

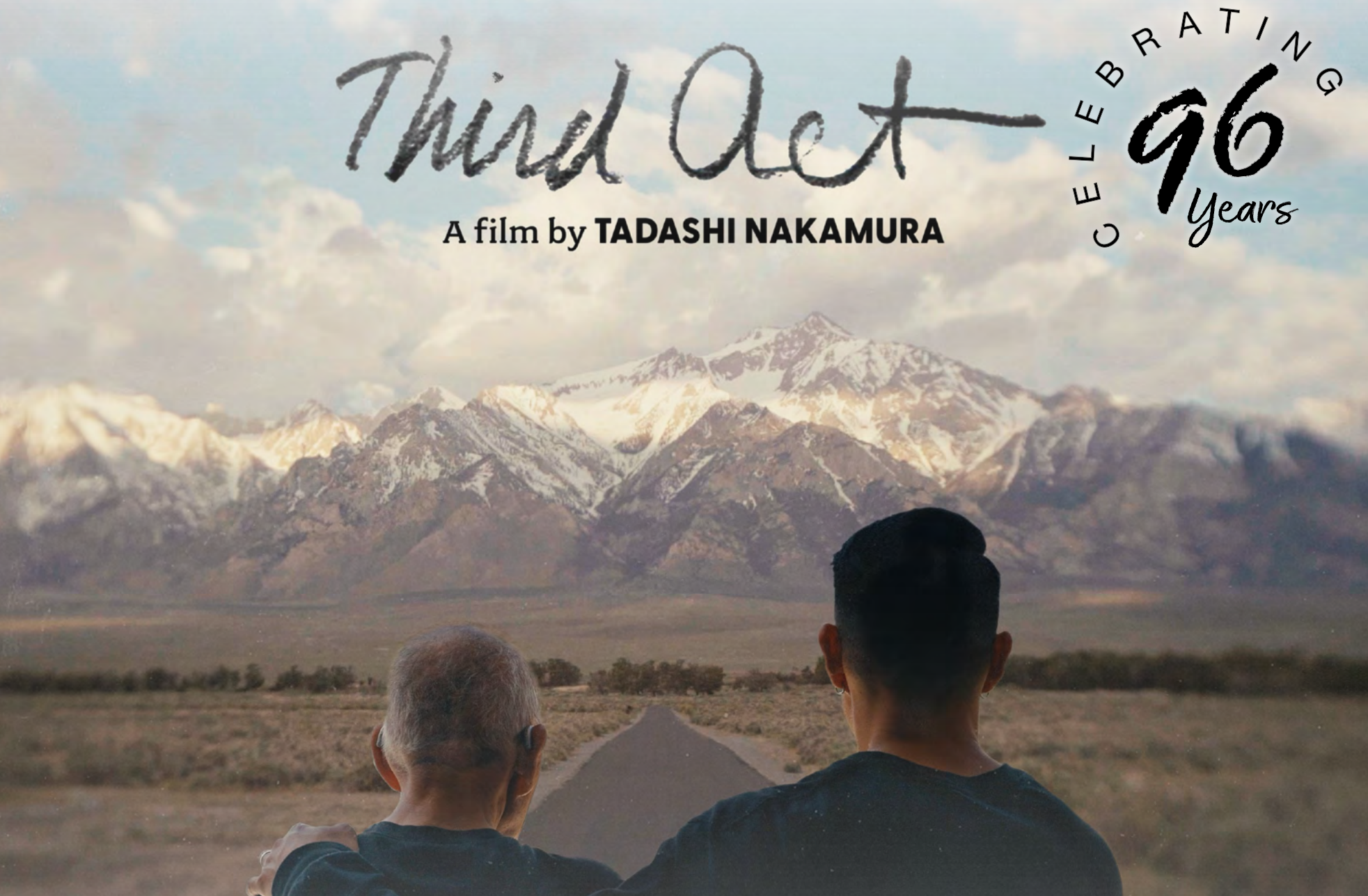


PACIFIC CITIZEN

Third Act

A film by TADASHI NAKAMURA

CELEBRATING
96
Years



‘THIRD ACT’

Second-generation filmmaker

Tad Nakamura completes a

paeon to his father.

» **PAGE 6**

» **PAGE 5**

Reflections on
a Solo Trip to
Manzanar

» **PAGE 12**

Dr. Satsuki Ina to
Keynote Manzanar
Pilgrimage



(Left) Participants of the Portland spring NY/SC retreat

Attorney Peggy Nagae was the event's key speaker.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE NY/SC



NY/SC HOSTS SPRING RETREAT IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

By Lincoln Hirata,
PNW Youth Rep. for the NY/SC

As the NY/SC's Pacific Northwest youth representative, I am excited to share that our spring retreat in Portland, Ore., was a success! Held on March 7 and 8, the retreat featured a variety of engaging activities and brought together all nine representatives from the JACL's National Youth/Student Council.

On March 7, our board began the day by

exploring the beautiful Portland Japanese Gardens, which served as a refreshing escape after our long travels. We next visited the Japanese American Museum of Oregon, where we enjoyed an in-depth tour that highlighted the local history of Portland's Japanese American community.

The museum is a true gem of the city, and its interactive exhibits captivated us all. One particularly poignant moment was when we walked through and reflected in the excavated jail cell of Minoru Yasui, where we also saw his Presidential Medal of Freedom, a testament to his commitment to the Constitution and his fight for justice.

That evening, we were grateful for the opportunity to dine with the Portland JACL board, who greeted us with a warm welcome and engaging conversations. This was a valuable time for us to learn about the strategies that have contributed to the success of the Portland chapter.

On March 8, we hosted a youth mixer and speaker event at the Nichiren Buddhist Temple of Portland. We were fortunate to have Peggy Nagae as our speaker; she was the lead attorney in the coram nobis case of *Minoru Yasui v. United States* and a local hero and social justice advocate. She inspired everyone in attendance, emphasizing the importance of defending those who currently face discrimination.

Later during our youth mixer, we were delighted to welcome many local students from the Portland area. We enjoyed a fun game of Jeopardy, folded cranes and had a great time getting to know one another. I would especially like to thank the Unite People youth group for joining us. This student-run social justice group based in Portland represents the connection and spirit of our chapter while engaging in meaningful work within the JACL and the broader community.

This retreat was truly special for both the Portland chapter and the NY/SC. As a member of the Portland chapter, I was proud to showcase the unique attributes of our city. Although we are the largest chapter in JACL, our strength lies not just in numbers but also in the love and dedication we share. The Portland chapter holds a special place in my heart, as our community is defined by its unity and kindness.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the Portland JACL chapter board, Connie Masuoka and Sheldon Arakaki (PNW governor). Without their support and guidance, this retreat would not have been possible. I am confident that the memories created during this retreat will resonate with our representatives and the chapter for years to come. None of this could have happened without the foundational work laid by the Portland members who came before us, and for that, I am truly grateful.



PNY Youth Rep. Lincoln Hirata (left) with PNW District Gov. Sheldon Arakaki



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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

IN THE ROOM WHERE IT HAPPENS

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

In case you aren't familiar with being "In the room where it happens," I must say you are even more out of touch with current pop culture than me. You're probably more familiar with my references to 1980s pop culture rather than the musical phenomenon of "Hamilton."

During the first Trump administration, or Trump 45, the musical "Hamilton" became well known as the creative resistance to the administration. Shortly after the election, Vice President-elect Mike Pence went to see "Hamilton" in New York City, but the cast, recognizing his presence in the audience, offered some off-script words at the end of the performance, calling on the administration to recognize the hu-

manity of the immigrants portrayed in the play and making up the cast that performed that night.

The reaction from President-elect Donald Trump was a demand that the cast apologize for how it treated the vice president-elect. The demand for respect for Pence seems incredibly ironic given the reaction after the mob that sought to hang Mr. Pence in the wake of his certification of President-elect Joe Biden just over four years later.

Now another four years later, we find ourselves once again with President Trump targeting immigrants, transgender women and the very government that he is sworn to lead. And we find ourselves searching even more for a resistance, if even some way to simply slow down the breakneck pace with which conventional norms are being torn down or simply ignored.

JACL is offering up some of that needed resistance to policies we find especially offensive and contrary to long-held values of justice and fairness, especially poignant because of our community's history, both during World War II and in the

years before and since. We recognize that what happened during the war was a continuation of discrimination that had been building for years and continued in differing forms through the recent anti-Asian hate crimes due to Covid-19 scapegoating.

