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FORMER CABINET MEMBERS SHINSEKI, MINETA, OLYMPIAN KRISTI YAMAGUCHI TO HIGHLIGHT CONGRESSIONAL GOLD MEDAL DINNER ON FRIDAY, JUNE 12, IN SAN JOSE

TORRANCE, CA.—Former U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki, former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta and Olympic champion skater Kristi Yamaguchi will highlight the program for the Congressional Gold Medal Dinner set for Friday, June 12, at the Fairmont Hotel in San Jose. The event is a fundraiser organized by the National Veterans Network (NVN) to support the Congressional Gold Medal Digital Exhibition that will share the personal stories of Japanese American World War II soldiers.

As part of the dinner program, NVN will make a presentation on a digital exhibition that is being developed for the Congressional Gold Medal (CGM) that is presently on display as part of the Smithsonian's National Museum of American History's **Price of Freedom: Americans at War** exhibit. The CGM digital exhibition, which looks at the broader service of 31,000 Japanese Americans during the war, is funded in part by a grant from the U.S. Dept. of the Interior, National Parks Service (NPS), Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program and Donna Cole of Cole Chemical. The project, which will be launched in 2016, is a partnership between the NVN and the Smithsonian's Asian Pacific American Center (APAC) and the National Museum of American History.

Secretary Shinseki, who served as head of Veterans Affairs from 2009 until May of 2014 and as Chief of Staff of the Army, will be the dinner keynote speaker. Several Japanese American veterans groups have expressed the desire to thank him for his service as part of the program. Secretary Mineta, whose brother Albert was part of the Occupation of Japan, will also speak. Yamaguchi will recount the service of her grandfather George Doi during the war and all veterans will be recognized. Poet/teaching artist G. Yamazawa, a National Poetry Slam Champion, will perform a 10-minute tribute piece. Yamazawa, 24, who is from North Carolina, has performed nationally and internationally.

The dinner is being supported by organizations from all over the country, including Chicago Nisei Post #1183 American Legion; Friends and Family of Nisei Veterans (Northern CA); Go for Broke National Education Center (Los Angeles); Japanese American Cultural and Community Center (San Francisco); Japanese American Museum of San Jose; Japanese American National Museum (Los Angeles); Japanese American Veterans Association (Washington DC); Midori Kai (San Jose); National Japanese American Historical Society (San Francisco); National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (Washington DC); Northern California Western Nevada Pacific (NCWNP) District of the JACL; Nisei Veterans Committee (Seattle); Silicon Valley JACL; Watsonville JACL; and, Yu-Ai-Kai Community Center (San Jose). Other organizations are expected to also provide support. Southwest Airlines is providing tickets in support of the event.

Tickets to the dinner are limited, but a number of seats have been set aside for the Nisei World War II veterans on a first-come, first-serve basis. Sponsorships range from National (\$25,000), Platinum (\$10,000), Gold (\$5,000), Silver (\$3,000) and Table (\$1,750). Deadline for table sponsorships is May 20, but ticket sales will remain open until June 3. Individual tickets are \$175. To purchase tickets or to sponsor a table, visit www.nationalveteransnetwork.com for more information. Deadline for reservations to stay at the Fairmont Hotel is May 12. Reservation line is 1 (800) 346-5550. Please reference "Congressional Gold Medal Dinner." For more information about the dinner, please contact Reiko Iwanaga at riwanaga@ecopiafarms.com.

The National Veterans Network is a coalition of organizations and individuals dedicated to educating the nation on the Japanese American World War II experience. NVN led a national campaign in 2009 to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and members of the Military Intelligence Service. For more information on the Congressional Gold Medal Digital Exhibition, contact the National Veterans Network at info@nationalveteransnetwork.com or go to www.nationalveteransnetwork.com or www.facebook.com/NationalVeteransNetwork.

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