The 2017 National JACL Scholarship Winners

As you read their responses on the following pages, I hope you are as inspired and proud of these aspiring community leaders as I am. Their vision for the future is critical to JACL’s long-term viability.

To level the playing field, the JACL has to find a balance in serving student scholars. With so many well-qualified students, the JACL do differently? If not, what should the JACL do differently?

Do you feel the JACL represents the differing views of serving student scholars. With so many well-qualified students, the JACL do differently? If not, what should the JACL do differently?

Respectfully,
Matthew Ferrelles,
JACL National VP Planning & Development

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The committees for 2017 come from the Northern California-Pacific (NCNW) District Council and the Central California District Council (CCDC), respectively. Those dedicated NCNW members serving on the selection committee reviewing the freshman applications include Sharon Uyeda (chair), Darlene Bagshaw and Nick Hori. Those members from CCDC who served on the undergraduate, graduate, law, arts and student aid selection committee are Roberta Barton (chair), Larry Ishimoto, Ralph Kumano and Kacie Robbins. Lastly, I’d be remiss not to recognize and express the organization’s appreciation to David and Carol Kawamoto for their on-going leadership and support of the scholarship program.

Their stepping in to manage this year’s program and their dedication and involvement have been instrumental in the evolution and success of the scholarship program over the years. Their unwavering participation reflects a true commitment to the JACL and our youth. On behalf of the entire National JACL, we thank this committed team of individuals for a job well done. We are very appreciative of the diligent work and great care that goes into reviewing all of the scholarship applications and the ongoing JACL tradition of acknowledging our young leaders and scholars with financial support in their pursuit of higher education.

I am thrilled that the JACL Scholarship Program continues to be so successful. We will soon begin the 2018 application process to recognize the next group of outstanding student leaders. As we wrap up the 2017 scholarship season, please join me in congratulating all of our award recipients.

Respectfully,
Matthew Ferrelles,
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By Matthew Otnesth

Laast month, I was in New York City to celebrate reaching another decade with four of my friends. Three of these friends I have known since high school, and we were roommates at one time or another in college. So, we have known each other for a long time. Aiden calls them his “aunties” because they have loved him through his transition and love him the same today.

We decided on New York because it got the most votes from all of us, and there is so much to do there. For me, it was a chance to spend time with my college friends, and they gave me the flexibility to do some advocacy work with groups in NYC, which I was so grateful for. As I returned home, I realized I learned a lot because I was open to new experiences. Here are my reflections...

At the Statue of Liberty, I reflected on how my grandparents came to this country to find a better life for their family. They taught us to be kind, work hard, and live a life of honesty and responsibility. As I looked up at Lady Liberty and saw her torch lighting the way, the shackles laying at her feet and holding a tablet with July 4 inscribed on it, I felt truly was a beacon of hope to all of those who come to our country for a better life. It certainly was for our family. I also thought how sad she must be at what our country is going through presently. Yet, liberty to me means having the ability to choose. And in times of adversity, there are so many who choose greater humanity. I saw in New York, Texas after Hurricane Harvey and Florida with Irma. And so, I look to the future with hope.

I thought that New York was too busy to care about others, and yet I found this city to have people filled with compassion and kindness. On the bustling streets of New York, there were people who took the time to help us find our way. One man carried my suitcase down the steps to the subway platform as he saw me struggle with my luggage. One lady, walking her dog, overheard us talking about our destination and turned us around so we weren’t walking the wrong way. Finally, another person realized that we were going to JFK airport but that we were on the wrong subway (yikes) so he reached out to help us get on the correct line. There was kindness wherever we turned.

At Central Park, we walked through Strawberry Fields and took a moment to stop and see the mosaic created with only one word: Imagine. I wonder what people thought when they saw those words: What did they imagine? For me, I took a moment to imagine peace, harmony and love. And I imagined a country led by wisdom, equality and hopeful leaders.

We decided on New York because it got the most votes from sharing her gifts with the world, how she listened to her heart and found greater success as a young, single mother living in a new place. I knew she was afraid, but she did not let fear stop her. I hope I can continue to listen to my heart, ask for support when I need it and trust those around me when moving into new and perhaps intimidating places in my life.

On the bustling streets of New York, we learned about how Carole King did not let adversity stop her from sharing her gifts with the world, how she listened to her heart and found greater success as a young, single mother living in a new place. I knew she was afraid, but she did not let fear stop her. I hope I can continue to listen to my heart, ask for support when I need it and trust those around me when moving into new and perhaps intimidating places in my life.

Finally, I am not a public transit person, I would rather take a taxi or Lyft my way around a city. My family calls me a bit high maintenance (who me?), but they indulge me. My girlfriend and I just visited a city where the subway is part of the NYC experience and was considerably cheaper to utilize. Initially, I thought I was in for a long week, but once I saw it as an adventure, it became more fun. We laughed together when we scrambled onto the wrong subway, realized we were going the wrong way and had to jump off before the doors closed on us. The longer rides gave me an opportunity to catch up with my friends, and there are precious moments I might never have had. In the end, I learned that attitude is everything.

I believe that no matter where we are, who we are or how old we are, we can learn things that make us better human beings. And in that environment, mocking the cretins who, unlike us, were not attuned to the world and the reverberations of their words within it, became far easier. And somewhere along the way, we mistook that contempt for action. We have not moved since.

But now, as a journalist, I see how vacuous that world is. A world of liberal flamethrowers who criticizes other liberals for their insufficiently liberal qualifications. A world in which men writing books construed as tinged with patriarchy is worse than no books being written at all. Do we move forward?

We journalists would have nothing to write about: nothing to show and nothing worth talking.

Mathew Otnesth is a graduate of Cornell University. He is a Yonsei, a hapa, a Millennial and a journalist.
FDR Presidential Library and Museum Set to Unveil Special Exhibit

A special reception of ‘Close-ups of Time Forgotten: The WSU Hirahara Photos Created in a Secret World War II Underground Darkroom’ featuring Patti Hirahara will be held on Oct. 12.

HYDE PARK, N.Y. — The Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum is pleased to present "Close-ups of Time Forgotten: The WSU Hirahara Photos Created in a Secret World War II Underground Darkroom," photographs taken in Heart Mountain during World War II by George and Frank Hirahara.

Attendees are invited to the viewing of Roosevelt’s Library’s new special exhibit “Images of Internment: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II” following the program.

Trevor James Bond, co-director of the Center for Digital Scholarship and Curatorial Associate, said, "The exhibit features photographs taken by George and Frank Hirahara during World War II. The Hirahara family, while in Heart Mountain, ordered their camera equipment and supplies from the Montgomery Ward and Sears Roebuck catalog order catalogs.

In 2010, Patti Hirahara donated her grandfather’s and father’s Heart Mountain photographs to Washington State University. Frank Hirahara’s alma mater. A National Park Service grant a year later funded the collection’s digitization and preservation, giving the public access to the documented experiences of actor George Takei.

Since then, the collection’s images have been part of groundbreaking projects delving into the history of the Japanese American incarceration during WWII. These have included the Emmy Award-winning documentary "Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain," produced by ABC7 Los Angeles Eyewitness News anchor David Ono and Emmy Award-winning TV editor and videograher Jeff Macintyre, and "Allegiance," a Broadway musical inspired by the personal experiences of actor George Takei. A special reception of ‘Close-ups of Time Forgotten: The WSU Hirahara Photos Created in a Secret World War II Underground Darkroom’ featuring Patti Hirahara will be held on Oct. 12.

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JACL SUBMITS AMICUS BRIEF TO SCOTUS IN OPPOSITION TO MUSLIM TRAVEL BAN

More than 70 years ago, the Japanese American Citizens League was compelled to submit amicus curiae briefs in the Hirabayashi, Yasui, and Korematsu cases to defend Japanese Americans convicted of violating orders that led to the imprisonment of almost 120,000 innocent people. The organization once again submitted a brief on Sept. 19 in support of the respondents’ plaintiffs’ request in the case of Trump v. International Refugee Assistance Program and Trump v. the State of Hawaii, more commonly known as the Travel Ban. The brief is available for download on the JACL website (www.jacl.org).

