

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GO FOR BROKE NATIONAL EDUCATION CENTER HONORS THE NISEI WWII SOLDIERS' FIGHT FOR JUSTICE

24th Annual Evening of Aloha Gala Set for Saturday, September 27, 2025

LOS ANGELES (Sept. 10, 2025)—Go For Broke National Education Center will host the 24th Annual Evening of Aloha Gala on Saturday, September 27, 2025, at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites in downtown Los Angeles. The annual hallmark community event will serve as both celebration and call to action—honoring the 33,000 Japanese American men and women who served during WWII to protect the freedoms and liberties of all Americans.

"The legacy of the Nisei soldiers who fought on foreign battlefields to defend constitutional principles, despite many of their own families being denied the same rights, is the inspiration our nation so desperately needs now," said Dr. Mitchell T. Maki, GFBNEC President & CEO. "We gather not just to celebrate their valor, but to share the Nisei WWII story as an important American story embodying the values that are the foundation of our common ground as Americans."

David Ono, ABC7 News Anchor and GFBNEC Board of Directors member, will emcee the evening, featuring testimonies connecting the veterans' legacy to today's civil rights challenges. Traditional gala elements—including the **Soldier's Memorial Table**, **on-stage Nisei veteran recognition**, **"In Memoriam"** acknowledgments, and the **6th Annual Living Nisei WWII Veteran Photo Tribute**—will take on added poignancy against the backdrop of current events.

Another signature feature of the Gala is the specially prepared menu by Chef Roy Yamaguchi, Founder & Owner of Roy's Restaurants Worldwide and GFBNEC Board of Directors member, and Chef Andreas Nieto and the Westin Bonaventure Hotel culinary team. Long-time supporter King's Hawaiian Bakery & Restaurant provides a unique dessert created by Pastry Chef Heather Campbell. The program will also include performances by National Heritage Fellow June Kuramoto, *Hamilton* national tour lead actress Kendyl Sayuri Yokoyama, singer Lauren Kinkade-Wong, hip hop artist Kaze Jones, and Hālau Hula Keali'i o Nālani.

The Evening of Aloha Gala is GFBNEC's primary annual fundraiser and marks the yearly launch of the "Fund the Future" campaign. As federal directives threaten to sanitize historical narratives such as the WWII Japanese American incarceration, and immigration enforcement operations echo tactics used against Japanese Americans 85 years ago, GFBNEC stands with both moral authority and lived experience to speak truth to power. Contributions will support expanded national outreach and GFBNEC's new programming in its permanent home in the new Go For Broke Plaza—ensuring it can serve as a sanctuary for difficult truths.

"We cannot allow the voices of our veterans to be silenced," Maki stated. "Every dollar raised supports not just our programming, but the fundamental right to remember and learn from our past."

Event Details:

- **Date:** Saturday, September 27, 2025
- **Time:** Registration and silent auction at 4:00 P.M.; dinner and program at 6:00 P.M.
- **Location:** Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites, downtown Los Angeles
- **Tickets and Donations:** Available at goforbroke.org/eveningofaloha/
- **More Information:** development@goforbroke.org or (310) 328-0907

The 2025 Evening of Aloha Gala major sponsors include: **Ruby Sponsor**—US Bank; **Emerald Sponsors**—MUFG Bank, Bill & Christy Seki and Dennis & Lorraine Kimura, Rick & Patee Shinto and Family, the Sugimoto Family Foundation; **Platinum Sponsors**—Central Pacific Bank, King's Hawaiian Bakery & Restaurant, Nikki Kodama & Family, Yoshio C. Nakamura Family, The Pacific Bridge Companies, Joyce Yamane & Stephen Waite in memory of Kazuo & Mary Yamane; and **Gold Sponsors**—Seki, Nishimura & Watase, PLC, Scott & Susan Takahashi.

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Note to Media

"Go For Broke" was the motto of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated Army unit composed of Japanese Americans from Hawai'i and the mainland. The term was Hawaiian Pidgin slang for "shooting the works," or risking everything for the big win in gambling—as the Nisei soldiers did while fighting in the field in WWII and facing prejudice at home in the U.S.

About Go For Broke National Education Center

Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that educates the public on the valor of Japanese American veterans of WWII and their contributions to democracy. Our goal is to inspire new generations to embody the Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) veterans' core values of courage, sacrifice, equality, humility, and patriotism. Founded in 1989, GFBNEC maintains the Go For Broke Monument and the interactive GFBNEC's *Defining Courage* exhibition in downtown Los Angeles, as well as extensive oral histories and archives, education programs, traveling exhibitions, and other initiatives. To learn more, visit goforbroke.org.

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