



PRESS RELEASE

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78th ANNUAL NISEI WEEK JAPANESE FESTIVAL

EIGHT PIONEER SPIRIT HONOREES TO BE FETED ON AUGUST 15

LOS ANGELES – July 15, 2018 – The Nisei Week Foundation is excited to announce the 2018 Nisei Week Pioneer Spirit honorees who will be recognized during the 78th annual Nisei Week Japanese Festival (August 11-19) in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. The eight Pioneer Spirit Award recipients make up some of the most active and dedicated leaders of the greater Los Angeles Japanese American community. They will be honored at a special 2018 Pioneer Spirit Luncheon to be held at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel (120 S. Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles) on Wednesday, August 15 at 12 noon. Tickets are \$65 per person or \$650 per table of 10 and can be obtained by calling the Nisei Week Foundation office at 213.687.7193 or by emailing office@niseiweek.org.

The 2018 Nisei Week Pioneer Spirit Honorees are:

Shingo Arase

Shingo Arase was born on January 5, 1929 in Los Angeles. When he was four years old, his family moved back to Yamaguchi, Japan and he did not return to California until he was 18 years old. Arase served in the United States Marine Corps in the 1950s during the Korean War.

In 1957, he graduated with a bachelor's degree in physics from UCLA and worked at various well-known companies until his retirement in 1988 from the Xerox Palo Alto Research Group. While there as a research scientist, he pioneered the development of personal computers and laser printers. The highlight of his career was when he developed and obtained four U.S. patents. One of the patents was for the first word processing machine of that era.

In addition to his career accomplishments, Arase has dedicated himself to the Japanese and Japanese American community by being involved with numerous organizations and activities, holding various leadership positions that utilize his skills and knowledge.

He has been a director on the Japanese Community Pioneer Center (JCPC) committee board since 2014 and was vice president in 2016. Since 2013, Arase has been a volunteer instructor for beginning computer classes teaching software programs such as Microsoft Word and Windows 10. He continues to organize and publish the quarterly newsletter, "Oshirase," which he created 2014. It features many articles including health and wellness, arts and crafts, and community events. He also develops and maintains the website content and organizes PowerPoint presentations for various seminars held at JCPC. He is also responsible for the

maintenance of all the office equipment and assists in instructing the volunteer members on how to use the machines. As a hobby, he participates in photography classes and enjoys taking photos. Arase has been responsible for compiling the JCPC 50th Anniversary Commemorative Book for the upcoming year.

Arase was one of the founding members of the America Miyazaki Kenjin Kai, established in 1977 and continues to be actively involved. Currently, he is vice president, treasurer, official photographer, and the webmaster.

Since 1947, Arase has been actively involved with the Mission Valley Free Methodist Church in San Gabriel, including holding leadership positions and producing the monthly newsletters. He also serves as the master of ceremony at least once a month for the morning services. He is not only involved in the local church, but has also held various positions regionally, including: board of administration (BOA), ministerial appointment (MAC), ministerial education group (MEG), and financial board for the Pacific Coast Japanese Free Methodist Conference. He currently publishes the Christian Business Men's Network quarterly newsletter and is the director and past-president of the Southern California Church Federation. Arase remarried five years ago to his wife, Chieko.

Kenji Fukuoka

Kenji Fukuoka was born in 1946 and is the second son to Mitsutaro and Setsu Fukuoka of Kumamoto, Japan. At the tender age of 16, he moved to Nagoya and later to Tokyo to financially support his family. While working in Tokyo, he entered a youth program where he was selected to visit Hawaii and Los Angeles for a brief stay. During this trip, Fukuoka became determined to live in America.

In 1974, while attending Sangyo Noritsu University, he made a decision to further his education by attending school abroad in Los Angeles. Four years later, he married Hatsumi Kobayashi. Fukuoka prior to retirement, he spent many years beautifying Los Angeles homes as a gardener and landscaper. He became a United States citizen in 2001.

For more than 40 years, from the 1970s to the present, Fukuoka has been very active in helping and volunteering with the Japanese community and nonprofit organizations. He has served the Nikkei community as president of the Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai, Kumamoto Kenjinkai, and Taisho Club; and served as vice president, chairperson and other important positions for many other Nikkei organizations. In 2013, he received the Honorable Ryokuhakuji Yukousho Award from the Japanese government and the Testimonial Award from the Kumamoto prefectural government.

