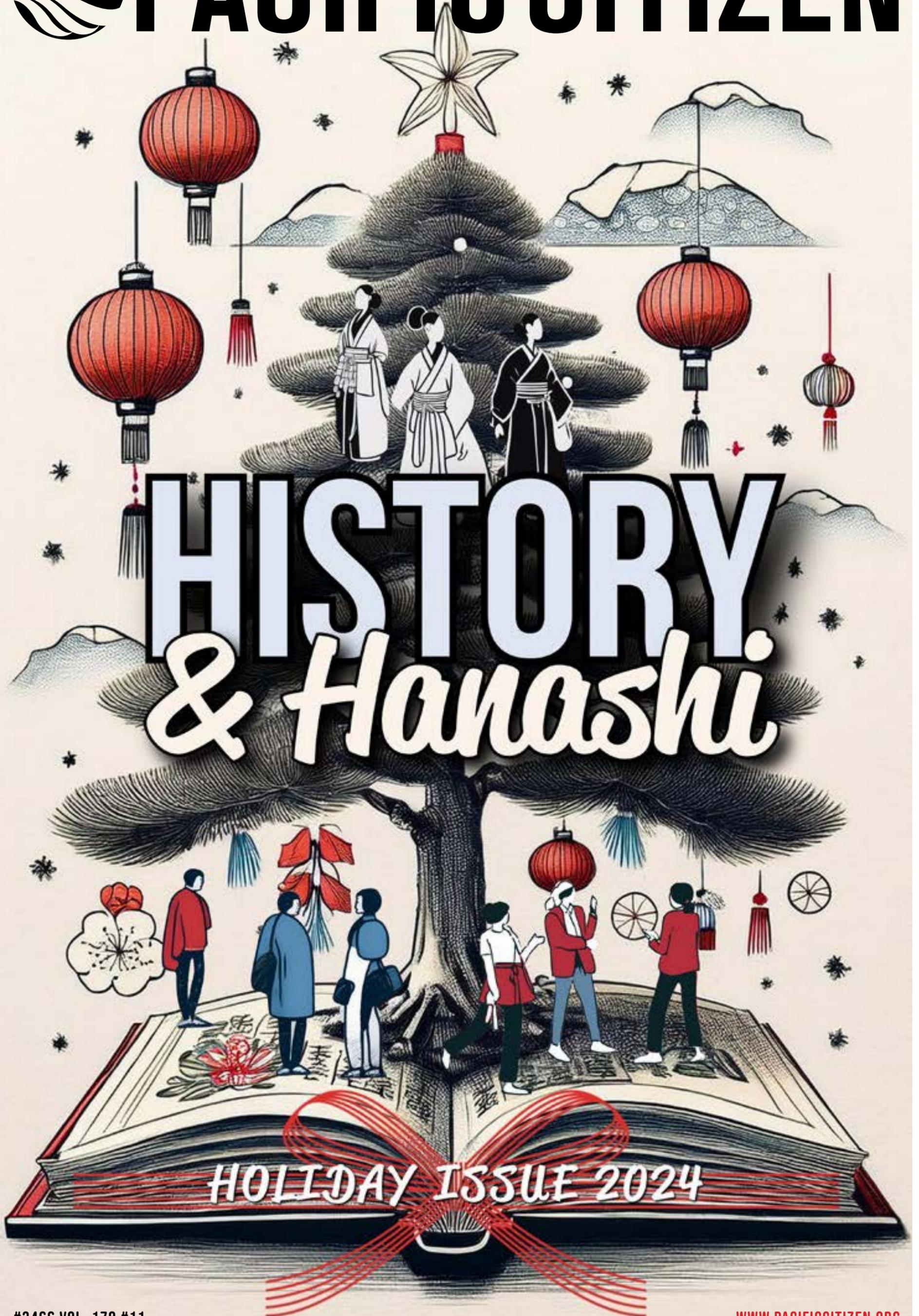


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Gary, Joyce  
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Linda  
Kimio  
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Sally, Steven & Willaine, Bradley & Rina, Tyler & Joyce

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Aeko Yoshikawa & Family



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In honor of our grandchildren:  
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Olivia, Maiya & Luca



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Ishihara

Happy New Year  
from  
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Craig I. Yoshikawa

Happy Holidays



Gordon, Dale &  
Chance Mizuno

Happy Holidays  
Bob & Sally Tanaka

May the New Year be filled with  
Peace, Good Health & Happiness

Mike Shibata

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Hiroshi and Lori Ann Yagi-Doi  
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Founded in 1929, JAACL is the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization. JAACL has chapters nationwide and a Washington, D.C., office and a national headquarters in San Francisco. JAACL's mission is to secure and uphold the human and civil rights of Japanese Americans and all Americans while preserving our cultural heritage and values.

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# Letter From the Editor

**H**anashi in Japanese means “talk,” “speech,” “conversation” or “story.” One of my favorite parts about the holiday season is the anticipated moment when my family, friends and loved ones gather around my dining room table to relax, eat our favorite foods (hello to the Kajiya family seafood dip, which appears only once a year!) and just “talk story.”

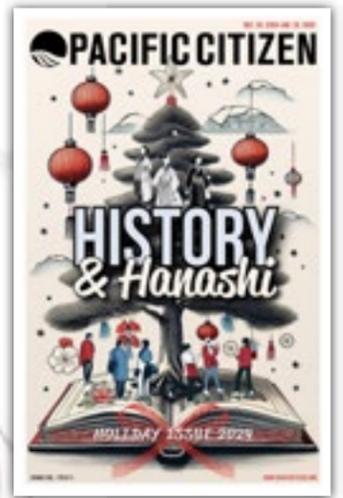
We sit there for hours reconnecting with one another, chatting about everything going on in our busy lives, as well as remember times that happened years earlier but in that moment of recollection feel like they occurred only yesterday.

That is the power of storytelling — the ability to bring alive feelings of deep connection that remind of us of the enduring strength of our shared history. Every story we tell and every tradition we honor becomes a foundation for those who will follow us. Each tale has the power to bridge the past and the future together.

The many unique stories presented in this special issue of the *Pacific Citizen* celebrate our community’s rich history and proud heritage. You’ll read about Lucy, a special dog that bonded an entire group of soldiers from a 442nd RCT medics unit together in Italy during World War II; special traditions JAACLers honor during the holiday season; a new future for a beloved Japanese American family’s rice business (don’t worry, it’s here to stay); what’s next for one of America’s “11 Most Endangered Historic Places” — and many more articles that highlight the vital importance of the AAPI experience.

In this season of reflection and renewal, may the strength of our connections and the stories we treasure guide us through the present and into the future. And may we, as a community, continue to preserve these stories for generations to come. Here’s to “History and Hanashi” . . . always.

— Allison Haramoto,  
 Executive Editor



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# Mile High

**HAPPY HOLIDAYS**

**Pat Hayashi**

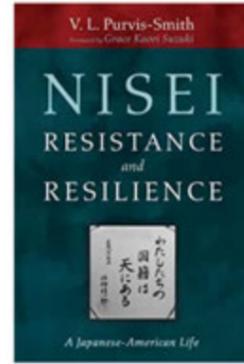
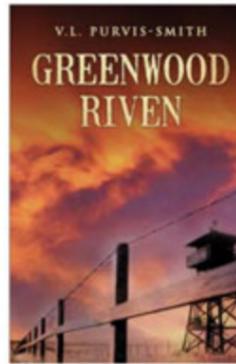
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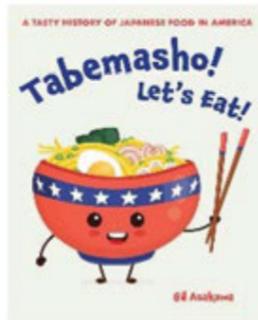
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*In Memory of Bob Sakata*  
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**Season's Greetings**

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**Seasons' Greetings to All!!!**



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**HOLIDAY CHEERS**

**Tom, Shelley & JoAnne**  
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 Denver, Colorado

Happy Holidays!



All the best for the year ahead.  
**Dylan Mori**

Holiday Greetings from  
**Wayne & Chris**

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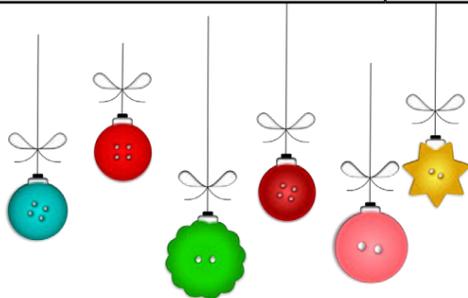
*Season's Greetings*

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*Happy Holidays*  
 Marge Taniwaki

*Warmest Holiday Greetings & Peace in the New Year!*  
 Ruby Mayeda

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## Watsonville-Santa Cruz



*The Watsonville-Santa Cruz Chapter*  
*90th Anniversary*

To our JACL Community,

In remembrance and in deepest gratitude to our ancestors of all origins who brought us together. In this, our Watsonville-Santa Cruz Chapter's 90th year, we remember all those who came before us without whom those lessons and ideals that they lived and sacrificed for, for their families and this country, would not have been continued to today.

