

Japanese American Veterans Association

2018 - 2024 Scholarship Awardees

What are they doing now?



Samantha “Sammy Jo” Kanekuni
**2021 Senator Daniel K. Inouye Memorial
Scholarship**

We visited with my grandfather in October 2024, shortly before his 103rd birthday. He is doing very well and still living independently and driving. In August, I’ll be starting a federal judicial clerkship in the District of Maryland. Our biggest news, though, is we welcomed a new addition, Abigail, in March!



Eve Kamidoi

2024 COL Virgil Miller Memorial Scholarship



I just finished my freshman year at the University of Michigan where I'm majoring in Biology, Health, and Society. I had a challenging and exciting first year! I received the William J. Branstrom Freshman Prize which is awarded to first-term freshmen who rank in the upper five percent of their class. I can't wait to return to Ann Arbor in August for my sophomore year.

I am currently working a summer internship at Bergen New Bridge Medical Center in Paramus, New Jersey. This experience is teaching me about working in a hospital environment and giving me hand-on experience with patient care to prepare me for my goals of having a future career in healthcare. It's been an enriching experience so far, and I'm looking forward to learning even more throughout the rest of the summer!

Thank you JAVA for supporting me during my first year of college with the 2024 Colonel Virgil Miller Memorial Scholarship.

Beth Uno

2022 Ishio Founders Scholarship

My husband David and I welcomed our first baby, Kenzo, in August! He is such a joy. My family and I have moved to Sacramento to be closer to my parents. We can't believe that Kenzo is almost 10 months old now.



Trish Tanaka

2024 Taubkin Legacy Scholarship

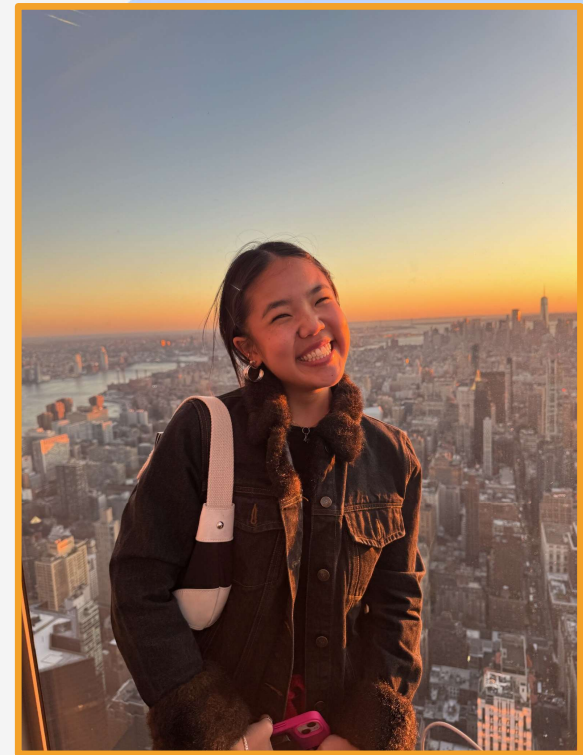
I just finished up my third year at UCLA! I am currently pursuing a Bachelor's in Bioengineering and am involved in a student-led strings orchestra, the Biomedical Engineering Society, and Residential Life. I'm nervous and excited to finish college next year and am grateful for JAVA for supporting me through this journey.



Cami Tom

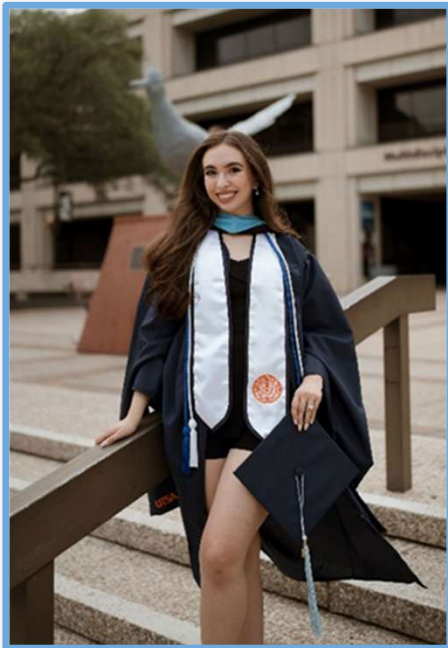
2020 Vic & Teru Matsui Memorial Scholarship

I just completed my first year of my Masters program at NYU. I am studying Speech Language Pathology, and will be graduating from the program next August. I've been enjoying living in NYC and going to see many Broadway shows!



Elaine Oyama-Avila

2023 Daniel K. Inouye Scholarship / 2019 Orville Shirey Memorial Scholarship



I earned my MS in Clinical Mental Health Counseling last month and I will be a PhD student in Counselor Education & Supervision this fall. I am working towards professional licensure LPC-Associate and I have launched a private practice, Blossom & Bloom Counseling. I got married in March, and my husband and I are hoping to buy our first home this year!

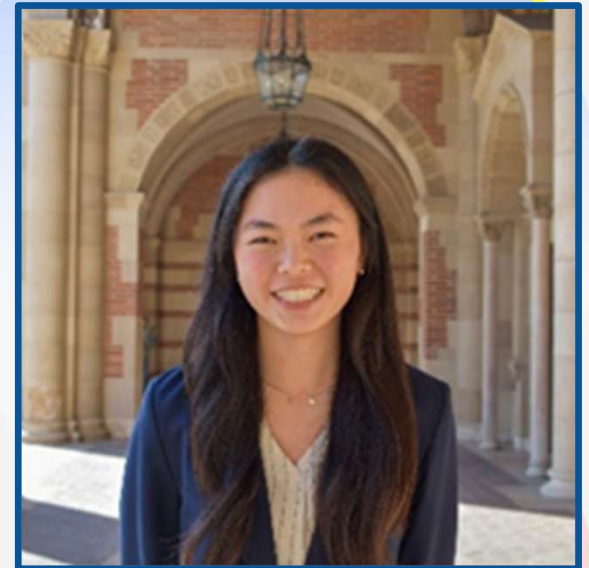
Hope you are doing well... It's been an honor to share my growth with you over these past six years!!



