



PACIFIC CITIZEN



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'75 YEARS OF HONORING OUR HEROES'

Arlington National Cemetery Hosts Annual Memorial Day Ceremony.

Military veteran Terry Shima, pictured (at left) with JAACL D.C.'s John Tobe, at the Memorial Day ANC event, recently celebrated his 100th birthday.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JOHN TOBE

Japanese Gov't Honors Writer Gil Asakawa

The *P.C.* contributor is set to receive the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, honor.



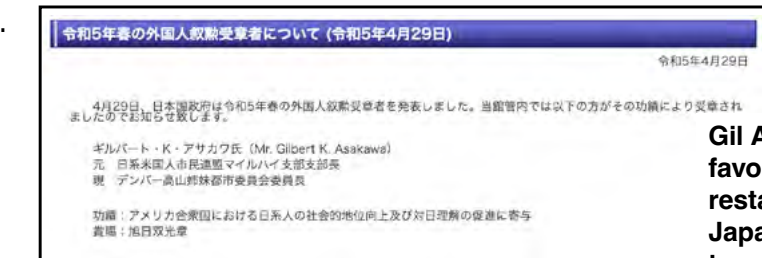
Gil Asakawa, pictured at one of his favorite places to be — Japanese restaurant — was selected by the Japanese government on April 29 to receive Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, honors later this fall.

By *P.C. Staff*

For more years than he might like to admit, journalist Gil Asakawa has kept busy writing: books such as “Being Japanese American: A JA Sourcebook for Nikkei, Hapa . . . and Their Friends” and “Tabemasho! Let’s Eat!: A Tasty History of Japanese Food in America”; dozens of newspaper columns like “Nikkei Voice” for this newspaper; and, of course, his blog, NikkeiView.com.

When he’s not doing that, Asakawa shoots and shares pics of his latest gastronomic conquests — “food porn,” as he calls it — via social media. And, just recently, the Los Angeles Times featured him in video with reporter Daniel Miller to explore the origin of sushi in L.A. (see tinyurl.com/2s4ytacp).

Although a labor of love (and nominal income), Asakawa’s moti-



A screenshot of Asakawa’s honor from the consulate general of Japan in Denver website.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF GIL ASAKAWA

vation has been to, as he puts it, be a “physical bridge between Japan and the U.S.” Why?

“Because I was born there and because I moved here when I was 8. So, I became very Americanized very young — and yet, I have these kind of deep roots . . . and I feel very connected,” Asakawa told the *Pacific Citizen*.

Those circumstances also extend to his involvement with JACL, at the national level as a past member of the *Pacific Citizen* board (including serving as *P.C.* editorial board chair) and the local level with the Mile High JACL chapter, as well as with the Denver-Takayama Sister City Committee, the U.S.-Japan Council

and the Japan America Society.

The Arvada, Colo.-based Asakawa was flattered and surprised to learn that his activities had been noticed — by the government of Japan. In late April, he was informed that he was among a group of people who were named as recipients of the Spring 2023 Conferment of Decorations on Foreign Nationals. “I’m very honored,” he said.

Sometime this fall, Asakawa will receive the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, for having “contributed to improving the social status of Japanese Americans

in the United States and promoting understanding of Japan.”

“There will be a ceremony, I assume, at the Consul General’s residence here in Denver,” Asakawa said.

Asked what his late father, Hawaii-born Nisei George Asakawa, and his Hokkaido-born mother, Junko, might think of this news, he says: “My dad probably



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— Gil Asakawa



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NIKKEI VOICE



Gil Asakawa's father, George H. Asakawa, and father-in-law, Rex Yoshimura

Memorial Day Is Special for the Japanese American Community

By Gil Asakawa

We marked Memorial Day weekend with a tradition that's held every year on the holiday, at Denver's Fairmount Cemetery, a huge maze of land crisscrossed by avenues and single-lane roads. The Nisei War Memorial was built in 1963 to honor the second-generation JAs who died during World War II, inscribed with the names of the heroes from Colorado on four large planks with the words "Freedom," "Honor," "Justice" and "Equality" etched at the top of each.

Over the decades, the memorial has become more of a Japanese American Veterans Memorial, with the names of all JAs with Colorado ties who served in the military etched on the other side of the planks. My father, George H. Asakawa, who died in 1993, is on the first wall. He served during the Korean conflict. My father-in-law, Rex Yoshimura, who served in the Air Force and was stationed in Okinawa before the Vietnam War, is one of the most recent names on the memorial. He died in late 2021.

On the center plank of the memorial, are these words:

"Deeply aware the cloud of suspicion hanging over them in the early days of World War II could be

dispersed only by a demonstration of loyalty. Americans of Japanese descent (Nisei) petitioned in 1942 for the right to serve their country. America offered them the opportunity and the Nisei served with distinction and valor in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in Europe, in military intelligence units in the Pacific and elsewhere. More than 30,000 Nisei bore arms in World War II and Korea, shedding their blood on such far-flung battlefields as the Arno and Bruyeres, Guadalcanal, Myitkyina and Pork Chop Hill. It is to those who made the supreme sacrifice in demonstrating that Americanism is not a matter of race or ancestry that this monument is dedicated."

The text was written by longtime Denver Post editor and longtime *Pacific Citizen* columnist Bill Hosokawa.

The Nisei Veterans Heritage Foundation hosts the annual service. Floral tributes are given at the base of the memorial by representatives of

community organizations and also family members of the most recent names to be added. The Consul General of Japan at Denver attends the ceremony, and a speaker is featured each year.

This year, my wife, Erin Yoshimura, spoke eloquently about how both sides of her family served – past and present – in the military. On her dad's side, five out of seven brothers served, including in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and after WWII, even though their family had been incarcerated.

It's always a powerful and inspiring event and a way to reconnect with friends and family and remember how our community has always been patriotic and willing to fight for the freedoms we enjoy as Americans.

I recently was reminded of this lasting bond within the Japanese American community, and especially the wartime JA experience of incarceration linked to JAs joining the U.S. military, as much to prove their patriotism as to fight the country's

enemies. And, seeing Denver's Nisei Veterans Memorial again, I was reminded of the power of memorials to the past and monuments to an ideal.

I was honored to be chosen as one of the newest members of the board of directors of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation, the group that built and oversees the powerful memorial to both the concentration camps and the heroes who made the greatest sacrifice during WWII.

The memorial sits on a triangular plot of land off the National Mall, a couple of blocks from the U.S. Capitol. It's a peaceful meditative spot amongst D.C.'s buzzing vibes of power and history. It's nice to see how the history of Japanese Americans fits into the landscape.

The memorial has different parts to it. There's a raised rock garden and summertime fountain with large stones representing the incarceration camps, as well as a surrounding wall

around the memorial that names the camps and has the number of incarcerated etched beneath each name; a section that lists the names of every JA who fought and died during the war; and a large bronze sculpture of two cranes struggling to free themselves of barbed wire. The statue, which sits atop a marble base, is by JA sculptor Nina Akamu, the daughter of a career Air Force serviceman.

It's a striking, emotionally wrenching piece that captures both the struggle and the victory of the community it represents.

Although I've attended many Memorial Day services, this year's events got me thinking more than before about the holiday and its symbolism for Japanese Americans. That's why we memorialize our past, current and future heroes.

