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JULI YOSHINAGA NAMED 2019 NISEI WEEK QUEEN

LOS ANGELES – August 11, 2019 – The Nisei Week Foundation is pleased to announce that Juli Yoshinaga was crowned the 79th Nisei Week Queen at the Aratani Theatre in Little Tokyo at its Nisei Week Coronation on August 10. Mia Masae Lopez was named 1st Princess, and Kara Chizuru Ito was chosen Miss Tomodachi by the other candidates. Juli Yoshinaga is 23 years old and graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in communication studies. She currently works at Warner Brothers Entertainment Group in multicultural marketing. She would like to continue working in her field and one day become a decision maker to ensure that diverse communities are being reflected on the big screen. Her hobbies include cooking with her mother and volunteering for the Japanese American Citizens League. Yoshinaga has chosen Women Make Movies as her platform.

During her speech, Yoshinaga spoke about struggling to find her identity, growing up as a multi-generational Japanese American. Her father is sansei (third generation Japanese American) and her mother is issei or (first generation Japanese American). She went on to say that pivotal experiences like being part of the Nikkei Student Union in college helped her embrace the beauty of being multi-generational and recognize that you can come from different generations and experiences but all still be Japanese American. She is the daughter of Tim and Mifumi Yoshinaga of Rancho Palos Verdes, California, and was sponsored by the Japanese Restaurant Association of America.

The 2019 Nisei Week Court members are:

1st Princess - Mia Masae Lopez (Venice Japanese Community Center & Venice-West Los Angeles JAACL)

Mia Masae Lopez is 25 years old and graduated from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona with a bachelor's degree in business administration – accounting. She currently works as a staff accountant at AEG Presents, a company specializing in live entertainment promotion. She plans to continue working and learning in the accounting and comedy fields. Her hobbies include sharing the art of henna tattoos, shooting portrait photography, and comedic improvisation. Lopez has chosen Tree People as her platform.

Miss Tomodachi - Kara Chizuru Ito (Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council)

Kara Chizuru Ito is 22 years old and recently graduated from Concordia University Irvine with a bachelor's degree in pre-physical therapy. Ito currently works as a sales educator at Lululemon, an athletic apparel store. She hopes to become a pediatric and orthopedic physical therapist and one day open her own practice. In her spare time, she enjoys playing board games and basketball, as well as volunteering at Cornerstone Pediatric Physical Therapy Clinic. Ito has chosen to support CHOC (Children's Hospital of Orange County) Children's Foundation, as her platform.

Princess - Marika Kate Gotschall (Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute)

Marika Kate Gotschall is 24 years old and graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in environmental science and policy. Gotschall is currently a barista at Starbucks in Disneyland and plans to go into a profession that works to help the environment. In her free time, she enjoys going camping and hiking, as well as scuba diving. This year, the platform she will support is the Surfrider Foundation.

Princess - Kayla Sachiko Igawa (Gardena Evening Optimist)

Kayla Sachiko Igawa is 23 years old and graduated from California State University, Long Beach with a bachelor's degree in hospitality management. She plans to continue working as an event coordinator and would like to eventually become a venue manager. In her spare time, Igawa enjoys playing basketball, volleyball, drawing, going to Disneyland, volunteering as a counselor at youth summer camps, and traveling. The platform she will support this year is the Alzheimer's Association.

Princess - Ariel Mei Imamoto (San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center)

Ariel Mei Imamoto is 22 years old and graduated from California State University, Fullerton with a bachelor's degree in accounting. She currently works as an accounts payable specialist at Tillys, a clothing company. Imamoto plans to obtain a CPA license and pursue a career in public accounting. Her hobbies include playing basketball, yoga, hiking, and learning about her family history and heritage. She has chosen Active Minds as her platform this year.

Princess - Emily Yuiko Ishida (East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center)

Emily Yuiko Ishida is 23 years old and recently graduated from California State University, Los Angeles with a bachelor's degree in biology. She currently works as an associate teacher at the East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center's Kokoro no Sato Infant Care Center. Ishida plans to pursue a career in research related to medical psychology. In her free time, she enjoys photography, indoor rock climbing, hiking, watching Marvel movies, and anything Disney. This year, she will support Shelter's

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

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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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