



NISEI WEEK™
Foundation

PRESS RELEASE

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2019 NISEI WEEK ANNOUNCES INSPIRATION AWARD HONOREES – RETIRED ALTERNATE PUBLIC DEFENDER JANICE FUKAI AND COMMUNITY LEADER ALAN NISHIO

President's Award Posthumously Awarded to Madame Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto and Madame Kangiku Sanjo

(Los Angeles – July 14, 2019) – The Nisei Week Foundation is pleased to honor two special individuals with the 2019 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 retired LA County Alternate Public Defender Janice Fukai and community leader Alan Nishio will receive this award at the Nisei Week Awards Dinner to be held Monday, August 12, at the Double Tree by Hilton (120 S. Los Angeles Street, Los Angeles). Starting at 6 p.m., individual tickets are \$100 and tables of 10 are \$1,000.

Also recognized at the Awards Dinner will be this year's President's Award honorees, the late Madame Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto, master tea ceremony instructor of the Urasenke School of Tea, and the late Madame Kangiku Sanjo, dance choreographer of the Sanjo School of Kabuki Dance, will be recognized for going above and beyond to volunteer their time and/or service to the community. For tickets or information, call the Nisei Week Foundation at 213.687.7193 or email office@niseiweek.org.

The following individuals will receive the Nisei Week Inspiration Award:

Inspiration Award - Janice Y. Fukai

Janice Y. Fukai was the Alternate Public Defender (APD) and *first* Asian American woman to serve as a department head in Los Angeles County's history. The Board of Supervisors praised her momentous 2002 appointment stating, "Janice Fukai has been instrumental in the development and leadership of her department. The entire Board has a lot of confidence in that office and her in particular." For 25 years, Fukai hired and inspired more than 350 lawyers, investigators, paralegals, administrative, clerical support and IT staff. Today, the office is considered one of the finest defense agencies in the state.

As an Asian woman lawyer who has experienced racism and sexism both inside and outside the courtroom, Fukai remains sensitive to the challenges that continue to face Asian Pacific Islanders, stating, "Throughout my legal career, I was led to believe that I had to work harder and be better, just to be seen as equal to my male and Caucasian counterparts. It was not fair, but the reality. My position as the APD allowed me to provide a fairer and more supportive working environment for our younger generations." As the County's first Asian woman department head, Fukai was proud of her diverse staff, which included a large percentage of API employees, far exceeding the norm for local, state or federal government agencies.

Fukai credits her successful 38-year public service and legal career to her father, the late Mas Fukai, a long time public servant for both Gardena City and Los Angeles County. At the young age of 15, her

father was interned during WWII and shared his experiences with her. She recalls her father frequently lamenting, "If in 1942 there had been more lawyers, judges, politicians, community leaders to protest the unconstitutional incarceration of more than 100,000 innocent and law-abiding Japanese Americans, that ugly chapter in history would have been avoided." Janice took her father's comments to heart and applied to law school.

Her decision to practice public defense was influenced by the late Honorable Robert M. Takasugi, Federal District Court Judge, for whom she served as judicial law clerk after graduating law school and awaiting bar exam results. Judge Takasugi was a champion for the poor and underserved in our society, whom he believed required good and caring defenders, to help them navigate through our criminal justice system, especially with the systemic built in biases already against them. He was a mentor and role model throughout her professional career. and followed his advice to become a public defender and found her calling.

Fukai received her bachelor's and Juris Doctor degrees from USC. She joined the Los Angeles County Public Defenders' Office in 1980, where she rose to the rank of special assistant to the late Public Defender, Wilbur Littlefield. Fukai's work as trial lawyer is featured in the book *Public Defender, Lawyer for the People* by Joan Hewitt. In 1993, she left the Public Defender for the opportunity to help the county build the newly created Alternate Public Defender department, literally from scratch.

She continues to serve on the board of numerous professional groups and is the recipient of many professional and community service awards. The daughter of the late Mas and Yuriko Fukai, she has one brother Rick and nieces and a nephew: Stephanie, Lauren and Charles.