One of his most prominent volunteering contributions was in 2016. The Kumamoto region was hit with a 7.0 magnitude earthquake on April 16, 2016. Shortly after this tragic event, Fukuoka spearheaded the Kenjinkai Kyogikai's "Kumamoto Earthquake Relief Fund Drive." For the next 11 months, Fukuoka spent countless hours and days visiting various Japanese events and collected more than \$130,000 in donations. What is so amazing is that after receiving several hundred donations, he personally wrote more than 850 thank you letters with a receipt to every donor. 100 percent of the initial donation money was first sent to the "Special Relief Fund Account," created by the governor of Kumamoto prefecture. The remaining donations, were thereafter sent to Kumamoto through the office of the Consul General of Japan in Los Angeles.

Today, Fukuoka continues to participate and volunteer with the Japanese speaking community and organizations. His contributions are well displayed and this award is well deserved. He and his wife Hatsumi have two daughters, Emi and Akiko.

Seiji Horio

Seiji Horio was born in Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan in 1937. He studied agriculture at Tokyo University of Agriculture and graduated in 1959. After graduation, Horio came to the United States as an agricultural apprentice and worked in Orange County. Later, after receiving his state contractor's license, he started his own professional landscape company.

Horio operated his successful landscape company based in the San Fernando Valley for close to 50 years. He has been a member of the San Fernando Valley Landscape Gardeners Association and the Southern California Gardeners' Federation for more than 50 years. Horio was president of the Southern California Gardeners' Federation in 1984 and 1985.

During this time, Horio helped his fellow landscapers and gardeners by being involved in running these predominantly Japanese American organizations. He helped in community activities such as the saving and relocation of the grapefruit tree to the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center's Noguchi Plaza. In the Sepulveda dam, he helped prune the pine trees, and assisted during the annual rose pruning at the Rose Bowl. He was also involved with the Keiro Home (Lincoln Heights) Garden cleanup, which was done every other month for many years. These activities were all done on Sundays after a long week of work.

The Gardeners' Federation ran a co-op store in Little Tokyo on San Pedro Street, selling gardening supplies to its members. In 1985, there was a fire that destroyed much of the warehouse and inventory. Horio was greatly involved in the restoration of the co-op store and spent many hours of his own time dealing with the insurance company, contractors, etc. His "community spirit" and dedication to help was evident, as his main motivation was to make sure the thousands of fellow gardeners could continue to purchase gardening supplies from store.

In 1986, the City of Los Angeles wanted to prohibit the use of gas-powered leaf blowers that were used by professional gardeners. Horio, along with many fellow gardeners, took time out of their busy work schedule and organized and attended hearings at City Hall to convince the City Council to reject this prohibition. To this day, he becomes emotional when he tells of these stories and how so many of his fellow gardeners got involved and worked together for a common cause.

Horio enjoys spending his retirement with his wife, Toshiko, whom he has been married to for 54 years, three adult children and seven grandchildren. He stays active by being on the executive board of the Southern California Gardeners' Federation, Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California year-end charity drive, and as a board member of the Koreisha Senior Care and Advocacy organization.

Arthur "Art" Takashi Ishii

Arthur Takashi Ishii was born in Chicago in 1944, the second child of Nisei resettlers from Heart Mountain War Relocation Center and grew up in the Seinan and J-Flats neighborhoods of Los Angeles. After attending Maryknoll Elementary, Virgil Junior High, and Belmont High School, Ishii entered the U.S. Air Force in 1962 during the early escalation of the United States' involvement in the Vietnam War.

While stationed in Japan, he met and married his wife Kyoko, with whom he had two children, Russell Takashi and Christine Namiko. Upon his honorable discharge from the Air Force, Ishii returned to Los Angeles and in 1969 co-founded the Yellow Brotherhood, an Asian American activist group whose mission was to provide peer leadership and rehabilitative services to an ailing generation of Asian American youth lost in the throes of gangs and drugs.

Yellow Brotherhood provided an alternative to the streets, offering homework tutoring, sports activities, community history education not found in school textbooks of the day, and peer counseling. The group disbanded in 1975, to be resurrected by its members a decade later as an Asian American youth basketball team. A short film about this group was made by documentary filmmaker Tadashi Nakamura in 2003.

Simultaneously, Ishii began raising a family as well as beginning a career in the commercial printing business. At Moore Business Forms, the world's largest manufacturer of business forms, he unprecedentedly twice earned Salesperson of the Year as the first mainland employee of Japanese descent, opening the door for the active recruitment of other North American Nikkei job candidates.

After 10 years of employment, Ishii's entrepreneurial spirit took over and in 1980 he founded Alliance Artforms, a commercial printing outfit that continues to this day, specializing not only in business forms but an extensive array of printed, silk screened, and embroidered marketing products and promotional items.

