



**PRESS ANNOUNCEMENT
For Immediate Release**

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JCCCNC to Honor Three Longtime Board Members at Annual Event

San Francisco, CA (September 1, 2011) – The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) will honor three current board members – Mr. Kaz Maniwa, Mr. Allen Okamoto and Mrs. Yo Hironaka, at their annual event *25th Anniversary of Opening Our Doors* on September 24th. These three honorees have served on the JCCCNC Board of Directors for more than 25 years each and have given outstanding support to the Center and to the community.



Kaz Maniwa, a social activist out of UC Berkeley and one of the founders of the Japanese Community Youth Council, joined the JCCCNC Board of Directors nearly 39 years ago, convinced that a community center was an important part of San Francisco's Japantown. Kaz was part of a group of young Sansei who joined the Board before JCCCNC was incorporated, dedicated to the idea that a facility would help strengthen the sense of community in Japantown. Kaz's commitment to Japantown and the

Japanese American community run deep: he established his law practice in Japantown and has been involved in a variety of organizations through the decades including service on the boards of Kimochi, Inc. and the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City Association.

Elected as President of the JCCCNC Board of Directors in 1990, Kaz began his leadership role with JCCCNC the same year that Paul Osaki was hired as Executive Director. The most pressing issue during Kaz's three-year tenure was fundraising to retire the mortgage. After he stepped down as president, he agreed to become the capital campaign chair in 1994 and also assumed the title of Chairman of the Board. Most recently Kaz has played a key role in JCCCNC's influence beyond Northern California; he was a founding member of the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council—a statewide organization of Japanese American non-profit groups that JCCCNC helped form—and served of Chairman of the Board. Kaz has also helped with JCCCNC's efforts to promote people-to-people relationships between the U.S. and Japan.



Allen Okamoto's involvement with JCCCNC is almost genetically pre-disposed. The son of Takeo Okamoto, he remembers talk of a community center among the Nisei in his younger days and of planning meetings often held in his parents' living room. The elder Okamoto was JCCCNC's first Board President, a position that Allen would hold himself in the 1990s. Active in a number of community organizations including the Northern California Cherry Blossom Festival and the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City Association, the JCCCNC holds a special place for Allen, primarily because of his family ties. With pride he remembers the 1994 visit of the Emperor and Empress of Japan and when the Center was able to "burn" the mortgage in 1996.

During Allen's three-year tenure as Board President, JCCCNC played a key role in: coordinating the "Legends of the Japanese American Baseball League" with the San Francisco Giants at Candlestick Park in 1996; leading a group of 176 community ambassadors to further goodwill as part of the 40th anniversary of Sister City Osaka/San Francisco relationship in 1997, beginning the first Shinzen USA Nikkei Youth Goodwill Basketball Tour; community efforts to preserve the YWCA, Sokoji Temple site, and Japantown Bowl; organizing the "Ties That Bind" Japanese American national conference in Los Angeles. Now that he is a grandfather, Allen is looking forward to four generations of Okamoto involvement with the JCCCNC.



Yo Hironaka is the only Nisei among this year's JCCCNC honorees, and the only Nisei remaining on the Board of Directors. She, like the other honorees, has served on the Board for 25 years or more, and although she may be of a different generation, is probably the youngest at heart. Yo's leadership and volunteerism throughout the Japanese American community are well known—her longtime involvement with the San Francisco JAACL, Japantown Task Force, Inc., and the

Christ United Presbyterian Church. Although she no longer drives, Yo rarely misses a Board meeting, often depending on public transportation to get her to where she needs to be.

Through her quiet determination and low-key leadership, Yo has provided a steady hand to the JCCCNC Board for many years. Her talent for fundraising is unmatched and if you're one of the many buyers of JCCCNC's sweepstakes and raffle tickets because of Yo's tenacious soft-sell, you've had personal experience with the power of her determination. She is continually one of JCCCNC's best fundraisers because of her gentle, yet convincing powers of persuasion.

"It has been important for me to stay involved over the years so I can help educate and shape future generations into community leaders," Hironaka said. "After receiving my honorary degree from City College of San Francisco as part of the California Nisei



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College Diploma Project, I have a much greater appreciation for the JCCCNC and their role in fighting for important issues affecting the Japanese American community.” Although not one to be in the spotlight Yo agreed to participate knowing that her presence at the ceremony would symbolize what happened to other Japanese American students who were forcibly removed from their homes during World War II and recognizing the importance of educating a new generation of students.

The annual fundraising event, *25th Anniversary of Opening Our Doors*, is scheduled from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 24, 2011 at the JCCCNC, 1840 Sutter St. in San Francisco.

For more information about the annual event, visit www.jcccnc.org or contact Development Manager Yumi Yukawa at (415) 567-5505 or email yyukawa@jcccnc.org.

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About the JCCCNC

The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) was established as a 501(c)3 non-profit organization in California in 1973. The JCCCNC serves over 185,000 individuals a year and conducts numerous exchange programs between the United States and Japan.