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PREVIEW OPENING OF RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY COLLEGE DISTRICT'S CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

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Façade of the restored building that will reopen as the Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties. (Riverside Community College District)

RIVERSIDE — A preview opening of the Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties and a celebration of artist Miné Okubo's 100th birthday will be held on Wednesday, June 27, at 5:30 p.m., hosted by the Riverside Community College District Board of Trustees and Chancellor Gregory Gray.

The center, the first completed part of RCCD's Renaissance Block project, is located at 3855 Market St. (at University) in the former Citrus Belt Savings & Loan building, built in 1926 by Los Angeles architect Stiles Clements.

The program will commence at White Park, adjacent to the center, with former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta as special guest. Tours will follow immediately after the program.

The center will foster an ongoing dialogue on social justice and civil liberties through art and humanities collections, exhibits, multimedia resources, research, and community programs. At its core, the center is about learning from the past and prompting new insights into the struggles for racial equality, individual rights, and equal opportunity that continue to shape Riverside and America.

The catalyst for the center is an arts and humanities collection of approximately 6,000 paintings and some 2,000 documents bequeathed to the Riverside Community College District by alumna and Riverside native Okubo, a prominent American artist of Japanese descent best known for "Citizen 13660," the seminal and first

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autobiographical account of the wartime internment, published in 1946.

This collection is believed to be the most extensive repository of Okubo's papers and artwork in a single location. According to some scholars, it may represent one of the most significant Japanese American art and archival collections in the country, and possibly comprises the largest and most complete body of materials illustrating mid-century Japanese American history spanning the prewar, wartime, and postwar periods.

The collection includes correspondence, business and financial records, articles, clippings, published materials, photographs, paintings, and miscellaneous memorabilia and artifacts gathered from Okubo's Greenwich Village apartment. The materials range in date from the 1930s to her death in 2001, with the bulk dating from the immediate postwar period to the 1970s. A large portion of the collection consists of Okubo's paintings and sketches, which she collected over her lifetime and which have never been exhibited.

She is the subject of a 2008 book, "Miné Okubo: Following Her Own Road," edited by Greg Robinson and Elena Tajima Creff.

The event is open to the public. RSVP by June 22 to Diana.meza@rccd.edu or (951) 222-8958.



Miné Okubo (1912-2001)

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Rendering of the interior of the Center for Social Justice and Civil Liberties. (Riverside Community College District)

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