Ice Cream Social. He plans to major in aerospace engineering in college.

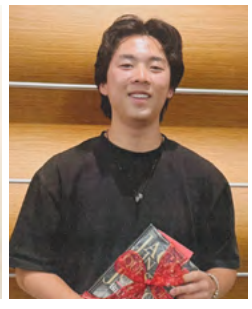


NATHAN YAMAMOTO is a graduate of DaVinci Charter Academy in Davis, where he maintained a 4.0 GPA. He has been awarded several literary and photo essay honors and is team captain and helps to coach the varsity tennis team. He is also involved with his church and enjoys working in its Japanese garden, while also being involved in community history projects and efforts to fund local libraries. Recently, he has been interested in Japanese films and the cultural differences between Japan and the United States. Although Yamamoto is new to Florin JACL, he looks forward to volunteering and getting more involved in its activities. He plans to major in history in college. ■













(Clockwise from upper left) **Justin Quon, Kalei Aoki-Chance, Keizo Arakawa, Michael Yebisu and Macey Aoki-Chance**

PHOTOS: JACL FRESNO CHAPTER

JACL Fresno Chapter and CCDC District Announce 2025 Scholarship Recipients

By JACL Fresno Chapter

The Fresno Chapter of the JACL is pleased to announce its 2025 scholarship recipients. Five outstanding Fresno JACL student members were chosen to receive scholarships, which included the Fred Y. and Setsu Hirasuna Scholarship ($1,000), the Miyahara/Kusakai Scholarship ($1,000), the Masao and Hana Kimura Scholarship ($2,000) and the Bertha and John Garabedian Foundation Scholarship (two awards at $1,000 each).

This year's recipients are Michael Yebisu (University of Oklahoma), Kalei Aoki-Chance (California State University, Fullerton), Keizo Arakawa (Reedley High School), Macey Aoki-Chance (Montana State University) and Justin Quon (University of California, San Diego).

In addition to their scholarship award, each of this year's winners were presented with the book "JACL in Quest of Justice" by Bill Hosokawa. Scholarship committee members included Randy Aoki (Fresno scholarship chair), Roberta Barton (Fresno chapter president), Joy Goto (Fresno chapter treasurer) and Katsuyo Howard (member).

Kalei Aoki-Chance ($500 CCDC JACL Scholarship), Macey Aoki-Chance ($500 Issei Memorial Scholarship) and Keizo Arakawa ($1,000 Miyahara/Kusakai Scholarship) were also awarded with the Central California District Council's JACL scholarships. ■

Thank You for Your JACL Membership!

We're grateful to have some of the most engaged and committed members around! Because of your loyal support, we have more premium membership upgrades and generous additional gifts than ever. We're also appreciative for those who renew year after year (some for 50 years or more!) and for our increase in new members. Your dedication is essential to our ongoing mission for social justice, education, and community! Thank you! - *JACL Membership Department*

Not a member? Join us today!
Visit jacl.org/member
or contact us at mbr@jacl.org

AAPI EQUITY ALLIANCE ASSEMBLES IN LITTLE TOKYO

Nonprofits, political leaders aim heat at ICE over raids, unrest.

By P.C. Staff

A Little Tokyo news conference organized by AAPI Equity Alliance and American Community Media gathered local political leaders and representatives from an assemblage of AANHPI organizations on June 26.

Its purpose: to send messages of solidarity with those in the Latino immigrant community targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), denounce the "inhumane ways that the Trump administration is treating our immigrant communities" and make connections to Asian and Pacific Islanders who have been or may be next in the federal government's crosshairs.

The event was facilitated by AAPI Equity Alliance Executive Director Manjusha Kulkarni, who introduced California Assemblymember Mike Fong (D-49th District), Los Angeles City Councilmember Ysabel Jurado (D-District 14), Los Angeles City Councilmember Nithya Raman (D-4th District), Coalition for Humane Immigrant Rights Director of External Affairs Oscar Zarate, Catalyst California President and CEO John Kim, Asian Americans Advancing Justice Southern California CEO Connie Chung Joe, Thai Community Development Center founder Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell, Little Tokyo Service Center Executive Director Peter Gee and Executive Director of Chinese for Affirmative Action and Stop AAPI Hate Co-Founder Cynthia Choi.