We believe that our history is as diverse as every individual in our community who lived it. People should convey in their own voice, in their own written words, who they are and document their own history. No one's history or culture should be forgotten. We will continue our work to ensure that all people will be remembered and to advocate for those who are not granted equal rights. May our future generations continue the work. Through striving together for the equal human and civil rights of each individual, we will build a world of peace and unity.

Best wishes for the holidays and the new year!



## Salt Lake City

**Happy Holidays!**

From the Salt Lake City chapter

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Wishing You Peace & Happiness  
 in the New Year  
**Jeanette Misaka & Family**



# The Dog Who Saved Soldiers' Spirits — And the Mystery of Her Final Days

*Lucy, a stray puppy adopted by Nisei medics during WWII, is now immortalized in a heartfelt picture book that uncovers her life on the European Front. But what happened after she came home?*

By Lynda Lin Grigsby,  
P.C. Contributor

**H**oward Kozuma sported the same close-cropped hairstyle for most of his life — short on top and longer on the sides. To smooth the errant strands away from his ears, he used candlewax.

“I think the top was an Army thing,” said his son, Pat Kozuma, 67. “And the sides, I don’t know.”

For decades, Howard showed up to family events in his signature style — hair slicked, mouth quiet. He was a man of few words who preferred to express himself through action. Whether at his children’s basketball games or booster club meetings, Howard was ever present and ready to help.

These qualities were rooted in his time as a World War II medic with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. On the European Front, Howard — a Honolulu-born Nisei — saw the worst of war. Wounded soldiers, as Sen. Daniel K. Inouye once said, don’t call out for their mothers on the battlefield. The lucky ones call out for the medics.

Howard, like many Nisei veterans, felt reluctant to unspool war memories. Speaking them aloud carried him back to the mountains of Italy where too many friends called for his help. In 1984, a throat cancer diagnosis and a laryngectomy reduced the bass in his voice. Howard could only talk between deep breaths.

Then one day, Pat, a general manager at the Aston Waikiki Beach Tower in Honolulu, heard a story that gave him pause — the 442nd RCT medics adopted a puppy in the Italian town of Luciana. The dog, aptly named Lucy, became the unit’s unofficial mascot.

Pat’s hotel job puts him in contact with many people from around the world who want to tell stories. He has heard them all. But when he heard about Lucy, he knew his dad was involved.

At war’s end, one medic took Lucy to Hawaii.

“Was it you who smuggled Lucy back home?”

Pat asked his dad.

The Nisei veteran smiled with his whole soul when he heard

**Lucy the medic dog, drawn in a helmet by Willie Ito, similar to the real photo of her puppy**



Lucy with her puppy in an medics helmet



Lucy and her puppies

the name Lucy. Then, he chuckled and took a deep breath.

“That was me,” Howard said.

## A Puppy and All Her Dads

The fighting at Luciana was bitter hand-to-hand conflict. In 1944, the 442nd RCT and 100th Battalion had the enemy barricaded with the fierce fighting style that later made them one of the most highly decorated units in Army history.

The units’ medical teams — comprised of doctors, dentists and even Boy Scouts with first aid training — received limited combat training and were restricted from carrying guns. Combat medics embedded with troops on the battlefield, lived in foxholes, rendered emergency aid under fire and carried the wounded across miles of treacherous terrain.

“There was no quit,” Dr. Harry Abe, a 442nd RCT medic, recalled in a 1997 interview with Columbia University’s oral history project. “I think we had something we had to prove. That was our motto all the way through.”

During WWII, combat medics relied on the bright Red Cross logo emblazoned on helmets and uniforms to give them special protection. Still, medics were often targeted and killed, according to the Go For Broke National Education Center.

In Luciana, battered and beleaguered, the 3rd Battalion medics needed a morale boost. They chanced upon local Italian children with a puppy. Maybe, they thought, the dog could live at their camp.

They offered the kids candy in exchange for the puppy, then brought Lucy back to camp and fed her with an eyedropper.

Lucy became the heart of a wartime family with so many dads, including Eddie Yamasaki — a bespectacled Nisei from Hawaii with a Leica camera and a penchant of taking photos and creating scrapbooks.

Yamasaki snapped photo after photo of Lucy, documenting her life during WWII from puppy to adulthood cradled in the arms of medics or nuzzled in the faces of infantrymen. She posed happily for photos with her dads, who grew so



Lucy came from the Italian town of Luciana. She became the 442nd RCT medics’ unofficial mascot.



Lucy drawing by Willie Ito

fond of her that they made her own “Lucy” dog tags. Lucy was a medium-size mutt with long hair along her neck and chest. Her bushy tail swished whenever her dads returned from battle.

When Lucy gave birth, the medics doted on her puppies. Yamasaki proudly took pictures of her expanding family, too.

At war’s end, the Nisei soldiers trickled back home. Memories of Lucy faded until 2013, when Yamasaki invited Stacey Hayashi, an author and filmmaker, to look at his 442nd photo album. By then, Yamasaki’s hair had turned snowy white, and he felt more ready to see the faces of wartime friends — many of whom never returned home.

In Yamasaki’s photo album, Hayashi thumbed through page after page of pictures of Lucy. In one photo, the medics lovingly placed one of her puppies in a helmet and took a photo. In another, Lucy laid regally on the medic jeep. Yamasaki had impeccable handwriting, which he used to scrawl along the margins, “Lucy — 3rd Battalion medics mascot.”



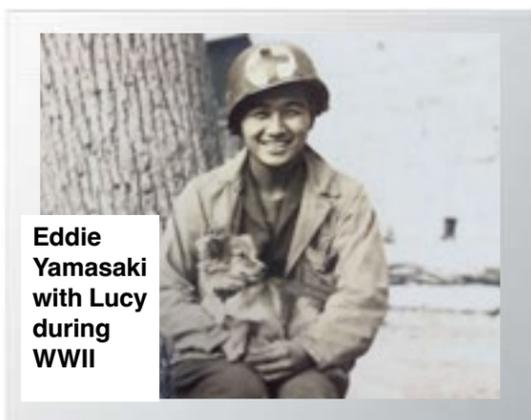
Lucy and her many dads of the 442nd RCT medics unit

Lucy the mascot with her 442nd RCT medics unit as drawn by Willie Ito for “The Story of Lucy”





Howard Kozuma and Lucy, illustrated together by Willie Ito for "The Story of Lucy"



Eddie Yamasaki with Lucy during WWII

novel. Hayashi decided to write a picture book about the little dog who made a big impact on the Nisei medics.

Lucy's story is so special, thought Hayashi, that someone exceptional needs to draw the dog. While promoting her graphic novel, Hayashi had a chance encounter with Willie Ito, a veteran illustrator who spent nearly 50 years in the animation industry as a cartoonist.

*Perfect*, thought Hayashi.

Their picture book, "The Story of Lucy: Mascot of the 442nd RCT Medics," is out now. Told from Lucy's point of view, the book shows how the little dog lifted spirits and licked away tears.

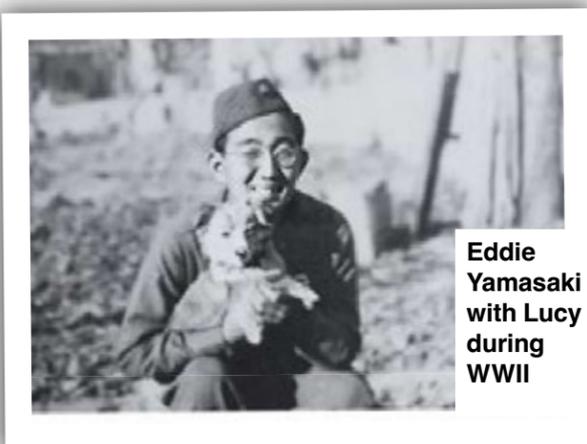
"I've been drawing dogs all my life," said Ito, 90, at his Monterey Park, Calif., home studio. He started his animation career working on the "Lady" character in the 1955 Disney classic "Lady and the Tramp."

"Lady" is an illustrated cocker spaniel modeled after Ito's own childhood dog named Snuffy, his first pet after returning to San Francisco from Topaz. In his backyard, young Ito liked to run around and jump off the swing set. The cocker spaniel liked chasing him. One day, the swing accidentally struck Snuffy in the head. Willie's dad took the cocker spaniel to the vet and came back empty-handed.

"It was such a traumatic experience," said Ito. "I felt like I killed her, and so I felt like I could never have a pet again."

Throughout his career of drawing dogs, Ito always included characteristics from Snuffy — even when illustrating Lucy.

Dogs are "minor angels," Jonathan Carroll, an American fiction writer, once said. Their love is unconditional, and for the brief time that they roam



Eddie Yamasaki with Lucy during WWII

"What is this?" Hayashi asked slowly about the dog pictures.

