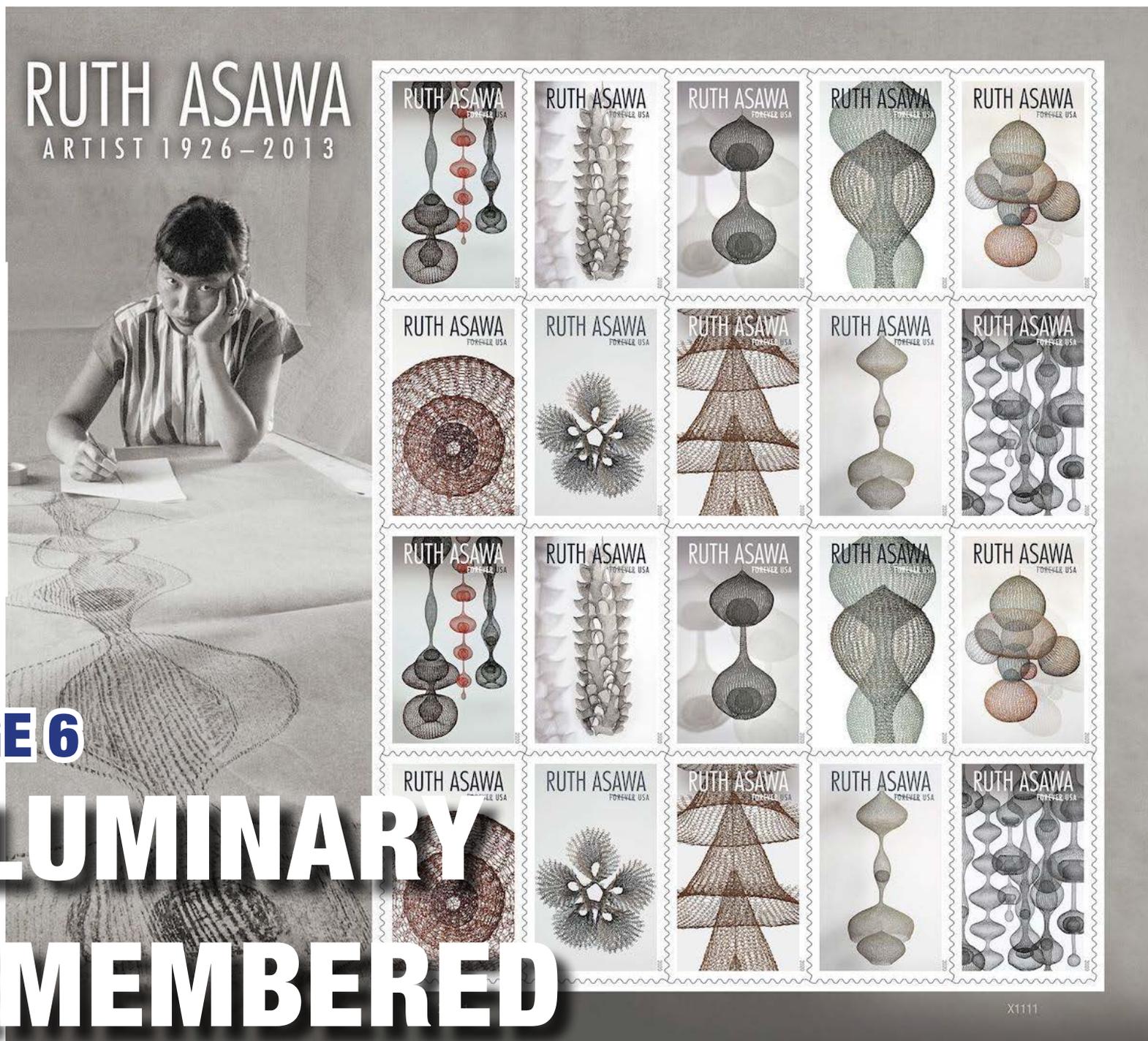


# PACIFIC CITIZEN

CELEBRATING 91 YEARS



In August, the U.S. Postal Service released a set of stamps commemorating the works of artist Ruth Asawa.

PHOTO: U.S. POSTAL SERVICE

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## A LUMINARY REMEMBERED

**Nisei artist Ruth Asawa's legacy is revisited, as her works remain a testament to her brilliance.**

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**The Public's Help Is Needed to Preserve the Historic Harada House.**

» **PAGE 9**

**Christian Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders Show Up for Black Lives.**

# P.C. STAFFER HONORED BY L.A. PRESS CLUB

The Los Angeles Press Club has awarded the *Pacific Citizen* a pair of awards at its 62nd SoCal Journalism Awards.

In the category News Feature (newspapers with a circulation less than 50,000), the LAPC honored with a first-place trophy a story titled “Go for Gold: Delayed Recognition for a Vet’s Family’s Quest,” which appeared in the Nov. 8, 2019, issue of the *Pacific Citizen* (see [tinyurl.com/y9ppqvl6](http://tinyurl.com/y9ppqvl6)).

In the category Entertainment News or Feature (newspapers with a circulation less than 50,000), it awarded a third-place recognition to the *P.C.* for “George Takei’s Life, Career Move at Warp Speed,” which appeared in the Dec. 20, 2019, issue of the *P.C.* (see [tinyurl.com/vmq7bj](http://tinyurl.com/vmq7bj)).



The *P.C.*'s George Johnston was recognized with two awards by the Los Angeles Press Club for stories he wrote that were featured in the newspaper last year; his first place award is pictured here along with previous accolades given to him by the organization.

This year, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the awards were not live

and in-person but prerecorded and streamed via the web on Aug. 29. The writer for both stories was George Toshio Johnston, the *P.C.*'s senior editor of digital and social media.

“To have the *Pacific Citizen* recognized for its story contributions is certainly a highlight in what has been an extremely challenging year thus far with everything going on in the world right now,” said *P.C.* Executive Editor Allison Haramoto. “I congratulate George on his award wins, as his stories truly capture the importance of the human spirit and how it can rise above adversity, something we can all relate to right now.”

This is the third time the LAPC has awarded Johnston a first-place win for his reporting (see [tinyurl.com/y3dnnzyk](http://tinyurl.com/y3dnnzyk) and [tinyurl.com/y5ns23xk](http://tinyurl.com/y5ns23xk)).

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# FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS OF THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON



JACL Executive Director David Inoue and his son, Akira in 2020



JACL leaders 57 years ago at the March on Washington

PHOTOS: JACL NATIONAL

By JACL National

In 1963, a group of JACL members and staff marched for the civil and human rights of all. This year, while a smaller group, JACL joined Asian Americans Advancing Justice, SALDEF (Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund) and thousands of others to commemorate 57 years since the first March on Washington and to continue the fight for Black lives and call for police reform. You can watch the full lineup of amazing speakers and the march itself at <https://2020march.com/watch/>.



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— Gil Asakawa

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## FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR BY THE CONTENT OF THEIR CHARACTER

By David Inoue,  
JACL Executive Director

Just a few weeks ago, I went down to the Lincoln Memorial with my son to represent JACL at the 2020 Commitment March. The event was held on the 53rd anniversary of the first March on Washington, where the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Probably the most famous line from that speech is “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” Today, this line is most often quoted to argue against the practice of affirmative action. Such use is a betrayal of King’s full speech.

It’s easy to digest the full idealism of this one line from King as representative of the full speech, and often the full man. A full reading of King’s speech, and his many other speeches and writings, reveals the deeper pain of injustice

and the need to eradicate those disparities.

While King aspired to a time when his children, or more realistically his grandchildren, would be judged absent the color of their skin, he knew it would not come without first addressing the injustices of police brutality or voter suppression, also clearly highlighted in that same speech.

And we know these injustices remain today, whether it is the police murders of Breonna Taylor and George Floyd, the disparate voting resources in Black communities that forces wait times of five hours or more to cast a vote or the purging of voter registration rolls in a majority of minority communities.

It is because of these persistent injustices that I took my son to the march on Aug. 28 and why we still need programs like affirmative action to counter the historic and continuing systemic racism in our country.

So long as African-Americans face such discrimination from American society, it is impossible to judge anyone independent of color because in every other facet

of life, color continues to be a factor.

When color has been a factor in access to education and varying disciplinary standards for Black and other children, to suddenly say the color of one’s skin, which has been a factor up until that point, suddenly does not matter, is a ridiculous proposition.

What is most ironic about the use of this line from King’s speech to oppose affirmative action is that the policies most often opposed such as those used at Harvard, Yale and other highly selective colleges are very much in the spirit of King’s desire to judge based on the content of the individual’s character.