Maddie Doi

2022 Mum Arie Memorial Scholarship

Since receiving the Staff Sgt. Mum Arie Scholarship, I have completed 3 years at UCLA, where I am studying Bioengineering. I have had the opportunity to conduct cancer imaging research, join engineering design teams, complete pharmaceutical internships, and continue playing basketball through the Nikkei Student Union. This summer, I am excited to be interning in MedTech at Edwards Lifesciences. Congratulations to all the new scholarship recipients!



Nicole Tanaka

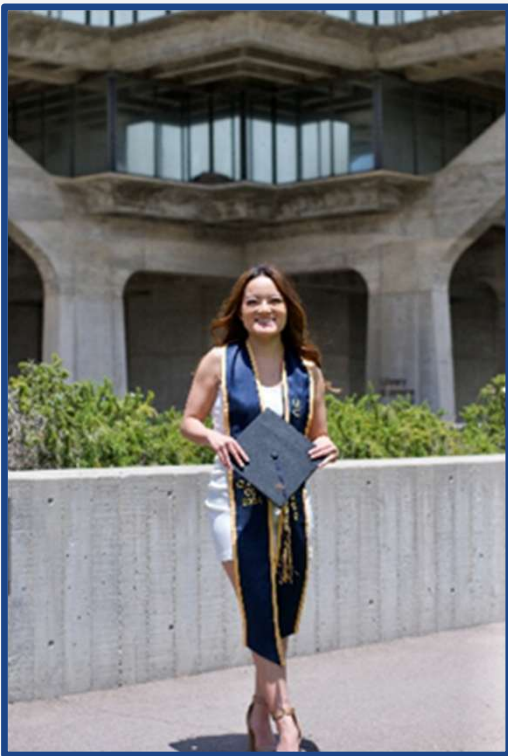
2022 Kiyoko Tsuboi Taubkin Legacy Scholarship



I graduated from UCLA in 2024 with a degree in Design Media Arts. Currently, I'm working as a graphic designer at Shoe Palace in Little Tokyo, where I've had the opportunity to design assets in collaboration with brands like Nike, New Balance, Vans, and more. It's been incredibly rewarding to see my work out in the world—especially when it's tied to giving back to the community.

Grace Bost

2020 Orville & Maud Shirey Memorial Scholarship



I graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of California, San Diego in June, 2024, with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Law & Society minor. During my gap year, I have been working as a Legal Assistant at Van Clief & Van Clief Law while studying to take the LSAT. I applied for law school last November, and I am delighted to attend Loyola Law School in L.A. this Fall. I am interested in different types of law, especially corporate and family law. I look forward to attending such an established law school, with an extensive alumni network that will help me succeed as an attorney. I am excited and welcome the challenges of law school.

Kai Vu

2024 Ishio Founders Scholarship



I graduated this month with a Bachelor of Science in Public Health & Global Health from the University of Washington. I was accepted to medical school and will be moving to Boston next month to attend the Tufts University School of Medicine, where I will be joining the Class of 2029 and studying for my Doctor of Medicine & Master of Public Health (MD/MPH) through a dual-degree program! I am excited to begin my medical training to become a physician while continuing my research pursuits in public health.

Jenna Tsuzaki

2018 Masaoka Memorial Scholarship / 2024 Daniel K. Inouye Scholarship

I just completed my first year as a medical student at the John A Burns School of Medicine in Hawaii. This year I was fortunate enough to complete a rotation in Waimea, Big Island. I spent about 2.5 months there where I was able to better immerse myself in rural medicine, and get to know the community members. I also was able to explore all the beautiful hikes and beaches there! This summer I will be working with Hawaii Pacific Neuroscience, along with the Center for Injury Research and Prevention on preventative injury research. Along with my internships I will be continuing to volunteer as a clinic manager for Hawaii HOME project, a student run free clinic for the houseless communities. Mahalo to everyone at JAVA for helping me along my path towards becoming a Physician!



Carlos Shimabukuro

2023 Furumoto Family Memorial Scholarship



As a rising Junior at the College of William and Mary and a data science major, I have recently become president of our school's chapter of the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA) and am an active member of the Japanese Cultural Association (JCA). I am also interning at The Vanguard Group in Pennsylvania this summer in the data analytics program!

***Madeline Chun* :: 2022 Ben Kuroki Memorial Scholarship**

In the Fall, I will be a Senior at Yale College double majoring in Economics and Humanities. This past year I've started conducting Economics research, studying the impacts of COVID-19 on cognitive indicators in adults nationwide. I've also peer tutored for the Economics, Mathematics, and Humanities departments. One favorite course I have taken is Thought Experiments, where I explored philosophical and ethical dilemmas through the lens of short stories and film. A fun experience I have had was touring with the Yale Concert band, in which I play percussion, in the UK!

JAVA has played a meaningful role in my education and my commitment to public service. I recently visited Yale's Beinecke Library to view a special collection of photographs, diaries, scrapbooks, and artwork from the Japanese internment camp in Poston, Arizona. As I continue my studies and research, I hope to forge my own path towards service in the US, hopefully through a career in law or education.