There is a lot happening now. The president has invoked the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 to target Venezuelan citizens in the United States without due process, just as Japanese, Germans and Italians were similarly imprisoned during WWII, and through Executive Order 9066, American citizens were also similarly detained and imprisoned without trial or legitimate suspicion of wrongdoing, only a connection through nation of ancestry. Perhaps even more egregious this time around is the fact that we are not even at war with Venezuela, seemingly one of the prerequisites of implementing the Alien Enemies Act.

As mentioned, the federal government is being dismantled, jeopardizing fundamental public services such as protecting the basic rights to public education for all American children. Perhaps more personal to the Japanese American community, cuts to the National Park Service threaten the maintenance and availability of National Historic Sites such as Manzanar, Minidoka and Bainbridge Island. These

sites are integral to members of our community finding opportunities to heal the wounds from the trauma of incarceration. We also use these sites to educate the public about our history of incarceration and instill the hope that we will not repeat the same mistakes, even as we seem to be doing so today.

But these are not new concerns for us. If you recall back to some recent conventions, you would recall an impassioned speech from Mike Honda for why JACL must take up the lead in pushing for the repeal of the Alien Enemies Act. You would see a meeting of the JACS consortium in parallel to our National Council meetings, with shared workshops and engagement from the NPS to highlight JACL's importance in promoting historic preservation. Just as we affirmed our support for gay marriage over 30 years ago, two years ago we affirmed our support for transgender and nonbinary people.

I sometimes hear from our members that they are not happy with a position JACL has taken. I often refer these "complaints" to our board and National Council resolutions that set our national policy direction. While we won't be having a National Council session this year in Albuquerque, we will be having plenary and workshop sessions to tackle and

discuss the many challenges facing JACL and our country today.

We will wrestle with how to stem the growing tide against Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion policies and how to change the narrative to match popular sentiment in support of such values. We will learn about the ways in which transgender people are targeted and made to feel less than others through sports and bathroom bans and what we can be doing to fight back. We will recognize our community's dark history with the Alien Enemies Act and strategize how chapters and members can work together to move toward passage of a full repeal of this anachronistic law.

We will do all of this and so much more at this year's JACL National Convention, "Voices in Unity." We want to hear your voice in Albuquerque, and hopefully with all of our voices together in the room where it happens, JACL will continue to be a leader in promoting a more just and moral nation. Together, we can make it happen.

To register for this year's convention and for more information, please visit the JACL website at jacl.org.

David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization's Washington, D.C., office as the AEA followed by EO 9066 paved



A MOTHER'S TAKE

I LOVE MOCHI, 2025

By Marsha Aizumi

Five days before Christmas, my husband and I made the difficult decision to let our dog, Mochi, go. After one month of trying to nurse her back to health by taking her out every day in a wagon to go to the bathroom and trying various medications, in the end, she quit eating and had difficulty when we tried to feed her with a syringe. We did not want her to suffer.

It was one of the hardest decisions we have ever made, and we were heartbroken. For any readers who loved their pets and had to let them go, we now understand the sadness and grief that fills your heart when you have to make that choice.

Was this the right time? Should we wait until a little bit longer? Is she suffering? Are we keeping her alive for us, but for her, letting her go is the most compassionate thing to



Our
sweet
Mochi

PHOTOS:
MARSHA
AIZUMI



Mochi and
her wagon

much, I wanted to share the indelible lessons she has left in my heart. For those of you who have been reading my column since 2016, I am repeating some of the lessons I wrote about in 2016, and I have added more.

1. Mochi always sees me as a loving, supportive person and forgives me when I fall short. As much as I love this little dog, sometimes I make mistakes. When I step on her tail and find a considerable amount of hair on the floor, after a loud yelp, she does not run away and glare at me as if I have done something purposely to hurt her. She turns right around and comes to me with compassion and openness, as if to say, I know you

didn't mean to hurt me. I forgive you and love you.

Lesson Learned: See the best in people, and do not harbor resentment. You will be happier.

2. Mochi creates boundaries for what she needs. Sometimes she likes to be a cuddle dog, and other times she needs her space. Sometimes she wants to be around us, and other times she wants to be in a quiet room alone.

Lesson Learned: Take the time for self-care.

3. When Mochi needs something, she will ask. When it is time for our walk, she comes over to me and looks into my eyes, like, "Are you ready to go?" When she wants to play, there she is with a toy in her mouth. When it is time to eat, I hear her little feet coming to remind me.

Lesson Learned: Ask for what you need, and reach out for support in a cute way. Don't whine and complain (which she sometimes did), but know being sweet, kind and cute works better (at least it did for me).

4. Mochi had separation anxiety and hated when we left her alone. We would leave a kong (a toy filled with peanut butter), so that became a way to communicate that we would

be back.

Lesson Learned: Communication is key . . . even for dogs.

5. Mochi had the cutest spring in her step. Like most dogs, she loved to go for walks. You could feel the joy. Although she would not have received the "Friendliest Dog in the Neighborhood" award (she was very protective of Papa and me), people would comment on how cute she was and how noticeable the joy in her step was. She connected us to so many neighbors we would have never met because of who she was.

Lesson Learned: People are attracted to those who live in joy, even if attracted from a distance.

For those of us who are lucky enough to have a Mochi in our lives — to be missed no matter whether we are gone five minutes or five hours, to be welcomed home as if we were the most important person in their life, to walk with joy and wonder and to love and forgive no matter what we do . . . how fortunate we have been.

Marsha Aizumi is an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community and author of the book "Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother, Her Transgender Son and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance."

THE KAKEHASHI PROGRAM: A Transformative Experience

One participant's experience in Japan gives her a new sense of belonging.

By Gina Samec

For five days this past December, I found myself in Japan for the first time with 70 Japanese Americans my age as a member of the Kakehashi program contingent, which was coordinated by the JACL and the Japan International Cooperation Center and is supported through funding by the Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sharing stories of our upbringings came with the recognition that we all had a uniquely different relationship to being Japanese. While some of us were raised within the Japanese community; others, like me, followed a less-straight-forward path to get here.

In my case, being a Sansei meant that I was raised by a parent who had lost touch with the culture due to the greater pressures of assimilation. Taking part in the Kakehashi program was a transformative experience that led me back to my roots and provided me with a new sense of belonging.

The majority of my group's trip as participants in Group 1 was spent in Okinawa, which is known for being home to some of the longest-living people in the world. Their reputation of longevity became less surprising after experiencing the affability of their tight-knit community. Their sincere friendliness and optimism is underpinned by a resilience developed over centuries of colonization and occupation. A saying I heard across the several days we spent there was that of *ichari bachode*, meaning "when we meet, we become family." The truth of it became undeniable as we entered our homestay in Yomitan Village.

Although I worried about the language barrier, a sense of familiarity developed between our group of five girls (myself, Hayley Agena, Michelle Murakami, Lulu Searles and Kiyomi Takemoto) and the kind, older couple who graciously hosted us.

With the power of Google Translate, we were able to learn about one another and, best of all, laugh together. Never having met my Japanese grandparents, being in their company filled a hole that was left in my heart.

Our Oji-chan filled every moment with levity, from playing his sanshin wherever we went, to feeding us goat sashimi after taking us to a goat farm. I never

wanted to leave the warmth of their yellow-tiled kitchen as our Oba-chan taught us how to make dan-go, or *sata andagi*, in Okinawa, as well as pork-filled gyoza. On the morning of our departure, I cried with an intensity that hadn't overcome me in years.

To say the trip was emotional was an understatement. The third day of the trip ushered in waves of excitement and grief as we went from a marine life conservation outing to visiting Chibi Chirigama. We stood at the front of the cave as the tour guide recounted the mass suicide that took the lives of over 80 Okinawans during World War II.

This tragic event was brought on by the fatal misinformation that convinced citizens of the torture that awaited them in American hands. Although it's a painful history to recall, it's also a testament to the strength of Okinawans. I remain in deep admiration of the beautiful and thriving community they have preserved as the U.S. military continues to have a troublesome presence in their lives.

As my first international trip at the age of 26, I braced myself for culture shock. I prepared to feel even less Japanese in an unfamiliar city as a foreigner. At the end of the day, a country comes down to its people, and luckily the ones I met on this trip were more welcoming than I could have ever imagined.

From the students to all of the kind government officials we met during courtesy calls, everyone we crossed paths with during the program made Japan feel like a second home. The friendships I forged with my Kakehashi group served as a reminder that we are all equally Japanese, despite our diverse backgrounds.

After leaving the tight-knit community I found in Japan, I now hope to cultivate that same sense of healing community wherever I go.