Highly selective schools take on the most nuanced and holistic views of their applicants, taking into consideration factors such as being a first-generation college student, as well as legacy status with alumni parentage.

It is because of this that JACL has and continues to support affirmative action programs and defend them from attacks like the one recently launched by the Department

of Justice.

One of the most troubling assertions in the DOJ letter is the complaint that there is no timeframe to end affirmative action policies. As described above, such policies are warranted so long as disparities exist, and we seem to have no timeline to end those. Perhaps, the DOJ should be asked what the timeline is to end police brutality on Black communities?

Having conducted alumni interviews for admissions to my own alma mater, though not as selective as Yale — not too far behind in its unrealistic admissions rates under 10 percent — I have seen how competitive college admissions can be.

A student who seemingly distinguishes himself or herself during his or her interview and presumably with sufficient academic credentials to warrant a referral for an interview is still likely to be rejected.

Opponents to affirmative action and the DOJ view admissions policies, particularly in the consideration of affirmative action as affecting only a small portion of

the applicant pool, when in reality, the holistic admissions policies, incorporating affirmative action, assess the full applicant pool.

For the individual applicant, he or she might see himself or herself as competing one-on-one with another applicant accepted over him or her, but in reality is competing with thousands of applicants to the school. There are many more qualified applicants than there are seats in each class at highly selective schools that accept as few as five or six percent of applicants.

Affirmative action is just one of many factors in the admissions process at highly selective colleges and universities. It is one factor that can be used to counter the impact of centuries of discrimination that do have a cumulative effect. It is one attempt to counter the shackles our society continues to place on people of color, especially African-Americans.

Perhaps there will come a day when the color of one’s skin can be eliminated as a factor, but that day has not come and remains a part of the applicant’s case for college admissions just as it does a part of their everyday existence.

*David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization’s Washington, D.C., office.*



## REIMAGINE EVERYTHING SOCIAL SECURITY STILL POPULAR AS IT REACHES ITS 85TH ANNIVERSARY

By Ron Mori

The Social Security Act celebrated its 85th anniversary on Aug. 14. The legislation provides retirement benefits to millions of American workers. To this day, Social Security still enjoys strong support from Americans across generations and political parties.

To celebrate this milestone anniversary, AARP commissioned a national survey to solicit adults’ views on Social Security. Support for Social Security has remained consistent over time. The vast majority of Americans — 93 percent of Republicans, 99 percent of Democrats and 92 percent of Independents — view Social Security as an important government program, and 56 percent believe it is even more important for retirees in light of the coronavirus pandemic.

“It’s crystal clear that Americans of all generations value the economic stability Social Security has offered for the last 85 years—even more so as we face the health and

economic challenges of a global pandemic,” said Nancy LeaMond, AARP’s executive vp and chief advocacy and engagement officer. “With so many Americans struggling to afford health care and other basic needs, Social Security is more important than ever — and AARP will never stop fighting to strengthen Social Security and make sure hard-working Americans get the benefits they’ve earned.”

AARP’s survey also found that Social Security is a key source of income and economic stability in retirement, but the survey respondents voiced concerns about whether it will be enough.

- Nearly three-quarters of Americans (74 percent) are worried that Social Security will not provide enough to live on during their retirement.
- Two-thirds of Americans believe the average monthly Social Security retirement benefit of \$1,503 per month is too low.

- Nearly 3 in 5 Americans are not confident in the future of Social Security, with confidence in the program lowest among 30- to 49-year-olds at only 28 percent.
- Nearly 2 in 5 Americans (39 percent) say they do or will rely on Social Security for a substantial portion of their retirement income, and 4 out of 5 expect it to be part of their retirement income.

Social Security is a key component of AARP’s “Protect Voters 50+” campaign, which launched Aug. 3. The initiative provides information about where candidates stand on issues that matter to Americans 50-plus, including Social Security, and how to cast individual votes safely from home or in-person this November.

- Other key findings:
- A strong majority (96 percent) of Americans say that Social Security is an important program.
  - Americans recognize that Social Security plays an especially important role during the COVID-19



pandemic. More than half (56 percent) indicated that Social Security is more important during the pandemic that it was before the pandemic started.

- Few agree that the program is driving up the deficit, and the vast majority is reluctant to reduce benefits for solvency.
- A majority of Americans (82 percent) say they will rely on Social Security at least somewhat for their retirement income.

### Methodology

AARP commissioned a national survey of 1,441 adults ages 18 and older to understand their attitudes

and opinions on Social Security. The interview was conducted July 14-27, 2020, online and by telephone. The data is weighted by age, gender, census division, race/ethnicity and educational attainment, obtained from the February 2020 Current Population Survey.

To learn more, visit [www.aarp.org](http://www.aarp.org) or follow @AARP and @AARPadvocates on social media.

*Ron Mori is a member of the Washington, D.C., JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.*



**The Harada family, circa 1911. Pictured are Jukichi and Ken Harada with their children, Masa Atsu, Mine, Sumi and Tadao.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE, RIVERSIDE, CALIF./COURTESY OF THE HARADA FAMILY ARCHIVAL COLLECTION



**A Harada family portrait, 1928. Pictured (back row, from left) are Mine, Mary, Calvin, Masa Atsu, Sumi and Clark and (front row, from left) Yoshizo, Ken, Harold and Jukichi Harada.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE, RIVERSIDE, CALIF./COURTESY OF THE HARADA FAMILY ARCHIVAL COLLECTION



**Jukichi and Ken Harada**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NAOMI HARADA



**Yoshizo Harada at the Harada House, circa 1930**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE, RIVERSIDE, CALIF./COURTESY OF THE HARADA FAMILY ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

# THE HARADA HOUSE: STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY THROUGH ACTION

The Riverside, Calif., landmark is awarded a grant from the National Park Service, but more action is needed to preserve this historic site.

*By Naomi Harada, Judy Lee, Robyn Peterson, NPS and P.C. Staff*

*‘I won’t sell. You can murder me. You can throw me into the sea. I won’t sell.’*

— Jukichi Harada’s response after being offered more than what he had paid for the long-desired home in Riverside, Calif. (1915)

**A**fter losing their beloved 5-year-old son to diphtheria, Jukichi Harada and his wife, Ken, sought a home in a safe, clean and healthy neighborhood. The year was 1915.

Neighbors objected and offered to buy the house, built in 1884 and located at 3356 Lemon St., in Riverside, Calif., fueled by the atmosphere of “Yellow Peril.” When they were rebuked, the neighbors sought the aid of the state attorney general to prosecute the Harada’s for violating the Alien Land Law, which prohibited Asian immigrants from buying property in California.

The Harada’s had placed the title of the home in the names of their three youngest children, Mine, Sumi and Yoshizo, who were U.S. citizens. When the couple won the landmark Superior Court case *California v. Harada* in 1918, it was a significant decision.

Presiding Judge Hugh Craig stat-

ed, “They are American citizens of somewhat humble station, it may be, but still entitled to equal protection of our land. . . . The political rights of American citizens are the same, no matter what their parentage.”

Some 25 years later, the Harada family again suffered the effects of “Yellow Peril,” and like many others were uprooted by the incarceration experience of World War II. But unlike the majority of Japanese Americans, when their incarceration finally ended, the Harada home had not been sold or taken away.

Instead, it had been cared for by Jess Stebler, a family friend. Thus, daughter Sumi Harada was able to offer temporary housing to returning Japanese Americans in Riverside. Both of her parents, Jukichi and Ken, passed away while incarcerated during WWII. For years, Sumi continued to live at the family home and served as the keeper of its history and hosted family gatherings there until her passing.

The house, along with primary artifacts and resources, was eventually donated by the Harada family to the City of Riverside under the stewardship of the Museum of Riverside. Because of the role the Harada House played in the landmark case challenging California’s Alien

Land Law and the story of a local family having endured the historic Japanese American incarceration experience, the Harada House is one of two National Historic Landmarks in Riverside, having received its official designation in 1990.

As such, it is unique among Japanese American sites of significance since it documents the story of a single family placed within the context of a group of people in an American historical event. Although the Harada House’s 20th-century stories and records now endure into the 21st century, the physical structure of the 1880s home needs attention and rehabilitation.

In today’s turbulent times, could the fetid waters of “Yellow Peril” once again be churning, leading to more xenophobic legislation? We have seen negative responses and treatment of specific immigrant groups in the wake of 9/11.

