



NISEI WEEK™  
Foundation

*PRESS RELEASE*  
For immediate release

For more information:  
Diane Tanaka 310.962.2698  
pr@niseiweek.org

## **2018 NISEI WEEK INSPIRATION AWARD RECOGNIZES HAROLD “HAL” KEIMI**

**(Los Angeles – July 15, 2018)** – The Nisei Week Foundation is pleased to honor a special individual with the 2018 Nisei Week Inspiration Award, which recognizes individuals who exemplify the spirit of Nisei Week by going above and beyond to volunteer their time and/or service or whose contributions have promoted the Japanese and Japanese American community and/or culture. This year, Harold “Hal” Keimi, a long time Nisei Week volunteer will receive the Inspiration Award.

This exceptional individual will be honored at the annual Awards Dinner to be held on Monday, August 13 at the Double Tree by Hilton (120 S. Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles). Starting at 6 p.m., individual tickets are \$95 and tables of 10 are \$950. Also recognized at the Awards Dinner will be this year’s Grand Marshal, The Honorable Vincent H. Okamoto, Los Angeles Superior Court Judge; and Parade Marshal, Aaron Takahashi, actor and comedian, and two Frances K. Hashimoto Community Service honorees: PyuaO2 Nagoya business association and Kizuna. For tickets or information, call the Nisei Week Foundation at 213.687.7193 or email office@niseiweek.org.

The following individual will receive the Nisei Week Inspiration Award:

### **Harold “Hal” Keimi**

Throughout the Nisei Week Japanese Festival, the newly-crowned Queen and Court will make dozens of public appearances; for the past 19 years, these memories have been documented by Harold “Hal” Keimi.

Born in Hollywood in 1931, Keimi grew up around his parents’ dry-cleaning business on Sunset Blvd before World War II sent the family to Santa Anita assembly center and eventually Heart Mountain internment camp. After returning to Los Angeles after the war, he graduated from Hollywood High School before being drafted into the Army, where he served from 1952 to 1954. Upon return, he played NAU basketball, softball, and baseball while attending the University of Southern California, graduating in 1960.

In 1961, he married his wife Barbara and became a schoolteacher, spending 30 years with the Los Angeles Unified School District. Outside of teaching, Keimi volunteered with CYC as a coach and official for youth basketball and baseball.

After retiring from teaching, Keimi dedicated even more of his time to volunteering with many different organizations. In 1990, he became a docent at the Japanese American National Museum and in 1992, he began a 20-year stint as a volunteer for his beloved Trojans in the USC Athletic Department. His exemplary service resulted in him receiving JANM’s Program Award in 1995 and the Miki Tanimura Award for Most Outstanding Volunteer in 2002. To this day, he and his wife Barbara continue their service at JANM, giving tours to the school children that come to visit the museum.

In 2000, Keimi became a volunteer for the Nisei Week Foundation as a personal photographer to the Nisei Week Court. He also eventually started capturing their experiences on video. By adding video, he wanted to give the Courts and their families a different look at their Nisei Week experience, as well as providing memories and documentation through photographs.

In addition to his volunteer work, Keimi has kept active in his retirement, starting to play taiko at age “50 plus” and running six marathons with his last one completed at age 65.

Keimi wants it to be known that even though he is the 2018 Nisei Week Inspiration award recipient, that every Nisei Week Court throughout the past 18 years has been an inspiration to him.

The 2018 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 11-19. For a calendar of events, log on to [www.NiseiWeek.org](http://www.NiseiWeek.org), call the Nisei Week Foundation office at 213.687.7193 or email [info@niseiweek.org](mailto:info@niseiweek.org). The Nisei Week office is located at 244 South San Pedro Street, Suite 303, Los Angeles, CA 90012.

###