JACL joins the Hirabayashi, Yasui and Korematsu families in drawing attention to the historical parallels between the Trump travel ban and what was done to the Japanese American community during World War II. This serves as an opportunity for the court to learn from its past error in judgment to ensure the preservation of the civil rights of a minority group in the face of infringement from the executive branch.

In the JACL’s original amicus brief in the Hirabayashi case, it noted that it was speaking “for all the minority racial groups in this country who may be the next victims of similar discrimination resulting from war or other prejudices and hysterias, and for the preservation of civil rights for all.” JACL National President Gary Mayeda notes that “those next victims are today’s Muslim community, and today, we share our story so that it does not become their story.”

In the wake of Sept. 11, this country made a clear determination that it would not fall into the same trap of scapegoating the Muslim community. President George W. Bush noted that the country could not do to today’s Muslims what was done to Bush’s Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta during World War II.

Sadly, our government’s actions shows it had forgotten the example of Sec Mineta as one among more than 120,000 Japanese Americans wrongfully imprisoned. JACL was represented in preparation of the brief by a team led by former Solicitor General and Duke Law professor Walter Dellinger.

“The resonance between the two cases should caution the Court to apply careful and meaningful scrutiny to whether there is...
Recipient of the Mr. and Mrs. JACL represents and supports in Oakland as the Jr. YBA vp, was a volunteer while balancing a wide variety of activities. One column, "A Yonsei newspaper and she volunteered in this country today and that JACL is doing an excellent job of educating its members about current affairs and how they relate to all Japanese Americans.

In my opinion, the JACL brings together the Japanese American of all ages by bringing awareness to the common thread that holds us all together: our immigrant past and the struggles that our grandparents and great-grandparents faced during World War II. The JACL seeks to engage its youngest members with articles written by people of our own generation and succeeds tremendously. It seeks justice for minority groups that are threatened in similar ways to Japanese Americans.

Once a member of the JACL, I began to have opportunities to satisfy my Japanese culture curiosity. Just by helping to prepare and set up for the many pancake breakfasts and teriyaki barbecues, I began to learn about Japanese culture and history by listening to the older members tell stories and reminiscing. During high school, I became more and more interested in politics and civil rights. There, too, the JACL offered opportunities to explore these interests. As a member of the JACL Sonoma County Board of Directors, I have been able to be a part of our history, adding value to those around me. The JACL's resilient efforts and role in society continue to impact generations of Japanese Americans and represents a vital component of my identity and values that define who I am and aspire to become.

"I am Vietnamese, Japanese, French and American all at once, embracing my mixed heritage through a variety of means, from celebrating New Year's Eve in February to participating in annual mochitsuki's in December. As a result, growing up was able to experience a fusion of cultures that showed me the importance of diversity in providing multiple perspectives and creating a more dynamic environment. In light of recent events, many individuals have wrongly manifested their fear of terrorist groups through racist actions, including religious profiling, violent hate crimes and verbal harassment, yet the JACL has shown undeniable support toward Muslim and Arab communities, recognizing the importance of preserving fundamental constitutional rights and the true value of diversity.

"The JACL's actions not only reflect my cultural heritage and belief in the importance of diversity, but they also represent my background and position on immigration. Immigrants shouldn't be treated as outsiders or viewed as a threat but should be recognized as an essential part of our history, adding value to our communities by providing skills, introducing us to different cultures and reminding us of the importance of tolerance. The JACL has expressed similar sentiments in their protests against recent immigration bans and through their voice, they are not only representing my beliefs and my family's backgrounds, but also the voices of thousands of others who have ever felt victimized because of their race or culture.
Amelia Claire Huster
JACL Chapter: Berkeley
Recipient of the Mr. & Mrs. Takashi Moriuchi Scholarship
The University of California, Santa Cruz
Notables
Community activism is the cornerstone of Amelia Huster’s volunteerism. Many youth are content to observe local activities, but Huster embraces and possesses the self-motivation to tackle any challenge. From volunteering at Food Banks to educating children at the Berkeley Fire Department, traversing San Francisco to Placer, teaching kids how to cook and writing articles for the Pacific Citizen, Huster has evolved into an influential youth advocate. Her love of the JACL principles guided her to the National Convention in Washington, D.C. in July. Inspired by the convention platforms and activities, Huster aspires to continue her role within the JACL and to encourage others to continue her commitment to the ideals of the JACL at by attending next year’s convention in Philadelphia.

Personal Statement
“Choosing to be a member of the Berkeley JACL is one of the most influential decisions of my life. I feel that the JACL represents my culture and heritage, and being a member of the JACL has made me feel close to this culture. Attending events that I wouldn’t have heard about without the JACL like the Day of Remembrance, an event to remember the internment and honor those who went through it, has allowed me to learn more about my family’s past.

While the JACL has connected me with my Japanese roots, it has also allowed me to become more involved in civil rights. Through the JACL, I have been able to write numerous articles on current events such as the 2017 election. I have been able to attend community meetings that focused on how different marginalized groups can support each other and I was given the chance to write and deliver a post election speech in Japanese.

I have learned that anyone can take ignorance and turn it into understanding through education. I will never be able to put into words how fortunate I feel to be a part of an organization that represents not only my family, culture and heritage but also that I feel proud to say I am a member of because I know that they will be on the right side of history, advocating for the civil rights of all people. The mix of Japanese cultural expression and civil engagement is why I feel the JACL represents me and who I am.”

Megan Kawakami
JACL Chapter: Clovis
Recipient of the Paul & Katherine Kawakami Memorial Scholarship
The University of California, Berkeley
Notables
Listing an impressive collection of math competition placements, National Honor Society and CSF leadership positions, one can easily see why Megan Kawakami aspires to become an electrical engineer. Following in her father’s footsteps, she chose electrical engineering as her major, in addition to computer science. Kawakami reflected on how both areas of studies are very intriguing with a broad range of applications that all benefit society. An accomplished pianist, she accompanies the Chinese Choir, Fresno Buddhist Temple choir and has participated in the California Music Educators’ Association Solo and Ensemble Performance, and other community involvement in the Clovis JACL, Clovis Japanese Cultural School, scouting, Fresno YBA and the Central California YBA exhibit her desire to be connected to her cultural roots. And Kawakami’s involvement with her local DOR group, Kappa Chapter, has heighten her desire to expand her knowledge of her Japanese American heritage.

Personal Statement
“As a Japanese American citizen, I am very proud of my culture. I believe that diversity is the heart of America and the key to success. I have been able to facilitate a leadership camp for 250 campers of different ethnic or financial backgrounds, different co-curricular involvement and different schools; this experience helped me to understand the importance of working with people from different backgrounds to obtain a variety of perspectives and build stronger relationships. I believe the JACL represents me to help in my pursuit to uphold my culture and sustain diversity.

JACL both supports and motivates me in my efforts to preserve Japanese culture. At my high school, I led the (Japanese) Club to volunteer at the Japanese Shizen Gardens, travel to the S.F. Japantown and attend our local Obon festival and food booth. At our monthly meetings, I helped teach the club about Japanese language and practices. The efforts of JACL were an influence on my actions.

“I participated in a History Day competition, and entered a project publicizing the injustice of the Internment camps during World War II. While volunteering at the Day of Remembrance events and 90666 exhibitions, I have seen how JACL works to promote equality and social justice, mirroring my views and concerns.

“I think that JACL has represented not only myself but also every member in our membership to uphold our rights and speak out for justice.”

Derek Morimoto
JACL Chapter: South Bay
Recipient of the Deni & June Uchima Memorial Scholarship
The University of California, Berkeley
Notables
Derek Morimoto's impressive list of academic awards that include the National Honor Society, AP Scholars with Honors and West High School CSF Tutoring Coordinator depicts his solid academic base to successfully navigate the UC Berkeley Electrical Engineering program. Morimoto marveled his West High School counselor Yoko Druzin by making the curriculum look easy while also performing with the Advanced Band Wind Ensemble and competing on the tennis team throughout high school. Perhaps more representative of Morimoto as a young man is characterized through his community service and Eagle Scout achievements. He earned his Eagle Scout award in the troop his Ojii-chan founded after the war. Many of Morimoto's activities unearthed local family history, fostering a desire to continue his family's legacy for future generations to understand and appreciate. His award-winning essay for the Go for Broke Essay contest is a testament to his mission in working to preserve all that his grandparents endured and rebuilt for his generation to explore and enjoy.