Gil Asakawa is the author of "Tabemasho! Let's Eat! The Tasty History of Japanese Food in America."



Denver's Nisei War Memorial honors Japanese Americans with Colorado ties who served in the U.S. military.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF GIL ASAKAWA

could have gotten a kick out of it." As for his mother, who is in memory care, he said he isn't sure she'd understand if he told her – but remains curious about what she might say when he shows her the Japanese language announcement on the consulate's webpage.

As for being recognized by Japan's government after all the years of writing, reporting and blogging on Japanese American and Japanese topics, Asakawa said, "I feel like that they actually got me. I'm glad that they saw that everything I've done has been about explaining JA history, explaining the immigration background of Japanese Americans and the World War II experience and everything since then."

And, while Asakawa knows that "it's definitely a big honor," he added that he knows "there are a lot of people across the country who deserve these awards." For now, however, it's Asakawa's turn to take a bow as his family's rising son.



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'75 YEARS OF HONORING OUR HEROES'

The annual Memorial Day ceremony at ANC is the longest, continuous ceremony held to honor those who answered the call to serve and defend the U.S.

By JACL DC Chapter

For the 75th consecutive year, Japanese Americans and other supporters organized an annual Memorial Day ceremony at the Columbarium Ceremonial Courtyard at Arlington National Cemetery on May 28 to honor the sacrifices of service members and their family members who answered the call to serve and defend the country with courage, dedication and selflessness.

The ceremony was sponsored by the JACL DC chapter, the Japanese American Veterans Assn., the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation and JACL National.

The morning ceremony was opened by event chair Turner Kobayashi, who mentioned that this event is the longest, continuous ceremony held by a nongovernmental organization at ANC. It was started by his father, Key Kobayashi, in 1948.

Key Kobayashi continued to coordinate the event for the first 44 years, and now, Turner Kobayashi has overseen it for the past 31 years. He said that an additional 83 names were identified, and the ceremony now honors 218 individuals.

Leaders of each participating organization addressed the group, all reflecting on the theme, "75 Years

Military veteran Terry Shima (pictured in foreground) listens intently at the Memorial Day ANC event. Shima, a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, celebrated his 100th birthday recently.

PHOTO: DAVID INOUE

of Honoring Our Heroes."

Representing the JACL DC Chapter was JACL Daniel K. Inouye Fellow Michael Tanaka, who expressed his appreciation for the sacrifices made by the previous generations so that he and others could enjoy their freedom. Tanaka closed by stating, "I am who I am because of you."

JAVA President Gerald Yamada recognized former JAVA Executive Director Terry Shima, who made a surprise appearance at the event. Shima served in the 442nd RCT and turned 100 years old earlier this year. Yamada noted the exceptional courage and valor of the Japanese Americans who served in World War II and the need to keep fighting the ongoing war against prejudice.

NJAMF Board Vice Chair Mark Nakagawa then spoke about the *giri* or "responsibility" of the current and next generation to never forget about the heroism of the previous

generation. And representing JACL National was JACL Norman Mine-ta Fellow Bridget Keaveney, who congratulated and commended the Kobayashi family and others for their efforts in ensuring that this ceremony has endured for 75 years and their commitment that this ceremony would continue long into the future.

Attendees then enjoyed hearing the thoughts of Kaitlyn Lawrence of Spark M. Matsunaga Middle School and her brother, Aiden Lawrence, of Kingsview Middle School, both from Gaithersburg, Md. The siblings spoke about the special burden serving in the military places on family members and the need for family members to support one another

Active and former military veterans saluting during the playing of "Taps."

Flags adorn the gravesites at ANC

PHOTOS: JOHN TOBE

during both good and tough times.

Keynote speaker Maj. Kay Izumihara highlighted that this year marks the 80th anniversary of the formation of the 442nd RCT and shared the many accomplishments of this most-decorated unit. Izumihara also showcased the exemplary military service of a number of female veterans that are interred at ANC. She closed by stating, "Freedom is not free. A heavy price was paid for our freedom, and it should never be taken for granted."

Following Izumihara's address, Mae Nakamoto and her son, Maj. Mike Lewis, USMC, gave a special tribute to her father and Mike's grandfather, Bob Nakamoto. Bob

Nakamoto was a former JAVA president who always supported community and veterans events locally, regionally and nationally.

Lewis closed by saying that his grandfather exemplified the motto of his unit, "Never above, never below, always beside you."

In keeping with tradition, Michelle Amano, JACL DC board member, then read the Japanese American Creed, which her grandfather, Mike Masaoka, wrote. This was followed by a recognition of all attendees who had served or are currently serving in the military before the playing of "Taps."

Following the service, attendees placed flowers on nearly 220 gravesites of those honored by JAVA, JACLDC, NJAMF and JACL National.

To view the service online, visit <https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PL9xcD0N3zhQfRz44dl-uXo6bA3xJXEjKiQ>. To donate to support this event, visit https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=AUTXU7ALSWWU4.



FELLOWS CORNER



The Rohwer Cemetery

The Jerome memorial is the only remnant remaining of the former American concentration camp.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF RICK KANAZAWA

My Experience at the Jerome/Rohwer Pilgrimage

By Michael Tanaka, JACL Daniel K. Inouye Fellow

In early May, I had the privilege of embarking on a four-day pilgrimage to Little Rock, Ark., where I stepped on the same grounds as seven members of my family who were imprisoned at Jerome and Rohwer incarceration camp 81 years ago, thanks to Kimiko Marr and the Japanese American Memorial Pilgrimages.

While I went by myself, not once throughout the pilgrimage did I feel alone. There is a sincere, unspoken form of solidarity meeting people in the very place our families were once incarcerated that is powerful and comforting.

In trying to connect the dots of a history that was never explained to me, I realized this pilgrimage was as much about picking up the pieces of my own family's story, as it was uncovering and uplifting the other 16,000 other stories that need to be honored, too.

Learning about incarceration to resettlement, and the diaspora that followed, this pilgrimage proved to me that the story of Japanese American incarceration is the most defining part of my Yonsei-Gosei identity.

After going on this pilgrimage and working for the JACL there are two thoughts that constantly ring in my head: What are the forces that shape this community? What are the forces that divide this community?

Learning how Japanese American sentiment in Arkansas changed from families being denied resettlement to being granted the freedoms and privileges of being "white" in the segregated South, I question why Japanese Americans were conditionally "accepted" in this case, but in places like California where my grandparents returned from Jerome, racial covenants greatly limited where they could live and work.

I question to what degree the

effects of incarceration and prejudice were instilled into the way Japanese Americans built community, treated each other and held onto their past as a matter of shame. I question

why my grandparents never spoke about their incarceration history, and why my parents never sought to learn it.

I grew up in the largest concentration of Japanese Americans with incarceration history in the country, but the cultural and social institutions that raised me prioritized social activities such as basketball. Is there a reason behind this, or is this just an excuse?

Personally, I don't think it's either. Just because something is ignored or not taught doesn't mean it's not relevant. In fact, if incarceration isn't relevant to my generation, why do we continue to exclude people without incarceration history? I question the irony of a community born out of exclusion, being exclusive. Is this just internalized trauma?