Recent images of U.S. border agents’ placement of children in cages are chilling, with some calling for new camps, citing the Japanese American incarceration experience as precedent. And now, the COVID-19 outbreak has spurred the finger-pointing blame toward an ethnic group, augmented by the American president persistently

calling it the “Chinese virus.” “Home” is now a very relevant topic. The COVID-19 outbreak has caused us to “stay at home.” Most of us are fortunate to have a home, but if the Alien Land Law were still in effect today and if the Harada case had had a different outcome, how many of us would have a home?

As of 2018, there are 44.7 million immigrants in the U.S. But the reality is, apart from Native Americans and Native Hawaiians, *we are all immigrants.*

“Places associated with the Asian American Pacific Islander heritage are sorely needed to provide the general public with easily accessible, readily digested, readily affordable, educational, recreational and historically responsible information about this rapidly growing ‘racial’ demographic in America,” stated Franklin Odo in his introduction to a collection of essays for the National Park Service. Odo



**Ken Harada in front of her home, located on Lemon Street in Riverside, Calif.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NAOMI HARADA



**Harada House prior to work being done in 2018 (Left) Harada House NHL plaque**

PHOTOS: PACIFIC CITIZEN



continued, “This understanding will empower the U.S. to act positively to secure their roles going forward in complex times, when issues of race, class, gender and religion make increasing demands on the political and moral character and stamina of the entire nation.” (Odo, an author, scholar, activist and historian, was the founding director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, 1997-2010.)

So, why should the Harada House and its stories be preserved and protected?

Because we need to be reminded of the importance of our democracy. We need to continually be aware that our rights, “our certain inalienable rights,” can be threatened. And we must be steadfast in our guardianship of and advocacy for those rights. The Harada House and its stories help to solidify the importance of our democracy. They are stories of our community — they are our strength. “The Harada House represents the activation of democracy,” said Naomi Harada. “Historical preservation helps to convey concepts: sitting in the house, imagining the conversations that transpired between

family members, seeing and reading the inscription on my father’s boyhood bedroom in his familiar scrawl: ‘Evacuated on May 23, 1942. Sat. 7 a.m.’ have a powerful impact of how historical events can jar one into the here and now. That jarring may motivate those to think and act for a more just and fair society. That is my hope for the preservation of the Harada House.”

Action can be implemented by engaging legislators to advocate for funding the rehabilitation of the Harada House and developing the site as a civil rights and social justice interpretive center.

Action can also continue with volunteerism and services to the Museum of Riverside and the Harada House Foundation. In addition, disseminating information about the significance of the Harada House to the public at large will continue to educate current and future generations. These actions in turn strengthen our community.

Recently, the Harada House was awarded on Aug. 20 a “Saving America’s Treasures” grant in the amount of \$500,000 from the National Park Service, in partnership with the Insti-

tute of Museum and Library Services, the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities to support the preservation of nationally significant historic properties and collections.

According to Riverside JACL’s Judy Lee, who also is a member of the Harada House Foundation, the Harada House is “the only recipient in California, as 42 grants were given nationally. It is an honor that this icon of social and legislative justice for Nikkei is recognized as a treasure by the federal government.”

In 2019, Congress appropriated funding for “Save America’s Treasures” from the Historic Preservation Fund, which uses revenue from federal oil leases to provide a broad range of preservation assistance without expending tax dollars.

The program requires applicants to leverage project funds from other sources to match the grant money dollar for dollar. This award of \$12.8 million will leverage more than \$25.9 million in private and public investment.

“From conserving the papers and artifacts of William ‘Count’ Basie to stabilizing a sandstone cliff dwelling of the sandstone cliff dwelling of the Ancestral Puebloan culture, these grants enable educational in-

stitutions, museums, tribes and local governments to preserve significant historic properties and collections for ongoing purposes of inspiration and education,” said Margaret Everson, counselor to the secretary, exercising the delegated authority of the NPS director.

The Federal “Save America’s Treasures” program was established in 1998 and is carried out in partnership with IMLS, NEA and NEH. From 1999-2018, the program provided \$323 million to more than 1,200 projects to preserve and conserve nationally significant collections, artifacts, structures and sites. Requiring dollar-for-dollar private match, the grants leveraged more than \$479 million in private investment and supported more than 16,000 local jobs.

In order to meet the requirements for this matching grant, the Harada House Foundation will launch an immediate fundraising campaign.

“We are delighted as this is a significant step toward our overall \$6.5 million fundraising goal,” said Lee in an email to the *Pacific Citizen*. “[We are] one of only 10 projects to be fully funded at the maximum \$500,000 (matching) grant level.”

“The goals are to rehabilitate the house and to develop an interpretive center for civil rights and social justice, using the Harada House story as a framework,” said Naomi Harada.

In additional news regarding the Harada House, the California State Historic Resources Commission met on Aug. 14 to discuss various state nominations, of which the Harada House was one, having been nominated for California State Historic Landmark status.

“While we await the final announcement of that designation, we would like to note that at the meeting, many of the nominated sites represented ethnic and diverse communities in California, reflecting an important trend in historic preservation,” Lee wrote to the *P.C.* “This follows what the National Trust for Historic Preservation — NTHP — has been trying to encourage when it helped to sponsor the first Asian and Pacific American Historic Preservation Forum — APIAHiP, San Francisco, 2010 — a conference that meets every other year, most recently in Honolulu in January.”

In addition, the Harada House Foundation awaits anxiously the announcement this fall of the NTHP’s “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” for 2020.

*For more information on the Harada House Foundation and its fundraising goal efforts, visit [haradahousefoundation.org](http://haradahousefoundation.org) or [www.riversideca.gov/museum/haradahouse/](http://www.riversideca.gov/museum/haradahouse/) or view its Facebook page.*



**Ken Harada and her grandchild in front of the family restaurant**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NAOMI HARADA



**Pictured (from left) are Yoshizo, Mine and Sumi Harada**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NAOMI HARADA



**Ken and Jukichi Harada in the backyard of their home**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE, RIVERSIDE, CALIF./ COURTESY OF THE HARADA FAMILY ARCHIVAL COLLECTION



**The Harada’s Washington Restaurant in Riverside, Calif., circa 1912**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE MUSEUM OF RIVERSIDE, RIVERSIDE, CALIF./ COURTESY OF THE HARADA FAMILY ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

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# A NISEI ARTIST LUMINARY REMEMBERED

The late-Ruth Asawa's legacy as an artist and arts education advocate is revisited as her works are a testament to the importance of art benefitting the greater good.

By Rob Buscher,  
Contributor



Ruth Asawa drawing while interned in Rohwer, Ark., 1943

PHOTO: COURTESY THE ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA



On the Bayou (WC.309), 1943 watercolor on paper

PHOTO: ARTWORK © 2020 ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK COURTESY THE ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA AND DAVID ZWIRNER



Detail of the Japanese American Internment Memorial, San Jose, Calif., 1994

PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPH BY AIKO GUNEO © ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA, ARTWORK © 2020 ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK COURTESY THE ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA AND DAVID ZWIRNER

It is not uncommon for an artist to be posthumously recognized for his/her genius, but the amount of attention that the late-Nisei artist Ruth Asawa is currently attracting is unprecedented for a member of the Japanese American community.

In April, author Marilyn Chase published a high-profile biography of the artist. In July, the *New York Times* ran a detailed feature about Asawa's life as her works re-emerge as high-ticket items in the art auction market. Then in August, the U.S. Postal Service issued commemorative stamps featuring Asawa's woven wire sculptures. Asawa was also a major subject in the 2020 Emmy

Award-winning PBS documentary "Masters of Modern Design," which focused on Nisei artists whose works helped define the cultural landscape of postwar America.

Asawa is truly having a moment, which is why it seems appropriate to revisit her legacy as an artist and arts education advocate who also happened to be Japanese American.

Asawa is perhaps best remembered for her looped wire sculptures, but her legacy in the San Francisco Bay Area (where she spent six decades of her life) runs far deeper with her numerous public sculptures and decades of arts education advocacy. Although much of her work is not directly attributed to her identity as a Japanese American, neither can it be completely divorced from the events that shaped her adolescence.

Growing up in the Greater Los Angeles area, Asawa spent most of her time out of school working on the 80-acre farm that her Issei parents leased in Norwalk, Calif. Like all Japanese Americans, her life would change forever in the aftermath of Pearl Harbor.