Personal Statement
“Forebodingly removed from his home along with 120,000 other Japanese American citizens, stripped of his rights and forced to live behind barbed wire during World War II, Ojii-chan endured much fear and intolerance. He later returned to Los Angeles, where he helped to re-establish Little Tokyo and rebuild their community. Ojii-chan believed in creating a community to foster a culture that endures for generations. Similar to Ojii-chan, I feel that the JACL represents our Asian Pacific American community to maintain our civil liberties and promote cultural diversity and equality for all people.

“Twenty-five years after President Ronald Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, I participated in a flag ceremony at the National Reconnaissance Library with my Boy Scout Troop. I realized that his national apology and recognition of injustice would not have been possible without the JACL.

“I also served as a liaison to West High School’s CSF and Interact Club, helping to organize volunteers for the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute events. As a board member for both school clubs, I [had] the opportunity to expose our members, representing a diverse group of cultures, to our Japanese American culture. I carry on the JACL’s mission to inform and pass on Japanese American culture and history. By sharing our cultures with others, we can bridge the diversity gap.”

Christopher Okamoto
JACL Chapter: Mount Olympus
Recipient of the Henry and Chiyoko Kawahara Memorial Scholarship
Colorado School of Mines
Notables
A distinguished athlete, Christopher Okamoto played varsity basketball all four years of high school while also competing in DECA Business and Marketing competitions and staying involved with his local church. As the president of his Youth Buddhist Association, he leads his peers in various volunteer activities and enjoys exploring the relevance of Buddhism in everyday life.

Personal Statement
“Although I believe that the JACL represents me to a good extent, I believe that there is still room for improvement, particularly in regards to the youth members. As a high school student, I don’t feel as represented as the other factions in the JACL such as the Nisei or Sansei. Currently, there are very few national programs like the JACL Youth Legacy Program that are inclusive of civil engagement. In order to provide the primary opportunities where high school members can participate are with their local chapters, the youth leadership summits and the National JACL conventions. Although these are all valuable opportunities, I believe the JACL can better represent high school students by allowing high school members to participate in these national youth programs. High school students are perfectly capable and mature enough to engage in these programs. Furthermore, these programs will provide high school students with meaningful opportunities to engage with the world they live in and prepare them to be knowledgeable and active U.S. citizens in the future.

“The JACL is very effective in promoting a more just and equal society for all. The JACL not only active and involved in its end goals but it keeps its members informed and engaged in pursuit of the same goal. Nonetheless, I believe they can represent youth members, particularly high school students, by providing more programs for them to participate in. It will better prepare them for the world ahead and increase their awareness of the importance of civil rights. The JACL is a valuable organization, and its success is instrumental in promoting a better society for today and the future.”

Michelle Oshita
JACL Chapter: Stockton
Recipient of the Hanayagi Kusukami Memorial Cultural Scholarship

Personal Statement

“While the JACL has connected me with my Japanese roots, it has also allowed me to become more involved in civil rights. Through the JACL, I have been able to write numerous articles on current events such as the 2017 election. I have been able to attend community meetings that focused on how different marginalized groups can support each other and I was given the chance to write and deliver a post election speech in Japanese.

I have learned that anyone can take ignorance and turn it into understanding through education. I will never be able to put into words how fortunate I feel to be a part of an organization that represents not only my family, culture and heritage but also that I feel proud to say I am a member of because I know that they will be on the right side of history, advocating for the civil rights of all people. The mix of Japanese cultural expression and civil engagement is why I feel the JACL represents me and who I am.”
University of the Pacific

Notables

Michelle Oshita was captain of the Science Olympiad in her senior year at Tokay High School and was a 12-time regional medalist and a five-time state medalist. Oshita also played JV varsity badminton and varsity golf. Since she was very young, Oshita attended yearly JACL picnics and volunteered at many JACL events. She is active with the Stockton Buddhist Temple Young Buddhist Assn. and has served in many other capacities. Oshita excels in nihon hosa (Japanese Classical dance) and has been dancing since 2009.

Personal Statement

"As two high school student sections cheer in an intense league basketball game, one of Tokay High School's elite senior basketball players steps up to the free throw line after he acquired two free throws from a foul. As he makes his shot, the positive support from the home team is soon drowned out by chants of 'USA, USA,' from the opposing team. Many of Tokay High's students, myself included, grew silent and stunned from these racial taunts toward one of our own Pakistani students. This muteness, however, soon grew into shouts of fury against this discrimination. Our newspaper story and appeal for solicitation was soon heard throughout the city of Lodi and Tri City Athletic League, which consists of high school teams throughout the greater Stockton region of Northern California. Many students turned to Twitter to inform others about the abuse they witnessed, but Pakistani students made it well known that this was nothing new. This seemingly minuscule event on a worldly scale reflects the discriminatory attitudes toward Syrian refugees in national politics today.

President Donald Trump divided the country even further with his controversial travel ban. "Americans seem to be reversing any social equality improvement in the country, which President Barack Obama and other preceding presidents worked tirelessly for. If this issue is not addressed, we do not welcome Syrian refugees with open arms, our future may be destined to parallel the times of World War II and Japanese internment camps. The JACL's commitment to accuracy upon hate crimes across the country embodies my own belief and desire for social equality for Japanese Americans and all minority groups in America today. I completely support the JACL's call for a Syrian refugee resettlement program and know that respect for diversity can pave together our disjointed nation."
for other Americans and be a model for American history, I feel that it is my responsibility to speak up for the rights of Japanese Americans. However, in today’s political environment where many other people’s rights are being infringed upon right before our eyes, and after learning about the struggle that Japanese Americans have faced in America, I feel that it is my responsibility to speak up for other Americans and be a supporting voice.

“In January, I had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C., to participate in the Women’s March and bring to the new administration the issues that I care about, such as women’s, LGBTQ, minority and immigrants’ rights. The JACL has a long history of doing just that — supporting other groups fighting for civil rights — and that is something I admire and wish to continue in the future. “On a smaller scale, the JACL represents an organization that will help preserve Japanese American culture in the U.S. As a Takalani Zó youth ambassador, I researched my family history and learned to appreciate and value my Japanese American heritage. In order to build a stronger sense of community, we researched and presented a tour of Japan that included personal stories and historic sites. I feel an increasing responsibility to protect Japanese American culture in the U.S., especially in San Francisco’s Japantown.”

Kiana Tsudama
JACL Chapter: Fresno
Shigei ‘Shake’ Ushio Memorial Scholarship
The University of California, Los Angeles
Notables

Kiana Tsudama was on her high school cheer team and competition cheer team for all four years. In her senior year, she was class president. Tsudama has been very active in the Central California Junior Young Buddhist Association and held many leadership positions. Since 2015, Kiana has been on the Fresno Shizen Japanese Friendship Garden Tea House Restoration Team. Her JACL involvement has been as a volunteer at the Shizen Run and a 5066 luncheon.

Personal Statement
The continuous efforts of the JACL to protect Japanese Americans’ interests and rights as well as those of other minorities have not been lost on me. There are immense amounts of negativity and tension between a myriad of people in America following the 2016 election. It was difficult to listen to the cheers of triumph from numerous people in front of our school and even from some of my close friends in the Japanese American community.

“The statement the JACL released preceding the election results accurately reflects how I felt about the outcome; many of the JACL statements align with my perspective on many issues that arise in our society. Those statements provide a sense of comfort knowing not only one person, but a group of people, share my views and are actively working to protect them. There is not much we can do to change the fact that [Donald Trump] is president. Therefore, it is imperative we unite and ‘combat the forces of racism that have been emboldened by the campaign’ (Bill Yoshino, ‘JACL Statement on the Election of President-Elect Trump’).

