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Prominent Bay Area Entrepreneur Yoshi Akiba and News Anchor Diane Dwyer Join International House Board

BERKELEY, CA – UC Berkeley’s International House has welcomed two prominent Bay Area women to its Board of Directors. Jazz club owner and restaurateur Yoshi Akiba and NBC Bay Area News Anchor Diane Dwyer joined the governing body of “I-House” in July. They will each fill three-year terms to advance the mission that has guided I-House’s work multicultural residential and program center for nearly 80 years: fostering intercultural respect, understanding, lifelong friendships and leadership skills for a more tolerant and peaceful world. I-House is home to 585 UC Berkeley graduate and undergraduate students from 70+ countries, and annually offers over one hundred public-access intercultural programs. The I-House alumni roster includes seven Nobel Laureates and two Nobel contributors along with dozens of prominent politicians, dignitaries, and leaders in business and the arts worldwide.

Yoshi Akiba, orphaned during World War II, came to the U.S. from her native Japan to study fine arts, dance and dance therapy. She opened Yoshi's Japanese Restaurant with two friends in 1975 in a 25-seat venue, and that over the next 25 years Yoshi’s won a reputation as the Bay Area's premier location for people who were looking for great food and an internationally renowned line-up of the best jazz artists anywhere. Yoshi's, now with both an Oakland and San Francisco presence, has hosted legendary jazz greats such as Betty Carter, Max Roach, Dizzy Gillespie, Joe Williams, Diana Krall, Branford Marsalis, McCoy Tyner, Harry Connick Jr. and Oscar Peterson among hundreds of others. Ms. Akiba will serve on the program committee of the Board and says “I’ve followed my spirit like cultivating a cloud since I was orphaned at an early age. I learned that my life would be about connecting with other people.”

Diane Dwyer is an Emmy-award winning news anchor at NBC station KNTV, and grew up in the Peninsula before attending undergraduate business school at UC Berkeley. She’s covered Barack Obama’s inaugural from D.C. and Olympic games in Torino, Italy and Beijing, China. Recognized with awards from the Associated Press, New York Film Festival and Bay Area Society of Professional Journalists, Diane adds I-House to existing volunteer involvement with F.A.C.E. Scholarships in Oakland, German Shepherd Rescue, Rebuilding Together Peninsula, the Asian American Donor Program, the Iraqi Children's Art Exchange and several other non-profits in the Bay Area. She will serve on the nominations and program committees of the Board and says that she is looking forward to helping spread the mission of the International House to a broader audience, working to expand the intercultural programs and enjoying the rich diversity inherent to I-House.

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Founded in 1930, International House is a self-supporting non-profit residential and program center at the University of California at Berkeley, dedicated to fostering understanding and friendship among the peoples of all nations, races and cultures. Its active program schedule, ranging from cultural festivals to discussions on world issues, enhances global understanding in the community and on the Berkeley campus.