A lifetime martial artist, at age 10 Ishii entered Hollywood Judo Dojo under senseis Takashi Kikuchi, Frank and Art Emi, Frank Watanuki, and Gene LeBell. He later trained in Wing Chun Gung Fu at the New Chinatown Gung Fu Club under Randy Williams sifu; Goju-ryu Karate at Tenri Karate Dojo under Guy Kurose sensei; and Okinawan Shorin-ryu Karate under senseis Eihachi Ota and Takayoshi Nagamine.

In 1990, Ishii founded Matsubayashi Shorin-ryu of Little Tokyo, the Los Angeles branch of the World Matsubayashi Shorin-ryu Karatedo Association (WMKA) headquartered in Okinawa, Japan. He holds the 6th dan grade and Renshi, or "polished teacher," instructorship title in this system.

As a longtime member of the Nisei Week Foundation board of directors, Ishii is the current general chairman of Nikkei Games, and is a co-founder of the Nikkei Karate Committee, a non-political entity consisting of Japanese American karate instructors that organizes the Nikkei Games Karate Tournament and Seminar as part of the larger Nikkei Games Budo Tournament. He is the proud grandfather of Miya, Ami and Ryan.

Don S. Miyada

Don S. Miyada was born in Oceanside, California in May 1925 to immigrant parents from Japan. He attended San Joaquin Grammar School and was a senior at Newport Harbor High School the day of the bombing of Pearl Harbor. Miyada and his family were uprooted from their home and incarcerated in a Poston, Arizona internment camp, where he received his Newport Harbor high school diploma. Even though Miyada was a citizen of the United States, he and his family were incarcerated with thousands of other Americans of Japanese ancestry who were forced to live in internment camps throughout the nation.

While in the internment camp he worked in the camp subsistence section and motor pool. In 1943, he left the camp to go to Preston, Idaho for seasonal agriculture work. In January 1944, he relocated to Detroit, Michigan to work in a defense plant.

In April 1944, with a change in his draft status from 4C (enemy alien) to 1A (fit for service), Miyada was drafted into the U.S. Army for 17 weeks of training at Camp Blanding, Florida. After Camp Blanding, Miyada was transferred to Camp Shelby, Mississippi for training as a replacement for the 442nd Regimental Combat Team (RCT) and was sent to France where he

was assigned to 100th Battalion A Company, in Epinal, France just after the 442nd cataclysmic Bruyeres battle of the rescue of the “Lost Battalion.”

After recovery, his unit was assigned to guard the Franco-Italian border. In March 1945, at the request of General Mark Clark, Miyada’s unit returned to Italy to help breach the vaunted Gothic line, which they accomplished in short order.

By the time the war ended, his campaigns included Southern France, Northern Apennines Mountains, Po Valley and the Rhineland. His many decorations include the Bronze Star, Combat Infantryman’s Badge, European–African–Middle Eastern (EAME) Campaign Medal, Army Presidential Unit Citation and the France Legion of Merit.

Miyada, as a member of the 100th Battalion, along with other soldiers of the 442nd RCT and Military Intelligence Service (MIS), all comprised primarily of Americans of Japanese ancestry, were each awarded the Congressional Gold Medal in Washington D.C. in November 2011. Miyada is one of the few remaining active veterans who served with the 100th Battalion of the 442nd RCT.

After his honorable discharge from the Army in 1946, Miyada took advantage of the G.I. bill to graduate from UCLA in 1949, and from Michigan State University with a Ph.D. in chemistry. His career was in clinical chemistry and he retired in 1991 as an associate adjunct professor in the Department of Pathology at the University of California at Irvine.

Miyada is a member of the Orange County Buddhist Church. In retirement he is a board member of the Suburban Buena Park Optimist Club and active member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 3670. He plays golf, travels, and raises cymbidium orchids as a hobby. He is married to the former Setsuko Takemori, they have four children. He and his wife reside in Westminster.

Roy Muraoka

Roy Muraoka was born on February 23, 1930 to Saburo and Haruko Muraoka, the second of four children: Lillian, Jane, and Takenori. The Muraoka family resided in San Diego County in the city of Chula Vista, where Saburo ran the local family farm growing strawberries, tomatoes, cucumbers, and celery.

