JACL Stands in Solidarity With Black Lives Matter.

Tod Mikuriya: The JA Father of the Medical Marijuana Movement — Part II

Protest marches from coast to coast demand the end to racism and a permanent change to the law enforcement system.

Watsonville Police Chief David Honda at a protest rally at Watsonville City Plaza on May 30. Members of Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL were also present that day. PHOTO: SHMUEL THAYER/SANTA CRUZ SENTINEL
Dear Editor,

I am confused, hurt, exasperated, angry. I read articles about police brutality, see pictures of black victims and hashtags of their names on social media. But not just now — for years and years, these stories of dehumanization and racism have faded in and out of American consciousness. When will something change?

The most important question, though, is what will I do about it? I sit behind a screen, enraged about change? My family told me that my Issei grandparents lived the American Dream because of their gaman attitude and work ethic. But what my family didn’t tell me was that the American Dream is selective. On the surface, the narrative seems universal and attainable, but deeper down, there are institutionalized forces at work pushing groups of people down and pitting groups of people against one another.

My family has responded to this point by reflecting on Japanese American internment and America’s hatred of the Japanese at one point in history. But institutionalized racism against black Americans and Native Americans precedes internment, the Chinese Exclusion Act and Yellow Fever, keeping these communities marginalized and oppressed for centuries.

Minorities’ struggles and experiences with prejudice and stereotypes should not be compared. Rather, our collective experiences as minorities in America should be recognized and held in solidarity. I am learning, I am trying. I challenge myself to do better and to be better, to have difficult conversations and, most importantly, to listen.

I am in no place to tell others what to do, but I challenge all of us — members of the Japanese American community, Asian American community and broader American community — to listen to voices that have been suppressed for so long. Only then will we understand how to be allies and only then, I think, will we start to heal.

Sincerely,

Marisa Kanemitsu,
South Bay JACL
FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
HONORING THE MEMORY OF OUR PAST LEADERS

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

As we continue to reel as a nation, first from the COVID pandemic and now what seems to finally be a recognition from our country of the injustice that black men and women face, it seems that JACL has not had the time to acknowledge our own loss. Within the time of just a few weeks, we learned of the passing of Helen Kawagoe and Lillian Kimura. Lillian was JACL’s first female president, serving one term from 1992-94, and Helen soon followed her with two terms from 1996-2000. We have not had a woman elected president since. Lillian’s election also saw the adoption of several resolutions seeming to usher in a new age of focus on what were seen as women’s issues. Today, I think we can all agree that they are universal issues such as sexual harassment, family leave and a woman’s right to choice. Yet, where are we as a nation, nearly 30 years later? The MeToo movement revealed the true depths of how pervasive and unaddressed sexual harassment is in our society. Family leave was the signature policy issue for Ivanka Trump throughout the 2016 campaign and the first few years of her father’s term. The result has been a mere 12 weeks of leave only for federal workers. Paid family leave remains a benefit for too few workers, generally those in more privileged positions. And with recent Supreme Court appointments, many fear that the longstanding precedent of Roe v. Wade could be overturned by an activist Supreme Court and as individual states also seek to erode women’s rights to choice and even access to basic health care.

More distressing is the fact that the average white woman still earns only $81.20 per dollar earned by a white man. The differences become even more stark when broken out by ethnicity. Some Asian ethnicities do well, with Asians on average earning $.90 to the dollar. This is boosted by Indian women, who earn $1.20 per dollar earned by white men. Chinese women are on par with white men and Japanese women earn $.92 per dollar. However on the other side of the averages are Nepalese women, who earn $.50 per dollar. Cambodian women at $.57 per dollar and Vietnamese women at $.67 per dollar earned by a white man.

For other minority groups, the differences are also stark. African American women earn $.62, Native American women earn $.57 and Latinx women earn $.54 per dollar. Statistics from were taken from http://www.equalpaytoday.org/equalpaydays and https://www.napawf.org/equalpaydata-and-resources.

These disparities persist despite women typically attaining both undergraduate and graduate degrees at higher rates than men, with these differences again even more pronounced for minority groups.

Gender disparities such as this have the power to reinforce themselves. When our second child was born and we were faced with the cost of two children in childcare, we had to seriously consider whether it was worth it for both of us to work, or if it might make more sense to have one of us stay at home with the children. At the time, with my wife’s income being the lesser one, it obviously would have meant her leaving her job at the time, negatively impacting her opportunities for advancement and growth for the time she was away.

Fortunately, we worked things out, but many other families are not able to make things work and must make the decision of which job is able to better support the family if one parent must stay home with the children.

If I might continue my digression around my own family, I often hear fathers talk about how they are in the fight for gender equality because of their daughter. I, too, want equality for my daughter, but that’s not fighting for gender equality, that is fighting for my own daughter.

It is the fight for other people’s daughters, wives, mothers that we must make the expectation. This is why it is important to recognize the differences even within our own Asian American community as shown in the statistics above.

In a final case of symmetry, Lillian began her term as president in the wake of the 1992 L.A. riots that occurred following the acquittal of four Los Angeles police officers who had beaten Rodney King, also caught on video. Nearly 30 years later, we are now in a fight for justice for the brutal deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and so many others. We must recognize that racism is not limited to the extremes of the lynching of black men.

We absolutely must call for justice for their deaths, but we must also seek justice for the racism and sexism that manifests itself more often in our daily lives. In particular, we must fight against disparate wages, home ownership rates and access to health care services. Our education system is based on neighborhood boundaries long ago set by discriminatory redlining policies. The system is rigged, and we must rebuild it to work for all.

As our country is freshly invigorated in the fight for racial justice, we must recognize and remember the bright intersection with gender inequality and the multiplying effect it has on the effects of racism. We do this to honor the memory of Lillian and Helen, but also because this is what JACL must stand for.

David Inoue is executive director of the JACL. He is based in the organization’s Washington, D.C., office.

Our outrage for George Floyd’s murder is not enough

By JACL National

It has been one week since George Floyd was lynched by four Minneapolis police officers. The death of George Floyd was preventable, as were the deaths of Tony McDade, Ahmaud Arbery, Nina Pop, Breonna Taylor, Sean Reed, Charleena Lyles and countless other black lives who have been lost to systemic racism in the United States.

Officer Derek Chauvin, now being charged with murder and manslaughter, was not alone in George Floyd’s murder. Also complicit were officers Thomas Lane, J. Alexander Kueng and, most visibly, Tou Thao, an Asian American officer who, instead of using his authority to stop Chauvin, chose to enable and protect his partner.

The JACL denounces the actions of Officer Thao and stands with the black community in demanding justice for George Floyd and all black lives.

We must recognize that as violence has erupted from the roots of peaceful protest, it reflects the violence we as a nation have inflicted upon the black community in our 400-year history as a colonized nation.

The genocide began with the colonization of Native American land, the capture, indentured servitude, enslavement and enslavement of African peoples, to Jim Crow and beyond.