Also acknowledged were Monterey Park City Councilmember Henry Lo (District 4) and representatives of Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass, Assemblymember Jessica Calosa (D-52nd District), County Supervisor Holly Mitchell (D-Supervisorial District 2) and Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.).

Following the speakers was a Q & A session with members of the press. By that time, however, the politicians had departed. In a follow-up via email with the office of Councilwoman Jurado, whose district includes Little Tokyo, *Pacific Citizen* asked two questions:



Speakers and supporters gather for this group photo at the June 26 news conference held at the outdoor plaza of the Terasaki Budokan in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. PHOTO: M PALMA PHOTOGRAPHY

- Going back to the unrest of June 8-9 in downtown Los Angeles, does Jurado have any knowledge of or has she inquired with the Los Angeles Police Department as to why police chose to direct protesters through Little Tokyo (1st and 2nd Streets) instead of blocking off Los Angeles, Judge John Aiso and Alameda Streets and directing them along Temple Street?
- Has Jurado or another councilmember proposed getting the mayor and City Council to implement an emergency moratorium on spray paint sales throughout the city limits of Los Angeles and reaching out to Los Angeles County to implement a simultaneous moratorium on spray paint sales throughout the county?

After receiving no answer from Jurado's communications director, two more emails were sent. At press time, no answers to the questions have been received.

Following are selected quotes from each speaker at the June 26 press conference event.

Manjusha Kulkarni: "AAPI Equity Alliance stands in solidarity with the Latino community who have borne the brunt of these kidnappings. … We call for an immediate cease to the raids, and we call for ICE to leave Los Angeles immediately."

Mike Fong: "We must stand together against the federal administration's targeting of workplaces, schools, hospitals and protect the constitutional rights of all people in the United States, regardless of immigration status.

"At the California State Legislature, we're doing everything possible to increase accountability and transparency of law enforcement. Also looking at the legislation that's being proposed by Sen. Sasha Renée Pérez, who's introduced SB 805, the No Vigilantes Act, which will require anyone conducting law enforcement to display their name and badge number. And there's also SB 627, the No Secret Police Act authored by Sens. (Scott) Weiner and Jesse Arreguin to ban local, state and federal officials from covering their faces."

Ysabel Jurado: "These actions are cruel, and they do not reflect our values. Make no mistake, this isn't just a Latino issue. This is an AAPI issue, and this is an L.A. issue.

"What we're seeing right now is fear replacing care and cruelty replacing justice, and let's name it for what it is, political theater. The violence that has been inflicted in our communities was by the federal government, and they need to stop the occupation here in Los Angeles and stop the ICE raids.

"I say to every Angeleno, especially those in the AAPI community, stand with your undocumented neighbors. Stand with the organizers, the caregivers, the workers, the families who make this city strong."

Nithya Raman: "The raids that we've

» See AAPI on page 12



***(Clockwise from upper left)* Manjusha Kulkarni, Mike Fong, Ysabel Jurado, Nithya Raman, Oscar Zarate, John Kim, Connie Chung Joe, Chanchanit "Chancee" Martorell, Peter Gee and Cynthia Choi**

COMPOSITE PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2026 TOUR SCHEDULE

HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVALS TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Feb 2-13
Lake Akan, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Otaru, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.
Hyobaku Ice Festival, Asahikawa Snow Festival, Sapporo Snow Festival,
Hyoto Winter Festival.

JAPAN SOUTHERN CHARMS HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Mar 9-20
Fukuoka, Hagi, Suo-Oshima, Hiroshima, Matsuyama, Takamatsu,
Shodo Island, Okayama, Kurashiki, Himeji, Osaka.

GREAT TRAINS-SEDONA HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Mar 15-20
Sedona Tour, Grand Canyon Railway to Grand Canyon South Rim, Flagstaff,
Montezuma Castle National Park, Verde Canyon Railway to 2 National Parks.

JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Apr 13-25
Tokyo, Shimoda, Commodore Perry sites, Shizuoka, Mt Fuji, Lake Kawaguchi,
Matsumoto, Tsumago/Nagome, Gero Onsen, Toba, Nagoya.

NEW YORK CITY HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Apr 23-28
New York City Tour, Statue of Liberty, Ferry Cruise of New York Harbor,
9/11 Memorial & Museum, 2 Broadway Shows.

MT RUSHMORE-YELLOWSTONE HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Jun 17-25
Rapid City, Mt Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial, Billings, Little Big Horn
National Monument, Cody, Yellowstone National Park, Jackson, Grand Tetons
National Park, Salt Lake City.

GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Jun 21-Jul 1
Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experiences.

ALASKA HOLIDAY CRUISE (Carol Hida) . . . . . Jul 18-25
Vancouver, Sail Inside Passage, Juneau, Skagway, Cruise Glacier Bay,
Ketchikan – "Salmon Capital", Vancouver. Koningsdam - Holland America Cruise.

PANA CONVENTION (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Sep
Sao Paulo-Brazil.

JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Oct 5-18
Hokkaido-Tohoku. Kushiro, Lake Akan, Sounkyo, Asahikawa, Sapporo,
Otaru, Noboribetsu, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Aomori, Lake Towada, Morioka,
Hiraizmi, Naruto Onsen, Matsushima, Mito, Tokyo.

AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Oct 26-Nov 11
Sydney, Cairns, Melbourne, Queenstown, Rotorua, Auckland.

CHRISTMAS MARKET CANADA HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Dec 1-7
Vancouver City Tour, Grouse Mountain Skyride, Shipyards Christmas Market,
Ferry to Victoria Island, Butchart Gardens, High Tea at Fairmont Empress Hotel,
Victoria Christmas Market & Fair, Van Dusen Festival of Lights.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL
312 E. 1st Street, Suite 240 * Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213)625-2232 * Email: americanholiday@att.net
Ernest or Carol Hida

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NCWNP

'League of Dreams' Sacramento Premiere
Sacramento, CA
July 26; 1 p.m.
The California Museum
1020 O St.
Price: $20 General Admission; Free for Students
The Florin JACL-Sacramento Valley and California Museum present this screening that will follow with a Q & A with filmmaker Lane Nishikawa and former JACL National Executive Director John Tateishi.
Info: For tickets, visit https://tinyurl.com/SacPremiere.

Gunpla Social
San Francisco, CA
Aug. 16; 1-4 p.m.
The Center
1840 Sutter St.
Price: $5 BYOGunpla
Are you a fan of the iconic mecha anime Gundam? Join the community in building the popular Japanese mecha models. This event promises to be a fun and enriching opportunity to connect with like-minded enthusiasts.
Info: Visit bit.ly/CenterGunpla and www.jcccnc.org.

Kabuki Theatre Appreciation Class With JETAANC
San Francisco, CA
Aug. 21; 6:30-8:30 p.m.
The Center
1840 Sutter St.
Price: Free But Donations Encouraged
Learn why millions have come to love the drama, spectacle and beauty of the powerful tradition of Kabuki Theatre. No preparation needed. All ages are welcome.
Info: Visit www.jcccnc.org and www.jetaanc.org/kabuki-club.

PSW

'Brushed Between Worlds' Art Exhibit
Albuquerque, NM
Thru July 25
Japanese American Cultural Center
1501 San Pedro Dr. N.E.
Price: Free
This exhibit will feature the artwork of local artists Junko Nakao and C. Hitoshi Nakagawa and their poetic nod to sumi-e, watercolor and storytelling rooted in nature and memory.
Info: Call (505) 308-8090.

Higashi Hongwanji Obon Festival 2025
Los Angeles, CA
July 26-27; 1-9 p.m.
Higashi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
505 E. Third St.
Price: Free
There will be plenty of food, games, bingo, a farmers market, taiko, music and cultural performances, Obon service and Bon Odori dancing (both days) at 6:30 p.m.
Info: Visit hhbt-la.org.

