WASHINGTON SCHOOL IS NAMED AFTER DENNY YASUHARA.

JAPANESE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF OREGON CELEBRATES ITS NEW SPACE.

THE USPS RELEASES THE GO FOR BROKE: JAPANESE AMERICAN SOLDIERS OF WWII COMMEMORATIVE STAMP.

HEROES FOREVER

June 18-July 1, 2021
**JACL NATIONAL WELCOMES NEW SUMMER INTERN**

Hunter Akiyoshi will assist JACL staff as a policy and programs intern.

Hunter Akiyoshi joins JACL as its new summer policy and programs intern.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JACL NATIONAL

---

**JANM and East West Players Receive Transformative Gift From Philanthropist MACKENZIE SCOTT**

The two Los Angeles-based entities are each gifted $10 million.

Mackenzie Scott, the billionaire philanthropist and ex-wife of Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, announced June 15 that she has given away more than $2.7 billion to hundreds of groups this year, among them the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo and East West Players, also based in Little Tokyo, which were each given $10 million.

Scott in a blog post said she donated to 286 “high-impact organizations” focused on a variety of causes, ranging from the arts and racial justice to higher education and combating domestic violence. Her post also noted that she has given away more than $3.5 billion since June 2020.

In a statement released by the museum, it said, “After a year that profoundly challenged the museum, the nation and the Asian community, we are deeply grateful for this landmark gift and to Ms. Scott for her generosity and visionary support for organizations across the country which are focused on achieving social impact in their communities,” said Ann Burroughs, president and CEO of JANM.

“Nearly 30 years, JANM has used the lessons of Japanese American incarceration and the loss of their civil rights to illuminate a better path forward for all Americans and the nation. MacKenzie Scott’s gift will ensure that we can continue to keep that history alive and to shine a light on the imperfect present and to shape a more just future.”

East West Players, the largest producer of Asian American theatrical works, also released a statement acknowledging Scott’s donation.

“East West Players is incredibly honored to be a recipient of MacKenzie Scott’s extraordinary philanthropy. In her announcement today, Scott’s sentiment that ‘people struggling against inequities deserve center stage in stories about change they are creating’ encapsulates the core purpose of East West Players’ work,” said Snehal Desai, producing artistic director of EWP. “In a time when hate crimes against Asian and Asian Americans continue to increase exponentially, this investment will ensure that the work of East West Players will continue to speak up and speak out against systemic injustice. . . . As [Scott] states at the end of her statement, ‘Generosity is generative. Sharing makes more.’”

---

**PACIFIC CITIZEN 2021 SPRING CAMPAIGN**

JACL MEMBER? ☐ Y ☐ N ☐ $50 ☐ $100 ☐ $150 ☐ $200 ☐ OTHER ______

Name: ____________________________

Address 1: ____________________________

Phone Number: ____________________________

E-mail: ____________________________

The P.C.’s mission is to ‘educate on the past Japanese American experience and preserve, promote and help the current and future API communities.’

*Your donations will help build and preserve a cohesive library of the Pacific Citizen to educate future generations.*
JAC has benefited from years of partnership with other individuals, organizations, coalitions and, more recently, corporations. One of the lessons from the World War II incarceration was that the lack of support from others probably made the incarceration more possible. It is why we have sought to make sure that we support others because we know that sometime, we might need their support.

This past year, as anti-Asian hate escalated, the support of others became all the more apparent and needed. With hate coming from groups outside our Asian American community, we needed people and groups representing those outside our own community speaking out against anti-Asian hate.

As we continue to emphasize, it is not so much what we do to combat the immediate surge in anti-Asian hate, it is what those outside our community do to denormalize it and make attitudes of anti-Asian sentiment socially unacceptable.

It is in the long-term fight against racism and xenophobia where JACL focuses our effort with our grounding in education. Programs such as the Japanese American Confinement Sites grants are vital to supporting education efforts of organizations such as JACL and many others with whom we partner from the Japanese American Citizens League, formerly the Organization of Japanese Americans, with whom we are formally affiliated. Because of being one of the significant elements of this year’s upcoming National Convention.

Founded in the early 1970s, OCA was with us in support throughout the redress fight. This year will mark the 27th year that OCA has joined with us in our highly successful Leadership Summit that brings JACL and OCA members together to learn about the advocacy work we do and how we do it in partnership with one another and in coalition with many other groups in Washington, D.C.

Among the alumni of the Leadership Summit is Krystal Ka’ai, the recently appointed executive director for the White House Initiative on Asian Americans, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

As a parent of two children, I fully understand the importance of this priority, as I have seen the reliance upon the internet in conducting all of their schoolwork this year.

Among our other partners for this year’s convention are Comcast Universal, Verizon, MGM Resorts International and the JACL Credit Union. The Credit Union is one of our longest-standing partnerships, and, of course, JACL membership enables you to join the JACL Credit Union. Similarly, our longstanding partnership with AARP allows the JACL site to be one of the select sites with specially discounted membership rates, a benefit unavailable without your JACL membership.

As we approach the convention this year, these are some of the many different partnerships we will be celebrating and recognizing. They are all important and fundamental to the work we do and the successes we have.


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

ALZHEIMER’S AND DEMENTIA

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Not too long ago, I was able to visit with an old childhood friend. After the initial greetings, we sat down and talked. There was so much to say — it had been years (decades). What came out of her mouth next seemed jumbled and confusing. So, I said, “Just how long has it been since you lost your mind?” She hit me.

Currently, an estimated 50 million people worldwide are living with dementia, including more than 5 million Americans. According to the Alzheimer’s Assn., this number could reach nearly 14 million by 2050 without changes in prevention or treatment. More than 80 percent of care provided at home is delivered or treatment. More than 80 percent of care provided at home is delivered. The brain has three main parts: the cerebrum, cerebellum and brain stem. Each has a job to do to make the body work properly. The cerebrum fills up most of the skull. It’s the part of the brain most involved in remembering, problem-solving and thinking. There are about 100 billion nerve cells called neurons throughout the brain that send messages in order to make memories, feelings and thoughts.