"Oh, that's Lucy," said Yamasaki. "Isn't she beautiful?"

### A 'Real Bright Spot' in War

Canines have been used in warfare since the founding of the country. Faster and more agile than humans, dogs were often used as messengers to carry ammunition, security guards and agents of care with the medics, according to the Department of Defense. In 1923, war dogs were honored with a first-of-its-kind canine veteran memorial in Hartsdale, N.Y.

Lucy's role with the 3rd Battalion medics is unclear. Did she serve on the battlefield or wait back at camp? Most of her dads spoke sparingly about their wartime experiences. Many have passed on, including Yamasaki, who died in 2017.

Many of the medics did not mention Lucy to their family — but a select few could not stop talking about her.

In a Sept. 20, 1944, letter to his mom, Abe included a hand-drawn self-portrait and a black-and-white photo of himself cradling Lucy in his lap.

"Something to show for the 1st attempt at taking pictures in sunny Italy," he wrote.

Lucy was "a real bright spot," said Carolyn Abe-Ishii, Harry's daughter. "She was really special to my dad, and you can see it in the pictures."

After the war, Abe became a medical doctor in New York for more than 40 years. Until his death in 2010, Abe's steely voice always cracked with emotions whenever he talked about his war experiences. He was a man haunted by his past.

In the 1997 Columbia University oral history interview, Abe sobbed when he talked about his fallen friends. The interviewer then asked him to talk instead about happy wartime memories. When he mentioned Lucy's name, his smile was audible.

"My dad loved animals," said Abe-Ishii, 70, of Agoura Hills, Calif. "And animals loved him."

Sometimes, Abe would try to tell his grandchildren about his war stories (his granddaughter, Adena Ishii, just became Berkeley, Calif.'s, first Asian American and woman of color mayor), but they mostly wanted to hear about Lucy.

"She followed us all the way through," said Abe about Lucy in the oral history interview. "In fact, she had a litter of babies that was delivered in France. You know who the obstetrician was? *Me*."

### Immortalizing Lucy

Like many who hear about Lucy's story, Hayashi had to share it. She had spent years interviewing Nisei veterans for her "Go For Broke: An Origin Story" film and the "Journey of Heroes" graphic

the Earth with us, they make lasting impressions.

### The Mystery of Lucy's Life

Howard Kozuma had just graduated high school in Honolulu when Pearl Harbor was attacked. As the oldest son in the family, the weight of maintaining the family's honor fell on his shoulders. When he left for war, his mother was not allowed to say goodbye. He had a job to do.

On the brutal European Front, one of Howard's jobs as a medic was to carry the dead and wounded back to camp. Through long distances and tough terrain, Howard was steadfast — he left no one behind.

In the brutality of war, just below his stoic exterior, Howard had a soft spot for his dog.

"He was always very soft in nature," said Corey Kozuma, his grandson. "I could imagine the comfort that a dog would bring to him, and how he felt very much attached."

When he returned to Honolulu, of course it was Howard who took Lucy home. He left no one behind.

"He wanted to make sure that Lucy was taken," said Corey, 32.

On the USS Liberty, Howard simply put Lucy in one of his bags enroute to Oahu by way of New York.

"I'm sure it was a little easier to smuggle a dog home then than it is now," said Corey with a chuckle.

Lucy lived out the rest of her life in Honolulu, where, according to Harry, she gave birth again. That's where Lucy's story mysteriously ends. Howard never mentioned Lucy to his children or grandchildren. No one knows what happened to Lucy's puppies.

Howard became a dental technician. He attended Nisei veterans' reunions on the beach and chatted with many wartime friends — including Yamasaki. Maybe they talked about Lucy, said Pat, but who was listening?

Howard died in 2013. He was 89. His gravestone is engraved with the motto he lived by: "Go For Broke."

In quiet moments, Pat likes to imagine a world where his dad is reunited with Lucy.

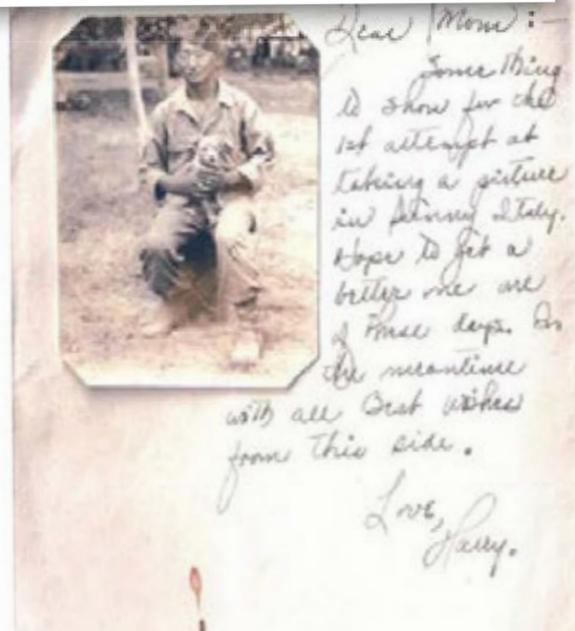
What would Howard say?

"I don't think he would say anything," said Pat. "I think he would just hug the dog."

To buy Lucy's picture book, visit [www.442lucydog.com](http://www.442lucydog.com).

### Help Solve Lucy's Mystery

Have any information on Lucy's life after she arrived in Oahu? What happened to her puppies? Please email tips to [llgrigsby@gmail.com](mailto:llgrigsby@gmail.com).



The 1944 letter Harry Abe sent home to his family that included a self-portrait and a photo of him and Lucy

# Portland

## Happy New Year from the Portland JACL



The Portland JACL organizes our annual Nikkei Community Picnic held on the third Sunday in August at Oaks Amusement Park. We enjoy a bingo, prizes, amusement rides for the kids, lots of pot luck food, fun and conversation. *Photo by Rich Iwasaki*

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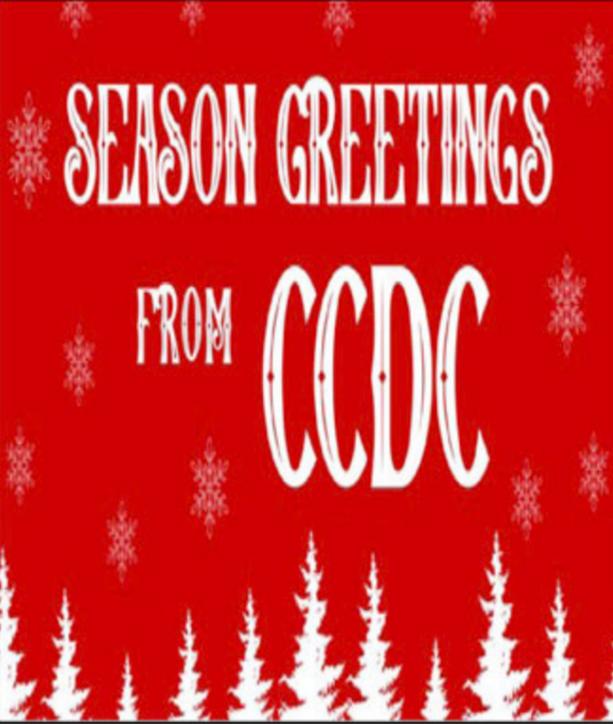
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Wishing all of you & your families a very  
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We will be celebrating our chapter's 50th anniversary in 2025  
and launching our traveling JA Baseball Exhibit!

# Silicon Valley

*Best wishes for a safe and happy  
holiday season!*



# Santa Barbara

## Happy New Year!



from the members of the **Santa Barbara JAACL**





(Counter clockwise from far right)

Robin and Tama Koda;

Kokuho Rose Heirloom Rice;

Robin Koda with Mochiko;

Blue Star Mochiko

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA

# A Lasting Legacy

*Koda Farms' long history of rice is starting a new chapter.*

By Gil Asakawa,  
P.C. Contributor

Robin Koda is eager to take visitors, including a reporter and a documentary film crew from the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo, through the history-filled land of Koda Farms, the iconic farm that was started 97 years ago by her grandfather, Keisaburo Koda.

Just about every Japanese American is familiar with Koda Farms — especially its best-known brands, Kokuho Rose rice and Blue Star Mochiko mochi rice flour. In Asian markets and even mainstream supermarket chains across the country, you're likely to see stacks of Koda Farms' rice (there's also Sho Chiku Bai Sweet Rice) in bags from five to 50 pounds.

Kokuho Rose, which was developed and first sold in the early 1960s, is credited in a story by the *Los Angeles Times* as being the rice that made the introduction of sushi in America possible, with its taste and texture the perfect complement to raw fish and nori seaweed. The rice helped convince restaurants in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo to import the glass-refrigerated counter displays from Japan for the first American sushi bars.

JAs know the rush to buy Kokuho Rose — especially the company's "Heirloom" product — when the "New Crop" designation appears on the stack of sacks at the store each fall.

