



123 Astronaut Ellison S. Onizuka St., Ste. 206 | Los Angeles, CA 90012
(213) 620-1767

July 10, 2023

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

George Toshio Johnston, Sr. Editor, Pacific Citizen
editorial@pacificcitizen.org

OR

Matthew Weisbly, JACL Education/Communications Coordinator
mweisbly@jacl.org

JACL National Convention to Take Place in Little Tokyo July 19–23

**Japanese American Citizens League Is the Nation's Oldest
Asian American Civil Rights and Educational Organization**

LOS ANGELES — The Japanese American Citizens League, which was founded in 1929 and is the nation's oldest Asian American civil rights organization, will hold its annual national convention in Los Angeles' historic Little Tokyo district from Wednesday, July 19 through Sunday, July 23.

With this year's convention theme "Rooted in Community," the JACL will be sponsoring numerous plenaries, workshops, panel discussions, a mini film festival, play readings and a special presentation of KABC Channel 7 newsman David Ono's live-multimedia show "Defining Courage" that spotlights the service and heroism of Japanese American soldiers during World War II.

Regarding this year's JACL convention, JACL National President Larry Oda in a statement said this year's theme highlights the Japanese American community's "museums, history, and food and shopping."

"Further it reminds us that though we continue to honor and reflect upon our past, we must extend our view to formulate a sustainable vision for the future of our organization. We must have the creativity and flexibility to adapt to new situations while remaining committed to our mission and values. Convention gives us the opportunity to deliberate the issues that affect us, share ideas to revitalize our membership, and inspire those who will become our future leaders."

The main venue where most of the JACL's national convention will take place is the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel, located at 120 S. Los Angeles St. in Little Tokyo. Other Little Tokyo locations where JACL convention activities will occur include the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (JACCC), the Terasaki Budokan and the Japanese American National Museum and its Tateuchi Democracy Forum, where most of the films will be screened.

Also taking place will be the JACL's National Council meeting, at which

-MORE-

organizational business will be conducted. More than 300 delegates and members from JACL's nearly 100 chapters located in Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Japan, Minnesota, Nevada, New Mexico, Ohio, Oregon, Nebraska, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, Washington, D.C., Wisconsin and more will be in attendance.

On Thursday night at the DoubleTree, a reception sponsored by the Consulate General of Japan will take place, along with a dramatic reading of the play "Question 27, Question 28," featuring actress Tamlyn Tomita.

Friday's agenda includes the plenary session titled "Envisioning JACL's Future Together" at 9 a.m., another play reading ("Shimbun") at 3:45 p.m. and in the evening, "Cruisin' J-Town," a dance celebration.

Saturday's plenary will be on the topic "State of Ethnic Enclaves" at 9 a.m., with the invitation-only President's Lunch taking place at noon and the customary Sayonara gala and awards program set for the evening.

On Sunday, the final convention event will take place at the Aratani Theater with a presentation of "Defining Courage."

To download a PDF of the convention program that contains a listing of the various workshops, panel discussions, the film festival lineup and other information, visit tinyurl.com/499cmdy7.



Over its more than 90 years of existence, the JACL has advocated and fought for equal treatment under the law for all peoples living in the United States, citizens, permanent legal residents and noncitizens alike, regardless of race or religious beliefs. Among JACL's most-high profile achievements was its leadership role in the Japanese American Redress Movement, which culminated when President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. That legislation saw the U.S. government apologize and provide token monetary compensation for its role in forcibly removing from the West Coast — and subsequently incarcerating in federally operated concentration camps — more than 125,000 U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry and legal permanent residents of Japanese ancestry who were proscribed at that time from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens.

In 1994, JACL also voted to recognize same-sex marriage, years before many other civil rights groups adopted similar stances and decades before the Supreme Court in 2015 ruled that same-sex couples could become legally married. In the present day, JACL has been a proponent for humane treatment of migrants without legal permission and an opponent to child separation policies conducted at the southern border, and an advocate for the U.S. government to create a federal commission to explore the topic of African American reparations for the modern-day effects of slavery, similar the hearings conducted by the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Incarceration of Civilians (CWRIC) of the early 1980s that helped lay the foundation for Japanese American Redress. The CWRIC's report concluded that the abrogation of the constitutional rights of ethnic Japanese in the U.S. during WWII, regardless of citizenship, was the result of "race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership."

JACL also develops next-generation leadership via its educational programs, scholarships and fellowships. For about JACL, see jacl.org/mission.

###