This causes the brain to lose tissue (also called shrinkage) and the loss of function and communication between cells. These changes can cause the symptoms of Alzheimer’s disease. These include memory loss, problems with thinking and planning; behavioral issues; and, in the last stage, a further decline in functioning, which can even include trouble swallowing.

Scientists know there is a cell failure is a part of Alzheimer’s disease, but they don’t yet know why. Scientists have identified certain risk factors that increase the likelihood of developing Alzheimer’s.

The greatest known risk factor for Alzheimer’s is age. After age 65, a person’s risk of developing the disease doubles every five years. Thirty-two percent of people aged 85 or older have Alzheimer’s.

Researchers have learned that family history also increases the likelihood of developing Alzheimer’s. Another risk factor is genetics. Two types of genes influence whether a person develops a disease: risk genes and deterministic genes. Risk genes increase the chance of developing a disease but do not guarantee it will happen. Deterministic genes cause a disease. This means anyone who inherits a deterministic gene will develop the disease.

Age, family history and genetics are all risk factors that we can’t change. However, research is starting to show clues about other risk factors that we may be able to influence. Studies show a strong connection between serious head injury and future risk of Alzheimer’s. For this reason, it’s important to protect your head.

Research also shows there are healthy lifestyle habits that people can adopt to help keep their brain healthy and lower their risk of cognitive decline. These include eating a healthy diet, staying socially active and exercising the body and the mind. Not using tobacco and avoiding excess alcohol is also good. Can hardly, there is no cure for Alzheimer’s, but nondrug treatments and medications may help with memory, thinking and behavioral symptoms for a while. Nondrug treatments for behavioral symptoms can offer physical and emotional comfort. Many of these strategies aim to identify and take care of the needs of the person living with Alzheimer’s. It’s important to talk about treatments with your doctor.

The information above is just a portion of information from an Alzheimer’s Assn. publication titled “Understanding Alzheimer’s and Dementia.” The entire pamphlet can be found online at alz.org/media/Documents/understanding-alzheimers-dementia-b.pdf.

Finally, here are some tips for coping with symptoms:

• Check for personal comfort. Look for pain, hunger, thirst, constipation, full bladder, fatigue, infections and skin irritation. Keep the room temperature comfortable.

• Don’t argue about facts. For example, if a person would like to visit a parent who died years ago, don’t point out that the parent is no longer alive. Instead, say, “Your mother is a wonderful person. I would like to see her, too.”

• Redirect the person’s attention by getting them to think about something new. Try to be flexible, patient and supportive. Respond to the emotion, not the behavior.

• Create a calm environment. Avoid noise and make sure there’s enough light and no sudden lights; quiet TV.

• Give personal security. Help them feel safe.

• Have rest times between lively events.

• Show the person that you hear them and answer his or her questions.

• For reasons behind each behavior. Talk to a doctor about behaviors that could be connected to medications or illness.

• Try to find more than one solution.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or judd@elderlawcalifornia.com. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.
COMING BACK HOME WITH PRIDE

By Marsha Aizumi

June is PRIDE month, and I thought this would be a good opportunity to feature one of my dear friends, Eric Arimoto. He has been such a committed advocate for the Japanese American LGBTQ+ community, since we met. I love how he has returned to the JA community to bring visibility and voice, as well as healing and hope, as a volunteer, organizer and mental health therapist specializing in LGBTQ+ affirmative therapy.

This is Eric . . .

Hello JACL community. My name is Eric Arimoto. I am a 56-year-old, fourth-generation, Japanese American, gay dude who uses the pronouns he/him/his. I live in Long Beach, Calif., with my partner, Paul.

A native Angeleno who grew up in the Baldwin Hills/Crenshaw district, I left home at 18 to join the U.S. Army, where I came out of the closet and started my first relationship with a fellow soldier in 1984.

I came out to my family in a Christmas card announcing that I have always been gay, always knew that I would grow up to love a man and that I am finally happy.

For 20 years, I designed and manufactured furniture. I am 25 years sober. As a result of years of psychotherapy, I returned to school in my 40s and got a master’s degree in clinical psychology.

Today, I work with the Department of Mental Health with the Sheriff Department’s Mental Evaluations Teams, providing support and referrals to people experiencing mental health crises. I also have a private practice specializing in providing trauma-informed, LGBTQ+ affirmative therapy for individuals, couples and adolescents.

I never intended to come back to the Nikkei community. Growing up playing basketball and baseball with CYC, going to Little Tokyo to visit my grandmother, going to community events, picnics, Nisei week, etc. accentuated how different I was.

The silence surrounding homosexuality in our community was stifling, terrifying and enraging. I never felt welcomed. Certainly, I didn’t have any role models to light the way toward having a positive self-image, pride in my identity or any reasonable hope of being accepted as a Japanese American gay man.

Being gay, for me, dictated that I navigate the white-dominated gay community, assimilate to their ways of doing things and thinking.

In 2012, I was doing exactly that when I met Marsha and Aiden Azumi, who came to my internship site to talk about their journey as a Japanese American transgender son coming out to his mother.

Within minutes of their presentation, I was sobbing. I was not conscious of how I longed to be healed of the split in my sense of self and the alienation from my birth community.

Soon after meeting Marsha, she asked me to participate in an API PFLAG group that she was organizing, which led to an invitation to Okaeri’s planning committee.

For me, Okaeri, like grace, came when I least expected it but most needed it. I didn’t have to choose one part of my identity. Rediscovering the JA community, I see how decent, kind, self-less, thoughtful and loving we are.

To be honest, during the organizing of the 2014 Okaeri convention, I was uneasy, felt out of place and had no idea what I was doing there. But on the day of the conference, when over 200 people showed up who looked like my family, aunties and uncles, grandparents and people I grew up around, I allowed myself to believe that our community is finally dealing with their fear and shame related to LGBTQ identity.