In a 1990 interview with the *Noe Valley Voice*, Asawa explained, "In February of 1942, on a Sunday morning at about 11 o'clock, two FBI men came, flashed their badges and said to my father, 'We're here to pick you up, Mr. Asawa.' He was in the field when they came. They gave him enough time to have lunch. I remember that day vividly. My sister, Chiyo, had made a lemon meringue pie. So, he ate lunch, had a piece of pie. I ironed a white shirt. He got into the one suit he had, and then they took him. And we never saw him from 1942 until 1946."

The family had no news of Mr. Asawa's whereabouts until a year later, when they learned he was being held in an Alien Detention Center in Lordsburg, N.M., a facility

where several Issei were killed by prison guards. Adding to the climate of uncertainty, Asawa's younger sister, Kimiko, was stranded in Japan, where she would spend the duration of World War II.

Asawa was left with her mother and siblings to figure out what to do with their possessions, and after the evacuation notice was issued, she stopped attending school in April 1942 to help sell off the family's farm equipment.

Asawa wrote, "I was 16, we were just packing up and trying to dispose of our tractors, our horses, our farm equipment, our trucks, our car. And we were being evacuated from the life my father had worked on since 1902, when he began farming in California. . . . I think it's humorous for anybody to think that the \$20,000 that we may receive through the Redress can ever compensate for the loss. As modest as our farm was, we lost two tractors, we lost two trucks, four horses, all the farm equipment. We lost everything. We didn't have household goods of any value, but what allowed my family to make a living was totally gone."

Like many of the Nisei who experienced incarceration during their adolescent years, Asawa's experiences would have profound and lasting impacts on the course of her life.

It was during her time at the Santa Anita assembly center that she took her first drawing course, taught by Disney animator Tom Okamoto. While in Arkansas at Rohwer, where her family was sent afterward, Asawa would have the opportunity to work on her first artist commission — illustrating the camp yearbook. Although she would go on to study education, because of wartime anti-Japanese racism, she was unable to complete the student teaching requirement of her degree. If not for those experiences, Asawa might never have become an artist.

Asawa's daughter, Addie Lanier, shared the following reflection about her mother's wartime incarceration: "Her internment experience was in some ways a mixed blessing. She was 16 when she went to Santa Anita, and 17 when she left for Milwaukee State Teacher's college. Her identity as an independent teenager coincided with the internment, which took away all parental oversight and authority. . . . From the time she



Ruth Asawa, Albert Lanier and daughter Aiko in front of a tomato sign they designed and painted for Asawa's parents' farm in Anaheim, Calif., 1949

PHOTO: COURTESY THE ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA

was 17-1/2 until she was 22, she had almost no interaction with her parents. Little to no financial support from her family. She was on her own.

"The racism she experienced was profound, but she also had people (like her English teacher in the camp, or friends she met in college or the mother in one of the families she au paired for) that told her that she was valuable and talented, and that her government had mistreated her," Lanier continued. "The world that opened up to her was diverse and such a contrast to her family farm. For example, she was taken to German Bund meetings in Milwaukee by a friend, she traveled to Mexico twice on the Greyhound bus, she became lifelong friends with European artists fleeing the Nazis and she got to experience Black Mountain College in North Carolina. None of this would have happened if she had not been interned, and her time at Black Mountain College changed the trajectory of her life."

Black Mountain College would prove to be a transformative experience that not only impacted Asawa's career, but also allowed her to meet her future husband, Albert Lanier. Initially, Asawa planned on attending only a single six-week summer term, but she instead ended up spending three years there.

There, she was mentored by Josef Albers, a Bauhaus artist who fled Adolf Hitler's Germany, and Buckminster Fuller, a polymath inventor and architect who reinvented himself after the Great Depression ruined his business. Both men had lost everything and rebuilt their lives — familiar perhaps to what Asawa was experiencing in her own life at that moment.

During the summer of 1947, Asawa would have another fateful encounter that would shape her work for many decades to come when she met a Mexican craftsman who taught her how to weave baskets. This technique would be the foundation of her signature looped wire sculptures that Asawa described as "like drawing in space."

Asawa expanded on that point in a quote from her estate's website: "My



(From left) Nancy Thompson, Ruth Asawa and her son, Paul Lanier, sitting in front of Baker's Clay panels for the Japanese American Internment Memorial in San Jose, Calif., 1993

PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPHER © INFORMATION, ARTWORK © 2020 ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA / ARTISTS RIGHTS SOCIETY (ARS), NEW YORK COURTESY THE ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA AND DAVID ZWIRNER



Stamps commemorating the works of artist Ruth Asawa.

PHOTO: U.S. POSTAL SERVICE





**Ruth Asawa with friends during her exhibition at the Peridot Gallery in New York, N.Y., 1954**

PHOTO: COURTESY THE ESTATE OF RUTH ASAWA

curiosity was aroused by the idea of giving structural form to the images in my drawings. These forms come from observing plants, the spiral shell of a snail, seeing light through insect wings, watching spiders repair their webs in the early morning and seeing the sun through the droplets of water suspended from the tips of pine needles while watering my garden.”

Whether she acknowledged it at the time or not, there was greater significance in Asawa’s use of wire — a symbol of confinement, which she

transformed into objects of beauty.

The following year in 1948, Asawa and Lanier decided to get married after graduation. This was no easy feat at a time when anti-miscegenation laws prevented them from being legally wed in most places in the country.

Acknowledging the possible challenges ahead, they sought the advice of their faculty mentors. Asawa recalled, “Albers thought I would make a good mother. I told him I wanted about six children. He said, ‘Gooooood, goooooood.’ And

he told Albert, ‘Don’t ever let her stop her work.’ It was very good advice, and Albert has always been very supportive. Then, Bucky told us, ‘The world is your oyster.’ And that’s all he said. I didn’t know what that meant at the time. But what he seemed to be saying was that each of us could shape our own world. You become the pearl, and you rub and you rub. And you make a big pearl out of your life.”

Letters that Asawa wrote to Lanier suggest that her family was generally supportive of their union, but they wanted her to wait until the family farm recovered financially from the wartime incarceration.

An excerpt from a letter dated Nov. 15, 1948, reads, “Mama said think carefully, then decide. Wants me to work for a year to justify my studying. The real reason is that they are extremely exhausted, and very little left of their physical energy. Lois finally wrote, too, and wants me to help financially mama and papa, to get George back to school. I am all

willing. She is all for our plans, but not so soon . . .” Another letter from December that year summarized her family’s attitude to the marriage succinctly as, “They dare to be tolerant, for we have all suffered intolerance innocently.”

Moving to San Francisco in 1949, Asawa and Lanier would go on to raise six children while working as a self-employed artist and architect. Asawa experienced some early success in the mid-1950s exhibiting at Manhattan’s high-profile Peridot Gallery, whose clientele included Nelson Rockefeller.

Still, the couple struggled to make a decent living through project-based work. Despite these challenges, Asawa actually turned down an offer from a design firm who wanted to hire her and provide her with childcare. Instead, she chose to work from her home studio, integrating her workspace and family life.

Reflecting on the nontraditional pathway that she took in her career as an artist, Asawa wrote, “The im-

portant thing is how you balance the two — your work and raising children. Because I had the children, I chose to have my studio in my home. I wanted them to understand my work and learn how to work. If I hadn’t spent all those years staying home with my kids and experimenting with materials that children could use, I would never have done the Ghirardelli and Hyatt fountains.” Indeed, two of Asawa’s best-known installation sculptures were inspired by techniques she experimented with during this time period.

Unfortunately, at a time when misogynistic attitudes dominated the art world, the same strengths that she saw in this home studio approach were panned by critics, who dismissed her as a “housewife,” as she was disparagingly referred to in an article titled “Eastern Yeast” that ran in the Jan. 10, 1955, issue of *Time Magazine*. Meanwhile,

» See **ARTIST** on page 12

## LOVE GOES THE DISTANCE



Just because we’re apart doesn’t mean we can’t stay connected. Caring for our family and friends is still as important as ever. So make time to connect, help plan out the medical care they need, and remind each other to stay safe and healthy.

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PHOTOS: ATHENA MARI ASKLIPIADIS

# PROTEST AND PRAYER

Christian Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders show up for Black lives.