“Asian Americans have been repeatedly made fun of with horrible stereotypes. I have even experienced being the punch line of jokes and have been made fun of with stereotypes. The things I have heard include, “Do you eat dog?” and “Oh, you’re just becoming a doctor because your parents want you to, right?”

“Normally, I would ignore the racist comments, but when I read the October/November JACL Digest, I saw how the Philadelphia JACL chapter combated the yellowface portrayal of Asians in Puccini’s ‘Turandot.’ Seeing this encouraged me to properly address the ignorance I have experienced in the past and will experience in the future. It made me realize nothing will change unless someone takes action and stands up to the rising tide of discriminatory rhetoric no matter where it originates.”

Andrew Yamashita
JACL Chapter: Contra Costa
Recipient of the Patricia & Guil Ishimoto Memorial Scholarship
University of Washington, Seattle Notables
Andrew Yamashita played the trumpet in the wind ensemble and jazz bands for four years at El Cerrito High School. He also spent 18 days in Nicaragua as a participant in Global Glimpse, Yamashita earned the rank of Eagle Scout in 2016 and participated in the World Jamboree in Yamaguchi-ken, Japan. For seven summers, he attended Daruma Gakko, which is partially funded by JACL. Since 2015, Yamashita has been a Youth Minister Assistant for Jodo Shinshu Buddhism and has served the Berkeley Buddhist Temple.

Personal Statement
“One thing the JACL could do to better represent my generation...”
In 2013, the organization supported a resolution to change immigration laws for Asian and Pacific Islanders, and while that is a step in the right direction, the JACL should be addressing immigration reform for a larger group than just Asian and Pacific Islanders.

"In particular, I think the JACL should ally itself with groups fighting for immigration rights for Mexicans. This is because our Japanese ancestors share a common struggle with them. The Immigration Act of 1924 banned Japanese immigration due to the anti-Japanese hysteria started by farmers angry at the success of the independent Issei farmers.

"While Asians have worked for over a century to create a more positive stereotype and abate the nativist fears that fueled segregation and hatred, that anger has now turned to the Mexicans.

"The topic that is most relevant to me today is the JACL's stance on marriage equality. JACL represents many different people and religions, but the fact that it supports gay marriage as an individual right stating that restricting it would violate protection from the constitution, shows me that religion and stereotypes played no part in determining the correct thing to do.

Additionally, being the second non-LGBTQ group to openly support gay marriage shows that the JACL is willing to act and stand for their values.

"Overall, the JACL stands for many of the issues I believe to be important, [but] there are things they could do to help more people and encourage more activity among its target demographic. Groups like the JACL are more necessary than ever, but they must continue to change and react if they are to stay relevant."

**UNDERGRADUATES**

Kristen N. Cunningham
JACL Chapter: Seattle
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyoko Kawahara Memorial Scholarship

*Whitworth University Notables*

Kristen Cunningham is a hard-working student who loves to learn new things. She also intentionally seeks opportunities to serve her community. Since enrolling as a freshman last year, she has maintained a 4.0 GPA while studying mathematics and computer science.

One of her community service projects is visiting schools to help other students in their computer science classes. Cunningham is not easily discouraged and with just one semester of computer science, approached the project with full enthusiasm and an open attitude. She has fond memories of the JACL as a child tagging along with her mother to chapter board meetings. She remembers feeling really welcomed when she finally became a board member three years ago, sitting at the table to contribute to discussions on her own. In addition to volunteering for many JACL events and attending the National Convention, Cunningham participates in the chapter’s annual Day of Remembrance trip to the state capitol to meet with legislators.

**Personal Statement**

"Throughout human history, people have been setting limits and rules for how others can live their lives. Only by abiding to these rules can one be fully accepted into society. Most of these rules were to keep peace and balance, but they were also to keep power and influence. Due to this, many of the rules regulated racial hierarchy, racial equality, sexual orientation, gender equality and other noncontrollable variables.

"As our society has evolved, these restraints have been challenged, and some have been overthrown. As generations pass, they are becoming more openly diverse as people have been able to break free from their individual oppression. Personally, I consider myself to be very diverse. Not only do I see myself as diverse because of my Japanese American heritage, but I also see myself as diverse because of my middle-class upbringing, my gender and my previous experiences, such as being in showband and visiting Japan.

"The reason I feel comfortable expressing everything that makes me different is because with each passing generation, differences are more widely accepted and embraced. This is the same reason that I feel as though the JACL represents me in a way relevant to today’s society. It is the JACL’s commitment to honor diversity and promote cultural, educational and social values that makes me aspire to do more to follow its lead and help however I can."
Beginning with a strong youth presence, JACL would get more input on the cultural disconnect struggle. Japanese American youth could come to JACL for a safe place to connect with their identity—while finding others who are doing the same.

Bryce A. Mawhinney
JACL Chapter: Mile High Recipient of the Alice Yuriko Endo Memorial Scholarship University of Colorado at Boulder.
Notables
Bryce Mawhinney will continue pursuing a degree in marketing, accounting and economics. He describes his involvement in Mile High JACL as a most rewarding experience because he learned something different with each event. He gained hands-on exposure to traditional Japanese cuisine at the Fall Festival. Through the volunteer activities, Mawhinney discovered that specialized jobs result in maximum potential product output at Kohaku Uta Gassen. Through his volunteer activities, Mawhinney was selected as the recipient of the Mile High JACL M. Tagawa Memorial Scholarship. In addition, he was named to the Dean's List at both the University of Colorado and Eckerd College and received numerous academic awards as an Advanced Placement Scholar.
Personal Statement
While it is always refreshing to hear a variety of opinions, it's gratifying to read something you're familiar with and connect with right away. When I read Amelia Hunter's (a high school student) speech that recounted stories her grandmother told her about her discrimination against Japanese American citizens (Pacific Citizen 2016 Holiday Issue), it instantly reminds me of the stories my own grandmother has told me. Living in Japan during World War II, she was secretly imprisoned in an internment camp. However, she was still subjected to the widespread discrimination when she moved to America after the war. She shared many stories with me about the difficulties of being a single mother and raising three daughters as a Japanese American immigrant.

Joy S. Yuzuriha
Emory University
Notables
Joy Yuzuriha will begin her second year majoring in computer science and music with a GPA of 3.88. Her passion for much of her life has been music, especially instrumental performance and dance performance. Yuzuriha has discovered a way to combine her musical passion with her involvement in JACL through the UK's Swing Band, which teaches youth about the World War II imprisonment of Japanese Americans through the music of the era of incarceration. She became the youngest member of the band as a seventh grader, playing second tenor saxophone and serving as the band's youth ambassador. In 2015, Yuzuriha traveled with the band to Minamiaso and Fuyasawa, Japan, to perform on the 70th anniversary of the incarceration and represent the Yorsei generation. Her ultimate goal in pursuing computer science and music is to integrate the two areas of study. Joy believes that both areas encompass the potential for boundless amounts of creativity and intellectual vitality, and she considers technology and the arts to be crucial components to a successful life.

Personal Statement
"My whole life, I have been re­mined of my being a Yorsei, a fourth-generation Japanese American, and the sufferings and successes that preceded my current life in the United States. The opportunities and organization that the JACL has offered me, both locally and nationally, have helped me remember my past, while allowing me to explore my passions. That is who I am. As one of the JACL's missions is to promote and preserve the heritage and legacy of the Japanese American community, I feel that this organization's goals are well-aligned with my own passions to remember the trials and tribulations that
my ancestors had to endure and how the events of the past affect our society today.”

GRADUATE

Masumi Asahi
JACL Chapter: West Los Angeles
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyoko Kayahara/Memorial Scholarship
Western University of Health Sciences

Notables

Masumi Asahi is a third-year medical student who plans to promote excellence in patient care and research through teaching in his career as a health professional. His teaching experience began at the University of California, Los Angeles, where he served as director of the university’s Koyoda Taiko group. He also teaches a weekly taiko drumming class at the Keyan Temple in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo. Asahi continues to expand his depth of knowledge by teaching first-year and second-year medical students alongside faculty and as a predoctoral teaching fellow. He currently volunteers for the Asian American Health Professions Student Assn. and for many free health clinics in the Los Angeles area. He also was a volunteer for the UCLA Nikkei Student Union and attended the Manzanar Pilgrimage as student volunteer. Asahi plans to continue volunteering to improve the lives of those who are less fortunate and develop the culture of the surrounding community. Like a gardener who creates the right growing conditions, Asahi hopes to use his health professional degree to cultivate a culture of compassion while caring for the various fruits and flowers within the garden of his community.