It all boils down to the same questions. Nevertheless, after going on this pilgrimage, for all the thoughts

I have, I am grateful for the people I met along the way.

I'm thankful to the Asaki family and Erin Shigaki for taking me in and adopting me as their "cousin."

I'm thankful for Tom Kurihara, Hach Yasumura, Masako Guthrie, Lois Lepekas, George Teraoka and all the Nisei for their presence and wisdom. I'm thankful for Julie Abo and our intergenerational discussion group for bringing a deeper perspective to the ways Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei-Gosei experience this pilgrimage and interpret the effects of our incarceration histories. I'm thankful for Kimiko Marr and her team for the sacrifices they made to create this life-changing experience.

Collectively, they taught me that just because I don't have all the answers, it doesn't mean that I should give up on trying to find them. For all the work that needs to be done, I know it is not too late. In fact, I am hopeful I am right on time.

Michael Tanaka is JACL's Daniel K. Inouye Fellow. He is based in the organization's Washington, D.C., office.

PLACER COUNTY-PLACER JACL WWII MEMORIAL FINALLY COMPLETE

The chapter hosts a dedication of the memorial to honor JA veterans, their families and community.

By *Thaya Mune Craig and Stewart Feldman*

The Placer County JACL hosted a dedication of the final elements of its historic World War II Memorial at the Bill Santucci Justice Center in Roseville, Calif., on April 29. The memorial, 14 years in development, honors Japanese American WWII veterans, their families and their community.

The two bronze plaques recently installed on granite boulders at both sides of the memorial were funded by the Placer County JACL chapter and the Grand Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West. The plaques honor significant individuals in recognition of their efforts: Placer County JACL recognized Ronald Reagan, who as president signed the act providing redress to those Japanese American citizens forcibly incarcerated during World War II; the Native Sons plaque acknowledged changes in the group's values from its origins to current times and is dedicated to the memory of E. Ken Tokutomi, a leader in Placer JACL and in the Auburn Parlor of the Native Sons.

Master of Ceremonies Jim Craig, co-president of the Placer JACL chapter, gave the invocation and introduced his wife, Thaya Mune Craig, who gave a brief history of the project. She recounted the stages of community outreach and support, spearheaded by late-Placer JACL Treasurer Tokutomi. She also acknowledged the contributions of many donors and organizations that helped fund the project. JACL Board Co-President Nancy Whiteside and current Treasurer Linda Dickerson then unveiled the plaque by removing an American flag from the boulder.

At the unveiling of the Placer JACL plaque honoring President Reagan, Placer resident Dennis C. Revell, representing the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and

Institute, reflected on the actions of President Reagan in signing the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which provided redress to the formerly incarcerated Americans of Japanese ancestry. Revell was married to the late-president's daughter, Maureen Reagan, and was a passionate and privileged observer to some of the dramatic episodes, as well as more quiet moments, of the last 25 years of President Reagan's life.

The Placer JACL plaque features a likeness of President Reagan (sculpted by noted local artist Douglas Van Howd) along with two historic quotes:

In May 1945, when a town in Southern California refused to allow Kazuo Masuda, a soldier killed in action in Italy, to be buried in its cemetery, Ronald Reagan, a young Army Captain at the time, stated:

"Blood that has soaked into the sands is all one color. America stands unique in the world, the only country not founded on race, but on a way — an ideal. Not in spite of, but because of our polyglot background, we have all the strength in the world. That is the American way."

In 1988, President Reagan signed the Civil Liberties Act, which compensated more than 100,000 people of Japanese descent who were incarcerated in internment camps during World War II. The legislation offered a formal apology and paid out \$20,000 in tax-free compensation to each of the estimated 62,000 former internees who were still alive.

Leaders of the Japanese American Citizens League reacted with "a collective sigh of relief" upon receiving an official apology for what they felt to be 46 years of shame and pain.

The second plaque, formally dedicated by the Grand Parlor of the Native Sons of the Golden West in a solemn ceremony, involved representatives and officers from all over the State of California, following a long tradition of historic dedications. This plaque reads:

WE PAUSE TO REMEMBER The Native Sons of the Golden West was founded in 1875 to preserve the spirit of '49 and the history of California.

Early California is marked by discrimination against Asian immigrants. Historically many people, organizations and governmental agencies in California expressed strong anti-Japanese views in the 1920's through the 1940's The Native Sons of the Golden West were one of these organizational proponents, which was reflected by society as a whole.

Today and for more than 50 years, The Native Sons of the Golden West have welcomed native Californians of all races and continues to work to preserve those places and events which have shaped our society today. We pause to remember and take time to reflect in hopes that lessons learned from the past will guide the decisions we make today and in the future.

This plaque is placed in memory of E. Ken Tokutomi, whose tireless efforts for the "Go For Broke Monument," the Auburn community, as well as The Native Sons of the Golden West will resonate for decades to come.

The ceremony concluded with a keynote speech by Placer County Supervisor Jim Holmes, who reflected on the initial dedication of the memorial site by the County of



Placer in 2009, and the determination of Tokutomi in fulfilling the promise made by Placer JACL. Holmes recalled the involvement of many community leaders, local businesses and citizens who made this memorial a permanent statement of the history of the Americans of Japanese ancestry in WWII.

BACKGROUND

In April 2009, Placer County JACL met with Placer County and established a public-private partnership with the goal to create a memorial that would commemorate local citizens of Japanese ancestry by honoring those who fought in WWII and acknowledging their families and community members who endured the hardships of the American concentration camps. Placer County dedicated the first phase of the memorial on Dec. 16, 2009.

At that time, the memorial included a compass rose in the center and large granite boulders containing plaques with a message from the Board of Supervisors and a short history of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. The Supervisors named the adjoining

road "Go For Broke Road" after the motto of the 442nd.

On June 2, 2013, a 3,000-pound bronze sculpture titled "Rescue of the Lost Battalion" was dedicated. These additions to the site were also dedicated in June 2013:

A boulder containing polished granite inscribed with the names of WWII Placer County veterans of Japanese ancestry; two polished granite benches, one honoring Placer Superior Court Judge George Yonehiro, a veteran of the 442nd, and the other acknowledging major donors; a plaque recounting the Japanese American experience, donated by Placer Buddhist Church; a pair of structures inscribed to honor donors, family members and veterans; an engraved polished boulder acknowledging significant donations.

Now, 10 years after that dedication, the memorial site is finally complete.



Dennis C. Revell



Placer Chapter JACL members (from left) Thaya Craig, Fusae Miyamoto, Stewart Feldman, Thaya Mune Craig, Jim Craig and Nancy Dickerson stand beside the Grand President of the Native Sons of the Golden West.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF STEWART FELDMAN

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HOPE FOR CHANGE

The discourse on Black reparations is divisive. Don Tamaki's presence on the California task force represents precedence and hope.

By Lynda Lin Grigsby,
Contributor

On a shelf between shifting books and papers in Don Tamaki's home office is an 81-year-old mailing tube unspectacular as its brown butcher color paper. The tube's center is hollow. Its content — a coveted college degree — has long been shimmied out. Its purpose fulfilled, the tube should have been discarded. Yet, here it is in Tamaki's Bay Area home. He holds it up to show the address written neatly in black ink, addressed to barrack 80, apartment 5. "It was a horse stall," said Tamaki.

