

NISEI Week Festival to Honor Eight Pioneers

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The Nisei Week Foundation has announced the 2018 Nisei Week Pioneer Spirit honorees who will be recognized during the 78th annual Nisei Week Japanese Festival (Aug. 11-19) in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo.

The eight recipients make up some of the most active and dedicated leaders of the greater Los Angeles Japanese American community. They will be honored at the 2018 Pioneer Spirit Luncheon to be held at the Doubletree by Hilton Hotel, 120 S. Los Angeles St., on Wednesday, Aug. 15, at 12 noon. Tickets are \$65 per person or \$650 per table of 10 and can be obtained by calling the Nisei Week Foundation office at (213) 687-7193 or by emailing office@niseiweek.org.

- **Audrey Yamagata-Noji** was born in Long Beach to the late George Kazuo Yamagata and Mae Matsuko (Kunisaki) Yamagata. She graduated from Long Beach Poly High School and CSU Long Beach, where she received her bachelor's degree in psychology and her master's degree in counseling. She received her Ph.D. in education from the Claremont Graduate University.

She began her career as a counseling assistant at Long Beach Poly High School, where she served as advisor to the Asian Club and then as a family therapist counseling juvenile offenders and victims of crime through various police departments in Orange County. Her career in higher education began as a faculty counselor and instructor at Long Beach City College and Saddleback College. While at Saddleback, she was both the faculty counselor and director of the EOPS Program.



For six terms, a total of 25 years, Yamagata-Noji served as an elected member, president, vice president and clerk of the Board of Education for the Santa Ana Unified School District. In this capacity, she developed many initiatives and programs focusing on enhancing the educational success of Latino and Asian students.

Her involvement in the Asian Pacific Islander American community ranges from having served on the City of Santa Ana Asian Pacific Advisory Committee to serving on the board of the Long Beach Japanese Cultural Center. She has been the youth director, Sunday school teacher, elder, and advisor for Grace First Presbyterian Church of Long Beach.

She is married to Gene Noji, a retired teacher and football coach. They have a son, Randall, who is also a graduate of CSULB.