Personal Statement

“Human rights are an important part of society and play an integral part in our lives as health care providers. The modern version of the Hippocratic Oath adopted clauses from the Declaration of Geneva, which states that I will not use my medical knowledge to violate human rights and civil liberties, even under threat. The dharma of Buddhism regards human rights as an extension of human nature. As a rising physician and member of the JACL, I will uphold these principles and commit to a moral and ethical conduct in the service of my patients.”

Mai Ichihara
JACL Chapter: Washington, D.C.
Recipient of the Kenji Kajiwara Memorial Scholarship
Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies

Notables

Mai Ichihara is a graduate of George Washington University, where she received a degree in international affairs and earned cum laude honors. She was also on the Dean’s List and was awarded the GW Service Excellence: Student Choice Award. Ichihara was also active in many campus organizations, including the Emerging Leaders Program, Kappa Phi Lambda Sorority, Japanese American Student Alliance, Asian Student Alliance, Global Language Network and Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership. Her professional experience is equally as impressive. Ichihara was a senior program assistant for the Natural Resources Defense Council, associate producer for TV Asahi America and intern at the State Department of State in the Office of Japanese and Korean Affairs. She also interned for the Study Abroad Foundation, White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and Sen. Michael Bennet (D-Colo.) two years ago. She quit her job as a political reporter to pursue her community activism and committed to fight for environmental justice. Inspired by a faculty member’s community activism, she became a community garden apprentice for Wangan Gardens, where she devoted every weekend to crop maintenance, hoping to improve food access for low-income neighborhoods. She also contributes climate change articles to an environmental blog and volunteers for a D.C. nonprofit to revitalize the city’s urban green spaces. Ichihara lives by the credo of one of her civil servant heroes, the Hon. Norman Mineta: “As you use one hand to climb up the ladder of success, use the other hand to bring up others.”

Personal Statement

“As a child of immigrants, I was nurtured not in wealth but in grit, and I am grateful for this rugged upbringing that forged my core values like resilience and compassion. Nevertheless, I refuse to modify the experience; it was disheartening to face barriers buttressed by my socioeconomic and minority status. My parents, in their naiveté, chased after the American dream to escape social conformity. In Japan, ‘The nail that sticks out gets hammered down,’ but as immigrants in the U.S., they struggled with the language barrier, workplace discrimination and absence of proximate family support and professional network, all of which are advanced tags that trickled down to me. That is why organizations like the Japanese American Citizens League are indispensable to the empowerment of multicultural, multigenerational residents in the United States. JACL understands the unfair obstacles faced by our ancestors, and my only wish is for JACL to continue expanding its presence beyond the coasts and major cities. I was unaware of its resources growing up in Monument, Colo., and there are still countless victims of injustice who stand to benefit from JACL.”

Jessica Kawamura
JACL Chapter: Berkeley
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyoko Kayahara Memorial Scholarship
Emory University

Notables

Jessica Kawamura holds a degree in ethnic studies and public policy from Brown University as well as a master’s degree in public policy from the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently a master of divinity candidate and serves on the Community and Diversity Committee of the Candler School of Theology. Other school service includes volunteering for the Candler Reconciling Ministries Student Group, Students of Color in Public Policy and Graduate Student Assembly at UC Berkeley and Asa American Students Assn. and Interfaith House at Brown University. During her time at Brown University, Kawamura also studied for a semester abroad at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. Her community service is also extensive. She is active in the National Japanese American United Methodist Caucus and the Atlanta Comfort Women Task Force. She previously volunteered for the Church of the Village United Methodist Church, Asian Americans for Equality, Asian American Impact Fund Giving Circle, Homeless Children’s Playtime Project and the Conference on Asian Pacific American Leadership. Kawamura feels a call to serve in the local church and community. She is currently serving as the co-chair of the California Nevada JACL Conference and in historic Japanese American congregations on the West Coast. She hopes to nurture spiritual formation and healing through the local church, growing congregations through community engagement and prophetic witness.

Personal Statement

“There is an opportunity for the JACL to be more prominent in dialogues about racial justice, particularly given the current political climate. For example, the JACL was not as engaged as it could have been, specifically in the social media dialogue, around the 75th anniversary of Executive Order 9066. Perhaps if the National JACL is not already doing so, it could create resources and provide staff support for local chapters to further engage around issues including xenophobia, Islamophobia and the recent rise in hate crimes. We should purposefully engage in intersectional and anti-racist organizing. Most importantly, we should not be hesitant to speak out about social justice, even when issues are controversial. What my generation needs and wants most is honest, open and courageous dialogue. We need spaces of gathering, healing and conversation rooted in our heritage and in our history, community that empowers us to go out to act for justice, honoring those who came before us.”

Dilan D. Nakatomi
JACL Chapter: Sacramento
Recipient of the Railroad & Mineworkers Memorial Scholarship
Keck School of Medicine at the University of Southern California

Notables

Dilan Nakatomi earned a degree in psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles, where he made the Dean’s Honor List three consecutive years and graduated cum laude in the top 20 percent of his class. He will begin medical school this fall with aspirations to become a pediatrician.

Tara Umemoto
JACL Chapter: Berkeley
Recipient of the Minoru Yasui Memorial Scholarship
The University of California, Berkeley
Notables

Turn Umemoto earned a bachelor’s degree in social welfare and is currently studying to earn a master’s degree in the same major with plans to pursue a career in child welfare services at a public agency. She is currently volunteering for the Oakland Unified School District as a wellness consultant, organizing events, trainings and orientations, as well as supporting parents in well-being education. Her previous community and school service includes working with Safe Routes to School and Wellness VISTA Specialist, Camp Always Counselor, Sierra Forever Families Intern, Alameda County Court Appointed Special Advocate, Social Workers in the Classroom Teaching Assistant, Berkeley Buddhist Temple Board Member, UC Berkeley Nikkei Student Union Core Member and Nikkei Choral Ensemble Administrative Director. Umemoto also exhibited extraordinary leadership skills as soon as she joined the Berkeley JACL Board and the Civil Rights Committee. Early on, she left an indelible impression on the board, exhibiting her intelligence and creative, well-thought-out opinions. She has the ability to take the time to learn about her peers, and she exemplifies patience, maturity and concern for the disadvantaged and targeted communities.

Personal Statement

“Our community currently faces two main issues. (1) the struggle with identity and the diversifying community of the Japanese American community, and (2) mental health stigma. Identity affects our community in a number of ways, but for people like me, it affects us in that we are Japanese but do not speak Japanese. I am Yonsei, fourth generation Japanese. My parents also do not speak Japanese, and my grandparents never spoke Japanese, so I also do not speak Japanese. This affects our treatment in society, as many people assume we speak an Asian language that they do not belong to. However, many of us only know this home. I, along with many other peers, have struggled with mental health issues and talking about very real feelings and emotions that we experience because of a stigma that exists. These relate to civil rights in that mental health can easily affect things such as education and employment. If someone is not mentally well, then it makes that much harder to do well in school and do well in the workforce.”

Midori M. Wong
JACL Chapter: New England
Recipient of the Rev. H. John & Asako Yamashita Memorial Scholarship
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Notables

Midori Wong is earning a master’s degree, with a GPA of 4.5 in real estate development after earning a bachelor’s degree in urban studies and planning from the University of California, San Diego. She has received numerous academic awards, including the William Wheaton Fellowship at MIT, National Commercial Real Estate Women Network Foundation Scholar (one of only three graduate students selected nationwide) and the Appraisal Institute Education Trust Minorities and Women Educational Scholarship. At the University of California, San Diego, she received the Benjamin Addison Research Award (most outstanding research paper by a UCSD Warren College senior), Academic Distinction Award (highest GPA in program class) and Urban Studies and Planning Program Honors (completing undergraduate in three years). In 2015, Wong was selected as a 78th Assembly District Women of the Year Honoree, California State Assembly Speaker Honorable Toni Atkins. She also was a finalist in the Mimi Yasui Oratorical Contest in high school and received several chapter and national JACL scholarships.