We continue to see the legacy of our traumatic history today in the inequities of COVID-19 as black lives are disproportionately impacted by our failed health-care system.

During World War II, our community found itself fractured in the midst of the incarceration experience; families, friends and neighbors torn apart by the decisions they were forced to make. We remained divided in the post-war years as we sought a path forward trying to find our place in the changing narrative of American society.

In the fight for civil rights, there were those who joined black leaders like Malcolm X and Martin Luther King Jr. to ensure civil rights were not solely for the API community, but all communities of color.

Yet, we also played into the model minority myth, a divisive narrative that has simultaneously served to both benefit and victimize. The privileges we have gained from this dangerous trope have only further driven a wedge between API’s and other communities of color.

We cannot continue on this path: We must stand together if we want to create lasting change.

Japanese Americans sought and achieved redress for our unconstitutional incarceration during WWII.

It is time that we as a nation come to a reckoning with our history of oppression and seek reparations for the legacy of slavery — to begin taking the necessary steps to right a grave wrong.

It is painful to acknowledge that, in many ways, Mr. Thao does represent our community and our own complacency and failure to act for racial justice for black lives.

As API’s, we sit at the intersections of privilege and oppression. While our experiences with privilege and oppression as individual communities are highly varied and nuanced (for example: the frequent exclusion of Pacific Islander and South and Southeast Asian communities in discussions around race and social issues, or the privilege those of us with lighter skin experience), it cannot be said that we do not benefit from the same systems that serve to hold us down.

Our privilege comes at a price, one that has historically served as a way to further oppress black lives. If we cannot come to terms with and address the privileges we hold and why, then we are part of the problem.

We cannot continue to tolerate this dangerous trope. We must do anti-racist work while still supporting the systems that have led to the deaths of so many black men and women.

We have a broken economic system that underpays people for honest work. Hiring decisions continue to be clouded by prejudice. Housing discrimination persists because of unequal access to capital and the legacy of redlining. If we do not feel the same outrage for the daily discrimination that continues to exist, outrage over George Floyd’s murder is hollow and meaningless. There can be no peace so long as our society and our government remain violent, both in physical action and policy, toward our own citizens. Our time to stand together is now. Black Lives Matter.
AN OPEN LETTER ON THE MURDER OF GEORGE FLOYD

By JACL Twin Cities Chapter

June 1, 2020

Mayor Jacob Frey and Police Chief Medaria Arradondo

Minneapolis City Hall

Dear Mayor Frey and Police Chief Arradondo,

We as an organization are sending our thoughts and prayers to the family and friends of George Floyd, a beloved member of the community who was callously murdered by members of the Minneapolis Police Department (MPD) on Memorial Day last week. But thoughts and prayers are not enough. We need action, and we need reform. We join the black community in calling for an actually anti-racist system that seeks out racism and works to eradicate it.

Japanese Americans have known what it is like to be unfairly persecuted by authorities on the basis of their race. And yet, we cannot pretend that we are not enough. We need action, and we need reform. The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) is committed to being anti-racist. We recognize that we are not immune from being racist simply because we are People of Color.

No evidence of this is clearer than the role of former MPD Officer Tou Thao who willfully failed to intervene while former MPD Officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee into George Floyd’s neck. It is the duty of all humans to actively confront racism and prevent it from claiming more innocent lives.

While many law enforcement officers are committed to protecting and serving all those within their communities, we need them to step up, speak out against and stop those who are not.

A single “bad cop” is too many, and those who allow them to remain in uniform are also at fault. It is therefore necessary for all four of the MPD officers responsible for George Floyd’s murder to be brought to justice. And, we call for concrete steps to be taken to prevent unwarranted, excessive police violence which too often results in the tragedies of officer-involved killings.

We call for the Minneapolis Police Department to transparently communicate acceptable and unacceptable officer behaviors so that civilians can report them to supervisors when necessary. To facilitate this, we call for the institution of an emergency hotline so that inappropriate or dangerous police behavior can be immediately reviewed and stopped before it’s too late.

This immediate accountability and oversight was a crucial missing piece in the murder of George Floyd. Concerned civilian bystanders were helpless to stop actions that they knew to be wrong and life-threatening. The tools we have now in some cases, including body cameras and cellphone footage, are valuable only after the fact. By then, it is too late.

Just as it is now too late to save George Floyd’s life, but it is not too late to prevent other unnecessary violent acts and murders. Now is the time to be proactive and usher in concrete reforms, reforms that extend beyond Minneapolis to the rest of the country.

Sincerely,

Executive Board, Japanese American Citizens League, Twin Cities Chapter

The JACL Twin Cities chapter members thanked the hospital’s staff for their ongoing dedication and generosity and the community coming together in this difficult time.

VCJACL Recognizes Hospital Workers

Ventura County chapter members thank first-responders for their COVID-19 dedication.

By Ventura County JACL

The BEST Strawberries for the BEST Health Care Workers” flyer accompanied the recent donation of strawberries from Ventura County JACL to staff at Pleasant Valley Hospital in Camarillo, Calif., for their hard work and efforts in combating the current coronavirus pandemic.

Chapter members thanked the hospital’s staff for their ongoing dedication and commitment to helping care for community members.

VCJACL’s Julia Miyamoto delivered the strawberries, which were grown by specialty farmer Jason Tamai of Tamai Family Farms in Oxnard, Calif.

Hospital personnel received the berries and quickly distributed them to its 325 employees. Staff were impressed, surprised and commented enthusiastically on the berries’ very sweet flavor.

One wrote, “It is heart warming to see and experience all the support and generosity and the community coming together in this difficult time.”

VCJACL chapter member Julia Miyamoto (center) delivers the berries.

Jason Tamai of Tamai Family Farms donated the strawberries.

A Pleasant Valley Hospital supervisor gives a thumbs up upon receiving the strawberries for her department.

JACL PSWD STATEMENT ON GEORGE FLOYD’S MURDER

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd was killed by negligence and inhumanity of the highest degree. The crime was perpetrated by a man sworn to protect and serve the community and its citizens. Unfortunately, this is just the latest iteration of an institutionalized problem that has plagued this nation since its inception. Racism.

The Japanese American Citizens League’s Pacific Southwest District stands in solidarity with the protesters who are risking their lives by lawfully protesting the systematic discrimination that black Americans face on a daily basis. This problem can only be solved through the cooperation of all Americans. The JACL PSW hopes to devote its resources to furthering the cause of equality for black Americans and all other races and creeds.

The JACL PSW condemns the actions of police officers who abuse the power granted to them by discriminating against black Americans. The damage that these individuals wreak is two-fold.

The first and most important consequence is that black Americans are forced to live in constant fear for no reason other than the color of their skin. The second is that their actions vilify the entire police force, which makes it harder for officers who justly uphold the law to perform their duties.

Individuals who use this tragedy as a pretext for crime and violence mitigate the protesters’ message of equality and pursuit of justice. They harm our community by destroying property and looting small businesses that are already suffering from the effects of COVID-19.

