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GFBNEC'S "COURAGE AND COMPASSION: OUR SHARED STORY OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN WORLD WAR II EXPERIENCE" EXHIBITION SET TO OPEN IN DELRAY BEACH, FLORIDA

Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens to Host National Exhibition Highlighting the Japanese American Experience During and After World War II

DELRAY BEACH, Fla. and LOS ANGELES (Mar. 24, 2026) — Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens will host Go For Broke National Education Center's traveling exhibition, "Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American World War II Experience," from May 9 to August 30, 2026. Opening during Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month, the exhibition brings the national story of Japanese American wartime sacrifice home to Florida, exploring the legacy of the historic Yamato colony and its residents, who faced their own challenges during World War II.

The exhibition features the story of Camp Blanding, a major World War II infantry training center in Florida, where Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) soldiers trained before their deployment to Europe. It also highlights the stories of Jun and Kenjiro Yoshida, two brothers born into the Yamato Village in Boca Raton, Florida, who served in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated unit of Japanese American soldiers that became one of the most decorated in U.S. military history.

Florida's Japanese American Story

Established in the early 1900s, the Yamato colony in Boca Raton was home to pioneering Japanese families who helped to shape innovative agricultural techniques to South Florida. At its height, 17 families built a thriving community with a schoolhouse, post office, railway station, and stores on Dixie Highway.

When World War II began, some colonists who had moved to the West Coast, after the real estate boom, were incarcerated along with 120,000 others of Japanese ancestry, including in Topaz, Mindoka, and Manzanar. Those who remained in Florida faced frozen assets, confiscated property for the military, and discrimination. Yet from this community came heroes like Kenjiro Yoshida, who died serving with the 442nd in Italy, and George Sukeji Morikami, who generously donated nearly 200 acres to create the museum and gardens that now bear his name.

A National Story with Local Resonance

"Courage and Compassion" reveals little-known stories of bravery and humanity among everyday Americans during and after the turbulent days of World War II. The exhibition covers events from the attack on Pearl Harbor to the fateful decision to incarcerate West Coast Japanese Americans in wartime camps to the courageous segregated units of the 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and the Military Intelligence Service.

Visitors will learn about the Nisei World War II experience and its legacy, study the nature of courage during a time of crisis, and consider the relevance of that wartime experience today.

"The exhibit honors everyday people who rose above the public hysteria of World War II to recognize Japanese Americans as friends, neighbors, and citizens," Dr. Mitchell T. Maki, GFBNEC president and CEO, said. "These untold stories have real relevance today as we confront issues of loyalty, citizenship, due process, and constitutional rights."

"This is an exhibition about past actions, but it is still very relevant today. It's an opportunity to reflect on who is brave and kind enough to act in our own communities, because it might be found in unexpected places," said Carla Stansifer, Morikami Museum chief curator.

Exhibition Details

"Courage and Compassion" will be shown at Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, 4000 Morikami Park Road, Delray Beach, Florida 33446. The museum is open Tuesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, please visit morikami.org.

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Note to Media

"Go For Broke" was the motto of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated Army unit composed of Japanese Americans from Hawai'i and the mainland. The term was Hawaiian Pidgin slang for "shooting the works," or risking everything for the big win in gambling — as the Nisei soldiers did while fighting in the field in World War II and facing prejudice at home in the U.S.

About Go For Broke National Education Center

Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that educates the public on the valor of Japanese American veterans of World War II and their contributions to democracy. Our goal is to inspire new generations to embody the Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) veterans' core values of courage, sacrifice, equality, humility, and patriotism. Founded in 1989, GFBNEC maintains the Go For Broke Monument and the interactive GFBNEC's Defining Courage exhibition in downtown Los Angeles, as well as extensive oral histories and archives, education programs, traveling exhibitions, and other initiatives. To learn more, visit goforbroke.org.

About Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens

Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens, located in Delray Beach, Florida, is a leading center for Japanese arts and culture in the United States. Founded in 1977, the museum was established on land donated by George Morikami, a Japanese immigrant and member of the historic Yamato Colony, who wished to create a place where Japanese culture could be preserved and shared with future generations.

The museum features rotating exhibitions of traditional and contemporary Japanese art and offers a wide range of cultural programs, including lectures, workshops, performances, and events. Its renowned gardens, Rōji-en: Garden of the Drops of Dew, designed by landscape architect Hoichi Kurisu, reflect major periods of Japanese garden design and provide visitors with a serene environment for reflection and discovery.

Through art, nature, and cultural experiences, Morikami Museum and Japanese Gardens fosters a deeper understanding and appreciation of Japan's rich cultural heritage.

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