The mailing tube contained his father Minoru Tamaki's degree from the University of California, Berkeley. It was mailed to Tanforan Racetrack in 1942, where the Tamaki family was incarcerated during World War II. Just weeks before his graduation from pharmacy school, news reports crackled about Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor. In a 1995 oral history interview, Minoru Tamaki said he knew what was coming.

"I thought to myself, 'Well, son-of-bitches . . . they'll ruin my life.'"

Instead of being ceremoniously handed his diploma, it was rolled up, placed in the mailing tube and addressed to a horse stall.

"That was his reality," said Tamaki, putting the tube back on its shelf where it lives as a symbol of a complex reality. A college degree offers a tacit promise of the American dream. Education will set you free. But the mailing tube — Minoru Tamaki's reality — constrained this promise.

His dad, ever the pragmatist, wondered why his son would want to keep it. And Tamaki, ever the optimist, said, "It's a metaphor for how far we've come."

It's this sense of optimism that informs his work on the California reparations task force, a first-in-

the-nation committee charged with studying the institution of slavery and its lingering effects on African Americans. On May 6, it passed recommendations on how the state may set the course right for generations of discriminatory harm to its 2.5 million African American residents. "We've got to start somewhere," said Tamaki. "America is capable of changing. I am optimistic, but this is a big lift."

EXPERIENCE WITH REPARATIONS

Formed in 2021, the task force comprises of nine members. Tamaki is the only nonblack member. He knows what people may think: Why is he here?

The answer is in his upbringing and experience, said Dale Minami, a partner at their eponymous San Francisco law firm, Minami Tamaki LLP. Tamaki grew up in Oakland, Calif., and graduated from UC Berkeley with both his undergraduate and law degrees.

"One of his greatest strengths is his analytical ability and realistic take on issues," said Minami.

In 1983, Tamaki was a member of the legal team that successfully

overturned Fred Korematsu's WWII conviction of defying evacuation orders. Tamaki's credentials are laid out in his record as a Bay Area lawyer and a community leader. He also symbolizes precedence and experience with reparations.

The Japanese American redress and reparations movement, which culminated in the passage of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, is one of the very few modern-day examples where the U.S. government acknowledged a great wrong and apologized for it. In 1990, Minoru Tamaki received his \$20,000 checks and apology letters for their WWII incarceration experiences at Tanforan and then Topaz. Tamaki's mother, Iyo Tamaki, was also incarcerated.

Like many Nisei, they viewed their days living behind barbed wire through a narrow aperture. If — not when — they talked about their experiences, the focus was always on

the pleasant memories. The formal apology from the government gave people affected by the incarceration the permission to feel nuanced feelings about intensely personal experiences.

After redress, the stories poured out of Minoru. In 1981, he testified before the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearing in San Francisco. The seams of his nuclear family were torn apart by the incarceration, he said.

"I am here today adding my voice to the voices of others who are demanding reparation for our wartime internment in order to set a precedent that will prevent the same thing from happening again to any other people in this country," said Minoru Tamaki in his testimony.

John Tateishi said the JACL changed its program name from "reparations" to "redress" to reflect its broader, more altruistic goals.

"While monetary compensation was the measure of success for one

segment of the JACL and for many in the community, our fight was, at its heart, about demanding our rightful place in this country as first-class citizens and in the process to find ways to heal from the psychological and emotional damage done to us during WWII," said Tateishi, a former JACL national director and redress director.

The power of repair has roots in *Kintsugi*, the Japanese art of pottery repair, which treats breakage and repair as part of the history and beauty of the object. The broken pieces are fused together with gold bonding and become stronger as a whole.

The California reparations task force is trying to calculate the harm of racism and oppression against African Americans. There's no comparison, said Tamaki, between four years in U.S. concentration camps and hundreds of years of constant oppression.

"I thought I knew something about history until I started looking at this seriously," he said.

During his two-year tenure on the task force, Tamaki, 72, learned about a racial pathology embedded in American history — cyclical in its perniciousness.



Don Tamaki



Coram nobis victory party. Don Tamaki (far left) is also pictured with Fred Korematsu (center).

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DON TAMAKI

Minoru Tamaki's Berkeley B.A. Pharmacy Degree was sent to a Tanforan Horsestall in 1942.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DON TAMAKI

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR REPAIR

The task force's report, which runs almost 500 pages, is one of the few government reports that connects the dots from the past to the present, said Tamaki. On June 29, the task force will present the final report to the legislature.

The report details a thorough history of discrimination against Black Californians in areas including voting, housing, education, policing and incarceration. Proposals for repair include direct compensation to descendants of enslaved people and policy proposals in health care, policing and education. The task force also approved a recommendation for the state to give a public apology and a promise to not repeat transgressions.

Tamaki hears the same question all the time: California was not a slave state. Why is it considering reparations? His answer is simple. California did not enter the union as a slave state, but it was complicit with the institution.

The 13th Amendment in the Constitution prohibits chattel slavery. But it was not a crime for slave owners to come to California during the Gold Rush and bring their human property with them. California also passed its own fugitive slave law

and legislation prohibiting African Americans from testifying or being a witness for or against white people in criminal court cases. By the turn of the century, these laws were then passed in the same tradition against Asian Americans with the Chinese Exclusion Act or the Alien Land Law.

It's very much connected, said Tamaki.

"You could take any one of these arguments and say, 'This is not my responsibility,'" said Tamaki.

"But that's not how society works. There is a collective commitment to pay for things that were incurred."

It's a collective responsibility, he added. "That's the nature of living in a society."

PRECEDENCE FOR BLACK REPARATIONS

The task force's recommendations call for policy reform to address historical disparities in health care, housing and policing. The task force consulted with economists to calculate the harm of chattel slavery and its lingering effects. But it has never recommended that the state pay a specific amount, said Tamaki.

Reparations is not about receiving a check in the mail, he said. It's about reviewing how these systems of oppression have developed. Similarly, how could a \$20,000 check cover

the Japanese American lives disrupted and uprooted during WWII? It likely did not. But what the redress check and apology symbolized was the government's acknowledgement of wrongdoing — essential to heal intergenerational trauma.

Often, the argument against Black reparations centers on the passage of time — hundreds of years. Discriminatory acts shape-shifted from segregation to redlined neighborhoods, and chattel slavery to incarceration.

How does the state — and country, writ large — atone for everything?

The very fact that the issue is so amorphous shows the damage done to the Black community and the need to institute corrective measures, said Tateishi.

"The issue of race will always prevail in our discourse on social justice as long as we continue as a nation to ignore that this country created the problem," he added.

There is precedence for reparations. In 1923, a white mob decimated the town of Rosewood, Fla., where hundreds of Black families lived. In 1994, Florida passed a bill awarding \$150,000 to survivors who could prove they owned property during the massacre. A scholarship fund was also set up for Rosewood's descendants. In the Chicago suburb of Evanston, housing vouchers have been offered to Black residents.

But at the federal level, HR 40, the decades-old legislation to establish a commission like the CWRIC to study the effects of chattel slavery, has yet to make it to the House floor for a vote.

The United States needs to address the harm it inflicted even if the victims are no longer living, said Tamaki. The reverberation of the transgressions still has consequences. But how do you put a price tag on generations of trauma and oppression?