San Diego Bon Odori 2025
San Diego, CA
Aug. 2; 4:30-9 p.m.
San Diego Buddhist Temple
2929 Market St.
Price: Free
Celebrate "Gathering of Joy" at the 2025 Obon Festival, which is dedicated to expressing joy and gratitude for the gifts of life, heritage and those we have lost. Come enjoy Bon Odori dancing, food and refreshments and much more!
Info: Email info@btsd.net.

Matsu Japanese Wine Night
Oceanside, CA
Aug. 12; Reservation Times Vary
Matsu
626 S. Tremont St.
Price: $375 Per Person
This six-course pairing dinner will feature wine from Japanese vineyards, ending with a dessert paired with Japanese whiskey. This special meal is a tribute to Yamanashi, the birthplace of Japanese winemaking and also the home to Koshu, Japan's only traditional grape variety.
Info: Visit https://eatatmatsu.com.

Natsumatsuri Family Festival During Nisei Week
Los Angeles, CA
Aug. 16; 11 a.m.-5 p.m.
JANM Democracy Center and Norman Y. Mineta Democracy Plaza
100 N. Central Ave.
Price: Free
Celebrate summer and Nisei Week at this family event featuring cultural performances, crafts, storytime with author and racecar driver Nadine Sachiko Hsu, origami and much more!
Info: Visit janm.org.

8th Annual Keiro No Hi Festival
Los Angeles, CA
Sept. 13; 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Los Angeles Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple
Price: Free for Attendees 60+; $20 for Attendees 59 and under; Registration Required.
This festival will feature live entertainment with performances by local older adults, food, vendors and much more. Registration is required before Aug. 22 or capacity is reached.
Info: Email events@keiro.org.

2025 VJCC Golf Tournament
Whittier, CA
Sept. 22
Candlewood Country Club
14000 Telegraph Road
Price: $200
This year's tournament will be a handicapped four-person team scramble format, with the shotgun start at 9 a.m., followed by an awards and buffet lunch at 2 p.m. Registration deadline is Sept. 12. All proceeds will benefit the VJCC Building Fund.
Info: Email golf@vjcc.com or call (310) 822-8885.

RAP Arts and Crafts Fair
Los Angeles, CA
Sept. 27; 9 a.m.-3 p.m.
Venice Japanese Community Center
12448 Braddock Dr.
Price: Free
Don't miss your opportunity to get a jump-start on holiday shopping with this craft fair that will feature plenty of unique craft items and much more!
Info: Interested in becoming a vendor, contact lola.hongo@gmail.com, sluyeda83@gmail.com or shar6416@aol.com.

PNW

'Sadako and Paper Cranes: Through Our Eyes'
Portland, OR
Thru Sept. 7
Japanese American Museum of Oregon
411 N.W. Flanders St.
In observance of 80 years since the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, this exhibit examines the devastation of nuclear war through the eyes of Sadako Sasaki.
Info: For information, visit https://jamo.org/sadako/.

2025 Heart Mountain Pilgrimage
Powell and Cody, WY
July 24-26
Heart Mountain Interpretive Center
1539 Road 19
Price: Pilgrimage Registration Prices Vary
Featured events include the premiere of "Hello Maggie!" the stamping of the Ireicho, the debut of a short film exploring cultural connections to Heart Mountain, multigenerational discussion groups and the ever-popular Sayonara Banquet.
Info: For more information, visit www.heartmountain.org.

'Natural Patterns: Katazome Stencil Dying'
Portland, OR
Thru Sept. 15
Portland Japanese Garden
The Calvin and Mayho Tanabe Gallery
611 S.W. Kingston Ave.
Price: $22.50 Admission
Katazome is a method of using paper stencils and resist paste to dye fabrics. This exhibit will feature the work of local Oregon artist Karen Illman Miller, who has practiced *katazome* for the past 30 years.
Info: Visit www.japanesegarden.org.

MDC

Intergenerational Conversations: 'Ripples of the Past' Program
Chicago, IL
Aug. 30; 3:30-6:30 p.m.
Midwest Buddhist Temple
435 W. Menomonee St.
Price: Free
This program from the JACL Chicago chapter brings Chicago-area Nikkei together to connect and process the trauma of WWII through personal story sharing.
Info: RSVP by Aug. 16. Visit https://jaclchicago.org/programs/intergenerational-conversations/.