Inspiration Award - Alan Nishio

For the past five decades Alan Nishio has been involved in Little Tokyo and the broader Japanese American community. From his initial volunteer work with the Japanese American Community Services (JACS) organization to his present work with the Little Tokyo Service Center (LTSC) and the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC), Nishio has served with many others in defining the history and shaping the future of the Nikkei community.

Nishio has served on the board of directors of LTSC for 35 years and was board president for over a decade. In addition, Nishio's other community leadership roles include serving as a board member for the JACCC and an advisory council member for Kizuna.

His initial involvement in Little Tokyo was in 1969 as a board member and treasurer JACS. During this time, JACS created the JACS Asian involvement office that initiated and supported a number of community service programs that continue today. In the 1970s, Nishio served as the chair of the Little Tokyo Peoples Rights Organization (LTPRO), who advocated for the rights of residents, small businesses and cultural and community organizations during the Little Tokyo Redevelopment Project.

In the 1980s, Nishio, who was born in Manzanar, was actively involved in the successful campaign to gain redress for Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II. He was a founder and co-chair of the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations.

He was also a member and chair of the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council (CJACLC), a statewide organization that sought to preserve and protect California's remaining Japantowns.

Nishio is a member of the U.S.-Japan Council (USJC) and was a delegate in the inaugural Japanese American Leadership Delegation in 2000, sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan. He also participated in USJC delegations advancing the work of nonprofit organizations in Japan following the 2011 Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. In recognition of his work in the Japanese American community

and advancing U.S.-Japan relations, Nishio was awarded "The Order of the Rising Sun with Gold Rays and Rosette" by the Government of Japan in 2016.

Retired, Nishio formerly served as the associate vice president for Student Services at California State University, Long Beach (CSULB). He also taught in the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies. His 40-year career in higher education also included serving as a founding staff member and director of the Asian American Studies Center at UCLA and as assistant director of the Center for Social Action at USC.

In addition to his work within the Japanese American community, Nishio was a past president and member of the board of the California Conference for Equality and Justice, a human relations organization based in Long Beach. He also was a trustee of The College Board, an educational association best known for its SAT and Advanced Placement examinations.

As a cancer survivor, Nishio is active in efforts to raise awareness and funds for research and education regarding leiomyosarcoma (LMS), a rare and aggressive cancer.

Nishio received his bachelor's degree in political science from the University of California, Berkeley and his master's degree in public administration from the University of Southern California.

President's Award - Madame Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto (posthumously)

Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto was born February 21, 1916, in Honolulu, as Shizuye Yagi. After attending high school in Los Angeles, she enrolled in the French American Fashion Design School and graduated in 1941. At that time, she also began training in chado, the "Way of Tea" ceremony. She moved to Kyoto, Japan, and for six years trained under Tantansai, Fourteenth Generation Grandmaster of the Urasenke School of Chado, and Shoshitsu Sen, Fifteenth Generation Grandmaster.

Following World War II, Sosei Matsumoto moved to Los Angeles and saw few practitioners of the tea ceremony. Her desire to start a school was thwarted by the unsettled times, with Japanese Americans returning from wartime internment camps.

On May 4, 1948, she married Edward (Eddie) Tetsuo Matsumoto, an electronic engineer, who built a tearoom for her in their first home on Coronado Street. After moving to her permanent residence on Occidental Boulevard in 1955, he built a new tearoom for her, later to be named "Showaken".

In 1951, she was invited to the signing of the US - Japan peace treaty in San Francisco, where over a four-day period she served tea to more than 3,000 American and Japanese officials, including President Truman and Prime Minister Yoshida. Later that year, she started teaching the Urasenke Tea Ceremony in Los Angeles, convening the first tea ceremony classes ever held in the US; one of her ceremonies is shown in the Twentieth Century Fox film, "East Is East".

Throughout the 1950s, Matsumoto Sensei introduced millions of Americans to chado through appearances on CBS and NBC television. In 1968, she presented the tea ceremony at the Olympic Arts Festival in Mexico City. Her more than 60 years of teaching and lecturing resulted in more than 120 chado teachers and thousands more tea ceremony devotees. Over the years, her students included Japanese and American-born people interested in learning the ancient Japanese tea ceremony.