The use of violence gives those who are prejudiced a reason to strike down this noble struggle. We must distinguish ourselves from these individuals who undermine our mission to fight the wrongs committed by racists and bigots.

This problem has been a scourge on America for too long. Now is the time to make a difference. The road to reform will be slow, so we mustn’t allow ourselves to become complacent and forget about the tragedy committed in Minneapolis.

Protester. Police. Black. White. Latinx. Indigenous American. Asian and Pacific Islander. LGBTQI. Straight. No matter what defines us, everyone who believes that black lives matter must band together to champion the cause of equality. We will seek justice for our brothers and sisters, and we will hold those who kill and hide behind a badge accountable for their actions.

Our Declaration of Independence proclaims, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.”

We will create a society where this sentiment is made a reality. So long as individuals and institutions discriminate against our neighbors and friends, depriving them of their God-given rights, we will stand together to stop this injustice. Black Lives Matter.
EWP’S SHOW GOES ON TO HONOR THREE WITH VISIONARY AWARDS

The delayed gala becomes a virtual affair due to novel coronavirus.

By P.C. Staff

In the ongoing battle between the novel coronavirus vs. the world, East West Players displayed its “show must go on” credo by transforming its 54th Visionary Awards and Silent Auction into the First Virtual Visionary Awards & Gala. Originally set to take place on April 27 at the Hilton Universal City in Studio City, Calif., the date was changed to May 31 and the venue became a cyberstitched mix of prerecorded and live-streamed-from-home segments viewable on YouTube and FaceBook.

And, in spite of the to-be-expected technical glitches, the show did eventually go on. Score: EWP 1, Virus 0.

But there was an added level of surreality to the proceedings as TV news outlets in Los Angeles simulcast the shelter-in-place mandate on May 25 to honor the sacrifices of Nisei veterans in a one-of-a-kind memorial service sponsored by JACL’s Northern California Western Nevada Pacific District.

While the shelter-in-place mandate made the traditional plan for the event — ordinarily co-sponsored by the Golden Gate Nisei Memorial Post #9879 VFW and held in Section R of the Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, Calif. — impossible, NCWNPD and a talented tech team from Yuen Designs came together proudly to create a unique program that gave community members near and far the opportunity to learn, reflect and honor a Japanese American legacy together.

Steve Okamoto, JACL San Mateo chapter president and vp of the Tanforan Assembly Center Memorial Committee, emceed the service program, opening with a warm welcome to the virtual audience.

“The legacy and work continues today, led by their daughters, Linda and Donna,” Ono said.

Accepting the EWP’s Visionary Award remotely were Sakaye Aratani and Linda Aratani. Sakaye Aratani recalled going with her late husband to the EWP’s former location on Santa Monica Boulevard and seeing the Aratani Courtyard.

The Japanese American Cultural and Community Center’s Aratani Theater and the Union Center for the Arts Aratani Theater were filled.

Addressing the situation, honoree Daniel Mayeda said, “I have to admit I feel a little awkward standing here alone in my living room, desperately in need of a haircut, wearing a tux, talking to an iPhone.”

Mayeda was one of three who received the EWP’s Visionary Award, the other two being the Aratani Foundation and screenwriter Adele Lim.

In his introduction for Sakaye Aratani, the widow of George Aratani, and their daughter, Linda Aratani, TV newsman David Ono of KABC-TV said, “To say that the Aratani Foundation has had an impact on the Asian American and specifically, the Japanese American community here in Southern California and nationally would be an understatement.”

Ono noted that since the Aratani Foundation was founded in 1994, its largesse has “transformed Little Tokyo,” citing the Japanese American National Museum’s George and Sakaye Aratani Central Hall, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center’s Aratani Theater and the Union Center for the Arts Aratani Theater.

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STAND UP

Asian Americans need to speak out and stand up for themselves, psychologists say in panel.

By Ray Locker

Dr. Carolee Tran, a Vietnamese American psychologist practicing in Sacramento, Calif., was shopping in her local Costco when an older white man approached her in the aisle.

“You’re a disgusting, animal-eating Asian woman,” he said to her.

Tran, who was 8 years old when her family fled the collapse of South Vietnam in 1975, was not having it.

“I said to him, ‘Shut the f--k up, get out of my face or I am going to call the manager.’ I am sick of it.

“My daughter thought I was going to get killed,” Tran said.

Tran, who joined psychologists Satsuki Ina and Gordon Nagayama Hall in a panel titled “Lessons From the Past: Yellow Peril in COVID-19 Times,” presented by the JACL on May 27 in conjunction with Asian American Heritage Month, said the time has come for Asian Americans to shed their historic reticence to speak up.

For too long, the panelists in the webinar, which was watched by more than 250 people, said that Asian Americans have tried to fit into the “model minority” niche consigned to them by white Americans; that Asian Americans have tried to get killed,” Tran said.

For most of her young life, Ina said, she followed the message that she had to be good and study hard. When most of her class of 100 students at the University of California, Berkeley, were out protesting, she was one of the two or three who showed up to class until her professor told her to get out with the rest of the class. “It kept me quiet for many years,” she said.

Now, however, as Ina witnesses the treatment of Latinx immigrants to the United States and the Trump administration’s family-separation policies, “I am pissed off and more activated than ever before.”

The webinar was moderated by Shirley Ann Higuchi, chair of the board of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, a sponsor of the event, and the senior director for legal and regulatory affairs for the American Psychological Assn. Other sponsors were the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans, the Asian American Psychological Assn. and the Southeast Asia Resource Action Center.

Tran has captured the lessons she’s learned in a new book, “The Gifts of Adversity,” which recounts her journey from Vietnam to become one of the founders of the social justice group Tsuru for Solidarity.

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Tran has captured the lessons she’s learned in a new book, “The Gifts of Adversity,” which recounts her journey from Vietnam to become the nation’s first Vietnamese American psychologist and her survival after suffering seven years of sexual abuse at the hands of a Roman Catholic priest. Higuchi is the author of an upcoming book that tells of her family’s experiences before, during and after the incarceration: “Setsuko’s Secret: Heart Mountain and the Legacy of the Japanese American Incarceration.”

See STAND on page 10
MOUNT OLYMPUS JACL MEETS AT SALT LAKE CITY CEMETERY

In advance of Memorial Day weekend, chapter members also participate in a cemetery cleanup.

By Floyd Mori

Because of the coronavirus and stay-at-home orders, most JACL chapters have not been holding activities or even board meetings. The Mount Olympus JACL chapter in Utah did not meet for its March board meeting since its major spring event had been canceled, and people were not supposed to venture out of their homes except for essential items because of the pandemic. The April board meeting was held over the phone.

However, since the stay-at-home restrictions were eased somewhat in the middle of May for most of Utah, Mount Olympus JACL Chapter President Dick Mano decided to hold a board meeting at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. Board members were invited to clean up the Japanese section of the cemetery, followed by a short board meeting. This was in anticipation of the Memorial Day weekend.

