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JACLYN HIDEMI TOMITA NAMED 2016 NISEI WEEK QUEEN

LOS ANGELES – August 14, 2016 – On August 13, with a crowd of nearly 700 in attendance at the Aratani Theatre in Little Tokyo, Jaclyn Hidemi Tomita was crowned the 2016 Nisei Week Queen. Megan Tomiko Ono was named 1st Princess, and Julia Kiyomi Tani was chosen Miss Tomodachi by the other candidates. Tomita, 24, graduated from San Diego State University where she was involved with the Nikkei Student Union and was a participant in the Kakehashi Project, whose mission is to facilitate understanding between Japanese and Japanese Americans. She received a bachelor's degree in multimedia art and plans to attend nursing school to become a registered nurse, and later hopes to return to school to become a nurse practitioner and pursue a doctorate degree.

Tomita represented the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center, where she played basketball with the San Fernando Athletics. When asked how she felt when she heard her name, "I was in shock at first and then an overwhelming sense of happiness." Tomita added, "I've never bonded so instantaneously with a group of girls before. I'm so excited for this journey we're about to take together."

Tomita's hobbies include attending live music performances, making pottery pieces, listening to spoken word poetry, and watching plays at the Pantages Theater in Hollywood. In addition to her commitments as the Nisei Week Queen, Tomita is supporting the Michael J. Fox Foundation as her platform this year.

The 2016 Nisei Week Court are:

1st Princess - Megan Tomiko Ono (Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council)

Megan Tomiko Ono is 23 years old and a graduate of California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in communication studies and a minor in marketing. She plans to attend graduate school and pursue a career in the nonprofit field, using her marketing and communication skills to support under-served communities. Ono's hobbies include playing basketball, running and surfing at the beach, serving as a facilitator for Kizuna's youth programs, and volunteering for other Japanese American community organizations. She will support the Lakers Youth Foundation as her platform.

Miss Tomodachi - Julia Kiyomi Tani (Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute)

Julia Kiyomi Tani is 24 years old and a graduate of the California Maritime Academy with a bachelor's degree in international business and logistics. She hopes to become a special education teacher or speech pathologist. Tani's hobbies include playing basketball, volunteering in the community, working

Princess - Heather Yoneko Iwata (East San Gabriel Japanese Community Center)

Heather Yoneko Iwata is 25 years old and graduated from the University of Southern California with a bachelor's degree in communication. She aspires to be a leader in cultivating diversity within the entertainment industry and would eventually like to open up her own small business in Little Tokyo.

Iwata's hobbies include fly-fishing for trout at Mammoth Lakes, exploring hole-in-the-wall restaurants, mentoring at-risk teens, and venturing to foreign countries to experience how others live.

This year Iwata will support the Pediatric Cancer Research Program as her platform.

Princess Kaya Minezaki (Japanese Restaurant Association of America)

Kaya Minezaki is 24 years old and a graduate of the University of Hawaii at Manoa where she received her bachelor's degree in biology and a minor in English. She also studied abroad at Waseda University in Japan and Freie Universität Berlin in Germany before completing her degree. She plans to attend medical school, specializing in emergency medicine and working to provide compassionate healthcare to diverse and underserved communities. Minezaki's hobbies include playing the piano, dancing hula, learning foreign languages, hiking, traveling, and trying different ethnic cuisines. She will support Project Angel Food as her platform this year.

Princess April Leilani Nishinaka (Gardena Evening Optimist)

April Leilani Nishinaka is 23 years old and graduated from the University of Southern California with a bachelor's degree in physics and a minor in American studies and ethnicity. She aspires to become a high school math or science teacher. Nishinaka's hobbies include doing arts and crafts, playing the violin, cheering for the USC Trojans and Los Angeles Dodgers, watching Disney movies, and empowering youth. The platform she will support this year is the Expanding Your Horizons Network.

with special needs children, and going to Disneyland. She will support PATH as her platform this year.

Princess Shannon Aiko Rose Tsumaki (West Los Angeles JACL & Venice Japanese Community Center)

Shannon Aiko Rose Tsumaki is 22 years old and a graduate of Whittier College with a bachelor's degree in sociology and a minor in anthropology. She hopes to attain a management role in human resources, helping individuals to reach their potential as motivated and efficient employees. Tsumaki's hobbies include playing and coaching basketball, going to Disneyland, visiting her family in Hawaii, hanging out with her friends, watching movies, and baking treats. The platform she will support this year is the Susan G. Komen for the Cure.

The court will represent the Nisei Week Foundation at community events locally and nationally (including Nagoya, Japan) throughout the year.

The 2016 Nisei Week Japanese Festival is a nine-day event first held in 1934, and is recognized today as one of the longest running ethnic festivals in the United States. This event will take place in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo district from August 13-21. For a calendar of events, log on to www.NiseiWeek.org, call the Nisei Week Foundation office at 213.687.7193 or email info@niseiweek.org. The Nisei Week office is located at 244 South San Pedro Street, Suite 303, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

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