Tamaki pauses and turns the questions over in his head.

"I don't know that there have been any reparations that really pay for actual damages," he said. "If you look at reparations as making someone whole — restoring what they lost completely — that's pretty hard to do."

But we can try. Then maybe some time in the future, there will be an opportunity to look at banal artifacts of this time and keep it as a metaphor for how far we've come.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The JACL will be honoring Don Tamaki with the organization's Edison Uno Civil Rights Award at its upcoming National Convention in Los Angeles next month.

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- THURSDAY >>>** National Council
"Question 27, Question 28" with Tamlyn Tomita
- FRIDAY >>>** Workshops
NY/SC Youth Luncheon
- SATURDAY >>>** Workshops
General Reception
Sayonara Gala
- SUNDAY >>>** David Ono's "Defining Courage"

Ongoing: opportunities to Stamp the Ireichō at the Japanese American National Museum. Visit jacl.org/ireicho to register!



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JANM FUNDRAISING GALA HAULS IN \$1.35M

Program cover

The event honors supporters in advance of a campaign to expand the museum's influence.

By P.C. Staff

LOS ANGELES — The Japanese American National Museum held its annual fundraising gala and online auction with a little — make that a lot — of help from its friends: the Harry Manaka and Gerald Ishibashi-led Sansei Rockers music act, some artificial intelligence, a live audience of hundreds and master of ceremonies Frank Buckley, anchorman of “KTLA 5 Morning News.”

The auction portion of the May 13 event, held at the InterContinental Los Angeles, raised \$247,740 for the museum's Bid for Education initiative. The Lexus Opportunity drawing for a 2023 Lexus RX500h — won by George Iwanaga — that was donated by Toyota Motor Sales, meantime, raised an additional \$164,925.

Both sums contributed to the estimated, according to JANM, \$1,352,642 million total the evening raised, which also included event sponsorships and ticket sales. With that sum and the \$10 million JANM received from philanthropist MacKenzie Scott in 2021, the museum is in the early stages of what, according to CEO and President Ann Burroughs, are “very, very bold plans” that will launch in a few months.

Before that, however, she was preceded by Bill Fujioka, who took over the chairmanship of JANM's board

of trustees following the death of its former chair, former Cabinet member and U.S Rep. Norman Mineta, who died in May 2022.

Fujioka thanked the audience. “With your support, JANM continues to be a place where people with diverse views and beliefs can come together and talk about the lessons of our history and how they helped shape the many social issues our nation faces today,” he said.

Prefacing her remarks by saying that “the baton is finally passing” to a “new generation of leaders and supporters” and that the museum's founders had wanted it to “stand as a beacon of civil rights,” Burroughs said, “I'm delighted to share with you that we've embarked on the largest fundraising campaign in JANM history.

“It's a campaign to transform our physical and digital presence, our exhibitions and our program, and we have very, very bold plans. We will reimagine our public spaces and our core exhibition, Burroughs continued. “We will retell the Japanese American story as an American story, from immigration to incarceration, from post-World War to resettlement to the present, as a story of interconnectedness with other communities, as a story of how the Japanese American community has changed over the decades.”

Los Angeles news anchor Frank Buckley served as master of ceremonies.



Burroughs also said that JANM would relaunch its National Center for the Preservation of Democracy as “a place where we gather people to talk about race, talk about identity, about social justice, about the fragility of democracy, with the ever-deepening divisions within civil society that we're seeing across the country, the rise of hate, the attacks upon democracy itself.

“The need to stand up the center is more urgent now than it's ever been — and who better, who better to do that in JANM?” Burroughs asked.

Burroughs also announced that JANM would bestow a new name upon its plaza to honor the museum's previous board of trustees chairman. “We will name our plaza Norman Y. Mineta Democracy Plaza,” she said, which elicited audience applause.

The evening's next speakers were JANM board of governors members Josh Morey and Nikki Kodama, who were followed by entrepreneur Cole Kawana, founder and president of

the nonprofit Japanese American Stories, which develops “artificial intelligence avatars to help preserve and share the oral histories of Japanese Americans.”

Kawana showed off the second of four immersive exhibitions done in collaboration with StoryFile Inc. The first, from 2021, was with 442nd veteran Lawson Sakai, now deceased, and the second was with the still-very-much-alive June Yasuno Aochi Berk, who introduced her digital avatar to the audience and demonstrated how in the future, museum visitors and students in far-flung locations alike will be able to ask “her” questions about her experiences.

According to Kawana, to make this work, Berk responded to “346 questions, ranging 32 topics, over six hours, eight minutes and 22 seconds of video captured in front of a 360-degree array of green-screen cameras.” “She'll soon be able to speak about her role or to [her] experience to dozens of classrooms across the country all at the same time,” he said.

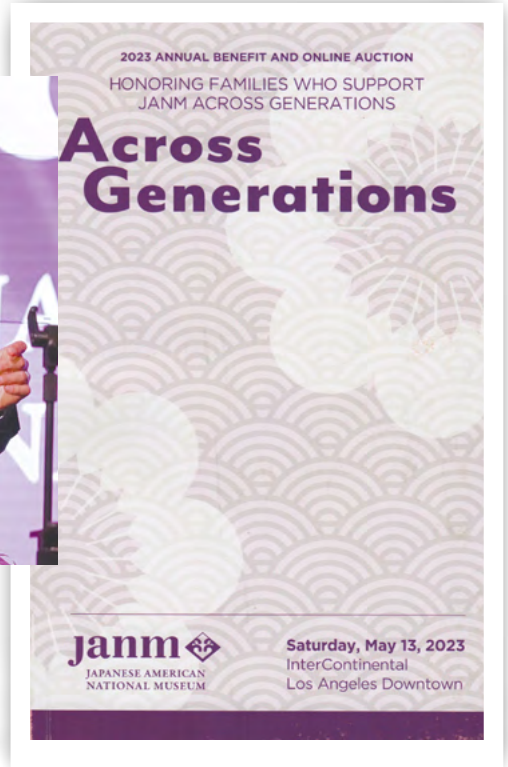
Following the demonstration were JANM board of governors member Jeff Maloney, who is also a councilmember for and former mayor of the City of Alhambra; Tadashi Nakamura, newly named director of JANM's Frank H. Watase Media Arts Center, who introduced a year-in-review video; JANM board

of governors member and eldest son of Norman Mineta, David Mineta, who, before introducing a video commemorating recently deceased JANM supporters and community members, spoke about his late father and another stalwart JANM supporter, Thomas Masami Yuki; and board of governors member Jennifer Hirano, daughter of JANM's inaugural executive director and later its president and CEO, the late Irene Hirano, and JANM board of governors member Ken Inouye, son of the late Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, JANM's board of governors chairman emeritus.

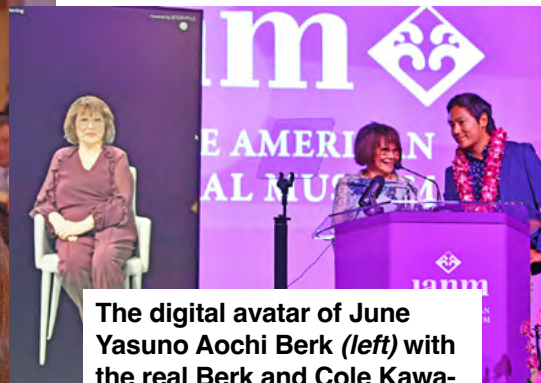
Inouye then introduced Jeff MacIntyre, an Emmy award-winning producer and partner of KABC Channel 7 telejournalist David Ono, to host the evening's fundraising element.