Besides the regular matters for the board to discuss, the chapter also held a drawing. Because the Fund-a-Rama, the chapter’s major fundraising event for the year, which normally benefits the scholarship fund, had been canceled, the chapter held a drawing since some of the prizes had already been gathered and tickets had been issued before the cancelation.

Board members present were Mano, Rebecca Oniki, Reid Tateoka, Floyd Mori, Irene Mori, Carolyn Valentine and Gary Okamoto. Also helping with the clean-up were Linda Mano, Shauna Tateoka and Chris, Andrew and Brandon Okamoto. Amy Tomita and Sadie Yoshimura joined the meeting by phone.

Mano returned to the cemetery a few days later to place a beautiful floral arrangement at the site of the monument erected in honor of the Japanese American veterans who were serving in the military when they died in World War II. The floral and written tribute to the veterans was from the Utah chapters of the JACL.

For years, the Japanese American community, including the three Utah JACL chapters (Salt Lake, Mount Olympus and Wasatch Front North) have been holding a Memorial Day service at the Japanese section of the Salt Lake City Cemetery to honor the Japanese American veterans of WWII and others who served in the military of the United States.

Usually joining with the JACL chapters have been the Daiichi Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Japanese Church of Church and the Salt Lake Buddhist Temple.

The memorial service is normally held on the Sunday morning of the Memorial Day weekend. It honors the achievements, sacrifices and lives of the Japanese American men who were killed during WWII along with other Japanese American veterans who have passed on since that time. The service is held at the War World II Japanese American Veteran’s Monument at the Salt Lake City cemetery, overlooking the Salt Lake Valley.

Most of those killed and honored whose names are listed on the monument were members of the 100th Infantry Battalion/The 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service. These U.S. Army units of WWII were honored with the U.S. Congressional Gold Medal of Honor in 2010. These Japanese American veterans have often been credited with helping to usher in the civil rights movement because of their heroism, patriotism and valor.

Many decades ago when the people of Japanese descent died in Salt Lake City, they were not allowed to be buried in the main part of the Salt Lake City Cemetery but were assigned plots far away from the major portions of the cemetery. The main part is an area that is across the street and from below the monument for the Japanese American veterans.

The Japanese section looks like a nice area now, but it was originally the undesirable part of the cemetery. Adjacent to the Japanese section is an area of Chinese graves.

It would be hoped that the racism of those years long gone would also have disappeared. Unfortunately, it is still with us and needs to be addressed. We must be ever vigilant in order to not let history repeat itself with regard to the egregious mistreatment that Japanese Americans received before, during and after WWII.

Floyd Mori was born and raised in Utah. His oldest brother, Shigeru Mori, has his name on the Utah Veterans’ Monument at the Salt Lake City Cemetery. Floyd Mori is a member of the National Veterans Network and worked on securing the Congressional Gold Medal awarded to Japanese American Veterans of WWII.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FLOYD MORI

EWP » continued from page 5

The plan to move to its current location in Little Tokyo meant raising funds to cover relocation costs and a tripling of its operating budget, Mayeda noted. While EWP worked hard to overcome those challenges during his tenure, he said that the pandemic-caused shutdown and related show cancellations has hurt EWP’s financial status quo and that this may be “the most-serious challenge that the theater has faced in its 54-year history.”

“But,” he continued, “I am confident that with all the people watching tonight, including people watching all across the country, that you will all rise up and support the theater and enable it to survive and advance and thrive.”

Actor-producer Daniel Dae Kim introduced the final honoree, Adele Lim, a screenwriter who co-wrote the megahit 2018 film “Crazy Rich Asians.”

“When I came to this industry, I was very much an outsider — Asian, female and a recent immigrant,” she said. “I found it very challenging breaking into an industry and writing stories, characters and roles that could not be any further from who I was or my experiences. But things are changing now, they’re different, thanks to the tenacious fighting spirit of our community and our homegrown organizations such as East West Players, CAPE and Gold House.”

At the end of the show, it was announced that EWP reached its goal of raising $200,000.

A recording of the First Virtual Visionary Awards & Gala can be viewed at tinyurl.com vevd4z6v.

NCWNP » continued from page 5

To memorialize the special Sister City relationship Hawaii has between Bruyères and Honolulu, the second educational half of the program was sponsored by the 100th Infantry Battalion Veterans Organization in Honolulu and led by volunteer Jayne Hirata.

Hirata’s program showcased the many diverse ways that the Japanese American World War II veterans are remembered and honored, not only in Hawaii or the mainland U.S., but also across the world.

The exciting and thought-provoking series of offerings included excerpts from the KHON2 news special “Back to Bruyères: The Legacy of the 100th” and a live interview with producer/editor Pamela Young; a re-enactment video from BCo/100Bn/442RCT Reenactment Group of Maizuru, Japan; a memorial video and message from Dr. Mitch Maki of the Go For Broke National Education Center; excerpts from JN Production’s documentary “Dream Big! A Postwar Success Story: The Nisei Soldiers of WWII” and remarks from Col. Keith Horikawa regarding the contemporary ongoing legacy of the 100th Battalion; and a showing of the “Go For Broke” music video and interview with musician and educator Kaze Jones.

Closing reflections and words of thanks from Yoshio “Yosh” Nakamura, a 442nd Regimental Combat Team veteran, concluded the program of remembrance.

By hosting this event virtually, the NCWNP District was able to include individuals, video and music that would not have been possible in an in-person program.

“The program was a fitting and moving Memorial Day for our community,” one participant said. Another viewer mentioned, “The Memorial Day event had me using my tissues too! It was wonderful.”

To view the recorded program on YouTube, visit https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL04D5S60PnFyfYf- fBmMTV98wSFhKJMa4V.

“The Nisei Soldiers of WWII”
TOD MIKURIYA: JA FATHER OF THE MEDICAL MARIJUANA MOVEMENT

This second installment focuses on Mikuriya's research successes.

By Rob Buscher, Contributor

The following article is a continuation from the May 22-June 4, 2020, issue of the Pacific Citizen about the early career of Japanese American medical marijuana pioneer Dr. Tod Mikuriya.

Although Dr. Tod Mikuriya’s time at the National Institute of Mental Health was brief, his experience working within a federal agency would shape his thinking for decades to come. It was clear to him that based on the overwhelming scientific bias that he witnessed at the NIMH, the government had committed to willful ignorance of the medicinal properties of cannabis.

After compiling the data for his “Position Paper on Marijuana,” Mikuriya was convinced that the only sensible course of action was for the government to decriminalize the substance so that medical researchers could resume scientific study of its medicinal properties that were widely acknowledged in U.S. pharmacology prior to the 1937 prohibition.

In 1970, Mikuriya moved to Berkeley, Calif., where he would become a fixture in the medical marijuana movement. In 1971, he joined Amorpha, a special interest group that was spearheading the California Marijuana Initiative.