Personal Statement

“I believe JACL can represent me and my generation in ways more relevant to today’s society by continuing to build an identity as a forward-looking, multicultural organization and by connecting to younger generations. The millennials will be our country’s largest generation and with the dominant population in the workforce. I think that JACL needs to create a new value proposition that communicates to this generation. One place to start would be to look at other successful movements and organizations and evaluate JACL’s role as a collaborator in those groups, or JACL’s ability to scale some of those successful elements to our own organization in a way that is still authentic to JACL’s identity and history.”

Kimberlee Hanamura-Valashinas
JACL Chapter: New England
Recipient of the Thomas T. Hayashi Memorial Law Scholarship
Case Western Reserve University
Notables

Kimberlee Hanamura-Valashinas is a first-year law student. She earned many academic awards in college, including Dean’s List and magna cum laude. She is interested in estate planning, national security law and laws applicable to the military family community. As a military spouse, Hanamura-Valashinas is a strong advocate for the legal rights surrounding military families. She hopes to dedicate a portion of her career to helping military families with all legal issues, such as estate planning, national security law and laws applicable to military spouses who are required to get licensed in each state they are transferred to due to new military orders.

Personal Statement

“JACL’s vision for the future and its ability to attract new Nikkei-jin hinges on overcoming perceptions that linger as a part of a complicated legacy. This legacy need not be a source of weakness; the ability to learn to lean into uncomfortable situations, namely situations of competing cultural informed paths to justice, is an immense strength. This struggle to reconcile cultural answers is also a pool of empathy that I think all Japanese Americans can relate to. My suggestion stated at the start of this essay, to take pride in this tension, can be stated another way: tap into this pool of empathy. Indeed, about the dangers of taking a step back into the past by using national security as an excuse to isolate individuals of protected classes.”

Lisa Matsue
JACL Chapter: New York
Recipient of the Sho Sato Memorial Law Scholarship
Fordham University
Notables

Lisa Matsue is a graduate of Keio University in Japan. Shortly after graduating, she joined the news department of TV Asahi, one of the six national broadcasting networks in Japan. During more than three years working at the network, she learned about the outstanding creative and technological skills of Japanese television and realized that Japanese media networks have no global influence or status. She later discovered it was the result of various internal and external complications with program contracts that limited program viewership to only Japanese audiences. This experience motivated Matsue to pursue a career in which she can help share with the world the Japanese media’s technological prowess and skills in creating documentaries. She also realized that she wanted to achieve her goal by breaking some of the Japanese legal barriers that prevent Japanese media networks from connecting with the world, especially with the U.S. Matsue hopes to gain a deeper understanding of the U.S. legal system, especially in copyright and intellectual property law, and pursue a career in representing international clients and transactions law.

Personal Statement

“What is intriguing about these accomplishments is how JACL successfully coordinated such large groups of people, who all had different goals and motives. While Japanese Americans were united in seeking their rights and finding a home on American land, not all Japanese Americans had the same beliefs or were in the same situation. Some Issei and Nisei resented Japanese associations and did not want to cooperate with them. Not all Japanese American felt the same way about rebelling against internment or about their rights to restitution. In many ways, the people that JACL has represented in the past are very similar to people JACL represents now. I strongly believe that JACL was able to unify...
these groups of different people by listening to varying opinions, trying to understand different views, but always keeping a firm grip on the goals of the organization.”

Mika Rothman
JACL Chapter: Seattle
Recipient of the Grace Ando Memorial Law Scholarship
University of Washington

Notables
Mika Rothman is a third-generation JACL member currently serving on her chapter board and its Civil Rights Committee. Her experiences growing up attending chapter meetings with her mother and then participating on her own helped form Rothman’s passion for civil rights and social justice. Her passion led to working as a digital project manager and a field organizer for Barack Obama’s presidential campaign and later as the senior legal assistant in the White House Counsel’s office under President Obama, helping to prepare materials to consider in clemency decisions for nonviolent drug offenders. Most recently, Rothman served as a volunteer for Asian Pacific Americans for Civil Engagement.

Personal Statement
“This past summer, I participated in the pilgrimage to the Minidoka Internment Camp, where many of my family members were interned. Walking around the camp formed a stronger connection to my Grandpa Jun’ichi and Grandma Aki, who both passed away before I was old enough to talk to them about civil rights and social justice. Later that day, pilgrimage participants were placed into groups of varying ages and diverse geographic and racial backgrounds. In those groups, we discussed the past and current injustices. Comments about the injustices of the camps were met with noddng heads. However, subsequent questions about current racial and social injustices, like the criminal justice system and immigration, exposed deep disagreements between young and old, urban and rural and those of and not of Japanese ethnicity. I left immediately frustrated by those whose opinions didn’t align with my own. After reflecting on the challenging parts of the discussion within the context of the purpose of the pilgrimage, I found the value in our conflicting positions. Had we been able to continue those conversations, our common beliefs in social justice and civil rights – convening themes of the pilgrimage – would have pulled us closer in understanding each other’s positions. To replace understanding with frustration, I believe, is to progress toward a strength of civil rights and social justice that we all seek.”

Rei Yamada
JACL Chapter: New York
Recipient of the Dr. George Goro Jr. and Haruko Motoyama Memorial Scholarship
Thomas Jefferson University

Notables
Rei Yamada graduated with honors from Cornell University, where she majored in human biology. She received several scholarships to pursue a law degree and has co-authored numerous articles in scientific research publications. Her campus and community service is extensive, including New York Presbyterian/Columbia University Medical Center, Cornell College Human Ecology Ambassadors and New Student Program and Project SOLVE. Association for Education for Psychoeducational Tuition. Ever since Yamada became bilingual, she has wanted to work with Japanese American patients. While I am as a digital project manager and a field organizer for Barack Obama’s presidential campaign and later as the senior legal assistant in the White House Counsel’s office under President Obama, helping to prepare materials to consider in clemency decisions for nonviolent drug offenders. Most recently, Rothman served as a volunteer for Asian Pacific Americans for Civil Engagement.

Personal Statement
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Sophia Nakasone
JACL Chapter: Ventura County
Recipient of the Aiko Susanna Hiratsuka Memorial Performing Arts Scholarship

Notables
Sophia Nakasone is a college freshman intending to major in dance and business administration. She graduated from Carpinteria High School with a 4.0 GPA, where she earned the AP Scholar Award, Presidential Award for Academic Excellence and the Director’s Award. Nakasone served in leadership roles in many school activities, including Muses, choir, yearbook, American Sign Language Club, Virtual Enterprise, Link Crew and the California Scholastic Federation. Her community service involvement included the Carpinteria Valley Arts Council, American Cancer Society, Breast Cancer Resource Center and Arts for Humanity. Nakasone has also won international awards at the Tremaine Dance Convention.

Personal Statement
“Takato it the JACL because I know it would be a community of people from all over the nation who could relate to what it is like to grow up feeling different from everyone else. I am a performing artist. I sing, dance and do musical theater. I have always grown up performing and have never seen many other Asian Americans as the leads onstage or in movies. One of my biggest inspirations, Stella Atreza, became the first Filipino American principal ballerina at the American Ballet Theatre not too long ago. However, her success was overshadowed by Misty Copeland, who was the first African-American principal ballerina at the same company. While both dancers deserve to be equally recognized for their hard work and success, only one dancer got publicity for this accomplishment. The JACL has taught me that regardless of my race, I am not deserving any less of success and recognition than anyone else as long as I work hard to make myself known.”

