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Cal Poly to Honor Nisei and Support Tsunami Relief March 11

Special Video Screening of the CSU Nisei Diploma Project and Benefit Piano Performance

SAN LUIS OBISPO – Cal Poly will host a video screening and benefit piano concert to honor CSU Nisei recipients and to support relief efforts for Japanese communities affected by last year's tsunami.

The screening and concert are set for 2 p.m., Sunday, March 11 in Harman Hall of the Christopher Cohan Performing Arts Center. The event is free and open to the public.

Members of the Cal Poly student chapter of the American Red Cross will be on hand to accept donations to the tsunami relief effort.

The screening honors the recipients of the honorary bachelor's degrees awarded by the California State University (CSU) Board of Trustees to Japanese-American students whom the United States government forced into internment camps during World War II. The video provides an oral history and highlights the experiences of Cal Poly honorary degree recipients Frank Suzuki and Kazunori Katayama, along with recipients from other CSU campuses.

A history display of the Cal Poly Nisei experience will be presented in the main lobby.

Cal Poly alumnus Alexander Kato-Willis will give a piano performance to provide attendees an opportunity to reflect and remember the one-year anniversary of the Japanese tsunami. Kato-Willis is a second-year doctoral student at USC's Thornton School of Music. In the spring of 2011, Kato-Willis gave a benefit concert tour of piano improvisation to provide aid for the victims of the Japanese tsunami.

In June 2010, the California Nisei Diploma Project was established to honor Japanese-American students who were forced to discontinue their educations in 1942 due to the United States' World War II internment policies. As part of the project, Cal Poly bestowed 20 honorary degrees to students from that era.

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