Mikuriya consulted on the medical language used to support the ballot initiative also known as “Proposition 19” — to decriminalize the personal use of marijuana for persons 18 years of age or older — which was put to a vote in the 1972 California general election.

Fellow CMI advocate Gordon Brownell recalled, “With his short hair, sharp clothes and pleasant smile, Tod was a good spokesperson in the legislative arena. He particularly liked it when he could confront a conservative Republican legislator and go up to him and say something like, ‘Hi, I’m a medical doctor and a Republican. Do you support decriminalization of marijuana and getting the government out of our private lives?’”

Aside from his clean-cut appearance and professional credentials, what made Mikuriya stand out from other marijuana activists was his focus on the medical applications of cannabis. Although the CMI was defeated, it garnered support from more than a third of the electorate.

Fellow advocate Michael Aldrich, Ph.D., explained in the “Dr. Tod” biopic documentary, “We regarded 30 percent of the statewide vote as an enormous victory. It meant that for the first time anywhere, California proved that marijuana had an actual political constituency, particularly in San Francisco, Santa Monica and other liberal places. But it was an active political constituency. And George Moscone, who was our state senator from San Francisco at the time and our state Senate Majority Leader, understood right away that because the overwhelming third voted in favor of legalizing marijuana cultivation and possession throughout the state, the constituency deserved the opportunity to lower the penalties for marijuana at the very least.”

With their newfound support from San Francisco, Mikuriya and his fellow advocates spent the next two years convincing the Republican majority State Senate committees related to narcotics enforcement that California could save as much as $100 million a year by decriminalizing marijuana possession for personal use.

Aldrich continued, “The reason for the cost was because possession for any amount of marijuana was punished as a felony, and that meant that you had to go to state prison for at least a year if you got caught with even a seed in your purse. We worked out the figure between arrest costs, parole officers, the cost of courts and incarceration involving marijuana cases.”

One of the challenges that Mikuriya and other advocates faced was the lack of a comprehensive bibliography of the medical uses of cannabis. In 1973, Mikuriya amassed the many resources he had collected over the years into a compendium guide for medical practitioners that he titled “Marijuana Medical Papers 1839-1972,” which he self-published through a loan from his parents.

Referring their parents’ progres- sive attitude toward Mikuriya’s work, Mary Jane Mikuriya wrote, “My parents’ understanding of medical marijuana evolved with Tod’s evolution and discovery of its many uses throughout history. Mother was a trained research scientist who found the information Tod was discovering over time very interesting. Their long conversations, actually more like a scientific cross examination about cannabis, its side effects, its cultural uses and practices were very interesting to her. She was pleased and proud Tod was working to help his patients. She supported him speaking out to help those in need, even if it was against the law.”

Marijuana has been a highly controlled substance in Japan since 1948, where even today, getting caught with a gram or less intended for personal use can carry up to five years’ imprisonment and a hefty fine. However, the elder Tadafumi Mikuriya also supported his son’s work. “Dad was always supportive and proud of Tod as he spoke up and challenged social norms,” said Mary Jane Mikuriya. “He followed him carefully and shared the news of Tod’s activities, good and bad, with our Japanese relatives.”

Thus, with his parents’ blessing and financial backing, Mikuriya created the most comprehensive volume of medical marijuana texts to date — a much-needed asset in the ongoing effort to legalize marijuana. An excerpt from the introductory statement of Tod’s publication reads:

“Medicine in the Western World has forgotten almost all it once knew about therapeutic properties of marijuana, or cannabis. Analgesia, anticonvulsant action, appetite stimulation, ataraxia, antibiotic properties and low toxicity were described throughout medical literature, beginning in 1839 when O’Shaughnessy introduced cannabis into the Western pharmacopoeia. As these findings were reported throughout Western medicine, cannabis attained wide use. Cannabis therapy was described in most pharmacopoeial texts as a treatment for a variety of disease conditions.

The active constituents of cannabis appear to have remarkably low acute and chronic toxicity factors and might be quite useful in the management of many chronic disease conditions.”

Mikuriya’s book, along with another study he led titled “Costs of CaliforniaMarijuana Law Enforcement,” helped win over the fiscally conservative Republican leadership in Sacramento, who would enact SB 95 in 1975. The bill decriminalized possession of marijuana for personal use under one ounce from a felony to a misdemeanor.

Mikuriya would spend the next 15 years continuing to lobby for marijuana reform, which was increasingly difficult during the return to social conservatism marked by the Reagan presidency years.

It was not until the AIDS epidemic of the early 1990s when the pathway to legalizing medical marijuana would finally open. Lacking access to proper medical care amidst society-wide prejudice at a time when little was known about their disease, many AIDS patients had taken to self-medicating with marijuana as a solution to pain management and restoration of appetite.

Acknowledging the opportunity that this presented, pro-marijuana advocate Dennis Peron mobilized San Francisco’s gay community and its allies to successfully campaign for Proposition P — a ballot question in the city election that would lead to the legalization of medical marijuana in the city of San Francisco.

Mikuriya was featured in a 1972 California Statewide Steering Committee Proposition 19 ad for the decriminalization of marijuana.

More reasonable laws and regulations controlling psychoactive drug research are required to permit significant medical inquiry to begin so that we can fill the large gaps in our knowledge of cannabis.

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Mikuriya was asked to write the text of the ballot question, which read:

The people of the city and county of San Francisco recommend that the State of California and the California Medical Association restore Hemp medical preparations to the list of available medicines in California. Licensed physicians shall not be penalized for, or restricted from, prescribing Hemp preparations for medical purposes to any patient.

The term Hemp medical preparations means all products made from Hemp, Cannabis, or Marijuana in all forms that are designed, intended, or used for human consumption for the treatment of any disease, the relief of pain, or for any healing purpose including; the relief of asthma, glaucoma, arthritis, anorexia, migraines, multiple sclerosis, epilepsy, nausea, stress, for use as an anti-biotic and anti-hemato, or as any healing agent or as an adjunct to any medical procedure for the treatment of cancer, HIV infection or any other medical procedure or herbal treatment.

Mikuriya was deliberate in his choice of words to “restore Hemp medical preparations” using this opportunity to educate the public about the past inclusion of medical cannabis in the U.S. Pharmacopoeia.

Prop P passed by an overwhelming margin of 4-to-1, paving the way for the first medical marijuana dispensary, the San Francisco Cannabis Buyers Club, to open. Mikuriya helped draft the intake protocol for the dispensary, which included a required letter of diagnosis from a licensed physician. In the years that followed, he would continue his advocacy efforts for statewide legislation that would eventually be introduced in 1996 as Proposition 215.

Mikuriya explained in his biopic documentary, “As one of the authors of the Prop 215, my claim to fame is getting the phrase ‘for any other condition that Cannabis is helpful’ included.”