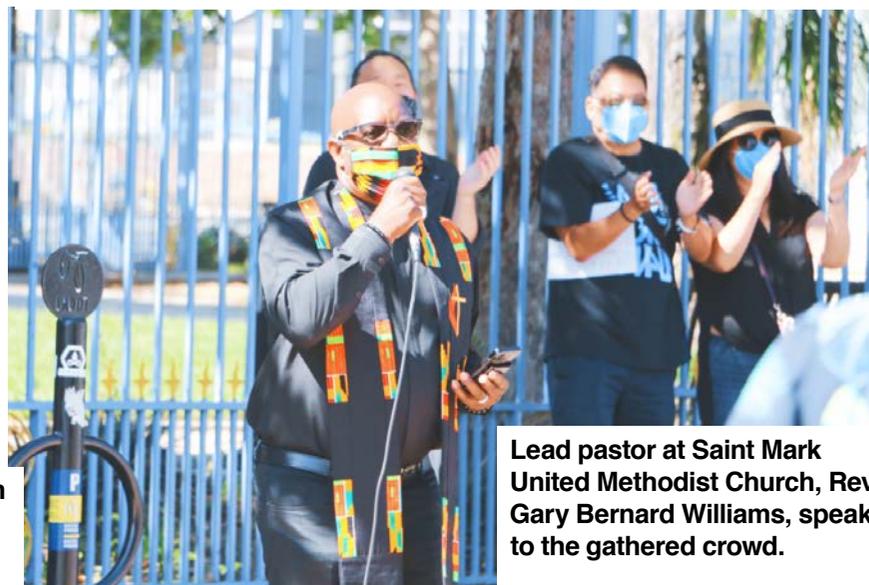
Attendee Eunhyey Lok of Garden Church holds her homemade sign proudly.



Diane Ujiye (right) speaks to the crowd.



Attendee Jocelyn Chung's sign reminds us that silence equals being complicit.



Lead pastor at Saint Mark United Methodist Church, Rev. Gary Bernard Williams, speaks to the gathered crowd.

By Athena Mari Asklipiadis,  
Contributor

A “Vigil of Love and Solidarity” was hosted in Leimert Park in South Los Angeles on Aug. 1 by Southern California AAPI Christians. This gathering of church leaders and community members was planned to show solidarity for Black lives. More than 25 churches and organizations participated in the event, which brought together AAPI and Black Christians to gather to pray, sing and listen to words of inspiration.

Due to COVID-19, attendees were asked to keep their physical distance and wear a mask throughout the duration of the event, though this proved to be quite the challenge in sunny Los Angeles’ summer heat.

But despite the discomfort, dozens of people showed up and stayed to

express their support for the Black community. Those who did not attend in person were able to live stream the vigil online and watch it from home.

With such a rich and diverse history in South Los Angeles, it was fitting the event opened up with a greeting and brief history entitled “Welcome to Crenshaw” by Rev. Gary Bernard Williams, lead pastor at Saint Mark United Methodist Church.

Rev. Williams reminded the crowd of masked faces that Crenshaw and Leimert Park, a now mostly Black South Los Angeles community, was founded in the 1920s during a time when people of different races were not cohabitating or intermingling as they do now.

“[Leimert Park] is a place where Black activism, art and culture happens . . . but it was built for white

folks only; we were not allowed,” he said.

Rev. Williams went on to say that things changed after World War II, when Japanese Americans returned to Southern California after being forcibly incarcerated in American Concentration Camps for the duration of the war.

Japanese Americans were the first minorities in the area to break through the racial barriers. When they moved in, they “opened the door for the rest of us, for African-Americans, for Hispanics and everybody else to move into this neighborhood, so we celebrate that today in this place,” Rev. Williams proclaimed.

Following that lead, many of the event’s speakers echoed the same sentiments, reaffirming that the longtime relationship between the

AAPI and the Black communities is nothing new and because of that, it was our duty to stand up against all injustices, not just our own.

Some speakers touched on the sensitive topic of tension that existed in the communities between Korean Americans and Blacks that came to a head during the 1992 Los Angeles riots.

Confronting that pain is something necessary for both groups in order to build understanding and bring forth the ability to move forward together.

Speakers like Diane Ujiye, an activist and also one of the gathering’s organizers, delivered some powerful words through poetry. Her poem questioned the AAPI community, specifically AAPI Christians.

“So, AAPI church where do we stand? With blue-eyed Jesus on stolen land?” asked Ujiye, referencing the whitewashing of Jesus’ image and reminding the crowd that Los Angeles is on native Tongva land.

More is to come from the group of leaders who hope to continue these conversations and their work as Christians supporting racial justice.

The website *aapichristiansforblacklives.org* identifies three clear goals:

1. Affirm racial justice as part of the gospel proclamation and obedience.
2. Activate and educate the AAPI

Christian community toward solidarity and support for the Black community.

3. Change the divisive narrative that separates AAPI and Black communities.

In addition to the inspirational speakers, attendees also listened to the beautiful words sung by singer Therrey Ilalio to “break every chain” and find “healing in the name of Jesus.”

Prayers and blessings closed the event, and the crowd dispersed to the sounds of beating drums from the African drumming group Daansekou, who perform at the plaza weekly.

Rev. Williams summed up the multicultural gathering best when he said, “It’s a beautiful thing when we can come together like this, when we can celebrate, when we can be in solidarity, when we can not just worship together, but protest together, to stand together, to speak up, to speak truth to power, when we can do that, we can change things.”

All in all, the vigil served as a peaceful example of community solidarity and a meaningful first step toward real healing and change.

*Video from the vigil can be found on YouTube on the “AAPI Christians for Black Lives” channel and on Facebook.*



Vigil attendees raise their fists in Leimert Park Plaza.



# JAVA AWARDS \$25,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

The organization announces 13 winners of its annual scholarship program for 2020.

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Japanese American Veterans Assn. announced recently 13 winners of its annual scholarship award program for 2020. Outstanding students from around the country applied for the scholarships. This year's recipients were incredibly talented and accomplished, each worthy of continuing the legacy of the Nisei service to country, despite facing tremendous obstacles placed by their government.



T.J. Okamura

The \$5,000 memorial scholarship honoring the late-U.S. Sen. Daniel K. Inouye's iconic career of military and civilian public service was awarded to T. J. Okamura of Redmond, Wash.

The grandson of George Okamura, 442nd RCT, T. J. Okamura is currently a U.S. Army Specialist in the Military Intelligence Corps. This fall, he will begin working on a master's degree in international studies with a focus on Japan at the University of Washington. He will also participate in the U.S. Army

Reserve Officers' Training Corps while concurrently enrolled at the University of Washington.

In his essay, he wrote, "It is one of my ultimate goals that whatever I do will give back to the community that shaped who I am. . . . [Being the] recipient of the Daniel Inouye Memorial Scholarship would be an honor that I hope to carry forward for all Japanese Americans."

The \$3,000 Founder's Scholarship, named for JAVA's founder, the late-Col. Phil Ishio, his wife Constance and their son, Douglas Ishio, was awarded to Caitlin Emi Takeda of Northridge, Calif.



Caitlin Emi Takeda

The granddaughter of Harry Arिता, MIS, Takeda recently completed her senior year at Brown University and will begin her first year at Brown University Warren Alpert Medical School this fall.

For her undergraduate senior thesis project, she made two summer pilgrimages to Heart Mountain, where she documented and photo-

graphed Nisei she met.

In her application, Takeda wrote, "[By] the end of the two summers, I had taken the photo of over 30 Nisei. I compiled these photos into a photobook that I titled, 'Nisei.' It serves as a reminder of the sacrifices that my grandfather's generation made so that I could live a safe and happy life, and as a way to honor my grandfather's legacy. I plan on giving a copy of the book to each of the internees who is featured. Giving back to the older Japanese American generations is something that I plan on doing for the rest of my life."



Rhian Kohashi O'Rourke

The Kiyoko Tsuboi Taubkin Legacy Scholarship, a \$2,000 award in honor of a longtime patron of JAVA, was awarded to Rhian Kohashi O'Rourke, the granddaughter of Hiroshi Kohashi, 442nd RCT.

O'Rourke, a graduate of Wellesley College, was a U.S. Fulbright Scholar Research Grantee in Amman, Jordan. She currently attends Johns Hopkins University and is

pursuing an MBA and MA in government.

After she finishes her dual-degree program, O'Rourke's goal is to do public health-care research and advocacy. In her essay, she shared, "[Pursuing] a graduate degree has reawakened my hope that I can create a better future for myself and positively contribute to society. . . . Because my grandfather was a member of the 442nd, this scholarship holds special meaning for me. Despite his permanent disability from the war, my grandfather's motto was, 'Do the best you can.'"