In 1942, as a result of Executive Order 9066, the family was uprooted and transferred to various internment camps. At the Crystal City, Texas, internment camp Muraoka met Aiko Fujii, who he would later marry. In 1945, after the war ended, the Muraoka family returned to Chula Vista and began farming again. In 1950, Muraoka graduated from Chula Vista High School and was drafted into the U.S. Army in 1951, and eventually stationed in Japan as a medical technician. After his discharge, Muraoka returned to Chula Vista to help the family farming business. In 1960, Muraoka married Aiko. They had their first son, Tad in 1963, and Ken in 1967.

In 1963, Muraoka and his father Saburo created Muraoka Enterprises, Inc. and broke ground for Palace Gardens, the largest mobile home park in Chula Vista. After his father passed in 1983, Muraoka expanded Muraoka Enterprises by acquiring another mobile home park, an apartment complex and a motel. Throughout this time Muraoka was a leader and active member in the Japanese American community.

Since 1946, Muraoka has been a member of the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, where he served as president of the Adult Buddhist Association. In 1973, Muraoka was one of the founding members of Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Japanese American Memorial Post 4851 and was part of the group that secured land and a building, which became a meeting place for

ikebana, shigin, Matsumae-Kai (music group), and kendo. For more than two decades Muraoka was the chairperson for the VFW's chicken dinner and bingo night that became a monthly gathering spot for many in the Japanese American community.

Muraoka served as the VFW Post Commander in 1980. For the Japanese Coordinating Council (JCC) of San Diego, he served as president for five years and secretary for more than 10 years. One of Muraoka's most cherished organizations is the Chula Vista - Odawara Sister City Society and he has been a board member with this organization since 1981. He has been on the board of directors of the Japanese Friendship Garden in Balboa Park since 1983, and has been a part of its three phases of growth. He grew a modest teriyaki chicken and yakisoba fundraiser to one of the most important fundraisers for the garden. After the City of Chula Vista claimed eminent domain over a site where a Japanese gakuen once stood, Muraoka and others succeeded in having a monument placed for its historical importance. He was also part of the committee that established and built a 100-unit apartment complex, Kiku Gardens, which was an affordable community for seniors.

Over the many years, Muraoka has been recognized and honored for his community service and contributions to the Japanese American community. On December 9, 2008 Roy received "The Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays" bestowed by the Consul General of Japan.

Muraoka has been a dynamic and active presence in the Japanese American community for most of his life. His age may have slowed him down but his spirit of giving to the community continues through contributions and donations to the various organizations that help promote community relations with Japanese Americans.

Yuriko Soyu Tanaka

Yuriko Soyu Tanaka was born, raised and educated in Miyagi-ken, Japan. After graduating from Meiwa Women's Jr. College in Sendai, she attended various classes that included tea ceremony (cha-no-yu), ikebana, cooking, and dressmaking. In 1957, Yuriko married Fred Kiyoshi Tanaka and moved to the United States. She became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1972. They have a son, Dr. Thomas Tanaka, a daughter, Mrs. Karen Uyematsu and five grandchildren.

After moving to the U.S., Tanaka continued to study cha-no-yu under Mme. Sowa Hitomi, founder of the Omotesenke School of Tea in Los Angeles. She received her teaching credential in 1973 and began student sessions at her residence in Orange County. She also organized her own tea group known as Yuwakai. Soyu Tanaka received the highest professional rank from the Omotesenke headquarters, Japan in 1988. She has mentored many students in the Omotesenke Domonkai since she began her cha-no-yu teaching career that spans more than 45 years.

Since 1973, she and her students have participated and organized many tea ceremony demonstrations at local and community events, including the Nisei Week Festival, OC Buddhist Church Hanamatsuri Bazaar, OC Cultural Association & OCJAA Culture Fair, LA Buddhist Federation Hanamatsuri, Anime Expo, and demonstrations at schools ranging from elementary to university level (UCLA, UC Irvine, CSU Long Beach and CSU Fullerton).

As a charter member of the Omotesenke Domonkai Southern California Region, Soyu Tanaka has continuously served in important positions. She was the recording secretary from 1977-1985, executive director from 1985-1998, vice president from 1998-2010, and has been a special advisor since 2010. She has supported five generations of presidents and her devoted services have improved the development of the organization. Soyu Tanaka also served as chairperson for its 15th, 20th and 25th anniversary events. She received "Shibu Koro-sho" (Special Award) in 1999 and "Shibu Tokubetsu Koro-sho" (Distinguished Award) in 2001 and again in 2010 from the

Omotesenke headquarters for her many years of devoted and outstanding service. In addition, Soyu Tanaka was awarded 2011 Woman of the Year and a 2015 Foreign Minister's Commendation in Honor of the 70th Anniversary of the End of War for outstanding achievements in the promotion of friendship between the U.S. and Japan.