But earlier this year, there was a panicked rush to stock up on Koda Farms products when news media, including the *New York Times*, ran stories about Koda

Farms that gave the impression that the operation was shutting down. The actual story, if readers dug into the coverage, is that Robin and Ross Koda, the granddaughter and grandson of Keisaburo who now run the farm, have licensed five of the family's products — including its seeds, processes, products such as Kokuho Rose and Blue Star Mochiko — to a Northern California company, Western Foods.

The *New York Times*, which broke the news to most of the country, proclaimed, "California's Rice Royalty Is Stepping Down: Koda Farms, a family run rice business revered by chefs, ends a century-long tradition."

Across the country, the *San Francisco Chronicle's* even more dire headline read, "This California Farm Supplied Rice to Chefs and Homecooks for 97 Years. Now, It's Shutting Down."

Both articles and others that followed mentioned the licensing deal and noted the products would continue, but readers, who might scan a headline but not fall for the click-bait sensationalism to actually read the details, just caught the gist of the story and assumed the worst.

Culinary fans thought that Kokuho Rose would not be available anymore, or that there would be no more Blue Star Mochiko sold to make butter mochi cake. But the products will still be available, and though it's true the Kodas are giving up the tough life of farming in an age of economic strife and climate change, the farm will remain, and rice will still be grown there under the supervision of Western Foods, as well as at the company's farms near Sacramento. There will actually be more rice from more land.



(Clockwise from far left)

Koda Farms;

Koda Farms silos;

Heirloom Kokuho Rose waiting for harvest;

Harvesting rice;

Fall Kokuho Rose harvest



Robin Koda, who lives on the family farm in South Dos Palos in California's Central Valley with her 99-year-old mother, Tama Koda, says the panic was immediate, and she was swamped with social media messages, phone calls and texts from fans far and wide.

The *Sacramento Bee* had it right in its headline, which stated the Koda legacy is moving to Yolo County, where Western Foods is located north of Sacramento. The *Los Angeles Times* set the record straight with a headline and article that included this direct statement from Robin Koda: "Stop freaking out. Stay calm. This is Koda family legacy chapter two."

The new chapter will be written by Western Foods. The company is licensing the right to use the Koda Farms name, as well as the names and logos for its famous products, in addition to Koda Farms' special heirloom rice seeds and production processes.

The deal was made possible because Keisaburo Koda was visionary enough to trademark his products and brand names decades ago, so that they could someday be handed on as valuable assets.

Koda was a forward-thinker in many ways. Before WWII, Koda Farms was the largest rice grower in the U.S. Koda was called the "Rice King" by consumers and media. He invented an efficient way to sow rice seeds using airplanes to drop seeds that had been soaked overnight onto wet fields so they could withstand the Central Valley's dry climate and soil. In the 1950s, he worked with a scientist to develop the special seed for medium-grain rice that would be sticky and chewy and have flavor and floral notes. It would eventually become Kokuho Rose.

But when Executive Order 9066 was signed, the Koda family — Keisaburo, his wife and two sons — was incarcerated at Amache in Colorado, where outside the family's barrack was a concrete usu mortar to pound mochi.

After the war, though, the Rice King returned to California and found that almost all of his land and equipment had been sold. He simply moved down the road a couple of miles and started the farm where the Koda family has built a new rice kingdom over the decades.

Koda didn't just farm the land (his sons took over), he began social justice and

community efforts that included being a leader in the JAFL, starting a program between the U.S. and Japanese governments to bring young Japanese farmers to Koda's land to learn American agricultural techniques and even filing for and eventually winning (after his death, unfortunately) reparations for his wartime losses.

As a businessman, Keisaburo Koda made sure he wasn't just growing rice to hand off to other companies to truck, process, mill and sell the end products. Koda made his operation vertically integrated, so his farm grew, harvested, dried, processed and cleaned, milled and packaged the products under his family brands.

"I'm extremely grateful and consider myself extremely lucky that he had the foresight to get his IP (intellectual property) all in order," Robin Koda said as she gave a tour of the farm and all the industrial equipment and various buildings that take the rice from farm to end products.

Her grandfather built a unique vertically integrated agribusiness that they could control every step of the way from growing to harvesting to processing and then selling products. "Right? I mean, that's the only reason why we have these trademarks to continue to license out," Robin Koda added.

And Miguel Reyna, the founder of Western Foods, is also glad for the founding Koda's visionary acumen. Reyna knew about Koda Farms before he founded Western Foods in 2004, when he worked for a company that milled Koda's rice. He says he was contacted by Ross Koda a year ago when Robin and Ross began to consider making the change. Western Foods is known for milling flours, including a host of gluten-free rice and ancient grain products, and he's excited to become the company behind Kokuho Rose, Blue Star Mochiko and Sho Chiku Bai Sweet Rice and other products.

Reyna and Robin Koda say that consumers can expect new, modern products, including Mochiko

pancake mix, mochi donuts and muffins, as well as future rice snacks, though hopefully not the hockey-pucklike rice snacks that have been a staple of supermarkets for years, but something more culturally appropriate. Reyna also runs a separate line of healthy snacks, Rivalz, so he knows snacks.

Reyna agrees that some of the media coverage has been challenging. "Yeah, the stories were all overboard a little bit. I think the messaging sometimes didn't come across very clear," he said. He also acknowledges that consumers can be skeptical of change like this, especially when a family owned company's products will be made by a different company. He says he respects the Koda family's achievement and hopes to maintain the Koda legacy with his own family. Two of his sons are in college, and Western Foods can become a multigenerational family legacy, too.

Some of the farming will continue at the current site, and he adds, "Really, the product is not going to change, and Ross and Robin are not going anywhere."

Robin will continue, for now, to be the familiar face of Koda Farms' rice (though she won't be driving to farmers markets up and down California on the weekends anymore). Ross will continue to work with Western Foods to run the seed program, though he's also involved in a new business selling sake. Uka Sake is made from Koda Farms' rice that is fermented and shipped to brewers in Japan's Tohoku region, where Keisaburo Koda emigrated from in the early 1900s, to be made into Uka Sake.

For Robin and Ross, who grew up on this land, played on the farm equipment and climbed the towers that rise up to give a view of the acres around the family compound all the way to the Coast Range mountains to the west, it was time to move on.

She's convinced her grandfather would approve because he was a restless soul who left Japan for a life in the U.S. and tried his hand at several businesses before landing on rice farming.

The Koda legacy will continue, and the family will be forever connected to Kokuho Rose and the other rice brands, but it will continue under a new leadership, hopefully, as Reyna says, for another century. ■



PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA

# San Fernando Valley



*Happy Holidays!*

We wish you Peace, Joy, and Prosperity in the coming year. Thank you for supporting our community.



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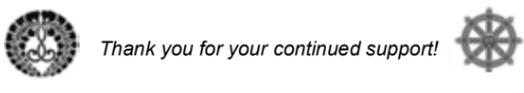
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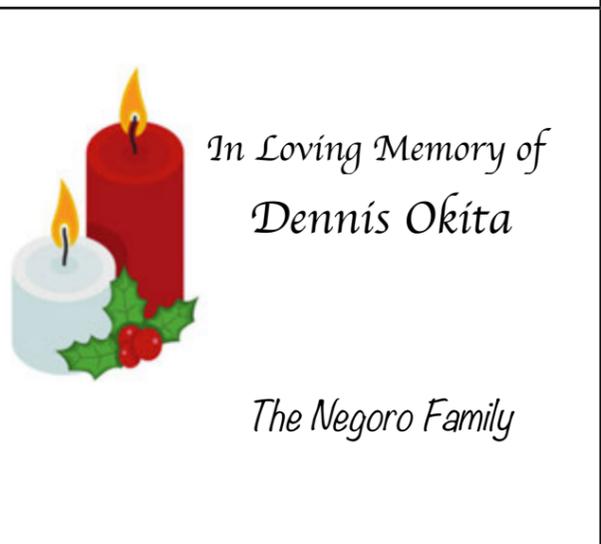
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Harold & Ellen Kameya



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HARUE (HANAMOTO) TOKUNAGA  
AND OUR BROTHER  
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Michiko Tokunaga Kus, May Wood,  
and Tom Tokunaga



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Nicole, Bryan & Jeannette,  
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**Peace & Happy Holidays to All**

**Happy New Year - 2025**

From  
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Palo Alto, CA

**Omaha**

**Season's Greetings from**

**JAACL**  
Japanese American Citizens League - Omaha Chapter

Wishing All Our Friends and Relatives a Joyous Holiday Season

**BILLY AND SHARON ISHII JORDAN AND FAMILY**

Omaha, NE

*Holiday Greetings to all our friends and family!*

Carol Mudra

# From the Executive Director



## WHY JACL?

By David Inoue,  
JACL Executive Director

It's the end of the year when every charity is seeking your support. My mailbox is full of end-of-year appeals every day, and hopefully, you will be receiving JACL's if you haven't already. So, perhaps the question is, "Why should JACL be included amongst the organizations you support this end of year?"

