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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SEVEN NEW DIRECTORS JOIN TOPAZ MUSEUM BOARD

The Topaz Museum Board is proud to welcome seven new board members and two ex-officio members; eight are Topaz descendants. Patricia Wakida, Board President said, "We are excited to welcome a dynamic cohort of new directors to the Topaz Museum Board, which will take the Museum to the next level of growth and sustainability and continue our nationally recognized work of protecting and preserving Topaz, its artifacts, and stories of the unjust mass incarceration of over 125,000 Japanese Americans during WWII."

Short bios are below:

Ann Tamaki Dion is a Topaz descendant; nineteen of her relatives were imprisoned in Topaz. Ann helped found the Friends of Topaz Museum to support the museum by organizing local community outreach and fundraising in California. In 2014, she participated in the National Park Service/s review of the Museum's narrative and exhibits, offering her input as a community stakeholder prior to the museum's grand opening in 2017. Later, she helped create the on-line "Topaz Stories," which evolved into a public exhibition at the Utah State Capitol during 2022. She previously served on the Topaz Museum Board as an ex-officio member and has represented the board in meetings with the Utah State Historic Preservation Office and the Wakasa Memorial Committee.

Dianne Fukami is an award-winning journalist and documentary filmmaker. Throughout her career, she has produced and directed nearly a dozen documentaries about the Japanese American experience. In 2022, she was honored by the JACL with the Japanese American of the Biennium Award. Until 2021, she was on the faculty for ten years at Academy of Art University in the Multimedia Technologies and Communications department. A resident of the Bay Area, Dianne has served on the boards of the National Japanese American Historical Society and Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. She is currently co-chair of the U.S.-Japan Council's Northern California regional district and is a member of the San Francisco-Osaka Sister City organization. She is a Topaz descendant on her father's side.

Barbara Hedani-Morishita was born and raised in San Francisco. Her immigrant grandparents on both sides of the family and several relatives also lived in SF—many were incarcerated at Topaz Relocation Center during WW II. She received her B.A. in Sociology at U.C. Berkeley as well as her M.A. at the School of Social Work, specializing in children's services, spending nearly 30 years working as their advocate. She has extensive experience in the non-profit sector; four years on the Alameda County Arts Commission, and a board member of Berkeley Buddhist Temple, Japanese American Services of the East Bay (now known as J-Sei), and served as a chief volunteer at the

president's office, when her husband Leroy Morishita, was President of California State University East Bay

Dean Hirabayashi was born and raised in Utah and is the President/CEO of the National JACL Credit Union. In addition to his 35 years of professional experience in the financial industry, he has been active in the multicultural Salt Lake City community such as JACL, Japanese Community Preservation Committee (JCPC), Salt Lake Buddhist Temple, Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA), Chinese Railroad Workers Descendants (CRWDA), and the Utah Asian Chamber of Commerce. He is currently a commission member of the State of Utah's Multicultural Commission and has been for the last eleven years.

Kenzie Hirai (ex-officio) was born and raised in Salt Lake City, Utah. She attended the University of Utah, earning a B.A. in sociology with certificates in criminology and ethnic studies. She spent one year as the Norman Mineta Fellow at the National JACL in Washington, D.C., which cemented her interest in community work, leading to her current job as program coordinator for Food Justice Coalition. She is an active member of the Salt Lake City Buddhist Temple and served on the Utah Nihon Matsuri 2023 festival planning committee. She is a descendant of Alice Sekino Hirai, who along with her family, was incarcerated at Topaz during World War II.

Chris Hirano has spent nearly three decades in the non-profit world, primarily in the development sector. He is currently the Chief Development Officer for Filoli Center, where part of his job includes working with the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Previous positions include Director of Development for the Asia Society of Northern California, Senior Development Officer at the Exploratorium, and other development positions including Stanford University and the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California. He is a Bay Area native and currently serves on the Board of JCCCNC. His father and grandparents were incarcerated at Topaz.

Dick Hirayama is a lifelong resident of San Francisco whose parents and grandfather were incarcerated at Topaz, where his sister died during childbirth. He received his B.A. in Economics and an M.B.A. in Finance from U.C. Berkeley. Before his retirement, he spent his career as an equity security analyst and portfolio manager working for the Bank of America Trust Dept., Associated Capital Investors, Wentworth, Hauser & Violich, and his own firm Hirayama Investments. He has also served as a member of the UNICEF International Council.

Joy Iwasa's career in non-profit fundraising spans over two decades, serving leadership positions at several local and internationally renowned organizations in the San Francisco Bay Area such as International House at UC Berkeley, Special Olympics, the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, and Project Open Hand. As Director of Development at International House, she was responsible for being awarded multi-year government grants, including a \$500K grant. Joy's professional connection to the Asian American community is seeded through her previous work as Director of Development at the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California and is fueled by her passion for sharing the stories of the people imprisoned during WWII in honor of her beloved grandmother, Yae Wada, who was incarcerated at Topaz.

Kay Yatabe (ex-officio) is a retired family physician whose career was spent in urban community clinics, mostly in San Francisco's Department of Public Health Community Health Network. She is the daughter of two Topaz incarcerated. She grew up in the East Bay, attended U.C. Berkeley and later UCSF Medical School. Her community work and board service include Friends of Hibakusha, which provides community support to American A-Bomb Survivors; J-Sei, a cultural and community service organization primarily for older adults; and Japanese American Women Alumnae of UCB. Besides being on the J-Sei Board (through June this year), she has volunteered as a Friendly Visitor for the past seven years. Her parents met at Topaz and she has supported and participated in many Friends of Topaz Museum events.

The new cohort joins existing Topaz Museum Board members: Scott Bassett, Jane Beckwith, Kiley Chase, Lorelei Draper, Hoggan Nelson, Hisashi Sugaya, and Patricia Wakida.

The Topaz Museum Board was established in 1997 as a non-profit organization with the mission to preserve the history of the Topaz camp, and in the decades following, fundraised and purchased 639 acres of the original site; JACL Chapters in Salt Lake City own one acre, for the total 640 acres in the one-square mile. In 2007, the Topaz site was designated a National Historic Landmark by the National Park Service.

The Topaz Museum is located at 55 West Main Street, Delta, Utah. Hours of operation are from 10:00 to 5:00. Closed on Sunday and major holidays. For more information including maps, guided tours, or to make a donation, see the Topaz Museum website at [*topazmuseum.org*](http://topazmuseum.org).

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