I’m still a sort of hybrid JAbanana kid. But I stick around the village and do this work because I know that there are so many other Nikkei LGBTQ+ folk, allies, family members out there who have yet to hear the welcoming call of Okaeri.

Today, I am a proud Japanese American gay man who has been embraced by my family and community. I thank all of you who have loved, accepted and supported me on my journey. It feels so good to be back home. . . .

I love and admire Eric so deeply . . . his honesty, his fierce advocacy for the Nikkei LGBTQ+ community and his own journey to integrate and find acceptance for both his gay and Nikkei identities. I hope you have enjoyed his beautiful story and felt his amazing heart.

If you would like to celebrate Pride Month with your Nikkei LGBTQ+ friends, family and allies on June 7-8-30 p.m. PT, please join us at Okaeri Connects’ PRIDE Happy Hour. To register at Eventbrite, visit https://OkaeriConnects-June252021.eventbrite.com to be sent the Zoom link to attend.

I love Eric and would love to see all of you join us to be a visible support and share what you are proud of in your life!

Marsha Aizumi is an advocate in the LGBT community and author of the book “Two Spirits, One Heart: A Mother’s Journey and Their Journey to Love and Acceptance.”

JAVA to Commemorate 75th Anniversary of President Truman’s Salute to WWII Nisei Soldiers

The organization’s ‘Day of Affirmation’ ceremony recognizes that all Japanese American soldiers who served during the war are America’s heroes.

By Neet Ford

On July 15, the Japanese American Veterans Assn. will commemorate the second annual Day of Affirmation at the World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. This date marks the 75th anniversary of President Harry S. Truman’s review of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team on the White House Ellipse on returning 442nd Regimental Combat from the 75th anniversary of President Washington, D.C. This date marks the 75th anniversary of President. The “Day of Affirmation” event honors that all Japanese American LGBTQ+ folk, allies, family members out there who have yet to hear the welcoming call of Okaeri.

The “Day of Affirmation” event will be livestreamed via Facebook on July 15 at Noon EST. To watch the program, please visit the JAVA website at www.java-us.org.
GO FOR BROKE STAMP OFFICIALLY RELEASED

The long-awaited Forever U.S. postage stamp honoring Nisei soldiers who fought valiantly during World War II is now available for purchase.

By P.C. Staff

F orever honored. Forever remembered. Forever now and always. The Go For Broke: Japanese American Soldiers of World War II Forever stamp was officially issued by the U.S. Postal Service on June 3 and is now available for purchase nationwide.

The stamp, honoring Nisei soldiers that formed one of the most-highly decorated fighting units of World War II, the all-Japanese American 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team, was unveiled at several dedication ceremonies across the nation, including one on June 4 in Los Angeles, the First City of Issuance.

Held at the Japanese American National Museum’s National Center for the Preservation of Democracy in Little Tokyo, the event recognized Stamp Our Story organizers — Aiko O. King, the late-Chiz Ohira and Fusa Takahashi — who were responsible for starting the grassroots campaign to recognize the veterans, some of whom were also present.

In attendance were Takahashi, accompanied by her granddaughter, Kimi Thompson; Wayne King, son of Aiko O. King; and Dr. John Mitamura, son of Chiz Ohira. Also present was SOS Co-Chair Wayne Osako.

In a statement exclusively to the Pacific Citizen, Osako said: “The founders, Fusa Takahashi, Aiko O. King and the late-Chiz Ohira, want to thank ALL of you and your family members, friends and colleagues for helping get this little stamp to finally arrive at our post offices. What a great sight it has been this month to hold the stamp in our hands and use it on mail.”

“The L.A. stamp unveiling was special because we were the First City of Issuance. Commemorative stamps are assigned one city that gets this designation, and L.A. got it due to its historic significance to the stamp,” Osako continued. “Fusa and Aiko came up with the idea after a visit to JANM, where they saw displays on the Nisei soldiers. . . . This was the pinnacle of the campaign, and we were so happy to have the community involved.”

Special guests of honor at the L.A. unveiling included Ralph Matsumoto, Military Intelligence Service; Don Miyada and Toke Yoshihashi, 100th Infantry Battalion; and Yosh Nakamura, 442nd RCT.

In a dedication ceremony held in Sacramento on June 5, presented by the Florin Pan was represented by Legislative Aid Marlon Lara.

And new Postmaster Douglas Smith said: “Today celebrates a part of our community’s story. . . . and when we listen to each others’ stories and listen to each other, the healing begins,” Fujii said.

A special Senate resolution on behalf of Sen. Richard Pan (D-Calif.) was also presented to the SOS organizers, recognizing their efforts and those of all Nisei soldiers. Pan was represented by Legislative Aid Marlon Lara.

And Postmaster Douglas Smith said of the Nisei soldiers, “As we honor the bravery and sacrifice of JA soldiers during WWII . . . they especially distinguished themselves in segregated units . . . Go For Broke, all in, to risk everything to make an all-out effort to win. They lived up to their motto with legendary acts of bravery. . . . We are proud to present the Go For Broke Forever stamp.”

And in a ceremony held on June 14 at the Oregon Historical Society of Portland, tributes to the stamp were made by special guests that included former Gov. Ted Kulongoski, who served as tribute committee honorary chair.

“It is appropriate to have this ceremony on June 14 as today is American flag day and also the perfect day to stamp our story.”

Representing the Japanese American Museum of Oregon was Executive Director Lynn Fuchigami Parks, who in her remarks about the Nisei soldiers, said, “Their dedication to the pursuit of liberty and justice for all helped . . . pave the way for us to realize our dreams. Because of their actions, we have been able to live our lives with the opportunities and privileges that we are blessed with today. . . . They are this nation’s heroes. Let their story live on to be shared and taught as an ideal standard for everyone to emulate.”

The Go For Broke Nisei Veterans stamp is available nationwide. Visit niseistamp.org to view additional dedication ceremonies.
WHY IT’S IMPORTANT TO KNOW DENNY YASUHARA’S NAME

A new middle school in Spokane, Wash., will bear his name and his legacy as an educator and civil rights ‘bulldog.’