Gina Samec is a community and product manager at a tech start-up in Los Angeles. She is a member of the Greater Los Angeles JACL chapter.



(Below) Gina Samec (front, left) and JACL Membership Manager Ariel Imamoto (front, right), a Kakehashi chaperone, and fellow Kakehashi participants enjoy sukiyaki in Tokyo.



(From left) Michelle Murakami, Hayley Agena, Gina Samec, Kiyomi Takemoto and Lulu Searles made *sata andagi* during their homestay visit.

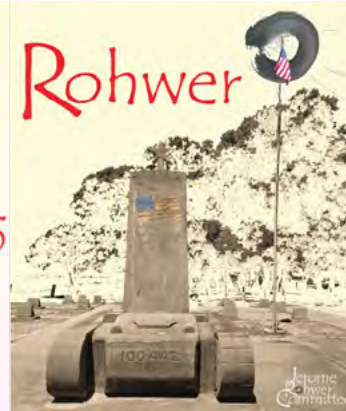


Group 1 outside of Meiji Shrine in Shibuya, Tokyo

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF GINA SAMEC

Jerome Rohwer
Pilgrimage
May 21-24, 2025

Connection,
Education, Healing



Learning and open conversation lead to understanding and healing.

The Jerome Rohwer Pilgrimage allows survivors, descendants, and others to learn about and discuss the legacy and aftermath of WWII era concentration camps in the USA. One day of the Pilgrimage is a trip to the concentration camp sites in Jerome and Rohwer, with a program in McGehee, AR, that includes taiko drummers and a short obon festival to honor the spirits of our ancestors. There will be two full days of programming in Little Rock, including intergenerational and generational discussions, historical sessions, survivor perspectives, social activities, and opportunities to stamp the sacred Ireichō (a book with names of more than 125,000 innocent Japanese and Japanese Americans imprisoned during WWII) and to research family histories.

Registration <https://tinyurl.com/JRPilgrimage>



We look forward to seeing
you in Little Rock

Support the Jerome Rohwer Committee
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MY SOLO PILGRIMAGE TO MANZANAR

It is more important than ever to make relationships to the past in order to continue sharing these cautionary tales in the future.

By Rob Buscher,
P.C. Contributor

For those familiar with my writing on pilgrimages, it may come as a surprise that I had never visited Manzanar until this past March. The opportunity finally presented itself when I had back-to-back work engagements in L.A. and S.F. two weekends in a row, with a few days to kill in between.

My trip began with a homecoming of sorts as I helped produce Nichi Bei Foundation's Films of Remembrance Showcase at the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute. Before the war, my great-grandparents were tenant farmers on the Kurata Ranch in Gardena, Calif. They avoided camp by "self-evacuating" — abandoning their farm and escaping by car to Utah. I plotted my route to follow some of the same roads they took until I hit the town of Mojave at the junction of state routes 14 and 58, heading north where they would have continued eastward toward Nevada.

An hour later, I came upon the town of Lone Pine, the closest settlement to Manzanar and home to just over 2,000 people. Lone Pine is also adjacent to the Paiute-Shoshone Reservation, a little over 230 acres in size and with a Tribal population of approximately 350 residents. I would later return to Lone Pine to spend the night, but I drove straight through to Manzanar in order to catch the Interpretive Center before it closed.

Nine miles later, I found myself face-to-face with the iconic military sentry checkpoint, unmistakable from the many photos I had seen both during and after World War II. Past the sentry houses, I saw a sole residential barracks painted white, giving stark contrast to the green-grey desert landscape punctuated by the scenic backdrop of the High Sierra mountains.

I was impressed to learn that the Interpretive Center was incarcerated-built and was used as an auditorium to host assemblies, dances, performances and film screenings. By far the largest surviving building from any of the WRA camps, I wondered how many lives were shaped by this physical space and found myself gravitating to the architecture. I observed visible remains of the projection booth with holes cut in different shapes and sizes to accommodate various film gauges, wondering what movies were shown.

A highlight of the exhibit was the 10 WRA camp banners, which are used annually at the Manzanar Pilgrimage. In 1992, Manzanar became the first camp designated as a National Historic Site and has long represented the larger experience of wartime incarceration in our nation's commemorative landscape. Seeing these banners together in one place, I recalled images of the eight camps I've previously visited and the many survivors and descendants I have met along the way.

The last thing I saw before venturing outdoors were 8mm movies shot by camp administrator Francis C. Dieterich, who captured color images of daily life at Manzanar that are otherwise absent from the historical record. I marveled at the lush green grass and colorful flowers amid the otherwise desolate landscape.



The Arai Fish Pond

After a brief stop at the reconstructed fire station, which houses a 1940s fire engine, I drove to the baseball diamond. With my souvenir Manzanar baseball in hand, purchased from the gift shop, I walked onto the diamond and stood at home plate. Overwhelmed by the power of place, I felt a sudden urge to run the bases. Sprinting with a smile on my face, realizing how silly I must have looked to the trucker driving his 18-wheeler past the camp, it gave me a much-needed moment of joy after touring the center.

From there, I drove to the Arai Fish Pond, located in Block 33, built by Jack Hanashiro Arai, an Issei man who worked at a produce market in L.A. before being incarcerated with his wife and three children. Dug about two to three feet below ground level, the pond was reinforced with concrete and its perimeter lined by large stones. Arai stocked the pond with fish that he sourced outside of camp while on temporary leave work projects. The pond became an oasis for the residents of Block 33, which was rediscovered in 2011 during an archeological survey and later restored.

Most WRA camps had some form of garden practice, but pond gardens were made possible at Manzanar by the incarcerated's liberal access to cement mix. Incarcerated became adept at using the material to create everything from garden features to Japanese-style *ofuro* soaking tubs. Under fading sunlight, I decided to save the other gardens for the next day, making my way to the cemetery.

Of approximately 150 Japanese Americans who died in Manzanar, only six burials remain, as a majority of the deceased were cremated or later reburied where their families resettled. Every year since the camp closed in 1945, two Issei — Buddhist Rev. Sentoku Maeda and Christian Minister Shoichi Wakahiro — made the trek back to tend the lonely graves and offer prayers. Learning of their annual visit, student activists from the Organization of Southland Asian American Organizations asked to join them in 1969, attracting a crowd of over 100 spanning four generations of the Nikkei diaspora.

This became known as the first annual Manzanar Pilgrimage

Rob Buscher in front of the Manzanar area limits sign

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ROB BUSCHER



and is widely credited as starting the nationwide pilgrimage movement. One could argue that it also paved the way for Japanese Americans to begin turning toward our painful past, sparking renewed calls for reparations.

The cemetery became a focal point of subsequent pilgrimages and is probably the most recognizable image associated with Manzanar. I paid my respects at the individual grave sites, then spent a few minutes admiring the offerings other pilgrims left at the *Ireito* — soul-consoling tower, written in kanji on the obelisk monument.

As I turned to leave, something in the distance caught my eye. I walked over to get a closer view and discovered what looked like a trail of *tsuru*, most likely left as offerings windswept from the monument. Following the dotted trail of sun-worn and tattered origami, I then noticed a replica signpost that read, "STOP- AREA LIMITS FOR PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY RESIDING IN THIS RELOCATION CENTER SENTRY ON DUTY." It sent a chill down my spine as I considered the remains of six individuals who have yet to venture beyond the camp perimeter.

Inspired to perform a small act of civil disobedience, I began walking into the open desert past the sign and toward the snowcapped sierras. As I strolled through the dusty terrain, it struck me how futile armed sentries were in an area so close to Death Valley.

Assuming someone did flee, where could they possibly go? Awed by the natural beauty, I was now far enough from the road to notice the almost deafening silence. Without a clear direction in mind, I kept walking toward the mountains until I came to a ridge of small boulders, likely moved there by camp construction workers while clearing the land.

There to my surprise, I encountered a barbed-wire fence, too well-maintained to be a war relic. As I approached, I noticed a sign that read, "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR BOUNDARY LINE." While I did not plan on walking much further, I found it ironic that the federal government had erected yet another fence that kept this Japanese American from leaving Manzanar.

As I drove the short distance back to Lone Pine, I reflected on these meaningful experiences. I spent the night at the historic Dow Hotel, a Hollywood favorite that hosted the likes of Roy Rogers, Gene Autry and John Wayne on their numerous location shoots in the area surrounding Lone Pine known as the Alabama Hills. The next morning, I visited the Museum of Western Film History located on the edge of town, dedicated to the over 400 mostly Western genre films shot locally between 1920 and the current day.

