



# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

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## JACL PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### JACL HOLDS FIFTH DC GALA

**Washington, D.C.** – The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation’s oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization, held its fifth annual Gala event in Washington, D.C. on September 29, 2011. The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta served as Honorary Chairman of the Gala. Secretary Mineta welcomed Gala attendees as did David Kawamoto, National JACL President, and the Honorable Ichiro Fujisaki (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the United States of America). The emcee was Denise Nakano, a news anchor for NBC in Philadelphia.

The JACL Gala, which is a “Salute to Champions” and honors outstanding individuals who have made a difference by contributing to the causes in which the JACL is involved, this year honored individuals who broke barriers in the field of athletics. Awards were presented to: Wat Misaka (the first person of color to play in the NBA), Don Wakamatsu (the first person of Asian American background to become a major league baseball manager), Cappy Harada (presented posthumously for his contribution to diversity in major league baseball), the Honorable Eni Faleomavaega (a strong supporter of diversity as the Congressman for American Samoa since 1989), and Comcast/NBC (a corporate partner committed to diversity and support of organizations such as the JACL).

Sponsors for the Gala at the Diamond level were AT&T and Eli Lilly. David Lin, National JACL Vice President of Membership, represented AT&T in giving greetings at the Gala. Dan Howle spoke on behalf of Eli Lilly. Other sponsors were: Comcast, Southwest Airlines, AARP, Aratani Foundation, UPS, Norman and Deni Mineta, NEA, U.S. Navy, OHA/Office of Hawaiian Affairs, David and Carol Kawamoto, Annie E. Casey Foundation, George and Nobuko Azumano, and GEICO.

Groups which purchased tables or made significant other donations were: University of Maryland Asian American Studies Program, JACL Eastern District Council, JACL DC Chapter, Japanese American Veterans Association, Caesar’s Entertainment, Craig Uchida, John Tagami and Roberto Llames, UNITE, Red Cross, Paramount, CBS, Larry Oda, and Donna Cole.

JACL National Board members who were present in addition to President Kawamoto and David Lin were: Larry Oda, Gail Sueki, Stephanie Nitahara, and Chip Larouche. Past JACL National Presidents who attended the Gala were: Lillian Kimura, Floyd Mori, and Larry Oda.

National JACL Executive Director Floyd Mori, who was instrumental in starting the JACL Gala’s and who is expected to leave his position in the JACL at the end of the year, expressed appreciation to all who participated in the Gala. “We are extremely grateful to everyone who supported the JACL Gala this year and in the years prior. The Gala’s have given the JACL the opportunity to honor some outstanding individuals, members of Congress, and corporations who have contributed to diversity and have made it a better world for all of us and our posterity. We salute our champions and hope this Gala tradition will continue for many years to come.”