For almost 30 years, she has been a member of the Japanese Women's Society of Southern California. She has been an advisor since 2005 and served as vice president from 1999-2004. She volunteers in Keiro home visits, Nisei Week rummage sale, and the year end welfare collection (Saimatsu Tasukeai Bokin). She served on the 95th, 100th and 105th anniversary event committees. At the 95th anniversary event, she received "Tokubetsu Koro-sho" (Special Award) from the organization and special commendations from the Mayor of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors.

Soyu Tanaka has been a member of OC Buddhist Church since 1970 and OC Buddhist Women's Association since 1974. She served as president of the OCBWA for two consecutive terms in 1979 and 1980. She volunteers in many church events and has been performing tea ceremony demonstrations at its Hanamatsuri Bazaar for many years. She has been on the OC Japanese Cultural Association board of directors since 1990. Soyu Tanaka participates in tea ceremony demonstrations at the Japanese Cultural Festival every fifth year. She is a member of the OCJAA and received its 2009 Community Service Award for her longtime contributions and efforts in promoting and preserving Japanese traditional culture in the Nikkei community.

She hopes that there can be a greater understanding and harmony between Japanese culture and the rest of the world through education in the art of cha-no-yu and other traditional Japanese customs.

Audrey Yamagata-Noji

Audrey Yamagata-Noji was born and raised in Long Beach, California, to the late George Kazuo Yamagata and Mae Matsuko (Kunisaki) Yamagata. As a self-employed gardener, Yamagata-Noji's father served as the CEO of the Harbor Japanese Credit Union for almost 20 years. Her paternal grandfather assisted in establishing the first Japanese language school in Long Beach.

Yamagata-Noji graduated from Long Beach Poly High School and California State University, Long Beach, where she received her bachelor's degree in psychology and her master's degree in counseling. She received her Ph.D. in education from the Claremont Graduate University. Her dissertation, "The Educational Achievement of Japanese American College Students," has been cited in other research studies. Yamagata-Noji received the Dissertation of the Year Award from Phi Delta Kappa and was the recipient of the Housam-Fisk Higher Education Award.

She began her career as a counseling assistant at Long Beach Poly High School where Yamagata-Noji served as a club advisor to the Asian Club and then served as a family therapist counseling juvenile offenders and victims of crime through various police departments in Orange County. Her career in higher education began as a faculty counselor and instructor at Long Beach City College and Saddleback College. While at Saddleback College, she was both the faculty counselor and director of the EOPS Program. She also served as the legislative chair for the EOPS Association and served an internship in the state capitol for the Assembly Ways and Means Committee.

Yamagata-Noji was Assistant Dean and later Dean of Student Development at Santa Ana College. She developed a comprehensive outreach program, successfully increasing access

for low income, first generation students from immigrant communities. She later became Vice President, Student Services at Mt. San Antonio College, where she continues to serve. In this role, Yamagata-Noji has successfully developed and implemented several innovative and highly successful programs, including the federally funded AANAPISI grant program designed to serve Asian and Pacific Islander American students.

For six terms (a total of 25 years), Yamagata-Noji served as an elected member, president, vice president and clerk of the Board of Education for the Santa Ana Unified School District. In this capacity, she developed many initiatives and programs focusing on enhancing the educational success of Latino and Asian students. Yamagata-Noji served on the executive board for the California School Boards Association. She is: a founding member and current president of Asian and Pacific Americans in Higher Education, co-facilitator of the Leadership Development Program in Higher Education sponsored by Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics, Inc., (LEAP) which focuses on promoting Asian and Pacific Islander Americans within colleges and universities.

Her involvement in the Asian Pacific Islander American community ranges from having served on the City of Santa Ana Asian Pacific Advisory Committee to serving on the board of the Long Beach Japanese American Cultural Community Center. She has been the youth director, Sunday school teacher, elder, and advisor for Grace First Presbyterian Church of Long Beach.

Recently, Yamagata-Noji was recognized as a recipient of the Cynthia S. Johnson Award by California State University, Long Beach's College of Education Student Development in Higher Education Department, the Scott Goodnight Award for Outstanding Performance as a Dean/Vice President by NASPA Region VI, the John W. Rice Diversity and Equity Award by the California Community Colleges, and the College of Education Alumnus of the Year Award from California State University, Long Beach.

She is married to Gene Noji, a retired teacher and football coach. They have a son, Randall, who is also a graduate of California State University, Long Beach.

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, 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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