After my brief Western detour, I returned to Manzanar where I documented the military sentry guardhouses designed by Issei stonemason Ryoza Kado, then walked through the extensive ruins of the administrative complex. Using concrete slabs as foundations, the footprints of Manzanar's administration buildings are more visible than other WRA sites. Having watched Dieterich's 8mm camp footage the day before, I was able to pick out a few recognizable locations, even eight decades later.



Block 14 Mess Hall and Latrine with the snow-covered Sierra Nevada mountains in the background

Young Bob Nakamura

PHOTO: ROBERT A. NAKAMURA, COURTESY OF THIRD ACT/ COPYRIGHT: ©ROBERT A. NAKAMURA



'THIRD ACT': FROM FATHER TO SON TO FATHER

Second-gen filmmaker Tad Nakamura completes paean to Robert Nakamura.



By Alex Luu,
P.C. Contributor

Director Tadashi Nakamura begins his documentary “Third Act” with a phrase that will become a refrain throughout the film’s 90-minute running time. The phrase is simple yet full of conviction: “My whole life, I always knew I had to make a film about my dad.” The phrase is spoken by Tad himself, about his father, Robert A. Nakamura.

It’s a wonder why prior to “Third Act,” no one had ever made a movie about the elder Nakamura. Lovingly known to longtime colleagues and family/friends as “Bob,” he has lived many lifetimes in his 88 years as a filmmaker, producer, photographer, activist and a founder of no less than three seminal media arts organizations: Visual Communications (1970), UCLA Center for Ethno Communications (1996) and Japanese American National Museum’s Frank H. Watase Media Art Center (1997), respectively, where Tad Nakamura now serves as its director.

Bob Nakamura documented the first pilgrimage to Manzanar in 1969; directed the searing film “Manzanar” (1972); spent a collective 33 years as assistant, associate and full professor at UCLA’s School of Theater, Film and Television and Asian American Studies Department (1978-2004); and was associate director of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center (1993-2011). He also co-directed the 1980 landmark film “Hito Hata: Raise the Banner,” about the incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II, and produced 28 films on the Japanese American experience.

Yet, with all of his countless accomplishments and accolades, it’s also a wonder why Bob Nakamura is not a better-known documentarian, like Ken Burns or Michael Moore. In the opening minutes of “Third Act,” Tad Nakamura narrates, “My father is known as the godfather of Asian American cinema, but ironically, most people outside of our community have never heard of him. I don’t want him or his work to be forgotten.”

‘Maybe an earlier generation knows who my dad is, but a lot of people my age and younger don’t.’

— Tad Nakamura

Bob Nakamura’s relative obscurity in the mainstream serves as part of his son’s motivation to make the film. “Maybe an earlier generation knows who my dad is, but a lot of people my age and younger don’t,” Tad Nakamura said, “or they don’t even know a lot about the history of VC (Visual Communications) or early Asian American cinema. A lot of people think it started with ‘Crazy Rich Asians.’ It was early on where I became protective of his legacy.”

Most documentarians have an objective distance and relationship to their subject matter. “Third Act” is that rare exception where a son is telling his own father’s story. As to whether this process would be too close or too partial, Tad Nakamura actually makes a strong case for flipping the rules of a traditional documentary. “It would be a given that if there was gonna be a film made on my dad, I would make it,” he said. “I wanted to do it because I felt I could trust myself. I wouldn’t trust anyone else to do my dad justice.”

In addition to having an irrefutable connection with his subject matter, Tad Nakamura brings to “Third Act” an impressive 20 years of experience as an Emmy Award-winning filmmaker. He was named CNN’s “Young People Who Rock” for being the youngest filmmaker at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival, and his previous films include “Pilgrimage” (2006), “A Song for Ourselves” (2009), “Jake Shimabukuro: Life on Four Strings” (2013) and 2024’s “Nobuko Miyamoto: A Song in Movement.”

And so, “Third Act” wastes no time in presenting Bob Nakamura’s influential role in Asian American media for the past eight decades. The film features an

assortment of black-and-white/color photographs and 16mm footage that functions as a visual timeline of Nakamura’s prolific oeuvre, dating all the way back to the late ’60s.

The photos range from a shot of Bob Nakamura proudly posing next to his still camera to him manning a bulky Arriflex movie camera to him directing “Hito Hata” perched atop a crane. There’s even an iconic photo of him with a cigarette, grinning and looking very much like an Asian American version of Hunter S. Thompson — and in Tad Nakamura’s proud assessment — “a f*****g badass.”

The celebratory and downright flexing of the pioneering filmmaker in his heyday is coupled with brief day-in-the-life scenes of present-day Bob Nakamura. There is also a glimpse into the elder Nakamura’s humor and playfulness.



Years before becoming a filmmaker, the long-defunct *Scene* magazine — archived at Densho.org — profiled Robert Nakamura in its September 1954 issue when he was an 18-year-old freelance photojournalist and copy boy at the long-defunct *Los Angeles Examiner* and the long-defunct *International News Service*.

When Tad Nakamura asks why he wants to make “Third Act,” his father deadpans, “To further your career” and laughs. Bob Nakamura also can’t help but joke, “So you’ll be guiding it though, right? Because you’re the director, and I just interfere because I’m a filmmaker!” This tender and humorous interplay between father and son quickly reveals their close familial bond.

Another seemingly innocuous scene that accentuates their deep bond is when they make their annual trek to UCLA football games. Having graduated from UCLA with an MFA in 1975, Bob Nakamura introduced his son to the games when he was just a young boy. This continued on throughout Tad Nakamura’s own later years as a Bruin in the early 2000s and has remained as a tradition since.

This sacred tradition is shockingly broadsided in one of the film’s most harrowing scenes. At a UCLA football game, Bob Nakamura becomes disoriented and agitated. He walks and walks and walks, seemingly going nowhere as he tries to figure out what exactly is happening to him. A vast contrast from earlier scenes, the elder Nakamura’s demeanor and voice are disparate as he barely finds the words to match his confused mental state. “Walking to the Rose Bowl, I felt totally out of control, and that’s what really kinda scared me,” he shared. Back in the car after the game, Bob Nakamura struggles to process what happened. “Well, I feel I got all kinds of symptoms right now. . . . I can’t breathe, I can’t hear. My voice is going. My legs are getting really tired,” he explained.

After checking into UCLA Medical Center and seeing a neurologist, it is confirmed that Bob Nakamura has Parkinson’s disease. With this shocking diagnosis, the filming of “Third Act” took on an even more urgent pace.

This unexpected turn of events more than challenged Tad Nakamura as a filmmaker. Instead of sticking to the original idea of a biopic, he took a risky chance by restructuring the overall focus of the film. “Once he got diagnosed, it kind of evolved into the film that it is,” Tad Nakamura said.

What follows is a bold roundabout in the direction, structure and tone of “Third Act.” Gone are the more carefree scenes that marked the beginning of the movie. Bob Nakamura gets more candid and somber in his interviews, baring his soul and peeling the layer off of his own bravado to reveal a very broken man who has been struggling with depression for many years.

Ironically, the combination of decades-long depression coupled with Parkinson’s emboldened Bob Nakamura to be open in expressing his inner thoughts and emotions. Tad Nakamura also attests to his father’s willingness to be more transparent.

In a powerful scene, Bob Nakamura reflected, “I’m in a really good place in terms of family, finances, creative work,

friends, community. But, regardless of that, every morning you wake up feeling miserable; there’s a feeling in the pit of your stomach, and you don’t want to get out of bed.”

Bob Nakamura pinpoints that pit-of-the-stomach feeling by saying, matter-of-factly, “Everything comes back to camp, and everything comes back to Manzanar.”

It turns out that Manzanar has had a vice-like grip on Bob Nakamura’s heart, soul and psyche ever since he was a boy. At just 6 years old, he and his family were incarcerated there until the end of WWII. In a pivotal moment from “Third Act,” he takes a painful deep dive into the recesses of the past and remembers how Manzanar had impacted his own father, Harukichi George Nakamura. In a weary tone, Bob Nakamura recounted, “Before WWII, before camp, Jichan had kind of worked his way up from a gardener to a businessman. He owned a house, and we had a piano in the living room. They were kind of joining the middle-class as much as a person of color can.”

In a deft touch, Tad Nakamura gives a visual companion to his father’s testimonial by including footage from Nakamura’s own 1971 film “Manzanar” — Nakamura as a young boy smiling happily, Jichan watering his plants, the whole Nakamura family posing in front of the family business’ storefront sign in 1935 — accentuating the fact that once upon a time, the Nakamura clan did live a kind of all-American life before incarceration. This *film within a film* technique is twofold in that it solidifies Bob Nakamura’s narration and reminds the viewer of one of America’s most disgusting transgressions against its own citizens.