The following JAVA Memorial Scholarships were awarded to graduating high school seniors, each in the amount of \$1,500:

- **Kiara Emi Kubota Stromberg**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Dr. Americo Bugliani and his liberator, Paul Sakamoto, 442nd RCT.
- **Chloe Elyse Hana Nelson**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Ranger Grant Hiro Hirabayashi, MIS.
- **Sophia Daniel**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Co.. Jimmie Kanaya, a three-year veteran of WWII, Korea and Vietnam.
- **Kylie Reiko Ginoza**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of CWO 4 Mitsugi Murakami Kasai, MIS.

- **Helena Kimiko Nukuto**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Sgt. Ben Kuroki, a gunner in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 505th Bombardment Group.
- **Camille Yuriko Tom**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Victor Matsui, MIS, and his wife, Teru Matsui.
- **Dawson Hideo Gomez Tokishi**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of past JAVA President and Korean War veteran Bob Nakamoto.
- **Joseph Paul Nakasone**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Maj. Muneo Michael Okusa, MIS.
- **Sarah Keiko Sakakihara**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Betty Shima, lifelong partner of Terry Shima, 442nd RCT.
- **Grace Xiang Bost**, recipient of a JAVA Memorial Scholarship in honor of Maj. Orville Shirey, 442nd RCT, and his wife, Maud Shirey.

JAVA thanks the Scholarship Committee: Chris DeRosa, chair; Dawn Eilenberger, CDR Jannelle Kuroda, Capt. (Dr.) Cynthia Macri and Mary Murakami.

To learn more about JAVA and its scholarship program, visit [www.java.us.org](http://www.java.us.org).

## JACL PUYALLUP VALLEY CHAPTER AWARDS RYAN LING

Puyallup Valley JACL has awarded Ryan Ling a \$2,000 scholarship for outstanding academic achievement and community service, the chapter said in an online announcement that was held in lieu of its annual scholarship/installation banquet, which was canceled due to the ongoing pandemic.

A graduate of Curtis Senior High School in University Place, Wash., Ling plans on attending Barrett Honors College at Arizona State University with plans of double-majoring in biochemistry and possibly marine biology.

"The reason I have decided to take [on] these fields is I believe that there are many answers in the ocean to our everyday problems that are going on — this mainly includes finding solutions to diseases such as the one that is going on right now. I hope to find these cures using 95 percent of the ocean's undiscovered areas. I'm grateful to be the recipient of the JACL Puyallup Valley Scholarship this year, and I wish everyone well and to stay healthy," Ling said.

Among Ling's many accomplishments, which included actively participating in student government



while in high school, his interests include swimming and being involved with the Tacoma Buddhist Temple. The chapter congratulates Ling on his well-deserved award.

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## Special Issues Coming Soon

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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

# CALENDAR

**DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PLEASE CHECK REGARDING THE STATUS OF EVENTS LISTED IN THIS ISSUE'S CALENDAR SECTION.**

## NATIONAL

### JACL Women in Leadership Webinar

Sept. 16, 4 p.m. PT/7 p.m. ET  
Virtual event

Join JACL for a roundtable discussion with some of JACL's women in leadership as they discuss the impact various JA women have had within JACL and nationally, as well as a candid conversation with women who currently hold leadership positions in JACL. Panelists include Sarah Baker, Cheyenne Cheng, Carol Kawamoto, Mieko Kuramoto and Lisa Shiosaki Olsen. **Info: To RSVP, visit <https://jacl.salsalabs.org/jaclwomeninleadership/index.html>.**

### JACL/OCA Virtual Leadership Summit

Sept. 24-29  
Virtual event

Join JACL and OCA in this year's summit, which has been held for more than 35 years and is dedicated to fostering bonds between the two organizations, as well as training community leaders in advocacy. Even though this year's event is online, the programming will remain virtually the same as an in-person program. Applications are open now through Aug. 30. **Info: For questions, contact Matthew Weisbly and Cheyenne Cheng at [policy@jacl.org](mailto:policy@jacl.org). A tentative schedule is available online at [jacl.org](http://jacl.org).**

### CELEBRATION, an APAICS Event

Oct. 1  
Virtual event

**Price: Free**  
CELEBRATION honors Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders for their contributions to the AAPI community. This year's all-virtual event will include remarks by members of Congress, community leaders and include performances and celebrity appearances. This year's honorary co-chairs are Congresswoman Grace Meng (D-NY) and Congress-

man Andy Kim (D-NJ), and the Lifetime Achievement Award will be given to actor/activist George Takei.

**Info: Visit <https://apaics.org/events/celebration/> to register for free.**

### Poston Virtual Pilgrimage

Oct. 3-4

Virtual event

**Price: Free**

The Poston Community Alliance Annual Pilgrimage will be held as an online event this year, and all activities will be free of charge. Programs will feature opening remarks by Dennis Patch, Tribal Chairman of the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation, and a video on the Poston Incarceration Site, which provide's Poston's unique history and updates on past and present Alliance projects. Workshops will be provided, followed with live Q & A sessions. Additional videos and films can be viewed "on demand" at [www.postonpreservation.org](http://www.postonpreservation.org). Special guest presenter will be Derek Mio, lead actor of the TV series "The Terror: Infamy," who will present a reading of Marlene Shigekawa's children's book "Welcome Home Swallows."

**Info: To register and receive the virtual event link, visit <https://poston-virtual-pilgrimage.eventbrite.com>.**

## NCWNP

### Midori Kai 2020 Boutique

San Francisco, CA

Virtual Shopping and Auction Event

Thru 15

**Info: Free**

This year's event is completely virtual where you can still find amazing items from talented and creative artisans including accessories, apparel, home/art, dessert/dining, jewelry, textiles and much more! Get your holiday shopping off to an early start by joining this virtual event.

**Info: Visit [www.midorikaiboutique.com](http://www.midorikaiboutique.com) or email [posaki@gsmanagement.com](mailto:posaki@gsmanagement.com).**

### Japanese Home Cooking: Cookbook Presentation and Virtual Cooking Demonstration with Author Sonoko Sakai

San Francisco, CA

Sept. 30; 6-7:30 p.m. PT

Virtual event

**Price: \$35 Center Members; \$40 General Public**

In this cooking workshop, L.A.-based food writer Sonoko Sakai will be talking about her new cookbook

"Japanese Home Cooking: Simple Meals, Authentic Flavors," and she'll make curry from scratch using whole spices and seeds. You'll learn how to make your own spice blends and make a curry brick that is free of artificial preservatives or food coloring.

**Info: Visit [www.jccnc.org](http://www.jccnc.org) for more details.**

## PSW

### 36th Annual Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival

Los Angeles, CA

Sept. 24-Oct. 31

Online film festival

**Price: Ticket packages are available for purchase**

Established in 1983 by Visual Communications, LAAPFF is the largest film festival in Southern California dedicated to showcasing films by Asians and Pacific Islanders around the world. The festival presents approximately 200 films, as well as the C3:Conference, LT@Home series and much more!

**Info: Visit [festival.vcmedia.org](http://festival.vcmedia.org) for more information.**

### LTSC 40th Anniversary

Celebration Gala

Los Angeles, CA

Oct. 10

**Price: Free with registration**

Join the Little Tokyo Service Center as it celebrates its 40th anniversary with a virtual gala highlighting the organization's diverse programming, accomplishments and vision built on years of service to the community. Please kindly consider donating to help reach its fundraising goal as well. A silent auction will also be featured at the event.

**Info: Visit [www.ltsc.org/40thAnniversary](http://www.ltsc.org/40thAnniversary).**

### GFBNEC's 'An Evening of Aloha'

Los Angeles, CA

Nov. 14, 4-5 p.m. PST

Virtual event

Join the Go For Broke National Education Center as it streams live for the first time 'An Evening of Aloha' celebration gala honoring our brave Nisei veterans.

**Info: Visit [goforbroke.org](http://goforbroke.org).**

### JANM Online Museum Collection

Los Angeles, CA

Japanese American National Museum

Online

JANM's Museum Collections Online features selected highlights from the

museum's permanent collection of more than 60,000 unique artifacts, documents and photographs. Among the collections that can be viewed online are the "Stanley Hayami Diary," "Hisako Hibi Collection," "George Hoshida Collection" and "Hideo Date Collection," "Estelle Ishigo Collection," among others. Although the museum is temporarily closed, viewers can still experience its inside treasures.