By Lynda Lin Grigsby, Contributor

S


Denny Yasuhara was someone who saw problems as challenges. He encountered many in his lifetime. As a longtime JACL leader, Yasuhara took on large institutions and national organizations in the name of justice.

As an educator, he combined love with discipline.

Like with all things ephemeral, there was a danger that Yasuhara’s name might fade into obscurity after he died in 2002 at 76. This was a challenge until this spring, when Yasuhara’s former school district announced it would name a new middle school building in his honor.

When open in 2022, the Denny Yasuhara Middle School will be the first school in Spokane, Wash., named after an Asian American, a Nisei teacher whose lessons reached far beyond the math and science subjects he taught.

Yasuhara was a teacher at Spokane’s Logan Elementary School and Garry Middle School for 28 years until his retirement in 1989. Generations of students affectionately knew him as “Mr. Yas.” In the halls of Garry, where he also coached the boys’ basketball team, he had the reputation of being strict and demanding, but fair.

One year, Yasuhara learned that a student was routinely late for class because she had to care for her younger siblings in the mornings.

“Where’s your mom?” he asked.

“Sleeping,” she replied.

Yasuhara drove over to the student’s house and yelled at the mother — “Get off your butt! She is your daughter. She’s not the mother! That girl was never late for class again.”

“He was a strong personality, and you knew exactly where he stood,” said Thelma Yasuhara, 91, his wife. “There was nothing false about him.”

In the early 1970s, Laura Ellenberger Rainoff was a teenager at Garry who loved basketball, but admittedly showed no skills on the court.

“I’m not an athlete,” she said. “Never was.”

In science class, Rainoff often talked to her friends about her favorite basketball team, the Los Angeles Lakers, and her idol, Wilt Chamberlain. In front of the classroom, Mr. Yas listened, too. He knew passion needed to be harnessed, so he invited Rainoff and her friend to be official scorekeepers at the boys’ basketball games. He drove them to and from the games.

“I can remember him talking to us about being good human beings,” said Rainoff, 62, an office manager in New York. “He was as concerned about who we were as people and how we treated each other.”

In 1973, Rainoff graduated from Garry, went on to earn a law degree and got married. Through the years, she kept in touch with Yasuhara and his wife through letters. In May, she wrote a letter of support to the school board calling Mr. Yas “one of the most influential people in my life.”

Rainoff’s letter was one of over 80 written to support Yasuhara’s name, according to Praeger.

His Most Important Relationship

To understand the significance of Yasuhara’s name, one must first understand that it was not his given name. He was born in Seattle in 1928, the youngest of four siblings in the Sawada family. His mother died when he was an infant, so the Yasuhara family from Bonners Ferry, Idaho, adopted him.

The family’s location away from the West Coast exempted Yasuhara from mass incarceration during World War II, but the injustice haunted him. In the Issei and the older Nisei, Yasuhara felt a sense of community. It was a debt of gratitude that he spent his entire life trying to pay back.

“He always talked about the dignity of a person,” said Thelma Yasuhara. “He believed people should be treated the right way.”

Of all the connections Yasuhara established in his lifetime, the most important one was with his wife. They met as teachers and basketball coaches from different schools in Spokane. She was a woman of her time, a devoted supporter who insisted he was the better teacher and the better coach. Both led undefeated teams when they first met.

Denny championed many social causes. In 1995, as JACL national president, he was part of a contingent that met with President Bill Clinton to discuss affirmative action.

PHOTO: CSPAN

Denny always felt strongly about justice, said Thelma.

Thelma (second from left) and Spokane officials and a student break ground June 2 for construction of the new middle school.

PHOTO: SPOKANE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PHOTO RENDERING: CAPITAL PROJECTS

The new Denny Yasuhara Middle School will be in Spokane school district’s northeast area, where Yasuhara taught.
From across the basketball court, Yasuhara spotted his future wife for the first time. While going through the details of their first meeting, the memory seems to tickle Thelma Yasuhara, so she chuckles over the phone.

“He was the kind of person that it didn’t matter whether he knew you or not, if he figured you are of Japanese descent, he would talk to you.”

But he did not talk to her, at least not that night.

Later, Yasuhara found out that she needed a companion to sit with her while she practiced driving a car. He said he could be her companion. As a couple, she spent a lot of time supporting Yasuhara in his tireless quest for justice. They were always pictured together at community events and on travel adventures.

“I thought we’d live to be old together,” she said. “But the Lord took him before I was ready to let him go.”

Yasuhara died of pancreatic cancer in 2002.

**A Daunting Bulldog for Justice**

Those who knew Yasuhara say he was an exceptional educator, but also so much more. “He was many things,” said Gail Nomura, associate professor *emerita* at the University of Washington. “Just a dynamo.”

Yasuhara served JACL for 42 years at the local, district and national levels. During his tenure as national president, he faced criticism from the Spokane County Democrat Central Committee for using racial slurs against Asian Americans.

“I thought we’d live to be old together,” she said. “But the Lord took him before I was ready to let him go.”

Yasuhara served JACL for 42 years at the local, district and national levels. During his tenure as national president, he faced criticism from the Spokane County Democrat Central Committee for using racial slurs against Asian Americans.

“He was the unrelenting backbone that kept up the momentum and organized all the pieces together,” said Nutt. “To see it all come together just by his perseverance and character was a lesson I would not ever forget.”

When it came time to finding faculty members to teach Asian American Studies at WSU, Yasuhara, once again, used his power of persuasion. Only universities in California offered Asian American Studies at the time, said Nomura, who was teaching at the University of California, Los Angeles, when Yasuhara called on her and her husband, Steve Sumida.

“Denny had a demanding reputation, but he was also compassionate. Here, he performs the Hongi, the traditional Maori greeting in New Zealand.”

“He didn’t put on airs,” said Thelma about Denny, both pictured here at Easter in 1980. “Even when he was recognized for something, it never went to his head. He never thought he was that important.”

Denny’s activism was evident in the coverage of the Pacific Citizen.