The idyllic shots of the happy Nakamura family segue to grim footage of racist signs denouncing the existence of the Japanese at the onset of WWII. Nakamura continued, “But then that was all wiped out. . . . After Pearl Harbor, overnight, I was a Jap, I had the face of the enemy. Jichan was under a lot of pressure because he was very high up in judo. Most of the judo instructors, like other community leaders, were taken away and put into maximum security prisons. For whatever reason, they missed my dad. But he was so scared of being taken away that he took everything that was related to Japan — pictures, letters, anything with Japanese writing, he buried in the backyard or burned.”

Unfortunately, like most Japanese American families who had to start all over postcamp, Jichan, having lost his family business, went back to being a gardener. “Coming back to postwar Los Angeles, it was outright unabashed racism.”

The trifecta of Jichan’s own erasing of the Nakamura family’s Japanese ancestry, incarceration in Manzanar and having to start postwar life from scratch served as a kind of “perfect storm” that created a lifelong schism between him and Bob Nakamura, as well as sowed the seeds of gener-

ational trauma and emasculation that would haunt both men.

This gritty reconciliation of how he felt about his father and his own battles with racism leads to the most gut-wrenching scene from “Third Act” wherein Bob Nakamura, with the unbearable weight of depression and Parkinson’s, completely releases all the decades’ worth of guilt, shame and trauma that has been repressed for way too long. What transpires next is at once tragic and excruciating to watch as it almost teeters on the edge of voyeurism, which once again begs the question: *Is Tad too close to his subject matter?*

“So, that particular scene — it wasn’t planned at all. I think it was the day after Thanksgiving, and . . . he started talking and talking, and I just took out my phone and started filming,” Tad Nakamura remembered. “He’s always talked about how racism and camp will destroy you. It f**ks up the way you see yourself and the world. . . . He had expressed that to me in a more conceptual, intellectual, theoretical way. But at that moment, it was the emotion of that.

“That’s the first time I’ve ever seen my dad that vulnerable,” he said. “It was the first time where, you know, I did emotionally have to just put down the camera. I probably start off as Tad, the filmmaker, filming the content, but then by the end, I just have to be the son and give my dad a hug.”

Just as Bob Nakamura is finally coming to a harsh reckoning of his own life and reassessing his troubled relationship with his own father, Tad Nakamura is also starting to relook at Bob Nakamura through a more enlightened perspective.

“I never knew my dad felt this way about himself or my Jichan. I always thought of him as this proud Asian American filmmaker,” he offered, “so I guess it was just hard to learn that he was so ashamed of who he was, and it hurts even more to know that he had no one to talk to, no one to help him understand what was going on or how to cope.”

Bob Nakamura’s mantra of “Everything comes back to camp, and everything comes back to Manzanar” is doubly layered in that the place and source of trauma can also provide a sort of release from said trauma. And so the latter half of “Third Act” provides an opportunity to both exorcise the searing pain held internally for decades and reclaim a sense of dignity.

Tad Nakamura includes footage from his own film titled “Research Trip for Pilgrimage” (2004) in which his father takes him to Manzanar for the first time. Once again, employing the film-within-a-film motif, the son is introduced by the father to the historical place that maligned thousands of Japanese Americans’ lives.

Some 20 years later after Tad’s first visit to Manzanar in 2004, everything has come full circle yet again. In the coda of “Third Act,” Tad Nakamura is taking his own son, Prince, there at the behest of Bob Nakamura. When



Tadashi Nakamura

PHOTO: TIBRINA HOBSON/
GETTY IMAGE



Tadashi Nakamura, Bob Nakamura and Prince Nakamura in a scene from “Third Act,” directed by Tadashi Nakamura

PHOTO: LOU NAKASAKO, COURTESY OF THIRD ACT/ COPYRIGHT ©TADASHI NAKAMURA



Tadashi Nakamura and Bob Nakamura in a scene from "Third Act"

PHOTO: TADASHI NAKAMURA, COURTESY OF THIRD ACT/ COPYRIGHT: ©TADASHI NAKAMURA

asked why, the elder Nakamura said, "I guess it is getting back to homecoming. . . . On one hand, I want to show him where his grandfather was in, essentially a prison. But at the same time, I like to show him where I used to get the branches to make the slingshots with. There's some really negative stuff (about Manzanar), but I can't help myself. There are positive things that I wouldn't mind showing him."

Representing the three ages of man, seeing three Nakamura males walking around and exploring the grounds of Manzanar is tender and bittersweet. Holding Prince's small hand, Bob Nakamura shows him the lay of the land and points out lizard and snake holes that he used to come across as a boy in camp. Grandfather to grandson, he said, "We didn't have things to play with, so we played with lizards and scorpions and snakes and kept them in bottles. Those were our pets."

This pilgrimage to Manzanar with Prince even has a tinge of the surreal as they come across a black-and-white photo of Bob Nakamura's second grade class. The picture has been a permanent fixture amongst the archival materials displayed at Manzanar. Almost in disbelief, Prince stares wide-eyed at the photo. To whatever degree Prince has been told about camp is uncertain, but here lies indisputable proof that his Jichan was physically incarcerated there.

In this revelatory moment, grandfather, son and grandson are inextricably linked by Manzanar. It is a moment that also has the possibility of a bit of healing. "He's been looking for answers himself," stressed Tad Nakamura. "He has been trying to process and come to peace with not only what happened with camp, but his own identity, his own relationship with his parents and his own relationship with his kids, too."

"Camp became analogous to Parkinson's," said Tad Nakamura. "There is no cure to Parkinson's, just like there is no cure for trauma or racism. So, the goal is how much can you heal along the way? It can't be cured. But can you heal, can you come to peace with it? Can you at least process it while you're here?"

These questions are valid but they have no easy answer(s), not for Bob Nakamura and certainly not for his son. Nevertheless, "Third Act" fulfills an epiphany that Nakamura shares in the film, which is, "Less history, more soul." In changing course in the middle of production when it was obvious that Parkinson's was already taking a swift hold of his father, Tad Nakamura has transcended the paint-by-numbers quality that plagues most documentaries.

Instead, "Third Act" is less of a portrait of an artist and more a portrait of Nakamura as son, father and grandfather. It is also a portrait of a man with weaknesses and strengths.

The godfather of Asian American media is, at his core, a human being who more than deserves forgiveness and redemption.

Tad also realizes "Third Act" is most likely the last film that Nakamura will be working on alongside him as the ravages of Parkinson's progresses at a steady pace. "One of the north stars throughout this process was what is the film that only I could make as his son. It became this really special time and place where I could sit across from my dad," Tad said. "I could ask him anything I wanted to know about his life. I asked him all the advice I've always wanted to ask. And at the same time, he could tell me everything he wanted to tell me before it was too late."

"Third Act" had its world premiere earlier this year at the Sundance Film Festival and will be screening numerous film festivals this year, including the upcoming Riverrun International Film Festival in Winston-Salem, N.C. (April 14), the San Luis Obispo International Film Festival (April 25, 26 and 28), the Atlanta Film Festival (April 26), Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival (May 3) and the CAAM Fest in San Francisco (May 8). As "Third Act" rolls out, it will undoubtedly garner more attention and accolades as it reaches more festivals and audiences.

Tad Nakamura, however, is more focused on the film's ability to effect change and engage dialogue about difficult topics such as racism, trauma, illness and the grace inherent in forgiveness and healing.

"One of the many things my dad always told me was that the success of your film is based on how useful it is," Tad Nakamura said, "and so it's not the merit, it's not critical acclaim but how much can the community and people use your film. I think hopefully there'll be a point of connection for people to project their own histories, their own communities, to how racism in this country can really destroy you for multiple generations. I want people to be able to either identify with that intergenerational trauma or that historical trauma, but also my dad is an example of someone who not only has lived through that and is experiencing that, but has also found a way to heal and how to process."

"The reality is that my dad is not going to be around forever, and hopefully, this film will," he concluded. "I wanted to use the film as a love letter to my dad or thank-you letter. Mainly to thank him for everything that he had done for me. And also to let him know how serious I took his legacy and wanted to carry that on. This is that one film that I felt responsible, obligated and destined to make. And because of that, I think it'll always be the most important film that I've ever made."