Following the fund drive, next were JANM board of governors members Christopher E.J. Yang, group vp of business development at Toyota North America, and Lisa Sugimoto, vp of PPL Inc.; and JANM volunteer Carole Yamakoshi and JANM board of trustees Chair Emeritus Ernest Doizaki.

The show closed with the Sansei Rockers and lead vocalist Royce Jones covering the Rascals' hits “A Beautiful Morning” and “Good Lovin'” sandwiching Steely Dan's “Reeling in the Years.”



JANM President and CEO Ann Burroughs (center) smiles with Paul and Lisa Kosasa at the museum's May 13 gala.



The digital avatar of June Yasuno Aochi Berk (left) with the real Berk and Cole Kawana, founder and president of Japanese American Stories

PHOTOS: NOBUYUKI OKADA/JANM



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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

JACL National Convention
Los Angeles, CA
July 19-23

Doubletree by Hilton Hotel
120 S. Los Angeles St.

Price: Registration Required/Virtual Rates Also Available

Come join JACL at its annual National Convention, which will be held in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo this July! This year's theme, "Rooted in Community," encompasses the cultural exploration into the area's community organizations, museums, history, shopping and food, as well as continues to build on last year's theme "Strengthening Our Community Through Action." This year's confab will include a welcome reception at the Terasaki Budokan, Youth Awards Luncheon, Sayonara Banquet at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, David Ono's "Defining Courage" and a Tamlyn Tomita-led reading of "Question 27, Question 28," as well as workshops, plenaries and National Council sessions.

Info: For more information and to register, visit www.jacl.org.

Irei — A National Monument for the WWII Japanese American Incarceration

Los Angeles, CA
JANM
100 N. Central Ave.

The *Ireicho* contains the first comprehensive listing of more than 125,000 persons of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly incarcerated during World War II. Visitors can now view the book and leave a special *hanko* (stamp/seal) for each person in the monument as a way to honor those incarcerated. The project's online archive is now searchable alphabetically or by camp.

Info: Visit ireizo.com for more information and janm.org.

NCWNP

Eden Bazaar 2023
San Lorenzo, CA

June 10, 1-7 p.m.; June 11, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Eden Japanese Community Center
710 Elgin St.
Price: Free

All are welcome to attend the Eden Bazaar 2023, presented by the Eden Japanese Community Center, which will feature delicious Japanese food, raffles, games for kids and a silent auction.

All proceeds will go toward maintenance costs for the EJCC, home to activities for all generations.

Info: Visit <https://www.edenjapanesecc.org/events> or email edenjapanesecc@gmail.com.

'Overflowing With Hope: The Hidden History of Japanese Americans in Alameda' Exhibit

Alameda, CA
Thru July 15
Alameda Free Library
1550 Oak St.

Price: Free
This exhibit documents the wartime removal of one marginalized community through images, testimonies, artifacts and long-hidden stories of Japanese Americans from Alameda whose lives were placed in turmoil following the issuance of Executive Order 9066.

Info: For free tickets, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/overflowing-with-hope-the-hidden-history-japanese-americans-in-alameda-tickets-606958508237>.

PSW

VJCC Annual Summer Natsu Matsuri Festival

Los Angeles, CA

June 24; Noon-9 p.m.

Venice Japanese Community Center
12448 Braddock Dr. (1 block west of Centinela Boulevard)

Price: Free
Join the VJCC as it welcomes summer with this festival featuring food, games, martial arts exhibitions, taiko performances, Ondo dancing, Japanese cultural exhibits, music and dance featuring Elemental Funk and much more for all to enjoy! All proceeds from this event will benefit VJCC's operating fund.

Info: Visit www.vjcc.com.

Aki's Market (A Project by Glenn Akira Kaino)

Los Angeles, CA

Opens June 30

Japanese American National Museum
100 N. Central Ave.

Price: Check Website for Admission Tickets

Created by artist Glenn Akira Kaino, the exhibition explores the transgenerational trauma from the WWII Japanese American incarceration experience through the stories of Kaino, his family and the community. It is also an interrogation of the American practice of displacement — collapsing almost 100 years of cultural subjugation into a spiritual, exploratory space from which the building blocks

of peace might be discovered.

Info: Visit janm.org.

Orange County Buddhist Church
Obon

Anaheim, CA

July 15, 2-8:30 p.m.; July 16, 2-8 p.m.

OCBC

909 S. Dale Ave.

Price: Free

Obon is back with free parking and shuttle service to OCBC, which will feature food, fun, games, craft boutique and delicious Japanese food and take-out. Taiko performances are scheduled for 4 p.m. and 6 p.m. and Bon Odori dancing is set for 6:30 p.m. on both days.

Info: Visit www.orangecountybuddhist.org.

PNW

'Parallel Barbed Wire' Exhibit
Powell, WY

Now Open

Heart Mountain Interpretive Center
1539 Road 19

This new exhibit features the remarkable stories of Heart Mountain incarceree Clarence Matsumura and Holocaust survivor Solly Ganor. Matsumura served in the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion and rescued Ganor. The exhibit details their remarkable friendship throughout their lives.

Info: Visit www.heartmountain.org for exhibit information and further details.

'Resilience — A Sansei Sense of Legacy'

Tacoma, WA

Thru July 7

Washington State History Museum
1911 Pacific Ave.

This exhibit features eight artists whose work reflects on the effects of EO 9066 as it resonated from generation to generation. It includes the works of Lydia Nakashima Degarrod, Na Omi Judy Shintani, Reiko Fujii, Wendy Maruyama, Kristine Aono, Tom Nakashima, Roger Shimomura and Jerry Takigawa.

Info: Visit <https://www.washingtonhistory.org/exhibit/resilience/>.

IDC

'Threads of Camp: Sewn From Japan to the United States'

Topaz, UT

June 24; 2-4 p.m.

Topaz Museum is sponsoring this program that will take place at J-Sei Community and Cultural Center in Emeryville

1285 66th St.

Lucy Arai will present photographs of surviving objects and artwork that illustrate life behind barbed wire fences as she illuminates how threads were used in camp with stories of how sewing, knitting and crocheting were more than the means to provide warm and durable clothing, bedding and items to make barracks into homes where Japanese Americans were forced to live during WWII.

Info: RSVP at jill@j-sei.org (with Threads of Camp in the subject line).

MDC

Spring Hoosier Chapter JACL Luncheon

Indianapolis, IN

June 10; 1-4 p.m.

Irvington Presbyterian Church
55 Johnson Ave.

Price: Free

The Hoosier JACL chapter invites all to attend its spring luncheon featuring delicious potluck food offerings and a panel presentation by Nancy Conner, Anne Moore and David Suzuki on the new book from the Indiana Historical Society "Asian American Voices in Indiana." Oral histories are included in the book, along with a forward on Asian American history written by Conner. Please bring a covered food dish to share.

