



PRESS RELEASE

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2019 NISEI WEEK JAPANESE FESTIVAL GRAND PARADE

79th Annual Parade to be Led by Grand Marshal Akemi Miyake, Community Leader and Long-Time Volunteer, and Parade Marshal the Los Angeles Clippers Basketball Team

LOS ANGELES – July 14, 2019 – The Nisei Week Foundation proudly hosts its 79th annual summer event with free cultural activities for all ages. The Nisei Week Japanese Festival features a Grand Parade as part of its first weekend of events, which will make its way through the streets of Little Tokyo on Sunday, August 11, starting at 4 p.m. The parade will be led by the 2019 Grand Marshal, Akemi Miyake, community leader and long-time volunteer, and Parade Marshal, the Los Angeles Clippers, partner of the Japanese American Basketball Night. The parade procession will start at Central Avenue and head west on 2nd Street, turning north on San Pedro Street, turning east on 1st Street, then turning south and ending on Central Avenue.

The Nisei Week Grand Parade will feature traditional Japanese taiko drum performers, local community groups, high schools, elected officials and representatives from Nagoya, Japan, Los Angeles' sister city, and the newly crowned 2019 Nisei Week queen and court.

Grand Marshal – Akemi Miyake

Akemi Miyake was born on August 12, 1919 in Arcadia, Calif., to Jitsuo and Makiko Miyake. At age four, Miyake and his family moved back to Japan with his sisters, Akeko and Miyako. His other three siblings, sister Chiyoko and brothers Akede and Tsukimi, were born in Japan. Miyake graduated Shiwa Agricultural high school in 1937. After graduation, he returned to America. Miyake worked at Sawada Farms in Gardena with his older sister Akeko and brother-in-law Yukinao Sawada.

In March 1942, he relocated to Salt Lake City to avoid being detained in a WWII internment camp. Miyake farmed celery during the day and worked at the Grand America Hotel as a dishwasher in the evening. In October 1945, he married Hisako Kurosu and returned to Los Angeles. Along with Yukinao, he first farmed in Long Beach then settled in Stanton under H. Y. Sawada Farms, later becoming Sawada and Miyake Farms. In 1957, Miyake became part of a 10-year farming exchange program between the U.S. and Japan. Approximately 125 Japanese trainees came and lived on the Stanton farm to learn American agriculture. He continued farming strawberries, tomatoes, citrus and vegetables until his retirement in 1995.

With the passing of Yukinao in 1960 and his wife in 1979, he became even more committed to giving back to the community. His father taught him the importance of giving back when he first left Hiroshima and honored him by doing so. Miyake served as president of the Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai (1981 - 1982), Japanese Pioneer Service Center (1985 - 1989), Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California

(1988 - 1990), and Dai Nihon Nokai Southern California Council (1993 - 1998). While serving as the president of the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Southern California, he had the honor of attending the funeral of Emperor Hirohito in 1989 and attending the coronation of Emperor Akihito in 1990.

From 1982 - 1990, he served on the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC) board of directors and helped raise funds for the JACCC building, Aratani Theater, and the Japanese American National Museum. In 1990, Miyake continued to support the arts by taking an advisory role in Japanese cultural arts including calligraphy, tea ceremony, and flower arranging.

Many of Miyake's involvements continue today. He started the Southern California Gate Ball Association in 1987 and served as inaugural president for many years, where he continues to play in his spare time. He also was one of the founding members of the Orange County Japanese American Association and was president from 1987 - 1990; today, he serves as a member of the board of directors. Miyake continues to support the Nanka Kenjinkai Kyogikai, which raises money to benefit orphans in Japan.

Some of Miyake's many awards and accomplishments include:

- 1963 - Agricultural Society of Japan - Ryokuhakujuyukosho Award
- 1982 - Agricultural Society of Japan - Kohakuju Award
- 1983 - Government of Japan - Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays
- 1984 - Little Tokyo Centennial Honoree
- 1986 - Little Tokyo Service Center Pioneer Award
- 1992 - Nisei Week Pioneer Award and Pacific Pioneer Award
- 1996 - Government of Japan - Order of the Sacred Treasure Gold Rays with Rosette
- 2000 - Agricultural Society of Japan - the Shihakujuyukosho Award

Miyake resides in Villa Park and has six children, nine grandchildren and four great grandchildren. He says "Thank you very, very much" to the Nisei Week Foundation for the honor of being selected Grand Marshal of the 79th Nisei Week Japanese Festival Grand Parade.

Parade Marshal – Los Angeles Clippers

The L.A. Clippers established its home in Los Angeles in 1984, after starting in New York. Led by Chairman Steve Ballmer, the L.A. Clippers in 2018-19 are competing in the franchise's 49th season and 35th in Los Angeles. They extended a franchise record, completing its seventh consecutive winning season in 2017-18. The team has logged the NBA's 5th-best record over the course of head coach Doc Rivers' five-year tenure.

The Clippers are committed to the city of Los Angeles and through the L.A. Clippers Foundation, provide resources and opportunities that make a positive difference toward leveling the playing field for youth in Southern California. The Clippers also make an effort to engage with the diverse communities of Los Angeles and has partnered with the Nisei Week Foundation since 2005 to put on the Japanese American Community Night.

Visit the Clippers online at clippers.com or follow them on social media @LAClippers.

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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