MANZANAR » continued from page 5

From there, I drove to Block 14 — a partially reconstructed residential block including reproductions of two residential barracks, a latrine, mess hall and basketball court. Compared to original barracks at other sites, they lacked the aura of trauma but were still effective in conveying their message. Of particular note was the classroom exhibit in one section of Building 8, which presents a facsimile of the camp school environment.

Despite being a reproduction, walking alone inside a mess hall that was meant to accommodate about 250 people evoked a slightly eerie feeling. Subtle sounds of cooking played from a speaker hidden somewhere in the kitchen added to the ambiance. I appreciated the inclusion of a trap door beneath the floorboards where mess hall cooks would hide stills for fermenting contraband alcohol. My last stop at Block 14 was the women's latrine. I previously documented latrine foundations at Tule Lake, but seeing these toilets placed so closely together without partitions gave me a more visceral sense of the lack of privacy that incarcerated suffered daily.

I next drove to Merritt Park, a 1.5-acre garden completed in 1943 by Issei landscape architect Kuichiro Nishi and further beautified by Nisei floriculturist Tak Muto. Similar to the Arai Fish Pond, Merritt Park's principal feature was a hand-dug pond, surrounded by a meticulously curated rock garden and accentuated by other landscape design features. Even in its current state, I was awed by the beautiful juxtaposition between the well-manicured grass lawn and Sierra vista in the distance.

From there, I walked across Block 29 to reach the site of the orphanage, euphemistically named Children's Village. There, I had a sobering realization that while many families in residential blocks found solace in one another during the difficult war years, these children were alienated even from other incarcerated. For these children, their ordeals would continue long past the war years.

As a final stop I decided to again pay respects at the cemetery. I drove into the empty parking lot and, struck by the vastness of the space, suddenly remembered the guitar that I was carrying with me to the Tsuru for Solidarity leadership retreat in Bolinas the following weekend. Having seen the many offerings at the monument the previous day, I felt inspired to give my own. I played "Don't Fence Me In," followed by a couple of originals and a few other covers. Before long, I became completely immersed in my musical offering at the Manzanar cemetery. Everything else melted away until it was just me, the music and the Ireito. After about 30 minutes, I paid my final respects with a deep bow before hitting the road to Tahoe.

It was hard to believe that I experienced the most-visited WRA site in such a personal way. At a time when the government is attempting to deny us our history, it is more important than ever that we make our own relationships to the past, so we may continue sharing these cautionary tales in the future. Now having visited nine of the 10 WRA sites, this seemed like a fitting conclusion to my solo pilgrimage to Manzanar.

The 56th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage is scheduled for April 26.



The banners for the 10 WRA concentration camps are displayed inside the Manzanar Interpretive Center.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ROB BUSCHER

DTLA JACL, JWSSC ANNOUNCE 2025 WOMEN OF THE YEAR

LOS ANGELES — The Downtown Los Angeles JACL chapter and the Japanese Women's Society of Southern California have revealed this year's Women of the Year recipients.

The honorees were selected based on their service to the community, contributions to promoting Japanese culture, career professionalism and strength and courage in the face of adversity.

Set to be honored at the annual luncheon on May 4 at the Quiet Cannon Conference & Event Center in Montebello, Calif., are Kimiko Fujita, Elaine Keiko Inoue, Jean Kodama, Darlene Kinuko Kuba, Yuko N. Uyesugi and Heidi M. Yoshioka.

KIMIKO FUJITA

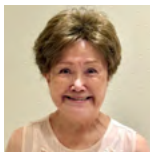
Kimiko Fujita has been a volunteer with the Orange County Japanese American Assn. since 1999, having served as a director, vice president and, since 2013, president of OCJAA. She also organized its Japan Culture Fair for 10 years. Since moving to the U.S. in 1988, she established NYLA USA Corp., a music education business, and is



currently promoting music education activities with 40 teachers and staff. She recently joined the board of directors of the Japanese Prefectural Association of Southern California.

ELAINE KEIKO INOUE

Elaine Keiko Inoue has been a volunteer for the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center's Hot Meals lunch program since 2009 and has been the program's supervisor since 2014. It has warmed her heart to cook for her extended ohana of over 150 people at the Center who appreciate and truly relish eating good, old-fashioned comfort food.



JEAN KODAMA

Jean Kodama has a long association with the Southeast Japanese School and Community Center (SEJSCC) in Norwalk. Kodama has been the head instructor of Norwalk Dojo since 2006, teaching both kendo and iaido (martial art of sword forms), and has won many trophies and medals at the local, national and international levels.



She was president of the Southern California Kendo Federation (SCKF), the largest regional kendo federation in the U.S., and has also held the offices of treasurer, second vp and executive secretary at various times since 1995. She is currently an adviser and historian of SCKF and is a past director of the All United States Kendo Federation.

DARLENE KINUKO KUBA

Darlene Kuba has served more than 50 years as a significant and contributing member of the Japanese American community. In 1976, as executive assistant to Los Angeles City Councilmember Gilbert Lindsay, she developed the City Council motion to create Little Tokyo Nutrition Services, which has provided critical nutrition and supportive services to seniors living in the Boyle Heights and Little Tokyo communities with Kuba as its chairperson since inception. Following Lindsay's passing, she founded Kuba and Associates, the first AAPI woman-owned government relations firm in Los Angeles, where she still serves as



its president. As an active supporter of the Japanese American National Museum, Kuba has become a key player in assisting with its fundraising and programs.

YUKO N. UYESUGI

Yuko N. Uyesugi has devoted many years of community service promoting chado. She joined the Los Angeles chapter of the Urasenke Tankokai more than 35 years ago and has served as its chief administrative officer from 2015 to 2018. In 2009, she founded the nonprofit Yusuian Foundation to share chado with the greater community and support charitable organizations that aid victims of natural disasters. With the help of her husband, George, she realized her dream of creating a tearoom named "Yusian" in Malibu overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Unfortunately, Yusuian itself was lost in January's Palisades Fire — but with her students' and friends' support, she plans on rebuilding and continuing the spirit of chado and community service to the next generation.



HEIDI M. YOSHIOKA

Heidi Yoshioka has long supported the community and its activities, including playing in, and then coaching, Japanese American basketball teams, serving as the president of the Southwestern Law School Alumni Association Board from 2012-14, as well as participating in the Japanese American Bar Assn., Los Angeles County Bar Assn. and the Asian Pacific American Bar Assn. She has aided and encouraged other women by being on the Steering Committee for RISE and is currently on the board of directors of Miranda's People, a canine cancer nonprofit that assists parents of canine children in affording cancer therapy.



Tickets are \$70 per adult and \$30 per child (ages 10 and under). Specify if vegetarian is requested. The deadline for reservations is April 18.

For more information, call Amy Tambara (English) at (323) 240-8385, or Rodney Nakada (English/Japanese/days) at (213) 628-1808.



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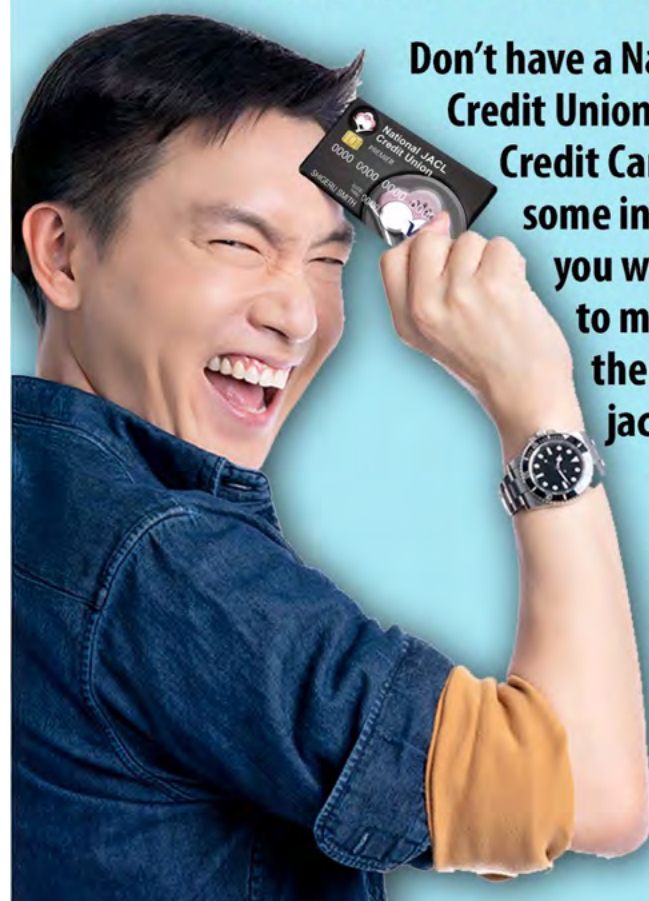


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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

2025 JACL National Convention
Albuquerque, NM
July 17-20
Price: Early bird registration now open

Save the date for this year's JACL National Convention in the beautiful city of Albuquerque! This year's event will feature plenaries, special events and the annual Sayonara Gala. Full details, including how to register, are available on the JACL website.
Info: Visit www.jacl.org.