While we have yet to see the full implications of President-Elect Donald Trump's policy changes, all indications are that the civil and human rights of many will be at risk. The gains we have achieved for women and people of color are at risk. It was over 70 years ago that JACL fought for the right of the Issei to become naturalized United States citizens after the twisted logic in the rationale of World War II incarceration that stated the continued Japanese citizenship of so many Japanese was indicative of their continued allegiance to Japan. We know the reality is that they continued to be Japanese citizens because they were not permitted to become U.S. citizens.

The same arguments painting Japanese Americans as a WWII national security threat are now being used to paint Chinese and Chinese Americans as allegiant to the Chinese government, when the reality is that many of them are fleeing that same oppressive regime.

We know this as the politics of division.

Divide and conquer, but we understand also how the fears of these other communities are the fears of our own. Because no one stood up for Japanese Americans during WWII, we must now stand up for other communities. We also better understand now how these communities are part of our own. The fight for women's health-care rights or transgender student's or athlete's rights are fights for members of our own community.

As much as we are focused on where we will be fighting against the incoming administration and its proposed policies, there are areas where we will seek to work together. We will continue to work to fund and implement programs such as the Japanese American Confinement Sites grants, including the newly created Education grants. Situations like this will be few and far between, but we will need to make sure to take advantage of any opportunities we can to bring positives when we will be challenged by so many negatives.

It is in this sometimes uncomfortable place of working in simultaneous opposition and collaboration that JACL expects to find itself in the coming years. In many ways, we can draw parallels to our community's situation during WWII. Much of what the president-elect has proposed to do, he can do without opposition, and probably with the full support of Congress.

We will seek to use the courts to oppose, but as we have seen with the stacked judicial system and a partisan Supreme Court, our efforts are likely to result in delay, not necessar-

ily defeat of policies that will be promoted under false pretense such as national security, just like WWII.

It is in this parallel to our experience in WWII that JACL can be one of the strongest voices

for what is right, where we have gone wrong as a nation in the past and repeating that history in the present. For JACL, we understand our own history and how we can engage with the administration, but also be a clear voice of opposition when needed.

To do this, we need your support. Thirty years ago, JACL had a membership base several times larger than we do now. With the attacks on DEI growing, our corporate support will be more challenging as companies scale back their support to our communities from fear that they will be called out.

This leaves us with the need for your donations to fill these gaps. Consider your tax-deductible donation at the end of the year to make sure that the Japanese American community has a voice in Washington, D.C., directly to all branches of our government.

JACL will fight not just for your voice, but the voices of all who need representation and a place at the table. But, we need your support to do so.

Thank you, and we look forward to working together with you in the new year.

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

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and

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2025

From the members of the

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Dayton, Ohio

[www.daytonjacl.org](http://www.daytonjacl.org)



# Detroit

**SEASONS GREETINGS  
and  
BEST WISHES FOR  
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**Mary Kamidoi**

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**FROM  
DETROIT CHAPTER JACL**

# Mount Olympus

**Holiday Greetings from Utah's  
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IDC Youth Rep	Alex Tokita

HAPPY NEW YEAR



# Twin Cities



**Holiday Greetings  
from the  
Twin Cities JACL** 

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# NY/SC: The Youth Vision for the Future, Inspired by Our Past

**Prompt: How has your JA family history, identity and/or experience shaped your role as a youth advocate, and what do you hope to accomplish in your role on the NY/SC?**

## Remy Kageyama, NY/SC Youth Chair

“Growing up in the historic Sawtelle Japantown, I witnessed firsthand the lingering effects of the exclusion and incarceration of Japanese Americans through my family’s plant nursery, one of the few remaining in the area. This is what sparked my passion for advocacy work in the JA and NH&AAPI communities and membership.”



“In my new role, it has been my goal to increase JACL’s investment in its youth —

and thus our organization’s future — by increasing transparency (between the National Board, the NY/SC and the broader JACL community), diversifying our constituency and creating more opportunities for intergenerational dialogue and mentorship. To that end, the programming for our recent NY/SC Fall Youth Retreat in Washington, D.C., was heavily focused on the restructuring of the NY/SC. We wanted to intentionally think about the ways in which we serve the youth members of the JACL — especially in this distinctively charged political atmosphere — and use our position to provide a voice, safe space and resource for JA and NH&AAPI youth in this country.”

“Over the next couple of years, we are hoping to shift our approach to programming to be more pan-Asian and inclusive of queer communities. We also want to establish a tradition of connecting with the host chapter at least once during our retreats.”

“While the new youth board has only been together for a short time, I have already been blown away by the passion and creativity that each of our reps brings. I am immensely fortunate to be able to work with such accomplished, dedicated young leaders, and I feel more inspired and energized than ever to roll up my sleeves and help get the JACL in the direction that it needs to go — for our youth and for our future.”

“Of course, none of our work would be possible without the generosity and support of our sponsors; JACL leadership, staff, and members; and everyone else who has contributed to empowering the next generation of leaders within the JACL, as well as the civil rights movement as a whole. Your donations, encouragement and mentorship make our work possible. As we head into the new year with our newfound vision and sense of purpose, I encourage you to follow along with the NY/SC’s journey.”

## Claire Inouye, NY/SC Youth Rep.

“Growing up as a Japanese American without a connection to the community or other Japanese Americans, I was driven to join the JACL and the NY/SC to find a sense of belonging and reconnect with my heritage. This experience



deeply shaped my role as a youth advocate, as I’ve come to understand the power of community in fostering identity and resilience. In my role, I hope to inspire others to explore their roots, engage with advocacy and uplift intersectional voices within our community. Looking ahead, I envision the JACL expanding its reach to engage more young people while deepening its focus on social justice and solidarity. I’m honored to contribute to this vision and help strengthen our collective future.”

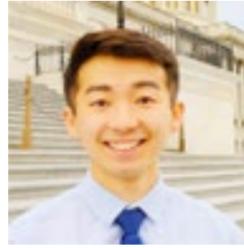
## Simon Kutz, EDC Youth Rep.

“As a half-Japanese son of a recent immigrant, my story did not always fit neatly into the collective Japanese American experience. However, growing up in a small Iowa town with few, if any, Japanese Americans, I decided to join the JACL to find that community. Surprised by the JACL’s extensive advocacy work that aligned with many of my interests, I began heavily involving myself in the organization, eventually leading me to the NY/SC. Serving as the EDC youth representative, I hope to grow interest among Japanese American youth who are originally from the East Coast, rather than continuing to rely on college transplants (of which I am). I hope to see the JACL become an even more inclusive place for Asian Americans whose stories do not necessarily align with the ‘norm,’ allowing the JACL to grow its membership and influence going into the future.”



## Alex Tokita, IDC Youth Rep.

“My family has been deeply involved with JACL for several generations, originating back to my great-grandparents’ incarceration in Minidoka during WWII. Moved by this legacy, I strongly believe in community/coalition building as a key tool for fighting injustice and affronts to civil rights. I chose to join the NY/SC with this goal in mind, specifically for inspiring greater engagement among youth in the hopes of continuing the JACL’s legacy into the future. Within my role as the Intermountain District youth representative, I hope to create a platform through which more youth find belonging and community within the JACL. And in pursuit of this mission, I hope to see the JACL provide chapters with needed support for attracting members and holding meaningful events.”



## Eli Nishimura, MDC Youth Rep.

“My experience growing up as a Japanese American largely influenced my desire to be a youth advocate. There was very little to no Asian American representation where I grew up. This made it difficult for me to feel comfortable with my Japanese American identity. It wasn’t until after I joined the JACL did I find a community of people that understood and validated my experience as a Japanese American. This is why one of my goals as a youth advocate is to strengthen and expand the JACL community. I want to share the safe, accepting and loving community that JACL has given to me.”



## Halle Souza, NCWNP Youth Rep.

“As we approach the beginning of the next Trump administration, I would like to see the JACL continue to reaffirm its commitment to protecting the civil rights of all. In this time of fear and uncertainty, it is vital that long-standing organizations such as the JACL advocate for those targeted by hatred and bigotry. We must draw on our community’s lived experiences to inform our approach to protecting

the most vulnerable. I hope that this work includes not only written statements but also tangible actions and allyship. We will get through this together, and I look forward to seeing the change that can be made.”

## Lincoln Hirata, PNW Youth Rep.

“Growing up, my grandparents always made it a point to teach me about my heritage. My great-grandfather was a ‘No-No’ boy, which certainly taught me the importance of standing up to injustice and for what is right. On that same note, my great-grandfather on my other side immigrated to this country with little means and managed to thrive through every tribulation. Both of these stories make me proud of my heritage and motivate me to ensure that what they went through never happens again. . . . The NY/SC grants me the opportunity to both foster that sense of joy for others and do meaningful work at a larger scale. I hope to revitalize our youth community by creating a lively and positive environment while making a difference in our community. Too often people make the assumption that service to one’s community is bothersome or boring, but I believe we can turn that around by developing newer projects. I hope to partner with other AANHPI organizations and foster a greater sense of community that goes beyond just our JACL roots.”



