

Japan Society of NorCal honors Hats Aizawa at gala



A LIFE OF ACHIEVEMENT — The 2010 Northern California Cherry Blossom Queen Arisa Hiroi presented the Japan Society of Northern California's Lifetime Achievement award, along with flowers, to Hatsuro Aizawa Nov 20 at Hotel Nikko in San Francisco.

photo by Chris Duffey

Surrounded by more than 300 people, Hatsuro "Hats" Aizawa received the Japan Society of Northern California's Lifetime Achievement Award Nov. 20 at Hotel Nikko in San Francisco.

Japan Society Award of Honor recipients Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer, a former U.S. ambassador to Japan and Takahiro Moriguchi, former CEO of Union Bank and chairman of JP Morgan Securities Japan, also gave speeches at the event.

Aizawa spoke of being incarcerated during the war, his postwar experiences rebuilding the Japantown community, and with U.S.-Japan business ties. After his speech, the 2010 Northern California Cherry Blossom Queen Arisa Hiroi presented Aizawa with the Lifetime Achievement Award.

Moriguchi recalled the challenges Union Bank faced in the late 1990s, and described the creation

of the Japan Alumni Association of Northern California, an alumni group in Japan for Japanese executives who have been based in Northern California during their careers.

Schieffer discussed the problems facing the U.S.-Japan relationship, but made a case for the two countries to work even more closely together to stabilize and promote peaceful growth in Northeast Asia.

The entertainment for the evening, the George Yamasaki Quartet, was joined by a guest performer, Consul General of Japan in San Francisco Hiroshi Inomata for the final number of the evening: "The Loco-Motion."

Inomata, who was an avid musician while studying at Waseda University, took the stage with his drumsticks. The performance inspired the crowd to form a rousing conga line to conclude the festivities.