**Info: [www.janm.org](http://www.janm.org).**

### Keiro No Hi Festival

Los Angeles, CA

Virtual Event September

**Price: Free**

Keiro No Hi, or "Respect for the Aged Day," is a Japanese holiday that honors and celebrates older adults. This third-annual event will take place in September, with registration opening in June. The "Quality of Life" Fine Arts Showcase will feature artwork created by community members. Last year featured artwork and projects submitted by more than 1,100 individuals. Everyone in the community age 60 and above is invited to participate.

**Info: Visit the Keiro website for registration information and more event details.**

## PNW

### Black Lives Matter and Why We Need to Be Involved: A Nikkei Community Conversation

Portland, OR

Sept. 19; 3-4:30 p.m. PT

Virtual event

**Price: Free**

Today's communities are rising up against injustices. What is the Black Lives Matter movement? Where do Japanese Americans fit in? Join Portland JACL at this virtual event to hear from community members about why the BLM movement is necessary and how it affects the Nikkei community. A Q & A will also be included, as well as a panel discussion featuring Vicki Nakashima, Sara Onitsuka, Rev. Kosho Finch and Chisao Hata. Registration is required to receive the link for the Zoom event. Questions for the panel can also be submitted in advance during registration.

**Info: RSVP by Sept. 18 at <https://tinyurl.com/Nikkei4BLM>.**

### Wing Luke Museum Online

Digital Content

Seattle, WA

Wing Luke Museum

Although the museum's doors are temporarily closed, there is still a plethora of curated

stories, digital content and neighborhood resources available to access and view. Viewers can check out Education, YouthCAN, Collections and Community Art all online! **Info: [www.digitalwingluke.org](http://www.digitalwingluke.org).**

## EDC

### Japan Society of Boston Free Online Resources

Boston, MA

Virtual classes and information

**Price: Free**

The Japan Society of Boston is offering free online resources featuring Japanese language learning tools, Japanese cooking, origami, arts and lectures and much more.

**Info: Visit <https://japansocietyboston.wildapricot.org>.**

## ADVERTISE HERE

Events in the calendar section are listed based on space availability. Place a 'Spotlight' ad with photos of your event for maximum exposure.

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# In MEMORIAM

**Akine, Diane Makiko, 81**, Hilo, HI, May 1; she is survived by her children, Clint Akine and Terri Lynn Akine; siblings, Wallace (Carol) Ishii, Roy Ishii and Katherine Ishihara; she is also survived by many nephews, nieces and cousins.

**Fukunaga, Yasuteru, 93**, Hilo, HI, March 20; an Army veteran, he is survived by his wife, Sadako Fukunaga; children, Earl Fukunaga, Arleen (Peter) Fukuyama, Carol (Russell) Gomes; siblings, Takanari Fukunaga, Yoshikage (Shinobu) Fukunaga, Suetaka (Vicky) Fukunaga, James (Ella) Fukunaga, Shigeyuki Fukunaga, Fujiko Ito, Setsuko Toriano and Etsuko Sato; gc: 7; ggc: 5; gggc: 2.

**Griffith, Ethel Sadame, 82**, Hilo,

HI, April 23; she is survived by her daughter, Kimberly (Xavier Aloiau) Griffith; sisters, Ruth Heu and Judy (Robert) Kanno; daughters-in-law, Valerie Boone and Karen Boone; gc: 8; ggc: 12.

**Higa, Milton T., 71**, Honolulu, HI, March 19.



**Iiyama, Chizu, 98**, Richmond, CA, Aug. 26; a longtime community activ-

ist with such organizations as JACL, NCR and the National Japanese American Historical Society, as well as a graduate of the University of California, Berkeley. During WWII, she was incarcerated at the Topaz WRA Center in Utah, where she met her future husband, Ernest Iiyama. The couple married and moved to Chicago in 1943; in 1955, they moved to Northern California. She was predeceased by her husband, Ernest; she is survived by her daughters, Patti Iiyama (Jerry Freiwith) and Laura Iiyama and son, Mark Iiyama.

**Kashiwagi, George, 91**, Sacramento, CA, March 29; during WWII, his family and he were removed to the Arboga Assembly Center near Marysville, CA, then incarcerated at the Tule Lake WRA Center in CA, and to the Minidoka WRA Center in ID; an Army veteran (Korean War), he was predeceased by his brothers, Bill, Paul and Mas; he is survived by his wife, Amiko; children, Carol (Craig) Yamane, Alan (Ali) Kashiwagi, Diane (Dennis) Shimosaka and Joy (Ray) Howell; siblings, Sam and Natsuko (Ian) Wallace; sister-in-law, Sue Kashiwagi; gc: 4.

**Mar, Elizabeth, 72**, Seattle, WA, March 25; and Mar, Robert, 78, Seat-

tle, WA, March 27; Liz Mar, co-owner of Kona Kitchen with daughter, Angie, and son-in-law, Yuji Okumoto; and husband, Robert Mar, both died from COVID-19, two days apart at the same hospital and same time of 1:35 a.m.; they are survived by their children, Angie (Yuji) Okumoto, Robert (Rachel) Mar and Richard (Thanh) Mar; gc: 7.



**Nagatani, Frank, 74**, Evanston, IL, May 13; an Naval Air Reserve veteran, he is survived by his wife, Linda; children, Samuel, Abigail and Nora Nagatani; sisters, Pauline (Joseph) Oyama and Irene Miyamoto; gc: 1.

**Oka, Hank, 89**, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, May 7; he was predeceased by his son, Garrett, daughter-in-law, Shirley, and sister, Margie Chomori; he is survived by his wife, Jean; children, Rob, Rick (Adrienne), Gayle (Alan) Nakagawa and Gidge (Dr. Mitch) Taguchi; siblings, Misao Chomori and George (Betty) Oka; gc: 10; ggc: 3.



**Ryuto, Chitoshi, 95**, Anaheim, CA, April 18; and Ryuto, Kazuko, 92, Anaheim, CA, May 1; both survived by daughter, Yukiko (George) Crain; Chiotshi is survived by her brother, Akira Ryuto; Kazuko was predeceased by his siblings, Yoneta Nishimura and Itsuko Koga; he is survived by his sisters, Nobuko Yamashita and Haruko Haraguchi; gc: 2.

**Saito, June Keiko, 95**, Gardena, CA, April 11; she is survived by her sons, Craig and Steven; brother, Fukashi (Tomi) Hori; she is also survived by many nieces and nephews.

**Tada, Yoko, 87**, Los Angeles, CA, March 13; she is survived by her children, Hiroomi (Kim), Takeomi (Hiroomi) Tada, Fumiko Iwasaki, Tomoko (Jason) Toland and Ayako (Wade) Prince; 3 siblings; gc: 8.

**Umeda, George 'Philo,' 91**, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 13; he was predeceased by his wife, Shirley; he is survived by his daughter, Darlene (John) Okuno; sister, Florence Numa; gc: 2.

TRIBUTE

**TERRY K. TAKEDA**



Terry K. Takeda of Anaheim, Calif., was to have celebrated his 25th wedding anniversary on Sept. 24 with his wife, Patti Hirahara, but he unfortunately passed away on April 28.

Terry graduated from California State University, Los Angeles, with a Bachelor of Arts degree in mathematics in 1970. He went on to have a 34-year career with the City of Los Angeles Department of Water and Power, where he was an energy analyst; he retired in 2009.

He was a brown belt in judo, a founding member of the first annual Marina/Gardena JACL 8K Run at the Vincent Thomas Bridge on Nov. 23, 1986, a recipient of the Venice/Culver JACL George Inagaki Community Service Award for Outstanding Community Involvement in 1993 and a board member of the Greater Los Angeles Singles JACL in 1994. He was also an avid golfer.

Terry was only a baby when his family was sent from Los Angeles to the Heart Mountain Wyoming Relocation Camp, where people of Japanese descent were forcibly relocated from the West Coast of the U.S. during World War II.

He believed in preserving the Japanese American legacy and was supportive of his wife's many projects across the country. Although he battled several pre-existing health conditions for more than eight years, Terry was happy that he could celebrate his 78th birthday this year thanks to having the loving support of his wife/caregiver, who advocated for his every need.

A Celebration of Life will be held in March 2022 at the Waverly Chapel at Fairhaven Memorial Park in Santa Ana, Calif.

Donations may be made in his memory to the Terry K. Takeda Legacy Fund, c/o The Washington State University Foundation, P.O. Box 641927, Pullman, WA, 99164-1927.