PERFORMING ARTS

CREATIVE ARTS

Sophia Nakasone
JACL Chapter: Ventura County
Recipient of the Aiko Susanna Hiratsuka Memorial Performing Arts Scholarship

Notables
Sophia Nakasone is a college freshman intending to major in dance and business administration. She graduated from Carpinteria High School with a 4.0 GPA, where she earned the AP Scholar Award, Presidential Award for Academic Excellence and the Director’s Award. Nakasone served in leadership roles in many school activities, including Muses, choir, yearbook, American Sign Language Club, Virtual Enterprise, Link Crew and the California Scholastic Federation. Her community service involvement included the Carpinteria Valley Arts Council, American Cancer Society, Breast Cancer Resource Center and Arts for Humanity. Nakasone has also won international awards at the Tremaine Dance Convention.

Personal Statement
“I decided to join the JACL because I knew it would be a community of people from all over the nation who could relate to what it is like to grow up feeling different from everyone else. I am a performing artist. I sing, dance and do musical theater. I have always grown up performing and have never seen many other Asian Americans as the leads onstage or in movies. One of my biggest inspirations, Stella Atreza, became the first Filipino American principal ballerina at the American Ballet Theatre not too long ago. However, her success was overshadowed by Misty Copeland, who was the first African-American principal ballerina at the same company. While both dancers deserve to be equally recognized for their hard work and success, only one dancer got publicity for this accomplishment. The JACL has taught me that regardless of my race, I am not deserving any less of success and recognition than anyone else as long as I work hard to make myself known.”

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Kai Oliver
JACL Chapter: Seattle
Recipient of the Henry & Chiyoko Kuwahara Memorial Creative Arts Scholarship

Notables
Kai Oliver will be a freshman majoring in graphic art and animation. He graduated from Joseph Charter High School with a 3.87 GPA. Oliver lives on a small farm in a very rural area in Oregon about the same size as the Kansai region of Japan. His mother, who was born in Japan, emigrated to the U.S. at age 30. JACL helped Oliver’s mother through emigration and helped her acquire her U.S. citizenship, and when Oliver decided to attend college in Seattle, his mother encouraged him to join the local chapter to benefit his new community through JACL.

Oliver received several scholarships for his high school, including first-place winner in the Academic Bowl and the Max Kiel Award for Outstanding Male Freshman. He also served in leadership positions in student government, played on a number of sports teams, performed in the school band and was active in fundraising for the American Cancer Society. Oliver has found the time to serve his local community on projects ranging from collecting food and necessities for daily life for families in need to teaching youth hockey and leading a playground renovation. In addition, he enjoys using the arts to create video games, but the emergence of virtual reality, digital apps, YouTube and other digital and visual communications convince me it is the way of the future. I believe the arts have a message of peace and understanding and is cross-cultural. My dream is to be a leader in an important movement and create art and even digital games and apps that heal both psychologically and physiologically. We are beginning to see that there is more to do, and I hope my career will include helping JACL make a contribution to that healing.”

The Sonoma County JACL congratulates

JACK CONKLIN

As the recipient of the Henry and Chiyoko Kuwahara Memorial Scholarship
NCWNP
Otsuki/Moon Viewing Festival
Oakland, CA
Oct. 1; 5:30-8:30 p.m.
Lakeside Park Garden Center
666 Bellevue Ave.
Price: Free; $5 weekend parking
Please join the Oakland Fukukoa Sister City Assn. for an evening of Japanese food, entertainment and moon viewing to celebrate the 51st anniversary of the festival. In addition, the event will honor the 100th birthday of the late Frank Ogawa. Japanese bento box dinners are available only on a prepaid basis by check or online.
Info: Visit www.oakland-fukukoa.org or email fosa1962@gmail.com.

Wesley Aki Matsuri Fall Festival
San Jose, CA
Oct. 7; 11 a.m.-4 p.m.
Wesley United Methodist Church
566 N. Fifth St.
Price: Free
Come and celebrate the fall season at the 85th Wesley Aki Matsuri Fall Festival. The event honors a traditional time in Japan to be thankful for a good harvest and well being of each family in the community. In addition to crafts, food, cultural displays and Kids Zone, the festival will also feature a performance by San Jose Taiko.
Info: Visit wesleyjsj.net.

PSW
Gedatsu Church Autumn Moon Festival
Reseda, CA
Sept. 30 (11 a.m.-6 p.m.) and Oct. 1 (11 a.m.-6 p.m.)
Gedatsu Church
7850 Hill Dr.
Price: Free
Come celebrate the fall season and welcoming of the new moon at this year’s family-friendly festival, featuring game booths, homemade crafts, festive market and delicious foods such as the church’s famous Huli-Huli chicken, chow mein, sushi and much more! Proceeds will benefit the church’s programs and support youth basketball.
Info: Visit gedatsuusa.org.

Kokoro Craft Boutique
Los Angeles, CA
Oct. 1; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
Price: Free
The ninth annual Kokoro Craft Boutique, organized by JANM volunteers, will feature more than 50 vendors selling unique jewelry, kimono fabric fashion, “Gion” paper fan, handbags, ceramics, origami, glass art and more. Proceeds will benefit JANM’s education programs and the museum. To make a boutique purchase of $20 or more will receive free same-day admission to the museum and a 10% discount at participating Little Tokyo restaurants during the month of October (one-time use).
Info: Visit janm.org/events or email kokorocraft@gmail.com.

PNW
'Gaining Influence — Developing Leaders for Equity and Justice in Private, Public and Nonprofit Sectors' Seminar
Seattle, WA
Sept. 30; all day
Keiro Northwest
1601 E. Yaweyer Way
Price: Free; registration is required.
This daylong seminar, presented by the Seattle Chapter of the JACL and supported by the Seattle JACL Presidents Youth Leadership Fund, with financial assistance by the Robert Chinn Foundation, will offer emerging leaders, early career professionals, students and other young adults the opportunity to meet some of the most influential Asian American leaders in the private, public and nonprofit sectors, as well as learn how their professional success is intertwined with their championing of equity and social justice.

2017 Sukiyaki Bazaar
Portland, OR
Oct. 1; 11:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
Oregon Buddhist Temple
3720 S.E. 54th Ave.
Price: Beef sukiyaki $14; vegetable sukiyaki $14, chicken bento $10, sanso-me $10
This year’s Sukiyaki Bazaar welcomes the first callings of fall and all that it brings with familiar foods, warmth, friends and family. Come enjoy sukiyaki, chicken bento and chow mein, as well as view beautiful calligraphy and small gifts that will be available for purchase by the Dharma School. Preordering food is highly recommended.
Info: Call Michelle and Elaine Yuzuriha at (971) 227-7240.

MDC
Chrysanthemum Banquet
Bloomington, MN
Nov. 11; 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
Normandale Hylands United Methodist Church
9920 Normandale Blvd.
This event will feature a luncheon, silent auction and guest speaker John Matsunaga, a Minneapolis-based visual artist/photographer, educator and activist. His work in the visual arts explores Asian American and Japanese American history, identity and experience, with special emphasis on the wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. He is currently a member of the education committee of the Twin Cities chapter.
Info: Visit teajca.org.
In Memoriam

Anzai, Robert James, 33, Whiawa, Hi, Jul 25; he is survived by his parents, Paul and June Anzai, and his brother, Charles.

Furumoto, Fusaye 'Mary,' 97, Los Angeles, CA, Aug 16; she was predeceased by her husband, Mannen; and children, Masako and Ikuro (Regina) Furumoto; she is survived by her daughter, Roye (Akira) Tanigomi; gc: 3; gc: 2.

Hamaguchi, Robert, 70, San Francisco, CA, Sept 4; he was survived by his wife, Carolyn; and children, Kristin (Darren) Scott, and监控Hamaguchi (LeAnne) and Staci Byrom (Bryan); gc: 3.

Hirota, Masako, 92, Los Angeles, CA, Apr 17; she is also survived by her children, Alyce (John) Uo1'Und- Hamaguchi (LeAnne) and Misako Scott.

Miyamoto, Grace Miyako, 92, Los Angeles, CA, Aug 24; she is survived by her sons, Nyle (Michele) and Bryce (Kay); siblings, Fred and Mary (Brenda); gc: 3.