Info: Email info@hoosierjacl.org.

Como Park's Cherry Blossom Festival
Saint Paul, MN

June 10

Como Park and Conservatory
1225 Estabrook Dr.

Price: Free

Como Park's 20 cherry trees were a gift from Japan and specially developed to withstand the cold Minnesota winters. Located near the Mannheimer Memorial near the Butterfly parking lot, the best time for viewing of these beautiful trees is between early May-early June. More information is forthcoming.

Info: Visit japanamericasocietyofminnesota.wildapricot.org for further event details.

Twin Cities JACL's Summer Picnic
Edina, MN

Aug. 6; 10 a.m.-3 p.m.

Rosland Park
4300 W. 66th St.

Price: Free

Save the date for the Twin Cities JACL's Summer Picnic, which is back after several years due to the Covid pandemic. This summer get-together will be filled with great friends, food, activities and much more. Stay tuned, as more information will follow.

Info: Contact tcjacl.org.

EDC

Symposium: Covering Hate Crimes in Black, Asian, Jewish and LGBTQ Media

Manhattan, NY

June 9; 10 a.m.-2 p.m. EST

Hybrid In-Person/Virtual Event

CUNY Campus

Price: Free

This hybrid event hosted by the Center for Community Media will focus on how community media can and do respond to hate crimes targeting Black, Asian, Jewish and LGBTQ communities. Speakers will include those with expertise in civil rights and community safety, as well as a panel discussion with media journalists covering hate crimes in their communities.

Info: To register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/symposium-covering-hate-crimes-in-black-asian-jewish-and-lgbtq-media-tickets-634157140077>.

Concert: Vista Philharmonic Orchestra: 'Heart and Solstice'

Groton, MA

June 17; 7:30 p.m.

Groton Hill Music Center

122 Old Ayer Road

It's the weekend of the summer solstice! Celebrate with works like Beethoven's joyous symphony and Arvo Part's "Fratres." In between, enjoy the meditative qualities of the shinobu flute and taiko featuring special guest soloist Kaoru Watanabe.

Info: Visit <https://grotonhill.org/concerts/heart-solstice/>.

Book Talk: 'Hula'
Cambridge, MA

June 26; 7 p.m.

Porter Square Books

25 White St.

Price: Free

Jasmin Iolani Hakes' novel, set in Hilo, Hawaii, is a sweeping saga of tradition, culture, family, history and connection that unfolds through the lives of three generations of women — a tale of mothers and daughters, dance and destiny.

Info: To RSVP, visit <https://www.portersquarebooks.com/event/jasmin-iolani-hakes-author-hula-conversation-julie-carrick-dalton>.

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MEMORIAM

Karate Great Fumio Demura Dead at 82

The renowned martial artist was Pat Morita's stunt double in 'Karate Kid' pics.

By P.C. Staff

Fumio Demura, the Yokohama, Japan-born *karateka* who helped spread the martial art of karate to the United States and the rest of



PHOTO: COURTESY OF KEVIN DEREK

the world, died in California on April 24. He was 82.

Demura's role as a karate ambassador began after he moved to the United States in 1965, when he established a karate dōjō in Southern California.

He gained recognition among karate students by appearing on the cover of more than 60 different martial arts magazines and as the author of several books on karate and *kobudō* or traditional martial arts weapons such as *sai*, *bo*, *tonfa* (aka *tuifa*) and *nunchaku*, the last of which was popularized by cinematic martial arts superstar Bruce Lee in such movies as "Enter the Dragon." It was Demura who taught Lee how to use the weapon that originated on Okinawa.

Demura had his own movie career, most significantly and mostly unbeknownst to the wider world, as Pat Morita's stunt double for the role of Mr. Miyagi in the original four "Karate Kid" movies. His prowess brought an authenticity and lethality to the Miyagi character in a fight scene from the original "Karate Kid" movie when Demura, costumed and in makeup to resemble Morita, defeats several members of the thuggish Cobra Kai dōjō who were intent on savagely beating the Daniel LaRusso character.

The actor Morita and the actual karate master Demura would become fast friends, as shown in the 2015 documentary "The Real Miyagi," directed by Kevin Derek, himself among the many generations of students of Demura Sensei.

"Once in a lifetime you meet a person that embodies all the characteristics of a well-rounded human being," Derek told the *Pacific Citizen*. "Sensei Fumio Demura was that man. He was more than a karate master, he was a huge mentor and a father figure, not just for me but hundred and thousands of people around the world. I was truly honored that he trusted me to tell his life story in 'The Real Miyagi' documentary. Sensei will forever live in our hearts. He will truly be missed."

Echoing those sentiments about Demura was Art Ishii, himself a karate sensei and chief instructor of the Little Tokyo-based Matsubayashi Shorin-ryu Dōjō.



Fumio Demura and Kevin Derek, director of "The Real Miyagi," at the March 18, 2015, screening of the documentary about the famed karateka.

"Demura Sensei has been like big a brother and mentor to me for decades," Ishii told the *Pacific Citizen*. "He was always the person I would go to for advice whether it was when I formed my own dōjō or when I put together the Nikkei Karate Committee for the Nikkei Games.

"I remember one time I was lamenting the fact that I could finally feel my age, that I was no longer as quick, agile and athletic as I used to be in my younger days. He smiled and acknowledged that he knew exactly what I was going through and that now was the time to realize that there was plenty of room to continue to grow in terms of building character and personal growth ... to work on being a better

person and passing my knowledge and experience on to others, that karate was not just about blocking, punching and kicking.

"Another piece of advice he gave me was that no matter how bad an experience we are going through to find the humor, something funny, in the situation. It helps to offset the negativity and helps to strike a balance between good and bad. I still heed his advice on this."

Demura knew from experience about overcoming hardship. De-



Pat Morita (left) and Fumio Demura, both portraying the fictional character of Mr. Miyagi from "The Karate Kid" movie franchise

PHOTO: COURTESY OF 'THE REAL MIYAGI'

spite having won regional and national karate championships in Japan, launching a karate dōjō in his adopted country proved to be difficult. In the early years after establishing his Shitō-ryu karate dōjō, finding enough students to keep the operation afloat was a challenge. To make ends meet with the students he had, Demura put on choreographed karate demonstrations at the defunct Japanese Village and Deer Park Buena Park, Calif., in Orange County, something that did not at the time sit well with his Japan-based home dōjō. Eventually, Demura was able to make his dōjō self-sustaining.

In recent years, although Demura's health had been in decline, he did participate in 2022's Nisei Week parade that honored him and other Japanese *karateka* and martial artists. In February 2023, *Black Belt* magazine honored him for his 75 years of martial arts activity. (Demura began training in the martial arts at age 9.) The magazine also named him its instructor of the year in 1969 and martial artist of the year in 1975. He was twice honored as a member of Black Belt's Hall of Fame.

According to the *Rafu Shimpo*, Demura is survived by a sister, four brothers and a nephew. He was predeceased by his parents.

(Note: To view a trailer for "The Real Miyagi," visit [youtube.com/watch?v=ohCVQvUv4mA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohCVQvUv4mA).)

Akaji, Elaine, 87, Honolulu, HI, Dec. 25, 2022.