Matsumoto Sensei exemplified the character of a "chajin" or tea person. She not only knew and could teach all the procedures for chado, but she also manifested the true spirit of self-discipline and compassion for others, which only a few students are ever able to attain.

In 1989, she received the title Meiyō Shihan, Honored Master, from her instructor Shoshitsu Sen. This is the highest teaching certificate available for instructors of Japanese tea ceremony. She taught, lectured and demonstrated widely throughout Southern California and the Southwest at a long list of cultural, educational and civic venues, including regular tea classes at UCLA. In recognition of her long service to

preserving Japanese culture, she received the Fifth Order of the Merit (The Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold and Silver Rays) from the Emperor of Japan in November 1990. She was also honored by the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, Japanese American National Museum, and other community organizations.

Since 1990, she voluntarily offered Keiro Retirement Home residents tea ceremony classes once a month, which continue to be offered by her students. In 1994, then first lady Hillary Clinton presented her with the NEA National Heritage Fellowship, the nation's highest honor in the folk and traditional arts.

Throughout her career, Matsumoto Sensei continued to receive numerous awards in recognition of her great work, including the Chado Bunka Sho award from Urasenke Konnichian in 2010, Certificate of Commendation from the U.S. Senate & Alliance in California Traditional Arts in 2018, and an award from the Smithsonian Institution in 2019. Matsumoto Sensei has left a rich and enduring legacy in the Way of Tea in Los Angeles.

President's Award - Madame Kangiku Sanjo (posthumously)

Kangiku Sanjo was born June Ito on February 8, 1940 in Boyle Heights, California to Jimmie and Alice Ito. In 1942, the family was interned in the camp at Manzanar. When the war ended, the family moved to Bunker Hill in Los Angeles.

At the age of 4 years old, she began taking Japanese classical dance lessons. At the age of nine, she came under the tutelage of Kanya Sanjo V (then known as Miharu Bando) to study both nagauta music and nihon buyo. Kangiku Sanjo reached professional status (natori) at the age of 16 and made her debut performing "Kyoganoko Musume Dojoji" and "Yasuna."

Within a few years she became an apprentice (uchi deshi) with Kanya Sanjo V (grandmaster) and assisted in instructing and producing the "Kabuki Dance" and "Kayo Buyo Series" programs until the passing of Kanya Sanjo in June 1989. She had also enhanced her study of nagauta music with the late Grandmaster Yajuro Kineya IX.

Kangiku Sanjo was offered and accepted opportunities to advance studies by kabuki dance choreographers and instructors in Japan. She performed with the late Onoe Shoroku II with Kanya Sanjo V at the National Theater of Japan in March 1969 accompanied by bunraku musicians of Osaka in a dance production "Shishi no Yume" (Ioin's dream).

Another career highlight includes her appearance in David Bowie's 1976 film "The Man Who Fell to Earth." She and Kanya Sanjo V were featured in the Kabuki performance segment. She also performed with then known Senjaku Nakamura as the butterfly in "Kagami Jishi" in 1981.

Kangiku Sanjo appeared in poster ads, television programs and represented Japan Kabuki Theater in television promotions for the World's Fair held in Knoxville, Tennessee in 1982.

She traveled often to Japan to study the latest techniques and trends in Japanese classical dance, juitai mai with the late Hide Kanzaki II, percussion instruments (ohayashi) and tea ceremony. From January 2003 through November 2005, Kangiku Sanjo lived and worked in Japan, allowing her to undergo an intense, in depth study of the history, evolution, backstage work, choreography, costumes and props, past and present, all-encompassing the creativity and the production of the kabuki dance with renowned choreographers and instructors.

After the demise of Kanya Sanjo V, Kangiku Sanjo became the artistic director and official representative of the Kanya Sanjo V Kabuki Dance Company dedicated to preserve the culture heritage of a 300-year-old historical traditional art form.

Being named the official choreographer of the 2019 Nisei Week Ondo is a great honor and privilege. All the natori and students are looking forward to creating an exciting and memorable event memorializing Kangiku Sanjo's great passion and desire to impart the Japanese culture on to future generations.

The 2019 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 10-18. 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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