Ground Blessing for Snow Country Prison Memorial and Pilgrimage to Bismarck
Bismarck, ND
Sept. 5
Courtyard of the Historic Barrack Building
This pilgrimage to Bismarck will celebrate the completion of the Snow Country Prison Japanese American Internment Memorial. Activities include a Native American ground blessing of the site, an honoring of those interned there during WWII and education programs and cultural performances.
Info: To learn more, visit https://uttc.edu/about-uttc/visit-our-campus/snow-country-prison-memorial-at-bismarck/.

2025 Crystal City Pilgrimage and Conference
San Antonio, TX
Oct. 9-12
Conference Portion: DoubleTree San Antonio Airport Hotel
611 N.W. Loop 410
Price: $395
Themed "Crystal City Rising — Neighbors Not Enemies," event programming will be centered around the present-day attacks on immigrant communities, Participants will also have the opportunity to stamp the Ireicho book.
Info: Visit www.crystalcitypilgrimage.org/2025-pilgrimage.

EDC

'Yakyu/Baseball: The Transpacific Exchange of the Game'
Cooperstown, NY
Opens in July
Baseball Hall of Fame
25 Main St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit explores the exchange of baseball between Japan and the U.S. from the Meiji era to today and the transpacific circulation of baseball concepts, style of play and people that shaped the shared culture of the game.
Info: Visit https://baseballhall.org.

Think!Chinatown Summer Events Chinatown Night Market
Manhattan, NY
July 25, Aug. 15, Aug. 30
Manhattan's Chinatown
Price: Free
Think!Chinatown's Night Market is here to build community with food and friends.
Info: Visit www.thinkchinatown.org.

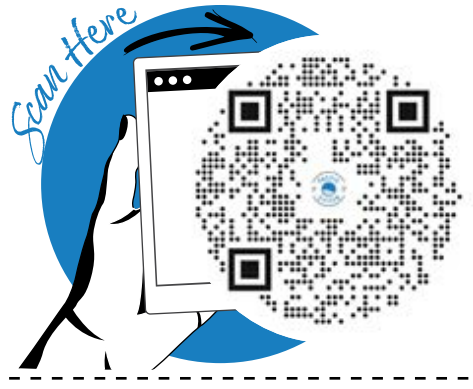
Japanese War Brides: Across a Wide Divide
Delray Beach, FL
Thru Aug. 17
Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens
4000 Morikami Park Road
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit illuminates previously unknown American immigration stories.
Info: Visit https://morikami.org/upcoming-exhibitions/.

Celebrating Sano Gofu: 50th Anniversary of Sho-Fu-An
Duxbury, MA
Thru August
Art Complex Museum
189 Alden St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit displays the paintings, sketches and architectural plans of Sano Gofu, a famous watercolor artist from Japan.
Info: Visit artcomplex.org. ■

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83rd Nisei Week Reveals 2025 Festival Lineup

Celebration for honorees, award winners, next queen runs Aug. 9-17.

By P.C. Staff

The Nisei Week Foundation has released details about its upcoming Nisei Week Japanese Festival, which runs Aug. 9-17 in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.

With 2025 marking its 83rd anniversary, the nine-daylong festival continues its Nisei Week queen and court tradition, as well as its Grand Parade celebrating the Japanese American experience and *ondō* street dancing, along with its Pioneer Spirit Awards luncheon that recognizes individuals for their service to the Japanese American community.

The candidates for Nisei Week queen made their debut July 13.

The 2025 roster and respective sponsoring organization are as follows:

- **Samantha Kimiyo Cirelli** (Venice Japanese Community Center & Venice-West Los Angeles JACL)
- **Mika Fumiyo Megumi Dyo** (Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute)
- **Emma Yasuko Shojinaga Fukunaga** (Japanese Restaurant Association of America)
- **Casey Mariko Kuramoto** (Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council)
- **Kimi Look** (Gardena Evening Optimist)
- **Megan Ayumi Miyamoto** (San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center)
- **Mia Miyoko Takatsuka** (East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center).