He would also write the protocols for dozens of other dispensaries that were opened after Prop 215 passed. In the aftermath of the statewide legalization of medical marijuana, oncologists and AIDS specialists largely embraced cannabis as part of their treatment plans, but few others were willing to do so.

Decades of information suppression regarding the medical uses of cannabis meant that physicians knew little about its effects, appropriate dosage or even what conditions it could be used to treat. Additionally, because federal law still forbade the use of marijuana as a controlled substance, law enforcement agencies threatened to revoke prescription-writing privileges of doctors who approved marijuana use.

Despite the legislative victories in California, the Clinton administration had elevated the Office of National Drug Control Policy to a cabinet level department, and by the end of 1996, over 544,700 individual arrests were made on marijuana possession charges nationwide.

Mikuriya’s high-profile role in the medical marijuana movement drew the ire of Barry McCaffrey, the director of ONDCP, colloquially known as the “Drug Czar” who publicly ridiculed Mikuriya’s medical philosophy as “a Cheech and Chong Show.” Even today, the debate about whether state laws on marijuana can supersedes federal laws is a legal grey area that patients and medical practitioners must navigate with caution. Not knowing how long he would be able to operate under the precarious legal circumstances, Mikuriya felt a sense of urgency to authorize as many patients as possible and thus opened the Mikuriya Practice in 1996, where he began practicing cannabis therapy full-time.

Never losing sight of his Japanese heritage, Mikuriya used the family mon crest on his business cards and website. As a psychiatrist, his examination mainly consisted of a discussion about the patient’s history related to mental and emotional health and did not include a physical.

Unfortunately, this would be his undoing as state and federal law enforcement conspired with the conservative-leaning members of the Medical Board of California, who strongly opposed Prop 215 to fabricate a formal investigation into his practice in 2003.

Mikuriya’s attorney, Bill Simpich, explained, “The hardcore anti-215 crowd in the Attorney General’s office realized they were going to lose and decided to round up all the cases filed by District Attorneys and cops who were ‘sore losers’ in Prop 215 cases and seek the records of the victorious patients.”

The case deviated from the normal protocols related to medical board investigations, which are typically only conducted when patients or health care providers issue a formal complaint. Documentation from state medical board records support this claim, as the record shows all complainants were members of law enforcement.

In an article from the fall 2015 issue of Nevada County Cannabis, patient advocate Bobby Eisenberg wrote, “The case against Dr. Tod was nothing short of a good old-fashioned witch-hunt. Not one patient filed a complaint against Tod, nor was there any evidence that a single patient had been harmed. The District Attorneys and Sheriffs were fractioned from successfully prosecute legitimate cannabis patients for possession and cultivation due to Tod’s recommendations and testimonies.”

During the trial proceedings, Mikuriya once again found solace amidst the Quaker community from the Quaker Fellowship he belonged to in Berkeley. Several of his Quaker friends attended the trial as a show of solidarity.

Beverly Mikuriya wrote, “These white men, well-connected, dressed in business suits, sat facing the judge and stood out from the rest of the attendees at the trial because they all wore a 4-inch-wide round lapel button that said, ‘Witness.’ They came in each session and did not talk among themselves nor to anyone at the trial, but their presence was very noticeable. Tod was comforted by their support — once again, the Quakers played an important role during Tod’s life.”

In January 2004, the Medical Board of California ruled that Mikuriya had committed gross negligence and nearly revoked his license. An excerpt from the ruling alleges that Mikuriya “committed acts of gross negligence, repeated negligence, recommended and approved the use of a controlled substance without conducting a prior good faith examination and failed to maintain adequate and accurate medical records in the care and treatment of 16 patients.”

Mikuriya’s penalty was reduced to a hefty fine and probation period of five years, but it left a lasting impact on his outlook for the remainder of his life.

Mary Jane Mikuriya wrote, “What Tod went through with medical cannabis was just like living again during the war years... waiting for the next personal attack, and he never knew where it might be coming from.”

Mikuriya shared similar sentiments in one of his final interviews with O’Shaughnessy’s journal that was published posthumously: “The cannabis prohibition has the same dynamics as the bigotry and racism my family and I experienced starting on Dec. 7, 1941, when we were transformed from normal-but different people into war-criminal surrogates.”

After being diagnosed with cancer in March 2006, Mikuriya continued to see patients and had an active role in organizing a medical marijuana symposium in March 2007 before succumbing to his illness in May 2007.

Mary Jane Mikuriya recalled her brother’s general service, where more than 300 attended.

“In the Quaker tradition, each participant stood up to tell some remembrance of the deceased. The remembrance event took over three hours, and people just did not leave the memorial. At the reception, people told one another how Tod spoke up against the law on their behalf,” she remembered.

Mikuriya was buried in the Quaker cemetery across from his childhood home in Fallsington, Penn.

Although he did not live to see his vision fully realized, so many of the medical marijuana movement’s victories in the past decade can be directly attributed to the work that Mikuriya began.

Medical marijuana has been legalized in 33 states, including the District of Columbia. All but six of the Democratic presidential primary candidates were in favor of outright legalizing marijuana. Presidential candidate Joe Biden wants to let the states decide and is in favor of scrapping past federal marijuana convictions.

Longtime JACL sponsor AARP issued a statement from its Board of Directors in September 2019, with the organization “supporting the use of medical marijuana in the states that have legalized it and supporting further research on medical use of cannabis to help alleviate the symptoms of diseases and the side effects of the treatment for diseases.”

Perhaps it is time that the JACL consider an official policy position on the subject as well. Civil rights group ACLU has actively opposed marijuana prohibition since 1968, objecting to the government’s criminalization on the grounds that it violates the “rights of individuals to make choices concerning their own bodies and private behavior.”

» See TOD on next page
Higuchi’s parents, William and Setsuko, were forced from their homes in San Jose and San Francisco and met as children in the seventh grade in the Heart Mountain school. They reunited as students at Berkeley and married in the 1950s. Hall, who is a psychology professor at the University of Denver, said Asian Americans face a constant stream of “microaggressions” from non-Asians, including questions about where they were really born or comments about how Asian American women are “exotic.” He cited a study that found that 78% of Asian Americans face some kind of microaggression every two weeks. The son of a Japanese American woman who was incarcerated at the camp in Poston, Ariz., and a Caucasian man who served in the Navy during World War II, Hall said he learned that people “can be an ally even if they are not part of a group.”

His father, Charles Hall, grew up in Washington state, where he attended a Methodist church with a largely Japanese American congregation. When his father got leave during the war, he told his commanders he was visiting family members in Pennsylvania. Instead, he went to the camp in Heart Mountain, Wyo., where his friends from home were incarcerated.

“He stayed in the camp,” Hall said. “He did it because these people were his friends. He wasn’t trying to be noble.”

Second Class Petty Officer Charles Hall of Cold Bay, Alaska, is listed as a visitor in the Sept. 18, 1943, edition of the Heart Mountain Sentinel. After the war, Charles Hall quit his local Elks Club when they refused to admit Japanese Americans and joined the Nisei Veterans Committee.