In 1993, Denny and Thelma Yasuhara went on a cruise to Vancouver.

“I trusted him. I knew he would do whatever he thought was right,” said Thelma.

“Denny took these fights personally, which made him a daunting bulldog of an adversary, but his goal was really the betterment of our country,” said Dale Minami, a San Francisco lawyer and Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL member. In 1978, Yasuhara made such a call to Minami, saying his alma mater, Washington State University, discriminated against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders because it did not offer Asian American Studies. The university did offer African American, Latino and Native American Studies programs.

“It sounded like discrimination to me, especially since Asian Americans were the largest minority group on campus for the previous five years,” said Minami.

With Yasuhara’s guidance, the JACL and a team of lawyers with Minami as the lead — all working *pro bono* — sued WSU. The legal pressure eventually persuaded the university to introduce Asian American Studies.

“There was a reason for Denny’s obsession, intensity and urgency that many people failed to fully appreciate,” said Tim McKinney, one of the lawyers who worked on the WSU lawsuit. “He knew that the window of opportunity for getting concessions from the larger society was small and could close at any time.”

Shannon Ueda Nutt was an electrical engineering major at WSU when Yasuhara approached her to be a plaintiff on the lawsuit. She listened to Yasuhara speak, then signed on because it was the right thing to do. As a plaintiff, she witnessed his organizing power.

“He was the unrelenting backbone that kept up the momentum and organized all the pieces together,” said Nutt. “To see it all come together just by his perseverance and character was a lesson I would not ever forget.”

When it came time to finding faculty members to teach Asian American Studies at WSU, Yasuhara, once again, used his power of persuasion. Only universities in California offered Asian American Studies at the time, said Nomura, who was teaching at the University of California, Los Angeles, when Yasuhara called on her and her husband, Steve Sumida.

“Denny had a demanding reputation, but he was also compassionate. Here, he performs the Hongi, the traditional Maori greeting in New Zealand.”

“He didn’t put on airs,” said Thelma about Denny, both pictured here at Easter in 1980. “Even when he was recognized for something, it never went to his head. He never thought he was that important.”

Denny’s activism was evident in the coverage of the Pacific Citizen.

In 1993, Denny and Thelma Yasuhara went on a cruise to Vancouver.

“I trusted him. I knew he would do whatever he thought was right,” said Thelma.

“Denny took these fights personally, which made him a daunting bulldog of an adversary, but his goal was really the betterment of our country,” said Dale Minami, a San Francisco lawyer and Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL member. In 1978, Yasuhara made such a call to Minami, saying his alma mater, Washington State University, discriminated against Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders because it did not offer Asian American Studies. The university did offer African American, Latino and Native American Studies programs.

“It sounded like discrimination to me, especially since Asian Americans were the largest minority group on campus for the previous five years,” said Minami.

With Yasuhara’s guidance, the JACL and a team of lawyers with Minami as the lead — all working *pro bono* — sued WSU. The legal pressure eventually persuaded the university to introduce Asian American Studies.

“There was a reason for Denny’s obsession, intensity and urgency that many people failed to fully appreciate,” said Tim McKinney, one of the lawyers who worked on the WSU lawsuit. “He knew that the window of opportunity for getting concessions from the larger society was small and could close at any time.”

Shannon Ueda Nutt was an electrical engineering major at WSU when Yasuhara approached her to be a plaintiff on the lawsuit. She listened to Yasuhara speak, then signed on because it was the right thing to do. As a plaintiff, she witnessed his organizing power.

“He was the unrelenting backbone that kept up the momentum and organized all the pieces together,” said Nutt. “To see it all come together just by his perseverance and character was a lesson I would not ever forget.”

When it came time to finding faculty members to teach Asian American Studies at WSU, Yasuhara, once again, used his power of persuasion. Only universities in California offered Asian American Studies at the time, said Nomura, who was teaching at the University of California, Los Angeles, when Yasuhara called on her and her husband, Steve Sumida.

“Denny had a demanding reputation, but he was also compassionate. Here, he performs the Hongi, the traditional Maori greeting in New Zealand.”

“He didn’t put on airs,” said Thelma about Denny, both pictured here at Easter in 1980. “Even when he was recognized for something, it never went to his head. He never thought he was that important.”

Denny’s activism was evident in the coverage of the Pacific Citizen.

In 1993, Denny and Thelma Yasuhara went on a cruise to Vancouver.

“I trusted him. I knew he would do whatever he thought was right,” said Thelma.

Previously known as the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center, the museum’s new space, located at 411 N.W. Flanders St., sits in the heart of what was once Portland’s historic Nihonmachi (Japantown).

The virtual grand opening ceremony took place on May 6, exactly 79 years after DeWitt’s declaration, and featured a number of special guests, including actor George Takei and Consul General of Japan Masaki Shiga.

Now one month on, the museum’s staff members are taking the time to reflect upon the incredible efforts it took to bring this vision to life. As a contributor to the Pacific Citizen, as well as a past intern of the museum, it was an honor to conduct an interview with my past colleagues to not only promote the legacy of this museum, but also properly acknowledge each of their roles in the formation and success of the new space.

The following core staff members of the museum contributed to the interview: Lynn Fuchigami Parks (executive director and Portland JACL board member at large), Lucy Capehart (director of collections and exhibitions), Jennifer Fang (director of education), Kiyo Endecott (office manager) and James Rodgers (project coordinator).

BRIDGET KEAVENYE FOR THE PACIFIC CITIZEN: When was the idea of a new museum space conceived?

JAMO MUSEUM STAFF: It was always the dream to secure a permanent home within the boundaries of what was once Portland’s large and vibrant Nihonmachi. The importance and commitment to remain in this culturally significant neighborhood couldn’t be stressed enough as the museum and the Japanese American Historical Plaza are the only vestiges left of the large and vibrant community that occupied 10-12 blocks of Portland’s Old Town. The opportunity to share and interpret this history in its actual location is indeed powerful.