The 2025 Nisei Week queen candidates are *(standing, from left)* Megan Ayumi Miyamoto, Casey Mariko Kuramoto, Mia Miyoko Takatsuka and Emma Yasuko Shojinaga Fukunaga. Seated *(from left)* are Kimi Look, Samantha Kimiyo Cirelli and Mika Fumiyo Megumi Dyo.

PHOTO: COURTESY NISEI WEEK FOUNDATION/TOYO MIYATAKE STUDIO

The seven candidates will vie for the title of Nisei Week Queen on Aug. 9 at 6:30 p.m. during the Coronation and Awards Celebration at the Aratani Theatre. Serving as co-hosts for the event are actor-activist Tamlyn Tomita and Los Angeles TV news anchor David Ono of KABC Channel 7. For details on each candidate, visit *niseiweek.org/candidates/*.

Serving as Nisei Week choreographer is Bando Hidesomi. She has been responsible for Nisei Week Coronation choreography since 2015 and has led and choreographed the Nisei Week Parade.

This year's recipients of the Frances K. Hashimoto Community Service Award, which recognizes people and organizations for their outstanding contributions to the Southern California Japanese American community, are Doug and Chris Aihara, and Azay restaurant.

Meantime, Michael Okamura has been named as a Nisei Week Inspiration Award honoree, along with Japanese American Vietnam War veterans on the 50th anniversary of the end of that war. Both parties will be honored at the Coronation and Awards Celebration, as will 2025 parade Grand Marshal Thomas Iino and Parade Marshal East West Players.

Per-person tickets for the Coronation and Awards Celebration are $95 (orchestra) or $65 (balcony) and may be purchased via the JACCC website (*jaccc.org/*) or by calling the Aratani Theatre box office at (213) 680-3700.

On Aug. 10, the newly crowned Nisei Week queen and court will participate in Nisei Week's Grand Parade, which starts at 4 p.m. Leading the parade will be Iino and East West Players. The parade features Japanese taiko drum performers, local community groups, high schools, elected officials and representatives.

Another signature feature of Nisei Week is its Pioneer Spirit Awards at 11 a.m. on Aug. 13, honoring four dedicated leaders and outstanding members of the greater Los Angeles Japanese American community. Being honored this year for their contributions are:



The 2025 Nisei Week Pioneer Spirit Award honorees are *(clockwise from upper left)* Miya Iwataki, Gene S. Kanamori, David Miyoshi and Katsuyoshi Miyazato.

PHOTOS: COURTESY NISEI WEEK FOUNDATION

- **Miya Iwataki** (nominated by the Little Tokyo Historical Society)
- **Gene S. Kanamori** (nominated by Keiro)
- **Katsuyoshi Miyazato** (nominated by the Nanka Fukuoka Kenjinkai)
- **David Miyoshi** (nominated by the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council).

The 2025 Pioneer Spirit Awards Luncheon takes place at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center's Toshizo Watanabe Culinary Cultural Center. Tickets are $95 per person or $950 per table of 10. Tickets may be purchased by visiting *niseiweek.org;* questions may be sent to *pioneer-luncheon@niseiweek.org*. (To read the *P.C.'s* coverage of last year's Pioneer Spirit Awards, visit *tinyurl.com/4w4dph9v*.)

For details about the accomplishments and contributions of each Pioneer Spirit Award recipient, the Hashimoto Community Service Award and Nisei Week Inspiration Award honorees, as well as the grand marshal and parade marshal, visit *tinyurl.com/9f59c5w2*.

For details on the Nisei Week Festival, visit *niseiweek.org*. ■

In MEMORIAM

Arao, Motomi, 91, Los Angeles, CA, June 26.

Kimura, Andrea 'Andie,' 37, Santa Monica, CA, May 4.

Okamoto, Susanne, 83, Gwynedd, PA, May 30.

Uyehara, William Suyekichi, 93, Los Angeles, CA, March 16.

Yama, Chris Kunio, 59, Fairfield, CA, March 22.