## Ryan Gasha, PSW Youth Rep.

“Before my parents immigrated to the U.S. from Peru, they were active members in the Japanese-Peruvian community. Their love for serving the community is what inspired me to join the JACL. Initially, one of my goals as interim-PSW youth representative was to establish a temporary PSW District Youth Board. With that first step completed, I now aim to complete the District Youth Engagement Survey Project with the new youth board. Moving forward, I hope the JACL and NY/SC use these recent election results not only as a reminder that the progress gained under our JACL predecessors is not guaranteed but also as motivation to encourage our country’s youth to become more civically engaged.”

## Emily Nishikimoto, At-Large Member

“My JA family history has encouraged me to be civically engaged and speak out for our community and its allies. I chose to join the NY/SC for those very reasons; I wanted to be more involved in the JACL and its mission of advocacy for not only our JA community, but also other communities that need a voice as well. I hope to foster more youth engagement in chapters with smaller youth populations to help secure the future of the JACL and its role as a leading civil rights organization. This year, I would like to see the JACL be proactive about protecting the rights of our community and other more marginalized communities with the incoming Trump administration. I would also like to see a push to gain new members, especially youth members, to secure the future of the JACL and its important advocacy work.”



# Berkeley

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Wishing you a Happy Holidays and Happy New Year from Daruma no Gakko

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Happy Holidays!

Rick, Irene, Beth, Ricky, & Shannon Uno

Sacramento, CA



In Memory of two long time SF Giants fans



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They would have been looking forward to next season



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Love, Kai

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Wishing everyone a happy new year

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Leo & Eeve Terauchi  
Roderick & Reiko Terauchi  
El Cerrito, California

Catherine Gibbons  
Aimee Terauchi  
Matthew Hard  
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明けましておめでとうございます!



Happy New Year  
Berkeley JACL!

In memory of  
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Frankie & Miles Dizon  
Kirkland, WA

*Wishing everyone a  
holiday season full of  
fun, rest and love!*  
*Best, Fun, Berkeley Chapter*

**Season's Greetings**

Matthew, Nancy & Lauren  
Fujikawa

*Happy Holidays*

from the  
**TSUETAKI'S**  
Tracy, Jane, Alex, Amanda  
and Bachan Hideko

Best Wishes  
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# Three Stories in Crystal City



Incarceration survivors Kaz Naganuma (left) and Hiroshi Shimizu

The “America’s Last WWII Concentration Camp” main wall exhibit at the My Story Museum in Crystal City, Texas



*Communities come together in a new exhibit that focuses on friendship and solidarity through recognition of shared histories and collective struggles.*

By Rob Buscher, P.C. Contributor

Members of the Crystal City Pilgrimage Committee joined together with local residents of Crystal City on Nov. 10 to open the first permanent exhibit on the wartime incarceration in the state of Texas. This exhibit, titled “America’s Last WWII Concentration Camp,” is based on the research of Hector Estrada, a retired plumber and Crystal City native who has devoted his retirement years to telling the story of this camp. Estrada’s exhibit was previously shown during the 2019 and 2023 Crystal City Pilgrimage and has now found a permanent home inside a local history museum called My Story Museum — The Story of Us: Tres Historias en Crystal City. My Story Museum, which also opened on Nov. 10, tells the stories of local veterans and the history of Zavala County.

Located in South Texas two hours southwest of San Antonio and known as the “Spinach Capitol of the World,” Crystal City is home to the nation’s largest spinach-growing operation. The opening event fell during Crystal City’s Annual Spinach Festival, which attracted an approximate 30,000 attendees between Nov. 7-10, more than quadrupling the town’s approximate 6,500 residents.

Crystal City also played a significant role during the Chicano Movement as the site of numerous student protests in 1969 that led to school reform and election victories by working-class Mexican American farm laborers who became leaders of the progressive political group La Raza Unida Party.

My Story Museum is the brainchild of former city manager Diana Palacios, herself one of the 1969 student protest leaders who helped organize a series of school walkouts in response to the unequal treatment that Mexican Americans were receiving at that time. Any student caught speaking Spanish in school faced corporal punishment. By January 1970, the school board agreed to the students’ demands, opening the way for progressive Chicano organizers to sweep the local elections in the following cycle.

Decades later, Palacios is now a successful business



(Above) Site of the Crystal City swimming pool. (Below) The makeshift memorial water tank up close



Hector Estrada in front of the exhibit he designed



Rob Buscher and Kurt Ikeda with Diana Palacios



Members of the CCPC museum committee



Victor Uno, CCPC board treasurer, gives remarks during the museum’s ribbon-cutting ceremony.

owner in her hometown, and seeking a way to bring local history to life for both local residents and out-of-town visitors, she decided to open the museum in the historic former Rexall Drugs building.

I journeyed to rural South Texas to help with the museum's opening. Adding to the significance of this trip, my brother-in-law, Kurt Ikeda, joined me. Ikeda's grandfather was incarcerated at Crystal City during the war.

On the morning of our first day in Crystal City, we toured the grounds of the former German School, thanks to CCPC board member and local high school social studies teacher and coach Ruben Salazar. Salazar became involved with the pilgrimage committee when the Crystal City School District hosted a welcome luncheon for pilgrims in 2019. Since 2012, Salazar had been the caretaker of Estrada's exhibit collection and was the person who organized the temporary exhibits at both the 2019 and 2023 pilgrimages.

Salazar took us on a tour of the old school grounds, located in the campus of the current elementary school. Joining us were Crystal City incarceration survivors Hiroshi Shimizu and Kaz Naganuma, who were being filmed for a local news special by KENS5, a CBS affiliate based in San Antonio.

Between 1942 and '48, this lesser-known Crystal City detention site held approximately 4,751 persons of Japanese, German and Italian nationality, along with their U.S.-born family members. The camp also imprisoned thousands of Latin American families of Japanese ancestry who were kidnapped from at least 13 countries in Central and South America as part of a prisoner of war exchange program.

With POW transfers made on a basis of 1-for-1 exchange, and considering how few Japanese soldiers were taken alive in the Pacific Front, the U.S. government decided to game the numbers by trading Latinx Nikkei for U.S. soldiers held captive by Imperial Japan. The federal government paid foreign governments to hand over their Japanese ancestry populations who were then taken to the port of New Orleans. Upon arrival, their passports and other travel documents were destroyed, thereby making them stateless persons. By the racist logic of that era, they were then considered Japanese nationals, eligible for POW exchange and brought to Crystal City from there to await repatriation.

Naganuma, CCPC board president, was born Kazumu Julio Cesar Naganuma in Cañao, Peru. In 1944, the FBI came to Peru and kidnapped his family along with many other Japanese Peruvian families. Naganuma's father was given three days to pack up the family and board a ship to New Orleans, a destination that was unknown to them until they arrived.

"Once we reached New Orleans, my mother saw some Japanese faces there, so she thought maybe we arrived in Japan," Naganuma recalled. Upon arrival, the Japanese Peruvians were stripped naked and sprayed with DDT to supposedly fumigate them before being placed on a train to Texas.

The Naganuma family spent three and a half years in Crystal City, from March 1944-September 1947. At the end of the war, Peru refused to take them back, and not wanting to repatriate to Japan — a country where Kaz and his siblings had never set foot in — the Naganumas were released under the sponsorship of Rev. Fukuda of the Konko-kyo Church in San Francisco. Speaking only Japanese and Spanish, the family was able to eke out a living working in Japantown.

"I'm actually surprised that my parents made it through, not just to live day to day, but the psychological impact they had," Naganuma, now in his 80s, reminisced. "To lose your entire livelihood to get to where you are now. They had everything taken away — I'm not sure how they got through." Of the approximately 2,600 Latinx Nikkei at Crystal

City, several hundred were repatriated to Japan, about 600 were eventually returned to Peru and another several hundred settled at Seabrook Farms in New Jersey.

The fact that Crystal City was the only large-scale detention site that held a multinational and multi-ethnic population during WWII makes it unique. Another standout feature of the camp is that it was the final point of departure for renunciants who were repatriated to Japan.

This was what initially led Shimizu, CCPC vp, and his family to Crystal City. Early in the war, Shimizu's father agreed to be repatriated to Japan along with his father, who was arrested by the FBI in the initial roundup of community leaders. Hiroshi Shimizu's birth delayed his parents' ability to return to Japan, and they eventually wound up in Tule Lake, where his father was imprisoned in the stockade for participating in the camp protests. Renouncing his citizenship under duress, the elder Shimizu attempted to rescind his decision, and in March 1946, the family was transferred to Crystal City to await the State Department's ruling on whether they could remain in the U.S.

Daily life in the Crystal City camp was markedly different compared to the larger WRA sites because as a formally designated POW camp, the federal government adhered to certain standards of living that far exceeded what was made available to Japanese Americans elsewhere in detention.