Leadership and stakeholders believed that our future was inextricably tied to the purchase of a permanent facility that could meet the needs for the growing organization and its museum, so the idea for a new museum space had been in the works for many years.

Through ongoing dialogue and a positive relationship with Prosper Portland, the city’s economic and urban development agency, an opportunity to purchase the Old Town Lofts commercial space was presented, and a sale was executed.

KEAVENYE: Who was all involved with the project, and what was the role of each individual?

JAMO STAFF: All members of staff and board were heavily involved in the project. Board member Cynthia Basye was extremely hands-on and participated in exhibit research, design review and editing. Lynn Fuchigami-Parks led fundraising efforts for the capital campaign and was assisted by Board President Connie Masuoka. Board member Brian Kimura (Portland JACL member) played a critical role as the project’s architect (Climate Architecture) and overall project manager, overseeing all aspects of design, renovation and construction of the new space.

KEAVENYE: How long did it take to create the new space?

JAMO STAFF: Originally, we had planned to close the museum for only four months in early 2020 to renovate the space, install the new exhibitions and move the museum; however, then Covid hit, and everything shut down. All aspects of the work were delayed — from permits to construction to fabrication of the exhibits. Trying to accomplish this in the
contributes to the region’s quality of life and cultural trust. The new center will strengthen our role as the leading cultural and research center for the history of Japanese Americans in the Pacific Northwest for educational, historical and cultural institutions.

We see the museum as a catalyst for revitalizing Portland’s Old Town neighborhood and the New Chinatown/Japantown Historic District — a once-in-a-generation project that demonstrates an inclusive, sustainable, memorable and financially successful redevelopment.

We are planning to activate Festival Street (N.W. Flanders Street between 3rd and 4th Avenues) as an extension of our museum space with programs, performances and festivals. We envision that our center will become a primary gathering place for activities of community importance — a place for programming in this historic neighborhood that provides reminders of the richness and vitality of the diverse communities that got their start here.

By uplifting these immigrant histories and stories, we hope to foster respect for diversity and the multicultural society we live in. We share the past to ensure the future, to create a more just and equitable society, standing firm against prejudice and hate.

The Japanese American Museum of Oregon is open Friday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. by reservation only. For reservations, call (503) 224-1458. Adults are $8, Seniors $6, Students $5, Children 11 and under are free. Masks are required. Visit www.oregonnikkei.org for additional details and information.

Wood from the original Minidoka post office was transported from Idaho to create the barracks exhibit that is now permanently on display at the museum.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF OREGON

A preserved 1930s dentist chair and equipment from a dentist in Portland’s Japantown (Nihonmachi)

Min Yasui’s historic jail cell where he spent nine months in solitary confinement in the Multnomah County Jail for purposely violating the WW II military curfew imposed on people of Japanese ancestry. Visitors can now stand within its walls to view his Presidential Medal of Freedom and hear audio of his own voice sharing what it was like to be held there.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE JAPANESE AMERICAN MUSEUM OF OREGON
CALENDAR

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

Annual JACL National Convention
July 15-18
Virtual Event
Join JACL at its annual convention, which will be held virtually featuring a National Council meeting as well as breakout sessions and more! Be sure to visit JACL’s website for complete convention information and announcements as they become available.

18th Annual Minidoka Pilgrimage
June 26
Virtual Event
Price: Free
“See Our Strength!” will be a virtual event on June 26, paying tribute to the nearly 13,000 people of Japanese ancestry living in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska who were forcibly removed from their homes in 1942 and sent to this desolate concentration camp in Idaho during WWII. This year’s event will honor and celebrate the resilience of the Issei and Nisei generations and bring awareness to the activism and unique experiences of Nikkei in the U.S.
Info: To join the event and for more information, visit www.minidokapilgrimage.org.

Heart Mountain Pilgrimage
July 23-24
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Due to lingering concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, this year’s pilgrimage will be a virtual event — complete with a fabulous slate of planned events. There will be virtual tours of the site, live-streamed programs and educational videos shown throughout the weekend. Festivities kick off on July 23 at 6 p.m. MT with an exciting announcement about the future of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and the Interpretive Center. To help cover the costs of producing this year’s online pilgrimage, please consider supporting the HMWF with a virtual registration donation. Stay tuned for more information about the pilgrimage!

Tule Lake Pilgrimage
July 31
Virtual Event
Price: Free
In keeping with this year’s theme, “Incarceration — Injustice — Protest — Resistance: Then and Now,” the event will explore Tule Lake’s unique status as the only one of the 10 WRA concentration camps that was converted into a maximum-security Segregation Center. More than 12,000 Japanese American activists were punished for sedition, with thousands stripped of U.S. citizenship to enable their deportation, all because they spoke out against the injustice of their incarceration. The pilgrimage will also include a memorial tribute to Tule Lake’s beloved poet laureate Hiroshi Kashigawa. More details and information about the event will follow.

NCWNP

‘Not Yo Butterfly’ Book Launch Celebration
Berkeley, CA
June 20; 3 p.m. PDT
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Eastwind Books of Berkeley, J-SEI and UCB’s Asian American Asian Diaspora Department present a book launch celebration of Nobuko Miyamoto’s “Not Yo Butterfly,” a mold-breaking memoir of Asian American identity, political activism, community and purpose. This intimate life story of Miyamoto — artist, activist and mother — shows how she has embraced her identity to create a blueprint for empathy through community art.

Sel-Defense Class
June 22, 10-11:30 a.m. and June 28, 4-5:30 p.m.
Price: Free
This free class, sponsored by the Sonoma County JACL chapter, is open to all Asian businesses and their staff, as well as the Sonoma County community. It will teach self-defense techniques from local martial arts teachers, especially important now as Asian Americans continue to face violence in response to the rise in anti-Asian hate. Participants will receive a free pocket alarm.
Info: For details and to register, email hikakud@sbglobal.net.