TRIBUTE

**RICHARD M. KAWANISHI**



Richard Masaji Kawanishi, 93, died on Aug. 25, 2020, at home in Leisure World in Seal Beach, Calif. Born in Torrance, he lived in the camps at Rohwer and Jerome, Ark., during WWII. He served in the Army and later graduated from Washington U. in St. Louis. As a CPA he was one of the first professional corporations in the state of Missouri. He is predeceased by his wife of 67 years, Kimie. He is survived by his sister, Jean Saeko Terayama; his two sons David (Patricia), and Stanley (Carol);

his daughter, Polly (Andrew) Leech; four grandchildren and three great grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at a later date due to COVID-19.

**PLACE A TRIBUTE**

'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$20/column inch.

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**ARTIST » continued from page 7**

her contemporary, Isamu Noguchi, was being hailed as a leading U.S. sculptor. Undeterred, Asawa continued working out of her home studio and quietly succeeded like many Japanese Americans of her generation did in the postwar era.

Asawa's career took an unexpected turn when she became politically engaged as an advocate for arts education in the public schools. Concerned at the lack of quality arts education that existed in her children's schools, Asawa co-founded the Alvarado School Arts Workshop in 1968.

The innovative program integrated professional teaching artists into classrooms in more than 50 San Francisco public schools. Shortly after, Asawa would become a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission, where she lobbied politicians and charitable foundations to support public arts programs. Later, she would also serve on the California Arts Council, the National Endowment for the Arts and become a trustee of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco.

Asawa's work as an arts educator and advocate aligned with the concepts she explored through the public art installations she became known for in her later career. Namely because art appreciation plays an important role in arts education, and what better way of making art accessible to everyone than by creating it in a public space. These aspects of Asawa's work are widely acknowledged, but to what extent did her heritage influence her works in this later period?



**Garden of Remembrance**  
(PC.012, San Francisco State University), 2002

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**Aurora** (PC.009, Bayside Plaza, San Francisco), 1986 Polished stainless steel

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Since her arrival at Black Mountain College in 1945, Asawa's identity had become primarily associated with her artistic pursuits. However, it was not uncommon for critics to misinterpret her wire sculpture works as being rooted in her Japanese heritage. Whether or not this led to an intentional distancing from her culture, it appears that Asawa identified foremost as an artist.

Addie Lanier provided her perspective on their family's relationship to Japanese culture: "Our first identity was always to the arts community. When I think of my childhood, I think of my parents' friends, who were always artists, architects, draftsmen, gardeners and their kids. She always made a Japanese New Year celebration with sushi and chicken teriyaki. My older sister and brother learned how to eat natto, took calligraphy classes, and my older sister studied shamisen. But by the time I came along, we didn't have much interaction with San Francisco's Japantown. Other than going to Soko Hardware (my father always got Christmas stocking stuffers from Soko), or the grocery Uoki Sakai on Post Street or very occasionally to the movie theater that showed samurai movies, we didn't go there often."

Four sculptures from Asawa's later career suggest an evolving relationship with her Japanese American identity.

The first is Asawa's 1976 "Origami Fountains" – located in the middle of San Francisco Japantown next to Soko Hardware. Consisting of cast bronze fountains in the shape of large origami flowers, Asawa designed the entire plaza including the cobblestone and concrete bas-relief panels on the benches. Set in the center of Japantown's historic business district, this installation is a veritable love letter to



**Origami Fountains**  
(PC.006, Buchanan Mall Fountain, Nihonmachi, San Francisco), 1976, 1999

**corten steel (1976), later cast in bronze (1999)**

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her Japanese American community.

The use of traditional Japanese motifs and folk arts in this installation indicates that perhaps Asawa longed for her Japanese American culture after spending three decades in predominantly non-JA spaces.

A decade later in 1986, Asawa would revisit the origami technique in her "Aurora Fountain," located in Bayside Plaza at the Embarcadero. Addie Lanier offered the following context for this piece: "She enjoyed collaborating with the building's architect, my father, Albert Lanier, who as an architect often helped her with technical drawings for the larger commissions, and her dear friend Mai Kitazawa Arbegast, who was the landscape architect for Bayside Plaza. The origami pattern, when made in paper, is a circular crown that rotates completely on itself. It's a great toy for children. She was always interested in the material, finding new uses for a material that was almost taken for granted. She has taken the flexibility of this origami pattern and turned it into stainless steel."

In addition to replicating the origami shape technique from her Japantown fountain, this sculpture integrates Asawa's love of child arts education as she continued her exploration of Japanese American identity.

The most literal interpretation of Asawa's Japanese American experience came in 1994 when she was commissioned to design the "San Jose Japanese American Internment Memorial." This was a significant departure from her previous works, which are generally abstract. It was also the first time that Asawa would address the wartime incarceration directly through her work.

The memorial consists of a free-standing bronze bas-relief panel located outside of a federal building, showing scenes from her own incarceration experience at Santa Anita and Rohwer alongside other experiences from the broader Japanese American narrative.

Reflecting on her process for this atypical work, Asawa wrote, "I had to dig deep into my past to find the common threads with other Japanese immigrants who endured the struggle and am glad I was part of it."

Asawa's final work on this theme was her 2002 "Garden of Remembrance," a commission for San Francisco State University that she did in collaboration with landscape architects Isao Ogura and Shigeru Namba. The installation was meant to honor the 19 Japanese American students who were forced to withdraw from classes at SFSU in 1942 because of the evacuation orders.

The original concept was to incorporate boulders from each of the 10 WRA camps, though that proved too costly. Instead, 10 locally sourced stones symbolize the deprivation of the camps that were located in dry,



**Installation view of *Contours in the Air* at the de Young Museum in San Francisco, Calif., 2006**

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desert-like places. In contrast, a waterfall runs over them, signifying the return of the incarceration survivors to the coastline after the war.

In a statement released during the dedication of the installation, Asawa wrote, "A lot of students don't know about the internment camps. They believe that it doesn't affect them, but I think it's important that they recognize what took place. I thought it would be nice if we could do something that told the story but not in a bitter way and not just as a Japanese story."

Asawa did not speak about these works together as a collection, and each was made for separate commissions. That said, looking at these works together demonstrates an evolution in how Asawa addressed Japanese American subjects over the span of four decades. In many ways, her process echoes how other Nisei processed the trauma of wartime incarceration.

After several decades of assimilation, Asawa reconnects to her cultural roots through the Japantown "Origami Fountains." Building upon that concept, "Aurora Fountain" normalizes the integration of Japanese culture into a non-Japanese space at the Embarcadero. With her "San Jose Internment Memorial," Asawa delves into her trauma headfirst and confronts the memories of her past. Finally, with "Garden of Remembrance," Asawa evokes a reconciliatory attitude, recognizing her Nisei contemporaries and educating future generations.

While the themes identified here might not have been conscious choices by the artist, these clues would suggest that Asawa was able to process her trauma through these works. If this was indeed the case, it appears that she had made peace with her experiences in camp by the late stage of her career as she came to embrace this aspect of her Japanese American identity.

In the last decade of her life, Asawa was honored with a major retrospective of her work at the de Young Museum in 2006. Then in 2010, the public arts high school in San Francisco that she had advocated for decades was renamed the Ruth Asawa San Francisco School of the Arts in her honor.

After a three-decade battle with Lupus, Asawa finally succumbed to her illness in 2013. Yet, Asawa's spirit of advocacy lives on in the school programs that she helped to build and her many public arts installations.

Several of Asawa's children are now artists themselves, and Addie Lanier manages her estate, ensuring that the legacy of her mother's work will live on.

Reflecting on Asawa's impact on her own family, Lanier said, "I would say that we don't have a strong connection to the Japanese American community, but I believe there is a Japanese aesthetic, which we have inherited from our mother. My brother, Paul, is a ceramic artist, my other brothers are general contractors, but they work in wood, my sister, Aiko, creates assemblages and collages. I garden. Our mother often said that she wasn't interested so much in creating artists, but that the arts expanded your abilities no matter what you did with your life. The arts make you stronger, more resilient, more creative and better problem solvers."

Asawa expressed a similar sentiment regarding the utilitarian nature of art in her writings. She wrote, "I think that the reason the arts are important is because it is the only thing that an individual can do and maintain his individuality. I think that is very important — making your own decisions. If you count everything that we fight for — better schools, better health care, more social awareness — we are letting other people make the decisions for us. We are not taking our lives into our own hands and making those decisions for ourselves."

As a woman whose adolescence was shaped by a government making decisions on her behalf, Asawa lived the rest of her life on her own terms. She built a successful career as an artist while raising a family of six, and she still managed to advocate for the greater public good. Perhaps Asawa's life can be best summarized in her own words: "Art saved us." ■