Hayashi, Thomas, 87, Torrance, CA, Dec. 17, 2022; veteran, Air Force; he was predeceased by his brothers, Herbert and Raymond Hayashi; he is survived by his wife, Joyce; sons, Grant (Sheryl) and Dwayne (Margot) Hayashi; gc: 4.

Nakamura, Mitsuko, 89, Sanger, CA, Dec. 30, 2022; during WWII, she was incarcerated at a WRA Center in AR; she was predeceased by her husband, Masao; she is survived by her sons, Robert Nakamura and Roger Nakamura; sister, Toki Inouye; brother, Henry Teraoka.

Uyeno, Susie, 83, Spokane, WA, Feb. 19.

TRIBUTE

SETSUKO ANDO



Setsuko (Sets) Ando, age 97, passed away in her home on May 9, 2023, surrounded by her loved ones.

Born in California, interned at Gila River, Ariz., with her family during World War II, she lived in New York and again in California before moving to Chicago.

Beloved wife of 64 years of Tadao Ando, loving mother of David (Lori), Allison (Bob) Berger and Elizabeth; cherished grandmother of Jennifer (David) Vollbracht, Nicole, Kelsey, Kimberly and Kaitlin; and adored great-grandmother of William and Setsuko. Sets was preceded in death by her siblings, Hanako Heyano, Shizuko Kimoto and Shigeru Heyano.

Most of all, she loved spending time with her family. Sets' beautiful light and loving kindness will live on in her family and in all who knew her.

A private family service will be held. In lieu of flowers or koden, please consider a donation to the Buddhist Temple of Chicago, 1151 W. Leland Ave., Chicago, IL 60640 or to a charity of your choosing in her memory.

TRIBUTE

EDITH MICHIKO YAMAMOTO



March 25, 1928–April 19, 2023

It is with great sadness that the family of Edith Michiko Yamamoto announces her passing on Wednesday, April 19, 2023, at the age of 95. Edith was born on March 25, 1928, to Kuichiro and Hiroko Nishi of Wakayama Prefecture. They established a very successful nursery in the Sawtelle neighborhood. Raised in West Los Angeles, Edith enjoyed a happy childhood surrounded by friends, including sisters in the Nisei

Club called Atomettes, based at the West L.A. United Methodist Church. She was a dedicated sister to her siblings Setsuko, Henry, Midori, Mary and Barbara. Together with 10,000 individuals of Japanese ancestry, she and her family were interned at the Manzanar concentration camp in California's Owens Valley.

After the war, Edith returned to West L.A. Undeterred by her circumstances, she went on to graduate from UCLA and build a successful career as an office manager and bookkeeper. On April 20, 1952, Edith married her lifelong partner Kenneth Yamamoto of Boyle Heights. The couple enjoyed a wonderful, long life together raising their two sons Mark and Peter. A devoted parent volunteer, Edith was elected to the Nora Sterry Lighted School PTA Cabinet in 1961 and was awarded a coveted PTA Lifetime Membership in 1968. Edith and Ken were a big part of the lives of their nieces and nephews and enjoyed traveling with their family and friends. They were dedicated to being a part of their grandchildren's lives and took pride in watching them grow. A lifelong West L.A. JACLer, Edith loved spending time with her friends and family going to ikebana/flower arranging classes, golfing, bowling, fishing and taking dance classes. She especially loved dogs of all kinds, her pet tortoises and collecting tortoise figurines.

Edith is preceded in death by husband Kenneth and son Peter. She will be lovingly remembered by her son Mark, her grandchildren Danielle, Trevor and Jessica Yamamoto, John Nizich and Michelle Olsen, her four great-grandchildren, many nieces and nephews, and sister Barbara Taniguchi of Fresno. A service will be held at the West L.A. United Methodist Church on June 3, 2023, at 2 p.m.

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It's Always Good to Have a Disaster Plan and Emergency Kit Supplies

By Craig Gima

When Hurricane Iwa hit Hawai'i in 1982, Gerry Silva huddled with his family under the dining room table in his Windward Oahu house as the winds and rains raged outside.

One of his kids noticed water coming into the home and told Silva, "Hey dad, it's raining in the house."

"We're in a two-story house, the only way that would happen is if our roof came off," Silva replied.

Silva and his family survived the storm, but their home needed lots of repairs.

Ever since then, Silva, an AARP volunteer speaker, has shared his personal story to teach others about hardening your home to survive a

hurricane and being prepared for any disaster.

The beginning of hurricane season in the Atlantic and Central Pacific on June 1 and in the Eastern Pacific on May 15 is a good reminder to review your disaster plan and emergency kit supplies. Rotate food items, water and prescription medicines that are near their expiration dates. Make sure everyone is aware of what to do if a disaster strikes, how to communicate and how to let everyone know you are safe.

Don't have a disaster plan or emergency kit? Now is the time to create a plan and get ready to survive a hurricane or any other disaster. Resources on how to plan for a disaster and what should be in your emergency kit are available online

at the FEMA website ([ready.gov](https://www.fema.gov)) and the Be Red Cross ready section of the American Red Cross website ([redcross.org](https://www.redcross.org)).

It's especially important that older Americans and caregivers of older adults have a disaster plan and emergency supplies of medications, medical equipment, batteries, food, water, can openers, contact phone numbers and cash on hand before a disaster.

If you're a caregiver with a loved one in a nursing home or care home, find out what their disaster plan is and what help might be needed if they have to evacuate the home or if electricity is out for an extended period. Is the plan workable?

Caregivers need to build a team because one person cannot do it alone in a disaster and its aftermath. What if you are not home when a disaster strikes? Are there neighbors or friends who live close by who can check on them? Those who care for loved ones with dementia will need help keeping their loved one calm and watching them to make sure they don't wander away.

Label a loved one's clothes with your contact information so if they do get lost, responders will know where they belong. The Alzheimer's Assn. has additional tips for

caregivers to prepare for disaster at <https://www.alz.org/help-support/caregiving/safety/in-a-disaster>.

Do you know where you will shelter in a storm or other emergency? If you live in a concrete building and are not on the ground floor, the best place to ride out a storm or survive a tsunami may be to shelter in place. But that might not be the best place to be in an earthquake. Maybe a relative or friend has a home that's been hardened to survive a hurricane and has emergency supplies. Will there be room to shelter there? Make a plan and find out in advance.

If you become separated from your loved ones, do you have a place to meet in the aftermath of a disaster where you can reunite or at least leave a message? A communications plan is part of disaster planning.

Community leaders, elected officials and volunteers can help

neighborhoods organize and prepare for a disaster and survival after a disaster. AARP, working with FEMA, has created a guide to help community leaders organize and better prepare and protect older residents in a disaster. The guide is available at <https://www.aarp.org/livable-communities/tool-kits-resources/info-2022/aarp-disaster-resilience-tool-kit.html>.

Everyone needs to do their part in planning to protect yourself and your loved ones and in checking on and helping neighbors, friends and relatives who may need help in an emergency.

We all need to plan and prepare. Our AARP volunteer, Gerry Silva, is a nice guy. But he doesn't have room for everybody under his dining room table in a storm.

Craig Gima is the communications director for AARP Hawai'i.



AARP volunteer Gerry Silva's roof after Hurricane Iwa hit Oahu

PHOTO: AARP

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