Rather than the typical 100-foot tar-paper barracks divided into 20-by-20-foot apartments, each incarcerated family was given half of a brick duplex in which to live. These buildings were equipped with bathrooms and kitchens that even included their own ice boxes, allowing incarcerated a far greater degree of autonomy and privacy.

"The food was so much better because we lived in a duplex where my mother cooked her own meals for the family, so we weren't eating in the mess hall," Shimizu remembered.

Another significant variation from the typical WRA camp was the swimming pool at Crystal City. The 250-foot-wide pool was designed by Italian-Honduran civil engineer Elmo Gaetano Zannoni, with German Americans who specialized in concrete providing the labor. While the amenity was enjoyed by many as a reprieve from the dry South Texas heat, it was also the source of the camp's worst tragedy when two Peruvian Japanese girls, Sachiko Tanabe (13) and Aiko Oyakawa (11) drowned there in 1944.

In 2023, town officials helped the Crystal City Pilgrimage Committee create a memorial monument placed at the former site of the camp swimming pool, built a shelter to protect the monument from the sun and renamed the adjacent street "Calle Aiko y Sachiko" in their memory. This was the next stop that we visited after leaving the German School building.

After spending some time reflecting on the significance of the site, Kurt and I drove the short distance to the area where we believed his grandfather's duplex was located. Overgrown with yellowed and sunburnt sedge grass and interspersed with clumps of prickly pear cactus, the area had been used as dumping grounds for fill taken from the nearby airfield. Among the debris, we found chunks of concrete, likely foundation of the former duplex buildings based on the condition of wear. However, a sudden and unseasonable storm cut our visit short, so we went back to the museum to meet the rest of the CCPC members, who were working on finishing touches for the following day's museum opening.

The next morning, we returned under clear skies to the swimming pool site. A striking feature of the former swimming pool is the Texas ash tree that grows out of the concrete foundation. Our local guides noted that this tree survives beyond all

odds in an area that is typically inhospitable to its growth, rather symbolic to the communities who were once held as prisoners in this space and now thrive in the postwar era.

For the official ribbon-cutting ceremony at the My Story Museum, Naganuma and Shimizu both took part, assisted by Palacios, Salazar, Estrada and Miss Spinach Festival 2024. During the ceremony, Mayor Frank Moreno Jr. acknowledged Kaz and Hiroshi as returning citizens of Crystal City, warmly welcoming them back.

For several hours following the ribbon cutting, I stood in the museum exhibit distributing keepsake pinback buttons and answering questions about the wartime incarceration. In each of these interactions I sensed a profound feeling of gratitude from local residents who were proud to have a physical location to celebrate their town's history and the role that the CCPC played in bringing this to fruition.

Our final morning in Crystal City was spent preparing for a panel discussion featuring Naganuma, Shimizu, Salazar and Estrada. When Kurt shared that we were able to locate his grandfather's duplex thanks to the research presented in the exhibit, Estrada burst into tears of joy. We shared an emotional moment of gratitude and deep respect for a man who had no family connection to the wartime incarceration and yet had given so much to ensure this history will not be forgotten.

Asked about his motivation for doing this work, Estrada answered, "I was born in 1946 in an area of Crystal City called El Chico. That area was loaded with old shacks that were used by migrant workers — we used to call it El Campo because it was a labor camp where all these migrant laborers were grouped together. As far as we knew, that's all it had been, a labor camp. But then after I graduated, got married and left the state, I moved to San Jose, Calif., and we were doing a job close to Japantown. We used to go eat at some of the restaurants, and I saw that there was a Japanese American museum there. I went to visit it just before I retired and found out that Crystal City had actually been a detention camp for Japanese people. We were never told in school about it. We didn't know anything about it. So, when I found out, I decided to start researching. I was shocked and angry that I was never taught this history. I vowed to bring this history back to Crystal City. People need to know the terrible injustice that happened."

For over 10 years after his retirement in 2001, Estrada researched the National Archives, the Texas State historical archives and numerous educational institutions, compiling photos, videos and documents about the internment camp. Using his own resources and computer skills, he created a 1,000-photo exhibit and a series of online videos telling the story of Crystal City's camp. Despite losing his son just weeks prior to the 2024 Spinach Festival and being diagnosed with terminal lung disease, Estrada journeyed to Crystal City for likely the last time to participate in the ribbon cutting and museum opening panel.

When asked what it meant knowing that his work would live on in the My Story Museum, Estrada said, "I am so thankful. I'm so happy that all these pictures are still being used to show what the United States has done to all these poor people."

Work on the museum will continue over the next year to further expand the historical interpretation as the CCPC prepares for phase II of the camp exhibit, which is tentatively planned to be unveiled during the pilgrimage scheduled to take place Oct. 9-12, 2025.

***For more information on the Crystal City Pilgrimage Committee and My Story Museum, please visit: <https://www.crystalcitypilgrimage.org/>.***

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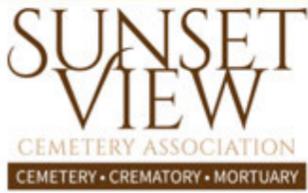
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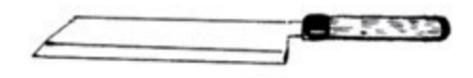
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Ansel Adams' historic photo of a baseball game played at the Manzanar WRA Center during WWII

PHOTO: COURTESY OF MANZANAR BASEBALL PROJECT



Game day, Oct. 26, 2024, on the newly rebuilt baseball field at the Manzanar National Historic Site

PHOTO: ALEX LUU



Manzanar Baseball Project lead Dan Kwong at the historic baseball field at the former Manzanar WRA Center, about six miles from Independence, Calif.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF DAN KWONG

# BASEBALL ON DECK — AGAIN — AT MANZANAR

*Dan Kwong goes extra innings to bring the historic ballfield back from neglect, tumbleweeds.*

By Alex Luu,  
P.C. Contributor

The Li'l Tokio Giants and the Lodi JACL Templars are facing off for the umpteenth time.

Having played against each other for so many times over the decades, these two Japanese American baseball teams are more than used to the ritual of the game. But Oct. 26, 2024, was no ordinary day at the Manzanar National Historic Site. For the first time since 1945, baseball was back at Manzanar.

The day marked the inaugural and unofficial opening of the Manzanar Baseball Project, an exhibition doubleheader with the Giants vs. Templars morning game, followed by the North vs. South California All-Stars.

Everyone in attendance was well aware of the immediate historical significance of actually playing in the first baseball game in more than 80 years at a place that incarcerated more than 10,000 Japanese Americans during World War II. From the batter's position at home plate, a guard tower that still stands in the distance could be seen, a physical remnant of Manzanar's past, which included a violent uprising in 1942 that led to camp guards shooting and killing two inmates.

The dichotomous nature of Manzanar's painful history and this joyous event was clearly not lost on any of the players, especially Dan Kwong, who has been the spearhead of the Manzanar Baseball Project for the last year and a half.

A native Los Angeleno who is half-Japanese American and half-Chinese American, Kwong is first

and foremost an award-winning and critically acclaimed performance artist whose one-man shows have been presented nationally and internationally. He has also been a player on the Giants team for 52 years and counting, a first baseman. While standing at first base, Kwong could hardly believe that this momentous day was finally happening.

With the Sierra Nevada mountains a majestic backdrop, Kwong and the rest of the players became forever tied to one of America's darkest times while creating a new story, one full of hope, healing and transformation. And as with most underdog stories that turn out to be epic and triumphant, the Manzanar Baseball Project's humble beginning lay in tumbleweeds.

According to Kwong, an archeological study was done by Manzanar archeologist and Cultural Resources Program Manager Jeff Burton in 2002. "The study determined that there would be no adverse effects from restoring the field, and that greenlit the project for Manzanar," Kwong noted. "The restoration was announced in May 2023, and the first call for volunteers was Memorial Day weekend to start clearing the field of tumbleweeds."

The tumbleweeds problem proved to be monumental due to the heavy rain in the ensuing months between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Another call for volunteers on Veterans Day yielded 27 people doing the difficult job of clearing and digging out all of the tumbleweeds — the Russian thistle kind to be exact — which were covered with millions of tiny needle-sharp stickers.

To Kwong's surprise, the misery of the removal of the tumbleweeds was offset by the volunteers' positive

attitude. "There were some baseball players from Li'l Tokio Giants, as well as a few from Lodi who made the long trek to volunteer. People were so happy to be there; it was so meaningful to them. Some players even brought their families. It was amazing," he recalled.

For Kwong, the idea of the doubleheader came to him as he was on his hands and knees waging the seemingly one-sided battle against the tumbleweeds. Now, he had two projects to juggle — the restoration of the baseball field and putting the details and logistics together for the doubleheader.

Through a dear family friend who lives in Independence (a mere eight-minute drive from Manzanar), Kwong was introduced to Chris Siddens of Siddens Consulting. Siddens showed up at Manzanar on one of the tumbleweed-clearing days and told Kwong he could be of help. Siddens' experience spans more than 35 years in the construction industry, and for the restoration of the baseball field, Siddens was a godsend.

