



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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JACL Gala Commemorates the 20th Anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988

Washington, D.C.—The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) held its second Annual National JACL Gala Awards Dinner, "A Salute to Champions of Redress," at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in downtown Washington, D.C., on September 25, 2008. The event commemorated the 20th Anniversary of the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided for Redress and an apology from the President of the United States to Japanese Americans who were interned in concentration camps during World War II. Over 300 guests attended the Gala. The Honorable Congressman Mike Honda did a superb job as the master of ceremonies for the evening.

The Gala was attended by elected officials, including Madeleine Bordallo who represents Guam, and the Honorable Norman Y. Mineta, formerly Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of Commerce. Many staff members representing members of Congress were in attendance along with representatives from various Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) and civil rights organizations. Corporate sponsors, as well as National JACL Board members and staff, and JACL members and friends from across the country enjoyed the Gala.

The awardees for the night, called "Champions" by the JACL for their tireless commitment and efforts towards the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, included the American Jewish Committee, an early supporter of the Redress movement; John Tateishi, former Redress Chair for the JACL; Grayce Uyehara, former JACL Legislative Education Committee Executive Director; the Honorable Norman Mineta, former Congressman from San Jose who was instrumental in getting the legislation through Congress; and AT&T as the corporate partner for helping to continue to tell the story of Redress among young people. The JACL also presented awards to two rising champions, David Inoue and Nathan Shinagawa, who are elected officials and show great promise for the future. Bill Yoshino, JACL Midwest Regional Director, was honored for thirty years of service to the JACL.

Ellie Yagi, a student at the University of Utah, captivated the audience as she sang the National Anthem and the song, For Good from the show Wicked. The Maryland Classic Youth Orchestra, consisting of Kenneth Liao, Elizabeth Leung, Emily Chen, and Christy Kang, provided entertainment. World War II veterans and members of the Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA) Grant Ichikawa and Yeiichi Kelly Kuwayama, performed the flag ceremony.

National Executive Director, Floyd Mori, stated: "The event was another success in keeping the JACL squarely in the middle of the DC scene. The honorees for the Gala are true champions, and we appreciate the work they did to bring about Redress and to help the JACL continue its work in leadership development and civil rights. We are grateful to our corporate partners, Senator Inouye and the rest of the Honorary Committee, the Gala Committee, and all who attended in order to support the cause of social justice. The support and attendance of members of the National Board was significant in giving the public a view of who we are as an organization. It would not have been possible without the work of JACL members throughout the nation."

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