Takko Drumming Workshop
San Jose, CA
July 17-3, 3 p.m.
Historic Hoover Theatre
1635 Park Ave.
Price: $30 Per Drum Station (Up to Three People)
Playful People Productions is offering a fun and energizing in-person workshop taught by the South Bay Beat Institute

PSW

A Life in Pieces: The Diary and Letters of Stanley Hayami
Los Angeles, CA
July 9-Jan. 9, 2022
JACCC
100 N. Central Ave.
Price: Timed advanced tickets are required; JACCC members do not need a timed ticket. Just show your membership card for free admission.
Stanley Hayami’s diary and writings from camp and during his wartime incarceration are brought to life in this presentation that reveals the hardship he and his family faced during World War II. At the age of 19, Hayami was drafted into the U.S. Army’s 442nd Regimental Combat Team. His legacy lives on through these letters, which were donated to JACCC by his family.

Forest-Bathing at the James Irvine Japanese Garden
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Sept. 26
JACCC
244 S. San Pedro St.
Price: Free
Take time out from your day and enjoy the tranquility of the JACCC’s beautiful Japanese garden located in the heart of Little Tokyo and Downtown Los Angeles. Closed since the beginning of the pandemic, the JACCC is now offering several 30-minute time slots each day Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.

Welcome Back to JANM!
Los Angeles, CA
Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
11 a.m.-5 p.m. PDT Friday, Saturday and Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.
Price: Timed, advanced tickets are required. No walk-in visitors. Admission is accepted up to 30 minutes after ticket time. No ticket refunds. Please contact JANM to rebook a new time.
JANM has reopened! Reserve admission tickets to visit the museum once again.

Welcome Back to JANM!
Los Angeles, CA
Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
JACCC
244 S. San Pedro St.
Price: Free
Take time out from your day and enjoy the tranquility of the JACCC’s beautiful Japanese garden located in the heart of Little Tokyo and Downtown Los Angeles. Closed since the beginning of the pandemic, the JACCC is now offering several 30-minute time slots each day Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.

Forest-Bathing at the James Irvine Japanese Garden
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Sept. 26
JACCC
244 S. San Pedro St.
Price: Free
Take time out from your day and enjoy the tranquility of the JACCC’s beautiful Japanese garden located in the heart of Little Tokyo and Downtown Los Angeles. Closed since the beginning of the pandemic, the JACCC is now offering several 30-minute time slots each day Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.

Welcome Back to JANM!
Los Angeles, CA
Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.
11 a.m.-5 p.m. PDT Friday, Saturday and Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.
Price: Timed, advanced tickets are required. No walk-in visitors. Admission is accepted up to 30 minutes after ticket time. No ticket refunds. Please contact JANM to rebook a new time.
JANM has reopened! Reserve admission tickets to visit the museum once again.

FOREST-BATHING AT THE JAMES IRVINE JAPANESE GARDEN
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Sept. 26
JACCC
244 S. San Pedro St.
Price: Free
Take time out from your day and enjoy the tranquility of the JACCC’s beautiful Japanese garden located in the heart of Little Tokyo and Downtown Los Angeles. Closed since the beginning of the pandemic, the JACCC is now offering several 30-minute time slots each day Sunday only; closed Mon.-Thurs.

GCWNP

‘Not Yo Butterfly’ Book Launch Celebration
Berkeley, CA
June 20; 3 p.m. PDT
Virtual Event
Price: Free
Eastwind Books of Berkeley, J-SEI and UCB’s Asian American Asian Diaspora Department present a book launch celebration of Nobuko Miyamoto’s “Not Yo Butterfly,” a mold-breaking memoir of Asian American identity, political activism, community and purpose. This intimate life story of Miyamoto — artist, activist and mother — shows how she has embraced her identity to create a blueprint for empathy through community art.

Sel-Defense Class
June 22, 10-11:30 a.m. and June 28, 4-5:30 p.m.
Price: Free
This free class, sponsored by the Sonoma County JACL chapter, is open to all Asian businesses and their staff, as well as the Sonoma County community. It will teach self-defense techniques from local martial arts teachers, especially important now as Asian Americans continue to face violence in response to the rise in anti-Asian hate. Participants will receive a free pocket alarm.
Info: For details and to register, email hikakud@sbglobal.net.

Takko Drumming Workshop
San Jose, CA
July 17-3, 3 p.m.
Historic Hoover Theatre
1635 Park Ave.
Price: $30 Per Drum Station (Up to Three People)
Playful People Productions is offering a fun and energizing in-person workshop taught by the South Bay Beat Institute
Domoto, Lily, 92, Torrance, CA, May 10; she is survived by her daughters, Denise (Thomas) Okabe, Lisa (Craig) Maeda and Carol (Jeffrey) Hiroto; siblings, Reiko Tsuchimoto, Hasu Fujitani, Amy, Chiyoh and Shoiichi Shingi; sisters-in-law, Sumie Maruya, Alice and Selina Shingi; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 7.

Ebihara, Junko, 79, Torrance, CA, May 6; she is survived by her husband, Teruaki Ebihara; sons, Kenneth (Cindy) Ebihara and Hiroyuki (Connie) Ebihara; gc: 2.

Fujisawa, Misako ‘Jocko,’ 93, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 10; she was predeceased by her husband, Haruo Fujisawa; she is survived by her daughters, Laura (Gerry Hamashita) Fujisawa and Nancy (Don) Kadowaki; sister-in-law, Susan Mita; she is also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 2; ggc: 1.

Hataoka, Grace, 82, Los Angeles, CA, Dec. 21, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, Walter Yukio Hataoka; she is survived by her daughters, Colleen Kaoru Hataoka, Patty Satsuki (Steve) Wilson and Candice Yukiko (Mark) Peters; sisters, May Reiko (Ted) Kawamura and Jean Haruye Osugi; gc: 4.

Higashi, Boyd, 58, Waianae, HI, April 3.

Higashi, Glenn Isaac, 72, Los Angeles, CA, April 28; he is survived by his mother, Iris Higashi; daughter, Sandra (Chris) Song; siblings, Joan Higashi and Daniel Higashi; gc: 1.

