



# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

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## JACL PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### JACL ANNOUNCES GALA HONOREES

**Washington, D.C.**—The Gala to be held by the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) on September 16, 2010, in Washington, DC will honor outstanding women. The JACL event which is billed as “A Salute to Champions” will present awards to Senator Dianne Feinstein, Etsu Mineta Masaoka, Christine Toy Johnson, and Roxana Saberi along with corporate partner, Eli Lilly.

National Executive Director of the JACL, Floyd Mori, stated: “It is a privilege for the JACL to present awards this year to some outstanding women who have had remarkable accomplishments. We are grateful to Senator Dianne Feinstein, Etsu Mineta Masaoka, Christine Toy Johnson, and Roxana Saberi for their contributions and also thank one of our greatest supporters as a corporate partner, Eli Lilly.”

As California's senior Senator, Dianne Feinstein has built a reputation as an independent voice, working with both Democrats and Republicans to find workable solutions to the problems facing California and the Nation. She was elected to the Senate in 1992. She has been instrumental in working with the JACL on Japanese American and Asian American issues.

Etsu Mineta Masaoka has been a dedicated member of the JACL for many years working along with her husband Mike Masaoka. She is the sister of Secretary Norman Y. Mineta and was interned with her family at the Heart Mountain camp in Wyoming during World War II when she met her husband. She continues to be one of the JACL's strongest supporters.

An award winning actress and playwright, Christine Toy Johnson, with her husband Bruce Johnson produced the documentary feature *TRANSCENDING - THE WAT MISAKA STORY*, which tells the Japanese American story of Wat Misaka, who was the first non white player in what is now the National Basketball Association (NBA). Christine is an avid advocate of inclusion and is a sought after speaker and writer on diversity issues.

Roxana Saberi is an American journalist who was arrested in Iran in January 2009. The Iranian government charged Saberi with espionage, which she denied. She was subsequently sentenced to an eight year prison term which later was reduced to a two year suspended sentence. She was released on May 11, 2009, and has written a book about her experiences.

David Kawamoto, the JACL's National President, stated: “The JACL is happy to honor these women who have made a difference. They have been examples of civil rights in action. We are also grateful to Eli Lilly and all our corporate partners.”

The JACL invites those interested in attending or supporting the JACL Gala to visit the website at [www.jacl.org](http://www.jacl.org) for more information on the event.

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