“My dad became an honorary Nisei.”

That kind of bearing witness for others is critical to her current work with Tsuru for Solidarity, Ina said. That group fights to raise awareness about the treatment of Latinx immigrants and also organizes “healing circles” to help people cope with multigenerational mental health trauma.

Tran agreed. “We need to ally with other people about how this is a repeat of history,” she said. “We need to fight it with whatever we can. Every bystander needs to stand up.”

The ACLU further explains in its statement, “Marijuana prohibition and the policies surrounding it result in a series of other civil liberties violations, including threatened rights to free speech and protection from illegal searches and seizure.” Between 2001-10, more than 7 million arrests were made for marijuana possession alone. Data gathered by the ACLU shows that the policing and enforcement of marijuana laws are also significantly biased against African-Americans on a regular basis, African-Americans are actually 3.73 times more likely to be arrested. Selective prosecution of these cases has likewise resulted in a disproportionate number of African-Americans serving jail time on low-level possession charges.

Regardless of whether the JACL adopts a formal stance on this issue, it is clear that the Japanese American community has long held stake in this conversation, thanks to the tireless advocacy of Dr. Tod Mikuriya.

Special thanks to Mary Jane and Beverly Mikuriya for sharing their memories and photographs that helped shape this article and Fred Gardner for the wealth of information about Dr. Tod Mikuriya and the medical marijuana movement published in his O’Shaughnessy’s Journal.

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

DUE TO HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS IN THE U.S. BECAUSE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, PLEASE CHECK REGARDING THE STATUS OF EVENTS LISTED IN THIS ISSUE’S CALENDAR SECTION.

NATIONAL

JACL National Convention
Continue to follow JACL on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, JACL.org and PacificCitizen.org for updated information regarding this year’s National Convention. There will be a virtual National Board meeting on Aug. 15.

Tadamalt! A Community Virtual Pilgrimage
National Event
June 13-Aug. 16
Price: Free
Hosted by the Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages website, this collaboration brings together representatives from many different parts of the Nikkei community who are committed to actively memorializing the history of Japanese American incarceration during WWII. Spread across nine themed weeks, “Tadamalt!” will feature prerecorded and live-streamed content, as well as opportunities to engage as a community.
Info: For more information, visit https://www.japlmpilgrimages.com.

Presidential Town Hall
National Event
June 27
Price: Free
This nonpartisan event will be the largest convergence of Asian American and Pacific Islander professionals and community leaders in this opportunity for the presidential candidates to participate and address issues relating to the AAPI community’s needs for the future. In addition, a series of workshops will also be organized before and after the event to support community building — all done within an interactive environment.

PSW
Queer Nikiesto Stories: Intergenerational Conversations
June 18
Los Angeles, CA
Online via Zoom 6:30-8 p.m.
Price: Free; RSVP
Okaeri, JANM and Visual Communications invite you to listen and participate in conversations with several generations of LGBTQ+ identified Japanese Americans as they talk about their experiences at the intersections of these identities. Join George Takei, USC student/JACL member Justin Kawaguchi and June Lagmay, founder of Asian/Pacific Lesbians and Gays, who will be in dialogue with Aya Tatsaki, a bicultural advocate. The audience will also be encouraged to take part in a Q & A portion, and the event will also include short films about Takei and Lagmay and their impact within the LGBTQ+ community and beyond.
Info: RSVP at janm.org/events.

JANM Online Museum Collection
Los Angeles, CA
Japanese American National Museum
Online
JANM’s Museum Collections Online features selected highlights from the museum’s permanent collection of more than 60,000 unique artifacts, documents and photographs. Among the collections that can be viewed are the “Shiho Hirono, the Tora Hirono Diary,” “Hisako Hishi Collection” and “Hideo Date Collection,” “Estelle Ishigo Collection,” among others. The museum is temporarily closed, viewers can still experience its inside treasures.
Info: www.janm.org.

PNW
Wing Luke Museum Online
Digital Content
Seattle, WA
Wing Luke Museum
Although the museum’s doors are temporarily closed, there is still a plethora of curated stories, digital content and neighborhood resources available to access and view. Viewers can check out Education, YouthCANS, Art Projects and Community Art all online!
Info: www.digitalwinglue.org.

EDC
Japan Society of Boston Free Online Resources
Boston, MA
Virtual classes and information
Price: Free
The Japan Society of Boston is offering free online resources featuring Japanese language learning tools, Japanese cooking, origami, arts and lectures and much more, all in a virtual online capacity.

Kimonos are cultural symbols which represent the beauty, nobility and significance of Japanese culture. They have been worn by men and women in all walks of life and have accompanied Japan's development from ancient times to the present day. Kimono is a Japanese traditional garment that consists of several parts: the outermost garment is called ‘Furoshiki’ and is used to wrap objects.
Obituaries

Hashii, Francis Regis, 69, Lanai City, HI, Nov. 5, 2019; he is survived by his partner, Kathleen Rose Fowler; siblings, Alileen Kins Krause (Steven); Patrick Anne Hashii (James Bradley Barnett), Michael Timothy Hashii (Mayumi); a niece and a nephew.

Higa, Terri, 64, Foster City, CA, May 5; she is survived by her siblings, Lori, Max and Randy; aunt, Helen; and a godson. A celebration of life is pending.

Kawata, Sam Tetsuo, 99, Culver City, CA, Nov. 24, 2019; he is survived by his children, Christine (Dennis) Yamamoto and Rick Kawata; siblings, Alileen Kins Krause (Steven); his partner, Kathleen Rose Fowler; siblings, Aileen Kimi Krause (Steven), Max and Randy; aunt, Helen; and a godson. A celebration of life is pending.

Shimazu; sister-in-law, Marie Matsumura; and a niece.

Nakaki, David Kiyoshi, 82, Tustin, CA, Dec. 9, 2019; he was predeceased by his brother, James Nakaki; he is survived by his children, Karen (Kevin) Little, Mitchell Nakaki and Claire Nakaki; mother,atsu Nakaki; sisters, Linda (Steve) Ritter and Susan (Matt) Lorenzini; sister-in-law, Kathryn Nakaki; and he is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

Paloma, Erma Iwami, 77, Corona, CA, Feb. 7; a retired school teacher in the Corona/Norco Unified School District, she is survived by her husband, Steve; daughter, Michelle (Shiro) Hamada; gc: 1; celebration of life to take place at a future date in Honolulu, HI.

Shigetomi, Fumi, 98, Pasadena, CA, May 4; donations in her memory may be made to the First Presbyterian Church of Altadena, the Pasadena Humane Society or Pasadena Nikkei Seniors.