Yonezawa, Kenneth Kazuyuki, 94, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 23. ■

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News Brief

Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670 Awarded All-American Honors

The Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States has bestowed Garden Grove, Calif.-based Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670 All American Post honors. This designation is awarded to fewer than 5 percent of VFW posts nationwide. To be so honored, a post must meet criteria that includes exceptional performance in membership growth, community outreach, youth engagement and advocacy for veterans' rights. Nevertheless, Post 3670 in a statement said: "This honor is not just about numbers or benchmarks. It affirms the legacy of our Nisei fathers and uncles and the continued commitment of Sansei, Yonsei and beyond. Together, we carry forward a living history of loyalty, resilience and leadership."

— P.C. Staff

GREATER PORTLAND AREA HOLDS 78TH ANNUAL JAPANESE AMERICAN GRADUATION BANQUET

The greater Portland area held its 78th Annual Japanese American Graduation banquet to recognize the achievements of 35 local high school seniors on May 4 at the Riverside Golf and Country Club.

With 215 people in attendance to celebrate and congratulate the students in the class of 2025, $35,000 in scholarships were awarded to the outstanding students to help start their college careers. The annual banquet is sponsored by Portland JACL, Gresham-Troutdale JACL, the Buddhist Henjyoji Temple, Epworth United Methodist Church, the Japanese Ancestral Society of Portland, the Nikkei Fujinkai, the Nichiren Buddhist Temple, the Oregon Nisei Veterans, the Oregon Buddhist Temple, the Veleda Women's Group and Shokookai of Portland.

In addition to the scholarships, each student received the book "Facing the Mountain, a True Story of Japanese American Heroes in World War II" by Daniel James Brown, donated by the Oregon Nisei Veterans. ■



Pictured in row 1 *(from left)* are Sayuri Hara, Hanako Duff, Selina Uehara, Mona Brines, Kou Yuasa, Claire Coffey, Lindsay Persaud, Midori Carrollo, Tyler Saito Takasumi; second row *(from left)* Kiyoshi Kiyokawa, Myles Mathies, Reiko Nitta, Issa Ono, Kai Maeda, Isaac Matsushima, Aiden Yee, Koshi Tamiyagi, Masahiro Nakano, Ichiro Tanada, Lili Baechel; third row *(from left)* Kenshiro Duff, Dylan Nakaji, Lennon Kalapsa, Trillium Ono, Takumi Schmidt, Mason Birney, Avery Hughes-Davis, Reon Sano-Ochiai, Issai Honda; and fourth row *(from left)* Kegan Egusa, Ren Gregie, Keiden Meyer, Joshua Strege, Thelonius VanDam and Alexander Jiminez.

PHOTO: CURTIS SUYEMATSU

AAPI » continued from page 9

seen across Los Angeles are not just disruptive, they are cruel and they are unconstitutional. … We make up 15% of the undocumented population here in America. South Asians, Indians make up 5% of the undocumented population. … It is not just an attack on them, it is an attack on us. And that is chilling."

Oscar Zarate: "We reject narratives meant to divide us and instead build bridges rooted in our collective liberation. . . . Let's keep showing up for each other, and as always, all power to the people."

John Kim: "If we let these atrocities pass because we tell ourselves it is not our turn on the hot seat, then we know it's just a matter of time before they turn on us and they turn on our families and our children."

Connie Chung Joe: "We do not need federal agents here to protect our city. We can protect our city. What we need protection from is from you, federal agents who are terrorizing our communities, separating our communities, taking us, even folks who have things like DACA — and they've been here for years. Those folks are now scared to go in for their annual check-ins because they are getting taken."

Chanchanit 'Chancee' Martorell: "Today we are banding together as human rights defenders with the following call to action: Stop the raids, apprehensions, kidnappings and military takeover of communities, uphold due process, constitutional rights and access to legal counsel."

Peter Gee: "I stand here just blocks away in Little Tokyo where tens of thousands of families were forcibly removed and detained without due process. That history lives with us, and today we're seeing the same forces at play: fear, racial scapegoating and unchecked government power. . . . We won't be silenced, and we won't let history repeat itself."

Cynthia Choi: "We must affirm that every single person in California and in this country has constitutional rights regardless of their immigration status. . . . We must come together to not only defend our communities but to build a future that belongs to everyone." ■