NCWNP

CAAMFest 2025
San Francisco
May 8-11
San Francisco Area Theaters
Price: Ticket Prices Vary
This year's CAAMFest reflects on the histories that have shaped our present. As diversity and funding in education and the arts are being threatened, it is more vital than ever to share stories and learn from each others' experiences. This year's films will remind us of the enduring impact of place and memory.
Info: Visit <https://caamfest.com>.

PSW

Delicious Little Tokyo X Earth Day Celebration
Los Angeles, CA
April 19; Noon-4 p.m.
Japanese American National Museum Pavilion
100 N. Central Ave.
Price: Free
Enjoy an afternoon of community at this joint plaza celebration with Sustainable Little Tokyo! Enjoy free activities, arts and crafts, community booths and entertainment for the entire family.
Info: Visit www.littletokyola.org.

56th Manzanar Pilgrimage
Independence, CA
April 26; 11:30-2 p.m.
Manzanar National Historic Site
This year's annual pilgrimage will include the Manzanar at Dusk program as well as the Ireicho "Book of Names" national tour stop by appointment. This year's keynote speaker is Dr. Satsuki Ina.
Info: Email info@manzanarcommittee.org.

Okinawan Craft Fair
Gardena, CA
May 3; 9 a.m.-2 p.m.
Okinawa Association of America Center
16500 S. Western Ave.
Price: Free
This annual craft fair in the Center's parking lot will feature arts, crafts and gifts, including Okinawa-themed items from local creators. There will be plenty of great finds for people of all ages!
Info: Visit <https://www.oaamensore.org>.

'Utayabira, Wuduyabira: Let's Sing, Let's Dance'
Torrance, CA
May 18; 2 p.m.
James R. Armstrong Theatre
3330 Civic Center Dr. N
Price: Ticket Prices Vary
This is a rare opportunity outside of Okinawa to experience Ryukyuan performing arts in a theatrical setting.
Info: For tickets, visit tinyurl.com/utayabira25.

'Path to the Perfect Cup: Coffee Culture in Japan' Exhibit
Los Angeles, CA
Thru June 7
Japan Foundation
5700 Wilshire Blvd.
Price: Free
This exhibit, organized in collaboration with Kurasu, explores the effects that coffee has had on Japan and, simultaneously, the extraordinary contributions that Japan has made to the global coffee community.
Info: Visit <https://www.jflalc.org>.

CCDC

Art of the Word: 'Once Upon a Book — Featuring the Illustrations of Grace Lin'
Fresno, CA
Thru June 29
Fresno Art Museum
2233 N. First St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit features Grace Lin's original illustrations from "Once Upon a Book," co-written with Kate Messner. In the book, Alice is tired of winter and decides to escape by reading one of her favorite books. She steps inside the book and becomes a part of the story . . .
Info: Visit <http://www.fresnoartmuseum.org/exhibitions/current-exhibitions/>.

PNW

'Taken From Their Families: Japanese American Incarceration on Angel Island During World War II'
Portland, OR
Thru April 16
Japanese American Museum of Oregon
411 N.W. Flanders St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit, which features the stories of 24 individuals, explores the lesser-known history of Angel Island during WWII. The former immigration center was used to process prisoners of war and Nikkei community leaders living on the West Coast and Hawaii.
Info: Visit <https://jamo.org/angel-island/>.

Side by Side: Nihonmachi Scenes by Tokita, Nomura and Fujii
Seattle, WA
Thru May 11
Wing Luke Museum
George Tsutakawa Art Gallery
719 S. King St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit, curated by Barbara Johns, features the works of Kamekichi Tokita, Kenjiro Nomura and Takuichi Fujii, who received widespread recognition and praise for their paintings, which provide an intimage view of what nihonmachi's familiar streets, alleys, storefronts and houses looked like before WWII. The exhibit features their work from the 1930s during the height of their artistic recognition and is the largest exhibition featuring the three artists' works.
Info: Visit www.wingluke.org.

IDC

2025 Amache Pilgrimage
Granada, CO
May 16-18
105 E. Goff
Price: Events Are Free
This year's pilgrimage is the 50th anniversary of the first Amache Pilgrimage. The weekend's activities will include events hosted by Amache Alliance, the University of Denver Amache Project, National Parks Conservation Assn., Colorado Preservation and the Sand Creek Massacre Foundation. There will also be opportunities, by appointment, to stamp the Ireicho Book of Names.
Info: Visit <https://amache.org/pilgrimage/>.

The 48th Utah Asian Festival
Salt Lake City, UT
June 7; 11 a.m.-8 p.m.
Grand Building of the Utah State Fairpark
155 N. 1000 W
This festival connects new Americans, immigrants and refugees to the more historic ethnic groups in the community and is a chance for all to meet various community leaders and establish new friendships in order to support Utah Asian communities. Come and experience cultural performances, children's activities and more.
Info: Visit <https://utahasianfestival.org>.

'Uncovering the Journey: Japanese American Pioneers in Box Elder County'
Brigham City, UT
Thru June 21
24 N. 300 West
Price: Check Museum for Admission Pricing
Explore the rich history of Box Elder County's Japanese American community. Discover the untold stories of early agricultural settlers, local war heroes and pioneering civic leaders. This exhibit highlights the lasting impact of Japanese Americans on Box Elder County's culture and history.
Info: Visit <https://brighamcitymuseum.org/uncovering-the-journey-japanese-american-pioneers-in-box-elder-county>.

MDC

'Toshiko Takaazu: Worlds Within'
Houston, TX
Thru May 18
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
1001 Bissonnet St.
This exhibit celebrates Toshiko Takaazu's celebrated glazed "closed-form" ceramic sculptures. The artist radically reimagined the vessal form as a site for limitless experimentation, harnessing the potential of both abstract painting and sculpture.
Info: Visit <https://www.mfah.org/exhibitions/toshiko-takaazu-worlds-within>.

Jerome/Rohwer Pilgrimage
Little Rock, AR
May 21-24
Price: Registration Fee \$350; Deadline is April 21
The Jerome/Rohwer Pilgrimage allows survivors, descendants and interested parties to learn about the continuing legacy and aftermath of America's concentration camps. The program includes an event in McGehee, AR, that includes an Obon festival to honor the spirits of our ancestors.
Info: Visit <https://jeromerohwer.org/index.php/pilgrimage/registration>.

EDC

Boston Red Sox vs. Minnesota Twins AAPI Heritage Night
Boston, MA
May 2; 7:10 p.m.
Fenway Park
4 Jersey St.
Price: Special Event Ticket Price
Ticket holders who purchase a special event ticket will receive a Red Sox AAPI Celebration jersey honoring the Year of the Snake. Arrive early to participate in pregame festivities and cultural performances.
Info: Visit <https://www.mlb.com/red-sox/tickets/promotions/cultural-and-identity-celebrations/aapi>.

2025 Boston AAPI 5K
Boston, MA
May 17; 8:30 a.m.
Metropolitan District Commission Pavilion
Celebrate AAPI Heritage Month and raise funds for local nonprofit organizations including Asian task Force Against Domestic Violence, Asian Women for Health and much more.
Info: Visit www.movement.cc/events/2025_boston_aapi_5k.

'Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Mine Okubo'
Washington, D.C.
Thru Aug. 17
Smithsonian American Art Museum
8th and G Streets N.W.
This exhibit presents an in-depth look at the careers of three trailblazing American women of Japanese descent and asserts their rightful place in American art.
Info: Visit <https://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/pictures-of-belonging>.

Arts of Japan
Boston, MA
Ongoing
Museum of Fine Arts
465 Huntington Ave.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit is dedicated to Japanese prints, specifically 19th-century *ukiyo-e* prints and contemporary pieces.
Info: Visit <https://www.mfa.org/gallery/arts-of-japan>. ■

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In MEMORIAM

(Editor's Note: Boldfaced names in blue in the PDF version of this page are active hyperlinks to published obituaries for the decedent.)

Adachi, Shunji, 91, Honolulu, HI, Nov. 9, 2024.