Nanamura, Mary, 85, Ser. Jose, CA, July 23; she is survived by her husband, Tom; daughter, Carol Isosaki (Les Isosaki); gc: 2.

Nakashoji, Norio, 78, Sacramento, CA, Aug 27; he is survived by his wife, Frances; children, Nancy (Garr) and Vicki Sanders; nieces and nephews; gc: 3; gc: 2.

Nakata, Francis ‘Frank,’ 83, Los Angeles, CA, Aug 23; he is survived by his wife, Alicia; daughter, Jane Nakata (Bob Sanders) and Vicki Nakata (David Graetz); sister, Jeanie Gee.

Oda, Lisa, 69, Chicago, IL, Sept 11; she is survived by her husband, George.

Saburo (Sab) Akiyama of Hood River, OR, passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, on Thursday afternoon on Sept 7, 2017, at Brookside Manor in Hood River. Sab was born home on April 7, 1921, in Oak Grove, Ore. — the fourth of five children of Tomoseichiro and Itsu Oka­yama (In Japanese, Saburo is “third son”). He was preceeded in death by his parents, beloved wife, Betty (2016), brothers Henry (2016) and George (2010) and sister, Kyo (2016). Sab spent his childhood working on the family orchard in Oak Grove. At 16, he and his family were forced to leave the family home as a result of Executive Order 9066 requiring all people of Japanese ancestry to be incarcerated at internment camps by the War Relocation Authority, regardless of citizenship. While incarcerated, Sab graduated from Tule Lake high school at the Tule Lake internment camp. Later, he and his family were relocated to Minidoka internment camp. He enlisted in the United States Army at age 20 with other young men from the camps to demonstrate that the Japanese were as loyal and patriotic as any other American citizen. Sab was killed during World War II at Amache, Colorado, near South Bend, Colorado. Sab attended Pacific University on the GI Bill in Forest Grove, Ore., where he graduated in 1951 with a Doctorate of Optometry. He moved to the Oregon Coast where he worked as an optometrist at the Reinhart Clinic in Wheeler. It was there that Sab met his future wife, Betty Dyke-Dykes. They married on June 4, 1956, in Oregon City and purchased a home in Nashoba, where Sab continued working as an optometrist. In time, Sab and Betty welcomed four daughters: Kathryn, Dana, Patricia and Jennifer.

In 1965, Sab had an opportunity to buy Harold Ker’s optometry practice on Oak Street in his hometown of Hood River. Thereafter, Sab served multiple generations of families who relied on him for eye glasses, contact lenses, professional evaluations, and an informed, observant and charming chair-side manner. Sab was an active member of the Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), where he served as an officer and in many other volunteer roles. He was a life member of the Lions Club, the Hood River bowling league, and the Chamber of Commerce among other civic activities. After nearly 40 years, Sab retired and sold his practice in 1995.

His extended family and others in the Hood River community will forever remember Sab’s proficiency at finding and digging razor clams in the surf of many Oregon and Washington beaches. Indeed, he taught his daughters, nephews and many friends how to spot and dig clams with a shovel (never a clam gun!).

Sab and brothers, George and Nobu, were avid and expert mushroom hunters. Every year, they hoped for a wet August so they’d have favorite mushroom hunting in fall — at forever-secret locations. Sab will be remembered for his smile and gentle humor, unfailing devotion to Betty over 60 years, his steadfast support for his daughter and her families, his open mind, eternal curiosity, inventive household repairs and his willingness to take on any challenge. He and friend, Pete Watts, remodeled the Nakata house (over several years) and built gardener’s cloSETS from kids’ furniture. He started many vegetable garden plants from seed under a row light contraption in the basement of the family home, his tomatoes were phenomenal. Sab bowled, golfed, gardened, followed current events, read, learned to make potaTOs as well as stained glass, and astonished his daughters with precision, handcrafted and tasty date palm-cookies. He loved food — especially sWEETS — and delighted in cinnamon rollS and lemon meringue pie. He would have a piece of lemon pie..."

Sab is survived by his older brother, Nelson (Florence), and sister-in-law, Ralith Akiyama; daughters, Kathy, Diana (Michael Jackson), Patricia (Davis Larson), Jennifer (Patrick Tahara) and three grandchildren who brought him much joy: Jasmine, Kazutomo and Erriko. He is also survived by cherished nieces, nephews and extended family, along with many longtime friends who joined together in mourning his passing. The family expresses its deep and heartfelt thanks to the extraordinary caregivers and staff at Brookside Manor, who assisted Sab with compassionate and loving care over the past 18 months. The family also offers their profound gratitude to the amazing people at Heart of Hospice who were an abiding and comforting source of support for Sab, there among us and who are here to inspire us.

A memorial celebration of life and reception/brunch is being planned for a later date. In lieu of flowers, memorial donations may be made to the St. Mark’s Endowment Fund for Betty Akiyama, (541) 385-2077, www.stmarksohd.org or email almanac@stmarksohd.org and/or to the Hood River Heart of Hospice in the Columbia Gorge, (541) 385-1912, www.heartofhospice.org. To learn more about Sab’s life, please visit Don­ santo’s Digital Archive at www.donsanto.org.

(Appointments by Anderson’s Tribute Center, 1401 Belmont Ave., Hood River, Ore., 97031; www.AndersonsTributeCenter.com)
YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

Were We All Immigrants

By Kenji Kuramitsu,
NYISC Representative

I was proud to see the JACL recently issue a statement alongside coalition partners, condemning the Trump administration’s assault on undocumented youth through the targeting of DACA. Often, in a whirl to condemn xenophobia and anti-immigrant animus, I will hear the refrain “we were all immigrants once.”

Our Executive Director’s statement opened with a variation on this remark: “As Americans, we have all an immigration story.”

I understand the positive intentions behind these words and the point for serious reflection they call us to — that we may better shield and support all immigrants today. Yet, my fear is that phrases like this unintentionally excludes important partners in our work for civil rights and racial justice. While strategically and contextually accurate for the Nikkei community, the idea that we all have an immigration story is flimsier than it may appear.

That is, not everyone came to this continent as immigrants. Some of those living in the United States have indigenous roots, tracing unbroken, familial relationships with this land back hundreds of generations. Others are the descendants of the forcibly enslaved, those stolen to this nation without consent. Still others were occupants of sovereign nations and kingdoms that were invaded and are continually crushed by illegal American occupation.

This conversation has played out in a Texas textbook’s euphemizing of enslaved Africans as migrant “workers,” as well as Ben Carson’s comment that black people came to this country as “immigrants.” Branding all American descendants of “immigrants” should give us pause. We should not trust claims that Native and African-Americans “immigrated” to the U.S. any more than we believe Nikkei willingly “evacuated” to parasitical camps.

We may be called to reflect proudly on our ocean-crossing ancestors. The only “immigration story” for many Native peoples, on the other hand, may be witnessing the devouring of their lands and lives at the hands of European immigrants. Inviting remembrance of our “immigration story” as a shared point of reflection is not a universally uplifting experience.

There are healthier starting points to begin to nurture multiethnic reflection and shared actions. One such point may be honoring all our ancestors — enslaved, indigenous, as well as immigrant — many of whom fought ceaselessly against literal extinction and cultural evisceration. Another may be to acknowledge our shared predicament now as people of conscience — as citizens and undocumented, as people of color and as those without it, as women, men and nonbinary folks — all numbering our days here in this churning, peculiar nation founded on genocide and enslavement.

As James Baldwin has said, history is the present: “We, with every breath, every move, are history. And what goes around, comes around.”

We are living in an age that reveals more nakedly than ever the living impacts of past conquests. For those of us with proud “immigrant stories,” we must wrestle with the fact that we, like our ancestors, are implicated in a settler colonial project — choosing each day to live, breathe and die on stolen land.

This conversation around dreams, dreamers and their destruction is immensely important. I celebrate the JACL’s willingness to tackle this story “with every breath, every move,” we, as citizens and undocumented, as people of conscience and allies along as possible.

Kenji Kuramitsu is the NYISC Youth Representative of the JACL.