Cedric Shimoo, flanked by the co-directors of “The Registry,” Steve Ozone and Bill Kubota

PLACE A TRIBUTE

In Memoriam

Shimoo, Cedric Masaki, 100, Los Angeles, CA, April 1; a graduate of Roosevelt High School in the Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights, Shimo had graduated from UCLA and was attending grad school at UC Berkeley when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor; he was drafted into the Army on Jan. 8, 1941. Shimo appears in a longer version of the MIS documentary “The Registry” and tells of attending the MIS Language School in Camp Savage, Minn., where he was placed into the three-month speed-up class for advanced students. Before he could graduate, however, he was expelled. “I’m the only one that’s ever been kicked out of MIS school. I had a good reason, though,” he said. That reason: His request to visit the Manzanar WRA Center while on furlough to see his mother before he was shipped overseas to serve was denied because the West Coast was an exclusion zone for people of Japanese ancestry, despite his being in the Army. “I think I must have raised too much of a fuss because they expelled me,” he said in the movie, adding later, “I’m not ashamed of what I did.” He was demoted and transferred to the 525th Quartermaster Corps, a “labor battalion,” which later became the 1800th Engineer General Service Battalion. Shimo would later receive an honorable discharge. In 2008, he was also awarded an Order of the Rising Sun kuniusho from Japan. In 2009, he was awarded an honorary degree from UCB because his education had been interrupted by the war. (P.C. Nov. 26-Dec. 17, 2009). After WWII, Shimoo had a career with the American Honda Motor Co., where he served as a vp. As a retiree, he served as a docent at the Japanese American National Museum. He was predeceased by wives Mitsuko Uyeno and Mildred Sasaki; he is survived by his son, Roderick; 2 nieces, a nephew, a grandnephew and many other relatives and friends.

Tahara, Masayoshi, 90, Rancho Palos Verdes, CA, Dec. 24, 2019; during WWII, he was incarcerated at the Granada WRA Center (Camp Amache) in CO; he was predeceased by his wife, Sumiko; he is survived by his children, Stanley Tahara, Don, Rassouli (Abbas) and Korie Tahara Jacobs (Craig); gc: 2.

Takeuchi, Ted Tetsuo, 92, Los Angeles, CA, Feb. 14; he is survived by his wife, Sumiye; son, Gary; gc: 3.

Uemura, Yoshiko, 87, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 14, 2019; she was predeceased by her husband, Kakichi; she is survived by her children, Kazuhide, Kazuaki and Joann; many gc and ggc.

Unemoto, Tom, 95, Los Angeles, CA, Nov. 24, 2019; he is survived by his brother, Herb; a niece, 2 nephews, 2 grandnieces and 1 great-grandniece.

PLACE A TRIBUTE

“In Memoriam” is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of $20/column inch.

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Editorial@pacificcitizen.org

June 5-18, 2020

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REIMAGINE EVERYTHING

AARP AND THE WOMEN’S ALZHEIMER’S MOVEMENT UNVEIL GROUNDBREAKING REPORT ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN AND ALZHEIMER’S, DEMENTIA AND BRAIN HEALTH

By Ron Mori

Seventy-five top Alzheimer’s and dementia experts collaborated on a 10-year strategic plan for researchers, policymakers and caregivers. AARP and the Women’s Alzheimer’s Movement synthesized years of data and findings to help explain why women are disproportionately affected by Alzheimer’s disease.

Two-thirds of the 5.8 million Americans living with Alzheimer’s disease today are women, and they also do the majority of caregiving for people with Alzheimer’s and dementia.

“It’s Time to Act: The Challenges of Alzheimer’s and Dementia for Women” is a comprehensive examination of the state of research and offers a first-ever five-point strategic plan for all who seek meaningful change in the next decade.

At current rates, 13.8 million Americans will be living with dementia by the middle of the century, and most of them will be women — yet there is still no vaccine or cure.

Ten years ago, the Women’s Alzheimer’s Movement partnered with the Alzheimer’s Assn. and, with additional support from AARP, first cast a spotlight on the extraordinary burden that women carry for Alzheimer’s disease and dementia. We need to work to reduce risk, improve care and help people keep their brains healthy while they age,” said AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins.

But no one organization or researcher can do it alone. We need to tap into everyone’s strengths and also make a call for women to take ownership of their own brain health.

“Medical research has historically left women out of clinical trials, making the assumption that they are basically the same as men,” said Maria Shriver, founder of the Women’s Alzheimer’s Movement. “That has led to a gap in knowledge about women’s health in general and Alzheimer’s in particular. We have got to close that gap. And, if the COVID-19 crisis has taught us nothing else, it is that we must be prepared for an epidemic that data predicts — and science accepts — as inevitable fact. We cannot allow Alzheimer’s and dementia to continue to claim the lives of our mothers, aunts, grandmothers, sisters, nieces, daughters and friends in record numbers.”

The following statement was released by AARP CEO Jo Ann Jenkins:

“As we consider this moment in time, we see the intersection of racial injustice and the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, which has disproportionately impacted people of color in every facet of our society. These events have highlighted the importance of an intersectional lens in our work.

AARP today continues to be guided by the promise that our founder, Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, made over 60 years ago: ‘We do what we do for all.’ Through our advocacy, programs and services, we fight against discrimination, advocate for access to health care and work to improve the lives of all people, especially those most vulnerable.

As we consider this moment in time, it’s clear this work is more important than ever. During these difficult days, AARP will use its voice, resources and trust in our brand to continue our fight for what is right so all people can live a life of dignity regardless of race, age or income.”

Founded by Shriver, the Women’s Alzheimer’s Movement is a nonprofit organization that is dedicated to raising awareness about women’s increased risk for Alzheimer’s and to educating the public — women and men — about lifestyle changes they can make to protect their brain health. Through annual campaigns and initiatives, WAM raises funds to support women-based Alzheimer’s research at leading scientific institutions around the country.

The report’s recommended strategic plan details a global strategy to help all women and their families who are contending with Alzheimer’s and dementia, regardless of income, ethnicity, education or cultural background. The five-step action plan strives to:

- Eliminate the Stigma of Dementia. Stigma stands in the way of diagnosis and quality care for this serious, public health problem.
- Empower Women to Stay Brain Healthy. Science has shown that we can all do a great deal to promote our own brain health.
- Ensure That Research Is Inclusive. Researchers must learn why dementia affects so many women and underserved communities, and they should report such data in their findings.
- Support Family Caregivers. All family caregivers should have access to training and local services that help them perform their duties. They should have paid leave and health care benefits.
- Improve Medical Training for Dementia. Health care providers must do a better job of addressing, spotting and treating cognitive decline in older women.

The full report and recommendations are available online at https://www.aarp.org/health/brain-health/global-council-on-brain-health/womens-report.

“Putting the spotlight back on better brain health will improve lives for everyone — but it will make the greatest difference for women because women bear a disproportionate burden, and underserved communities are especially affected,” said Sarah Lenz Lock, senior vp at AARP and executive director of the Global Council on Brain Health.

Ron Mori is a member of the Washington, D.C, JACL chapter and manager of community, states and national affairs — multicultural leadership for AARP.

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