



San Diego JACL Gala producer Lane Nishikawa confers with co-masters of ceremony David Ono and Stephanie Vigil.

Yujing Sun (left) and Allyne Tachiki welcome gala attendees at the check-in table.



Slack Key Ohana performs at the event.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

SAN DIEGO JACL GALA SPOTLIGHTS WOMEN

Females of all ages are honored at the chapter's annual fundraising dinner.

By P.C. Staff

When the San Diego JACL chapter puts on its annual awards dinner and fundraiser, waging against its aplomb and finesse at putting on a well-run, well-produced show would be a fool's bet — so having it take place on Oct. 7 at the Sycuan Hotel & Casino in El Cajon, Calif., was fitting indeed.

Replete with a silent auction and musical performances by Slack Key Ohana and the University of California San Diego's Asayake Taiko, the event's production team, led by actor-filmmaker Lane Nishikawa, also displayed its ability to roll with changes.

When the slated co-masters of ceremony who have worked the event over the past several galas — Los Angeles TV newsman David Ono of KABC Channel 7 and actor-activist Tamlyn Tomita — needed a late substitution when Tomita had to bow out, Ono was able to call on a former TV news colleague from the early days of their respective careers: Stephanie Vigil.

"She was my co-anchor 30 years ago in Sacramento," Ono told the audience. "We've been superclose friends ever since. She went on and had a brilliant career up in Washington State." It was a reference to her having recently relocated to the San Diego area after retiring following a quarter-century at KHQ-TV in Spokane, Wash.

With the hosting duties under control, the 2023 edition of the chapter's annual affair put the spotlight on five honorees — all women — and a re-emphasis on the



Pictured (from left) are Caroline Winn, Dr. Li-Rong "Lilly" Cheng, Lee Ann Kim, Jerrilyn Takada Malana and Wendy Urushima-Conn.

PHOTO: JADE COAST PHOTOGRAPHY

still-resonant message: stopping Asian Hate. Honored for their service and achievements were:

- Jerrilyn Takada Malana, Civil Rights Leadership Award
- Wendy Urushima-Conn, Community Leadership Award
- Lee Ann Kim, Media Leadership Award
- Caroline Winn, Corporate Leadership Award
- Dr. Li-Rong "Lilly" Cheng, Lifetime Achievement Award

But before they received their respective recognitions, the chapter called on educator Rich del Rio to present to former Bishop's School student Grace Sun its Youth Leadership Award.

Although she was unable to attend in person to accept her award because she was across the continent in Massachusetts as a premed student double-majoring in biochemistry and economics at Wellesley College, Sun addressed the audience via a recorded video, in which she thanked the San Diego JACL.

Tamami Yoshida, San Diego JACL chapter board of directors member, presented a second Youth Achievement Award that was not on the program to Kaili Yamashiro for having written an essay at age 15 that appeared in the San Diego Union Tribune for the Day of Remembrance. San Diego JACL board mem-

bers Joanne Hayakawa and Taiga Takahashi, and Sage Creek High School sophomore Eva Kurima announced a crowdfunding effort to pay for a stone monument at the Miramar National Cemetery dedicated to Japanese Americans who served in World War II. A QR code was shown on the big screens flanking the stage to take audience members to a GoFundMe page located at tinyurl.com/ycku6mjk.

Vigil called on San Diego District Attorney Summer Stephan to introduce Civil Rights Leadership Award honoree Jerrilyn Takada Malana, presently the chief deputy district attorney/human resources for the San Diego County District Attorney's Office.

In her remarks after receiving her award, Malana said, "I really believe it is of utmost importance to all of us that the next generation be civically engaged to ensure that our democracy survives, that it thrives and that it remains vibrant."

Ono called on Robert Ito, San Diego JACL chapter advisory council member and CEO of Ito Girard & Associates to introduce the next honoree, Wendy Urushima-Conn, president and CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego, who received the Community Leadership Award.

» See WOMEN on page 10



Robert Ito, San Diego JACL chapter advisory council member and CEO of Ito Girard & Associates, and Michael Kurima, San Diego JACL chapter co-president, flank Community Leadership Award honoree Wendy Urushima-Conn, president and CEO of the Epilepsy Foundation of San Diego County.



(From left) Michael Kurima, Lifetime Achievement Award honoree Dr. Li-Rong "Lilly" Cheng and former San Diego City Councilman Chris Cate



Chief United States District Judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of California Dana Makoto Sabraw and Michael Kurima flank Corporate Leadership Award honoree Caroline Winn.



Attendees look over silent auction items during the San Diego JACL Gala.



Kaili Yamashiro (left) displays her Youth Leadership award that was presented by Tamami Yoshida, member of the San Diego JACL chapter's board of directors.



Consul General of Japan Los Angeles Kenko Sone and his wife, Mami Sone, were among the special guests present at gala.



(From left) Actors Derek Mio and Chris Tashima and Robert Yonemitsu, San Diego JACL chapter advisory committee member

Members of UCSD Asayake Taiko perform.



San Diego JACL Miramar Memorial Committee GoFundMe QR code

WOMEN » continued from page 5



In her remarks, Urushima-Conn said, "As I reflect back on tonight's honor, I'm thinking about the people that came before me. I'm thinking of 1942. You've heard about the 120,000 interned in camps, and when we talk about 'never forget,' those aren't just numbers. That's my grandparents, that's my parents. I called my 87-year-old dad today and I said, 'What did you remember about camp?'"

