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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress (NCRR), Visual Communications, and CSULB's Asian Studies, Student Services and the Earl Burns Miller Japanese Garden invite you to the Long Beach Area Premiere of the acclaimed short film, *Stand Up For Justice The Ralph Lazo Story***

The first Long Beach area screening of *Stand Up for Justice* will take place Friday evening, October 8, 2004, at 7:30 PM at the University Theatre on the campus of California State University at Long Beach (CSULB). The Theatre is located at 1606 E. 7th Street at the corner of East Campus Drive (park in lot #7) on the south side of campus. Admission is \$10.00. A short program and light refreshments will follow the film showing.

Persons wishing to support the film are invited to a pre-screening reception at 5:30 PM at the beautiful Earl Burns Miller Japanese Gardens on the campus of CSULB. The cost of the pre-screening reception is \$25.00 per person and includes admission to the film. Reservations for the garden reception must be made by calling the Japanese Garden at 562-985-5930.

"We are thrilled to involve friends from the academic and Japanese American communities in this South Bay screening," said Long Beach educator Steve Nagano. "The film will be a powerful learning tool for high school American History and Civics classes. Students and teachers will learn about the devastating personal toll this dark period in our nation's history took on our parents and grandparents." "We hope students will be inspired by Ralph's story and learn that one person's actions can have a positive impact," added Nagano.

*Stand Up for Justice*, a 30-minute drama, tells the amazing, true story of Ralph Lazo, a sixteen-year-old Mexican/Irish American high school student, who joined his Japanese American friends on the train to the Manzanar concentration camp during World War II. It recreates the turbulent days in the Los Angeles Japanese American community after the

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**VISUAL COMMUNICATIONS**

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bombing of Pearl Harbor. Ralph reacts with disbelief and anger as he observes his Nisei friend Jimmy and Jimmy's family become the objects of racial hatred. Ralph's feelings of friendship and loyalty toward his Japanese American friends become even stronger as he easily integrates into the fabric of Manzanar camp life.

After the war and during the redress movement in the 1980s, Lazo joined in efforts to educate the public about the internment of Japanese Americans, and supported the National Council of Japanese American Redress lawsuit seeking reparations from the United States government. Ralph Lazo's actions during and after the war earned him the undying gratitude of his many friends in the Japanese American community.

*Stand Up for Justice*, a six-year project, was made possible through the support of many people within the film and Japanese American communities. Film industry professionals worked at reduced rates or even for free to make the film a reality. Community members raised funds and contributed time and resources to the film. The Civil Liberties Public Education Fund, the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, and Japanese American Community Services of Southern California provided seed money for the film's production and eventual distribution to secondary schools and libraries.

The film stars Alexis Cruz as Ralph Lazo, Chad Sakamoto as Jimmy, and Marcus Toji and Brittany Ishibashi as two of Jimmy's and Ralph's friends. The supporting cast includes Emily Kuroda, Ciro Suarez, Sarah Rincon, Will Kayne, Ron Martinez, Takayo Fischer, James McLeod and Hiro Ueno.

The film, written and directed by John Esaki, is a production of Visual Communications and Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress. Funds raised from the screening will be used to duplicate *Stand Up for Justice* and the accompanying curriculum guide, and to train teachers in its effective classroom use.

To obtain tickets and for more information, call NCRR at 213-680-3484. Leave your name, phone number and the number of tickets desired.

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