

"UCLA Asian American Studies Center To Celebrate Its 40th Anniversary"

The UCLA Asian American Studies Center will be celebrating its 40th anniversary with an outdoor reception and program on Saturday, May 16, 2009 from 4-7pm at Dickson Plaza on the UCLA campus. The event will also pay special tribute to Director and Professor Don T. Nakanishi, who will be retiring after 19 years of distinguished leadership of the Asian American Studies Center and a 35-year career at UCLA. The event is free and open to the public. Please visit the web site: <http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/archives/40thcelebration.htm>

The title sponsors of the celebration are David Nishida and Dr. Tina Yamano Nishida of Los Angeles and Tokyo, who have established the David Nishida and Tina Yamano Nishida Distinguished Scholars Endowment at the Asian American Studies Center. Both are UCLA alumni. David is president and CFO of Hudson Japan, an investment company, while Tina is an educator and writer. They have two sets of twin boys.

The UCLA Asian American Studies Center was established during the 1969-1970 academic year as a result of faculty, student, alumni, and community advocacy. "The Center," the founding steering committee wrote in its proposal to the UCLA administration in 1969, "will hopefully enrich the experience of the entire university by contributing to an understanding of the long neglected history, rich cultural heritage, and present position of Asian Americans in our society."

Through its programs in research, teaching, publications, library and archival collecting, leadership training, and community partnerships, the Center has pursued its original mission, and has sought to enrich and inform not only the UCLA community, but also an array of broader audiences and sectors in the state, the nation, and internationally.

Today, UCLA is the largest and most comprehensive research and teaching institution in the field of Asian American Studies. It has the largest faculty with over forty tenured professors in twenty-five departments across the university, including the Department of Asian American Studies, which was established in 2004. The Department teaches over 60 classes annually, enrolls over 3,000 students, and offers an undergraduate major and minor, and a MA degree. UCLA annually produces more MA theses and PhD dissertations on Asian American Studies topics than any university in the nation.

The UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press publishes two national journals, *Amerasia Journal* and *AAPI Nexus*, and has released over 200 books, reports, and bibliographies, including classics like *Roots: An Asian American Reader* (1971), and the *National Asian Pacific American Political Almanac*. The Center's Library and Special Collections are national resource treasures of the field of Asian American Studies. The Center continues its legacy of building mutually beneficial partnerships with a wide array of organizations, museums, and other programs in Southern California and nationwide, and its innovative web-based programs like the *US-China Media Brief* have a world-wide reach. The Center's endowment, which has been generously supported by thousands of donors over the years, includes six endowed academic chairs, and numerous fellowships, scholarships, research funds and academic prizes.

The Center has produced a number of renowned leaders, scholars, and writers during its four decades, including Morgan Chu, the nation's top intellectual property attorney; Lisa Hasegawa, National Coalition for Asian Pacific American Community Development; Stewart Kwoh, Asian Pacific American Legal Center; Judy Chu, Chair, California Board of Equalization; Chanchanit (Chancee) Martorell, Thai CDC; Angela Oh, civil rights leader; Joel Jacinto, Search to Involve Pilipino Americans; Yen Espiritu, Professor, UCSD; Gary Okihiro, Professor, Columbia; Franklin Odo, Director, Smithsonian Institution; Justin Lin, film-maker; Jeff Chang, writer; Erin Kahunawaika`ala Wright, University of Hawaii-Manoa, among many others.

Professor Don Nakanishi is being recognized for his leadership as Director of the Asian American Studies Center since 1990. During those 19 years, the Center experienced unprecedented growth, stability, and national visibility and impact of its faculty, publications, policy research work, archives, community and campus programs, and endowments.

A recently concluded external review of the Center by a national team of scholars concluded that, "The Asian American Studies Center at UCLA is indisputably the leading Asian American Studies center in the country and an exemplary ethnic studies center of any kind, the gold standard against which all the rest are measured."

Born and raised in East Los Angeles, Professor Nakanishi graduated from Theodore Roosevelt High School, and received his BA from Yale University and his PhD from Harvard University, both in political science.

Nakanishi is a pioneer in the national development of Asian American Studies. He co-founded Amerasia Journal in 1970 when he was a Yale undergraduate, and served as the second national president of the Association of Asian American Studies. He also has written over 100 books, articles and reports on Asian American politics and education. Among his many former students are faculty members at colleges across the nation and world, renowned writers and artists, as well as elected officials, community leaders and educators.

In recognition of Nakanishi's long commitment to serve and advance Asian Pacific Americans locally and nationally through innovative community-based research and partnerships, the Don T. Nakanishi Fund for Outstanding Engaged Scholarship has been established to recognize exemplary community research by UCLA faculty and students. More information can be found at:

<http://www.aasc.ucla.edu/archives/40thcelebration.htm>

Award-winning news anchor and UCLA Professor Tritia Toyota, California Assembly members Mike Eng and Warren Furutani and UCLA Vice Chancellor Claudia Mitchell-Kernan will be among the featured speakers at the 40th anniversary event. The Chinatown Kung Fu and Lion Dance Troupe, Samahang Modern, and others also will perform.

RSVP is requested. Please call (310) 825-2974 or email aascsvp@aasc.ucla.edu. Parking is available at Lots 2 and 3. Rates are \$9 per day. For more information, please contact: Jolie Chea, (310) 825-2974 or jchea@aasc.ucla.edu