"And he said, 'The uncomfortable straw mattresses.' . . . I asked my mother what she remembers, and she said, 'How cold it was with the wind blowing through the slats in the horse stalls.' Oh, my goodness. So, how do we do better? And how do we move forward?" she said.

Urushima-Conn answered her question by quoting from a children's book, "The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse": "And what do you think success is?" asked the boy, and

the mole says, "To love, no matter our beliefs, or the color of our skin, may we all go forth with more kindness and love."

San Diego businessman Louis Song introduced Media Leadership Award honoree — and spouse — Lee Ann Kim, the founding executive director of Pacific Arts Movement, the nonprofit organization behind the San Diego Asian Film Festival and a former news anchor and reporter for ABC affiliate KGTV-10.

"I stand here so lucky that I'm with a man that supported me because I think all of us who do leadership in this community, you absolutely need a partner who is willing to be with you every step of the way," Kim said. "So, Louis, thank you so much. And I love you."

Vigil introduced Dana Makoto Sabraw, chief United States district judge of the United States District Court for the Southern District of

California, to bring up the next recipient, San Diego Gas & Electric CEO Caroline Winn, to receive the Corporate Leadership Award. She called back to something Sabraw said in his remarks about their mutual roots in Sacramento, Calif.

"When I was working at the pie shop with Judge Sabraw's sister back during my high school years, I thought I was making a lot of money. And I'm like, 'I don't need to go to college,'" she recalled. "So, thank goodness for my parents who . . . very strongly suggested I go to college and get my engineering degree."

The evening's final honoree was Dr. Li-Rong "Lilly" Cheng, who received the chapter's Lifetime Achievement Award. Former San Diego City Councilman Chris Cate introduced Cheng, director of the Chinese Cultural Center and former professor at San Diego State University's School of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences.

"We are a global community, even though we are in San Diego today. Our job here is to think about the underserved and the unserved," Cheng told the audience. "Our job here is to think about how we can continue to show our humanity and our humility, to be part of the human race. And I want to thank JACL for acknowledging all of us here tonight — but also to keep going." ■

ODO » continued from page 8

support, Franklin said if they didn't see my value, maybe I should look for an institution that did.

" . . . Franklin gave me the tools to navigate a challenging time in my academic career and helped channel my energy into more productive pursuits."

Ted Gong, director, 1882 Foundation

"This was Franklin. Ready to step out of his way, get out of the office, friendly and soft-spoken. I can say, from the moment we met, I felt he would always be at my back, ready to advise and be encouraging. I'd like to share this statement attributed to Franklin:

"If you don't control your own culture, and your own vision of life, and your own participation in life, then you don't control anything. And that's what we're about. The true spirit of any kind of democracy is to have people be autonomous at the same time that they know they're dependent on the community around them."

James Counts Early, former assistant secretary for education and public service; director, cultural heritage policy, Smithsonian Institution

"I invited Franklin to Washington

and suggested he consider a project with Smithsonianwide implications for which my office would provide initial funding support. He agreed and conceptualized, organized and implemented the groundbreaking Smithsonian APA Program, which later became the APA Center.

"Franklin is certainly remembered for his scholarship, his collegiality, his mentorship, his friendship. But new generations should be directed to his vision of building cultural democracy at the University of Hawaii and the Smithsonian Institution.

"Let the Spirit of Franklin Odo rise and guide new generations within and across the diverse racial, ethnic, cultural, class and gender communities he contributed to and led in order to secure our present and future."

To donate to the Franklin S. Odo Endowment for Ethnic Studies at the University of Hawaii-Manoa, please visit <https://giving.uhfoundation.org/funds/13014604>.

For more information, please contact Dr. Mary Kunmi Yu Danico at myu@hawaii.edu.

PACIFIC CITIZEN

Special Issues Coming Soon

November -VETERANS Special
Celebrate or acknowledge the Armed Forces or the Veterans in your life by placing their name and photo in our newspaper and forever saved in our archives!
Prices start at \$30 per 2"x1"

December -
Holiday Special Issue
Deadline: HALLOWEEN

Great fundraiser opportunity for Chapters!!
Holiday issue packages have been sent to all JACL Chapters
Please contact Susan if your Chapter has not received anything.

Contact Susan
(213) 620-1767 ext.3
email: BusMgr@PacificCitizen.org

RESERVE SEATS NOW



One Show Only!

DEFINING COURAGE

★ Celebrate the Legacy of True American Heroes ★

Defining Courage is a journey into the legacy of the Nisei Soldier, Americans of Japanese ancestry who served in the segregated units of the 100th IB, 442nd RCT, MIS, and 522nd FAB. Considered the greatest fighting units in American military history, most have never heard their extraordinary stories.

Fly over World War II battlefields in Italy, France, Germany and Japan, in an immersive and unforgettable live event. Featuring...

Stunning Cinematography, Live Music/Choir, Historic Film & Eyewitness Interviews.

SEE, HEAR, and EXPERIENCE their incredible heroics through this masterpiece of innovative storytelling.




★ **Saturday, November 11, 2023 - 4pm** ★
The Kennedy Center, Washington, D.C. • Buy Tickets Now!
www.DefiningCourageShow.com

Presented By







This presentation is not a Kennedy Center production.