Ichinose, Craig Kenji, 77, Khel, HI, March 15; he is survived by his sons, Daniel (Crystal), Travers (Juanita) and Hale (Kimberly); sisters, Ruby, Nerissa, and Audrey; gc: 6.

Katagiri, Matsuuo, 102, Los Angeles, CA, May 5; during WWII, she was incarcerated at the Granada WRA Center (Camp Amache) in CO; she was predeceased by her husband, George Katagiri; she is survived by her daughters, Betty and Alice; brother, Tak Yamashita; gc and ggc: 2.

Marumoto, Shizue, 87, Layton, UT, Feb. 6; she was predeceased by her husband, Hiroki Marumoto; she is survived by her sons, Sheldon (Katharine) and Michael (Kim); honorary son, Tony Potter; sisters, Yasue Kido, Mitsue, Tamae and Tomoe; gc: 6.

Nakamura, Aiko, 89, Salt Lake City, UT Jan. 18; a JACLer; she was predeceased by her husband, Stanley Nakamura, and 2 brothers and 2 sisters; she is survived by her children, Cindy (Kim) Garrick and Mark (Sue Ellen) Nakamura; gc: 5; ggc: 11.

Nishiki, Clay, 74, Hacienda Heights, CA, Jan. 27; he is survived by his wife, Nancy; children, Scott Nishiki (Connie), Ryan Nishiki (Anna) and Stacey Callahan (Steve); siblings, Lenore Ishimi, Dale Matsuno (Gene) and Trude Rocha (Mike); gc: 6.

Sakaniwa, Himeji, 97, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 14, 16; he was predeceased by his wife, Kimayo; he is survived by his sons, Ron, Toshinari and Richard (Jennifer); siblings, Kumpei and Hisako Ouchi; gc: 3.

Sato-Nakashima, Carol Kazuko, 91, Morgan Hill, CA, Jan. 28; she was predeceased by her husband, George Sato; son, Keith Sato; siblings, Priscilla Yotshika, Lynne Ayoshi, Betty Kastner, Chizuko Sakata, Robert Sakata and Tom Sakata; she is survived by her husband Tosh Nakashima; children, Ken (Sherri) Sato, Karen (Jan) Sato, Terri (Chuck) Rennie; sisters-in-law, Linda Sakata and Sue Dibble; brothers-in-law, Mts (Liz) Sato and Dick (Yoko) Sato; cousins, Sam (Yae) Sakamoto, Annie Kawaguchi and Shima (Karen) Sakata; gc: 4.

Tanaka, Darlene Nami, 78, Santa Monica, CA, Feb. 11; during WWII, her family and she were incarcerated at the Topaz WRA Center in Utah; she is survived by her husband, Ted T. Tanaka; sons, Scott and Ryan; daughter-in-law, Ginalyn; sisters, Toshiko Taylor and Annette Okada; she is also survived by many nieces and nephews; gc: 3; ggc: 3.

Yamamoto, James Masaru, 90, Delano, CA, Jan. 25.

Yamamoto, Evelyn Hisako, 89, Oxnard, CA, Nov. 21, 2020; she was predeceased by her husband, William T. Yamamoto, and sister, Arlene Hamashita; she is survived by her children, April S., Tom T. (Charris), Robin S. Yamamoto and Canie M. (Brent) Yamamoto-Henson; siblings, Ken (Libby) and Bob (Lynda) Sugino; gc: 3; ggc: 3.
WISH OF A LIFETIME FROM AARP

By Ron Mori

We can all use some good news, and here’s your opportunity to nominate a special someone in your life with a Wish of a Lifetime.

Last August, in the middle of the pandemic, AARP announced that it was joining forces with the Colorado-based charity Wish of a Lifetime to help older adults fulfill their lifelong dreams. Since its founding in 2008, Wish of a Lifetime has made over two thousand wishes come true for older residents of all 50 states and D.C. It has now rebranded as “Wish of a Lifetime from AARP.”

“By bringing Wish of a Lifetime into the AARP family, AARP believes that its important work can reach more people — both those who want to give help and wish applicants — and ultimately combat the negative effects of isolation, strengthen social ties and inter-generational connections and help wish recipients achieve a lifelong dream,” said Scott Frisch, AARP executive vp and COO. “AARP has long worked to empower people to choose how they live as they age, and by joining forces, we want people to know it’s never too late to dream — regardless of their age.”

Wish of a Lifetime from AARP continues to accept wish nominations online at www.wishofalifetime.org. During the coronavirus crisis, Wish of a Lifetime has modified its wish-granting program to focus on virtual wishes and wishes that can happen safely within recipients’ homes and communities.

Recent Wish recipients include:

• Marguerite Miller, 92, of Fort Lauderdale, Fla.: As a 12-year-old, Miller survived the Nazi invasion of France in 1940 and worked alongside her mother to hide Allied pilots downed over her homeland. Her experiences fueled a lifelong aspiration to skydive, which Wish of a Lifetime helped her to fulfill.

• Bertha Nunn, 87, of Waldorf, Md.: Nunn’s family caregiving responsibilities took priority over her childhood dream of being an actress. Through Wish of a Lifetime, Nunn got to appear in a TV commercial for Crest toothpaste, which aired last December. She said of the experience: “When we get up in age, we’re just thrown away. But this is something we can do in our 80s.”

• Salvatore Reale, 90, of Seminole, Fla.: The Bronx native and retired firefighter, now living in Florida, has been a Yankees fan since 1936. Wish of a Lifetime helped Reale return to Ladder 136, his old fire station, which honored him for his service. Then, he threw out the first pitch at a Yankees game.

With nearly 38 million members, the nation’s most-read magazine and many other communications channels, AARP has already begun to bring a national spotlight to older adults who dream and those who want to help make those dreams come true. Its September 2020 issue, AARP Bulletin, which reaches some 23 million homes, featured the stories of Miller, Nunn and Reale.

AARP was founded in 1958 by Dr. Ethel Percy Andrus, a retired high school principal, to champion positive aging, fight age discrimination, develop solutions to the problems and challenges faced by older Americans and upend negative stereotypes.

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