Arita, John Tadashi, 69, Manteca, CA, Jan. 14.

Buffington, Yumiko, 71, Portales, NM, Feb. 15.



Furuichi, Satoko, 86, San Francisco, CA, Feb. 9.

Hamakawa, Tsurue, 95, Sacramento, CA, March 19.



Hatano, Masayuki, 97, Sacramento, CA.

Higashi, Nancy Nobuko, 88, Los Angeles, CA, Nov. 2, 2024.

Ikeda, Kiyoko, 103, Sacramento, CA, Dec. 30, 2024.

Ito, Warren, 57, Lodi, CA, Nov. 18, 2024.



Masada, Gregg, 58, Monterey Park, CA, Feb. 19.



Masuda, Merlyn K., 90, Las Vegas, NV, Jan. 22.



Kagawa, Jason Allen, 49, Fresno, CA, Oct. 2, 2024.

Kasahara, Shizuko Rose, 105, Milwaukie, OR, Nov. 5, 2024.



Kashiwagi, Dean Takeo, 72, Mesa, AZ, April 1.



Kawabata, Kenneth Kengo, 70, Colma, CA, Oct. 31, 2024.

Kawamoto, Galen Hideo, 77, Portland, OR, August 6, 2024.

Kuroda, Shizuna Janet, 88, Roseville, CA, Feb. 2.



Matsumoto, Nancy Eleanor, 52, Yuma, AZ, March 6.



Miller, Kyoko, 94, Seattle, WA, Feb. 9.

Mitani, Nellie Narie, 105, South Pasadena, CA, Jan. 11.

Nishitsuji, Gary, 72, Rosemead, CA, Dec. 31, 2024.

Okada, Emiko, 87, Renton WA, May 20, 2024.

Otani, Yaeko, 93, Fountain Valley, CA, Feb. 26.

Suyenaga, Umeko M., 90, Roseville, CA, Feb. 10.

Vanderhaeghen, Kimiko, 96, Santa Maria, CA, March 20.

Mineta Pal Sen. Alan Simpson, 93, Dies



Former Wyoming Sen. Alan Simpson and former Rep. Norm Mineta

PHOTO: RAY LOCKER

CHEYENNE, WYO. (AP) — Former U.S. Sen. Alan Simpson, a political legend whose quick wit bridged partisan gaps in the years before today's political acrimony, has died. He was 93.

Simpson died March 14 after struggling to recover from a broken hip in December, according to a statement from his family and the Buffalo Bill Center of the West, a group of museums where he was a board member for 56 years.

"My family will remember him best not for his many accomplishments, but for his loyal friendship — and sharp sense of humor," said former President George W. Bush said in a statement.

A political moderate by current

standards, Simpson's three terms as senator from 1979-97 covered the Republican Party's rejuvenation under President Ronald Reagan. Simpson played a key role rallying GOP senators around the party's legislative agenda as a top Senate leader during that time.

His Democratic friends included Robert Reich, labor secretary under President Bill Clinton, and Norman Mineta, transportation secretary under President George W. Bush.

Simpson and Mineta met as Boy Scouts when Mineta and his family were imprisoned as Japanese Americans in the Heart Mountain War Relocation Authority Center near Simpson's hometown of Cody, Wyo., during World War II.

After leaving politics, both promoted awareness of the incarceration of some 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry in camps during the war.

By 1995, he'd had enough of the Senate and decided not to run again.

After leaving the Senate, Simpson taught about politics and the media at Harvard University and the University of Wyoming. In speeches he often urged college students to be politically involved.

In 2022, President Joe Biden awarded Simpson the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Simpson is survived by his wife, Ann; his brother, Pete Simpson; sons, Colin Simpson and William Simpson; and daughter, Susan Simpson Gallagher.

Former La. Sen. J. Bennett Johnston Dies

By P.C. Staff

J. Bennett Johnston, who served Louisiana as a senator for 24 years, died March 25 at a McLean, Va.-hospital. He was 92. According to family members, the cause of death was attributed to complications from Covid-19.

Known as a conservative Democrat who was able to work across party lines and as "the man to see" with regard to energy policy — he was a champion of the United States' Strategic Petroleum Reserve — he was also among 69 senators who July 27, 1988, voted "yes" on a reconciled version of HR 442.

Also known as the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, the bill, which was later approved by the House of Representatives on Aug. 4, 1988, then

went to the White House. President Reagan signed it Aug. 10, 1988. Its enactment led to an apology and monetary compensation to still-living Japanese Americans who were forcibly removed from the West Coast and subsequently incarcerated in government-operated facilities.

At the time, Johnston served on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee; he also served as a senior member of the Appropriations Committee and the Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development.

In 1990, Johnston received the endorsement of Republican senators during his closest re-election bid when former Ku Klux Klan member David Duke ran for the same seat. Johnston declined to run again in 1996.

News Briefs

Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi to Run for Superintendent of Public Instruction

The four-term Democrat who represented Los Angeles County's South Bay and now faces term limits, has announced his 2026 bid to become the state's next superintendent of public instruction. ¶ The Justice Department accused Army 1st Lt. Li Tian of conspiring with former soldier Ruoyu Duan of sharing classified military information with China. Also indicted was Army Sgt. Jian Zhao for selling government hard drives, including ones marked "Top Secret," to Chinese buyers.

— P.C. Staff

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Gerald Fukui President

Dr. Satsuki Ina to Keynote Manzanar Pilgrimage

The renowned activist and psychotherapist will speak at the 56th annual event on April 26.

LOS ANGELES — The Manzanar Committee is proud to announce that Dr. Satsuki Ina will be the keynote speaker at the 56th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage on April 26.

A nationally recognized psychotherapist, filmmaker and co-founder of Tsuru for Solidarity, Ina will share her insights on the lasting impacts of the incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry during World War II and how it relates to the political landscape today.

Ina has dedicated her career to addressing

the psychological effects of racial injustice, displacement and oppression.

As a therapist, she has worked extensively with survivors of political persecution and other forms of historical trauma.

As an activist with Tsuru for Solidarity, a project by Japanese American social justice advocates and allies working to end detention sites and support immigrant and refugee communities, she has been a tenacious advocate for social justice.

In addition, during the first Trump administration, she was a prominent figure in denouncing the injustice and cruelty of how children in immigrant detention camps were separated from their families.

Ina and Tsuru for Solidarity understand the parallels between trauma Japanese Americans experienced during World War II and the trauma asylum seekers have experienced when incarcerated in U.S. detention centers.

Ina recounted her childhood experience at Tule Lake and Crystal City when she met with asylum seekers in an article written for the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) in 2015: “My visit with mothers and children at the euphemistically named Karnes County ‘Residential Center’ a few weeks ago triggered distressing associations of my own experience as a child. We, too, lived in a constant state of fear and anxiety, never knowing what our fate would be. . . .

“As a licensed family therapist,” Ina continued, “I was appalled at the severity of



Dr. Satsuki Ina

the trauma that the women and children had experienced prior to their arrival in the U.S. And even more disturbing was the evident criminalization of their efforts to escape violence and seek safety and protection for their children. To be imprisoned with their children — infants and toddlers, school age and teens — is not only unjust, it cruelly plunges them back into their past powerlessness and terror.”

Said Manzanar co-chair Bruce Embrey, “We are honored to have Satsuki Ina as our keynote speaker this year. Dr. Ina’s understanding of the parallels between the trauma Japanese Americans experienced during WWII and the treatment immigrants and refugees experienced during the first

Trump administration and continue to face today makes her uniquely qualified to speak at this year’s pilgrimage.”

This year’s Manzanar Pilgrimage will also include the Irei Project’s the Ireichō: Book of Names that memorializes the more than 125,000 Nikkei incarcerated in the American concentration camps during WWII.

This interactive exhibit is traveling to all 10 former WRA concentration camps and other incarceration sites, in conjunction with pilgrimages in 2025 and 2026.

The tour is a collaboration of the Irei Project, founded by Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams, and the Japanese American National Museum as part of JANM on the Go, a series of programs and exhibits presented during the renovation of the Museum’s Pavilion.

Reservations to stamp a name in memory of those incarcerated during WWII in American concentration camps in the Ireichō Book of Names will be available by appointment only. To request your appointment, visit <https://bit.ly/ireicho>.

If you are interested in taking a bus up to the pilgrimage, please submit your name to be put on a waiting list, since all spaces have already been reserved. To fill out the form to be placed on a waiting list, visit bit.ly/56manzanarbus.

For more information about the Manzanar Pilgrimage, please visit manzanarcommittee.org.



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