Siddens' initial involvement of just lending his welding skills expanded to overseeing and performing most of

the arduous labor on the field. When Siddens surveyed the Manzanar field, he immediately noticed one of the challenges was working on a site that was not going to be graded to an even elevation. Another frustrating challenge was that some of the lumber that was purchased at Home Depot was defective. The brutal summer heat and unpredictable winds posed yet more challenges.

Still, Kwong and Siddens were undeterred. They were joined by Dave Goto, MNHS' longtime arborist. Goto drove the dump truck, bulldozer and did most of the heavy lifting, while Siddens and Kwong focused on the project's massive to-do list. Kwong is quick to credit Siddens with "building the whole damn thing."

Under Siddens' lead, the once tumbleweed-strewn plot of land slowly transformed into a visible semblance of a fully functional baseball field.

For Siddens, the Manzanar Baseball Project carried a deep significance. "I read about Manzanar in high school. As I learned more about WWII, I learned more about Manzanar through documentaries, and what I learned in high school was nowhere close to what actually took place here and at other internment camps," Siddens said. "I had a neighbor in San Diego whose family was interned at Poston. She didn't talk about it. I only learned this as I was watching a documentary on Manzanar, and I saw her sitting in the third row of the audience. I asked her if she was interned there, and she told me no, that they were moved to Poston. She became a good friend and neighbor before she was killed in an auto accident. I felt that I was giving back to her and all the other Japanese Americans that were wrongly forced out of their homes and businesses."

In addition to Siddens and Goto, more than a handful of consultants, architects, engineers, construction companies and steel suppliers across the country came forward to contribute their expertise,



Members of the Lodi JACL Templars team (in green) and the Li'l Tokio Giants team

PHOTO: ALEX LUU



**Dan Kwong credits Chris Siddens (left) of Siddens Consulting for “building the whole damn thing.”**

PHOTO: DAN KWONG



**Various vintage baseball gloves**

PHOTO: ALEX LUU

time and equipment. Generous in-kind help was provided by History for Hire Prop House, Nous Engineering, Gwynne Pugh Urban Designs, graphic designer Mike Boula, Morey Insurance, Independence Fire Department (which provided stand-by ambulance and EMT), Owens Valley Unified School District and Alisa and Alan Lynch.

A crucial piece of the restoration puzzle was made complete by studying photographer Toyo Miyatake’s archival photos of Manzanar and its original baseball field from the mid-1940s.

Upon the completion of construction, the last remaining task was to get the baseball field ready for the doubleheader. This painstaking process would not have been possible without the labor that was put in by Gino McKiernan and his colleague, Alvin Yano. Both men work at the MLB Youth Academy in Compton, Calif., which provides baseball programs for kids. McKiernan and Yano did not represent the Youth Academy in their donation of time and skills but just as individuals who were more than happy to see the Manzanar Baseball Project come to fruition.

McKiernan knew Gail Materials, the company that supplies infield dirt for the Major Leagues. Through McKiernan’s connection, 50 bags of infield dirt were donated.

Kwong was also amazed by Yano’s focus on the most-minute details that came with evening and smoothing out the field. “We had this infield drag mat, one of those steel mats, and Alvin was out there with a little minitractor dragging that entire field,” Kwong remembered. “Usually, you only use the steel mat on the infield area, but Alvin was working on the entire 3-acre field just going in circles. We’d be working on other things, and he would be out there dragging that steel mat for hours at least three, four days.”

It truly took a village.

The cloudless October sky on game day remained the same as the games were played. In the fourth inning, 20-year-old Kainoa Tsuye, one of the youngest players for the Giants, hit the game’s first RBI. Feeling the adrenaline rush of the RBI, Tsuye grinned as he crossed home plate. “It feels amazing to be out here playing and to run on that dirt,” Tsuye said. “This is such a significant moment for me. My great-grandfather was interned here in Manzanar, and I have a few great-uncles who were at other camps. It’s surreal to see how far this game has traveled and to be doing

similar as the camp baseball players did so long ago. I will remember this for the rest of my life.”

For Sho Yamada, who also spent hours volunteering on the field clearing tumbleweeds as well as being a player on the Giants team for the last 20 years, the focus of the day was just to play good baseball. “This is my way of honoring the interned players as a whole and for any spirits in attendance to give them a good show,” Yamada stated. “Play in a way they would be proud of and with all the media here, a chance to showcase what Japanese American players can do.” Even though Yamada has family members that were incarcerated in Arkansas, he admits that until recently, their experience had not weighed heavily on his mind. “However, with all the scapegoating of immigrants happening today and after the results of the last presidential election, I’ve experienced a new fear and awareness of the injustice of the internment camps.”

Manager of both the North All-Stars and the Monterey Amberjacks team, Mike Furutani is in awe of standing on “hallowed ground.” “Eighty-plus years ago, guys who lost everything played on the same field we’re standing on — they played to forget about their situation for a while and gave the community an opportunity to forget as well. When I was on the mound and looked around the diamond, I saw the guard tower in the distance, and that hit me pretty hard — they were prisoners for just being Japanese. They had committed no crime,” Furutani reflected. “The other thought I had, after I processed the anger and frustration of the racism of the past, was how lucky we were that those who came before us persevered through the hardships and gave us, 80 years later, the opportunity to honor them and remind the next generation — some of who were on the field and at Manzanar for the first time — to never let

**Momo Nagano was incarcerated at the Manzanar War Relocation Authority Center**



this kind of injustice happen again.”

For Marty Sakada, manager of the Lodi JACL Templars, the oldest team in California, being at this inaugural doubleheader had multiple meanings. “You couldn’t help but get emotional during the introductions while lined up on the freshly chalked foul lines. It was like 10,000 camp internees were watching our every move,” he recalled.

Sakada’s family farmed in the Sacramento Delta pre-WWII but were interned at Tule Lake. “My father was 16 years old at the time and drove the camp’s ambulance. My mother was also interned at Tule Lake, along with my grandmother and aunties,” Sakada said. “My oldest aunt was a nurse at Tule Lake but passed away in camp with appendicitis complications. I was told that she was not able to receive the proper antibiotics that were reserved for the camp military personnel only. I am fortunate that both of my parents persevered after being in camp. They raised my sister and myself and provided us with so many wonderful opportunities that they were not given in their lifetime.”

In the first game of the doubleheader, the Giants beat the Lodi Templars handily. However, the final score is not what matters. More important is what transpired on that field — the rebuilding of community and a reverent homage to honor ancestors at a middle-of-nowhere locale whose landscape features searing summer heat, biting winter frost, treacherous winds and tumbleweeds.

As Kwong walked off the field, he took it all in — the Sierra Nevada mountains, the cheers and hollers from the crowd, his teammates jumping up and down and high-fiving one another.

“That was amazing! At a certain point, you’re just playing baseball, right? You’re just playing baseball ...” Kwong said as tears welled up in his eyes. “It’s almost surreal when

you’ve anticipated something for so long. To see how the other players reacted and how meaningful it was for them, the looks on their faces, to feel their excitement. I got you here! I made this field for you!”

Kwong also has a deep personal connection to Manzanar. His mother, Momo Nagano, and her extended family were incarcerated here. On the same day that Pearl Harbor was bombed, her father, Kiro, was picked up by the FBI. Nagano entered Manzanar when she was 16 and left two years later when the war ended. While in camp, she even played softball with the Gremlins girls club and, according to Kwong, “Had her nose broken when playing catcher when the batter threw the bat.”

It is fitting that Kwong has dedicated the Manzanar Baseball Project to his mother, who died in 2010. “To me, the baseball field is acknowledgement of the spirit of the JA community and that even under harsh and heartbreaking conditions, Japanese American people were determined to hold on to their sense of community and dignity as fully as possible,” Kwong said. “Stuck out in the middle of the desert, rejected by their own country, having lost everything, they were going to make art, create beautiful gardens, play music, dance — and play baseball. They were going to live.”

The Oct. 26, 2024, doubleheader will certainly not be the last baseball game to be played at Manzanar. Kwong envisions regular games to be played once the Manzanar Baseball Project has its official opening sometime in fall 2025.

“I hope the baseball field draws wider attention to this piece of American history — the legal atrocity that was committed against Japanese Americans on the West Coast during WWII and how that resonates with our current political climate, in which there is talk about putting other people into ‘camps’ and how wrong and inhumane an idea that is,” Kwong stressed. “If we receive a grant, we will be doing educational work with high school students about this piece of history. Hopefully, the doubleheader becomes an annual tradition.”

If we are to believe Giants player Yamada, the “spirits in attendance” will no doubt greet Kwong upon his return to Manzanar. That and a fresh new batch of tumbleweeds. ■



**A team photo of Manzanar’s Gremlins softball team**

PHOTOS: KWONG FAMILY COLLECTION

# Monterey Peninsula

Japanese American Citizen League  
of the Monterey Peninsula



*Happy Holidays*

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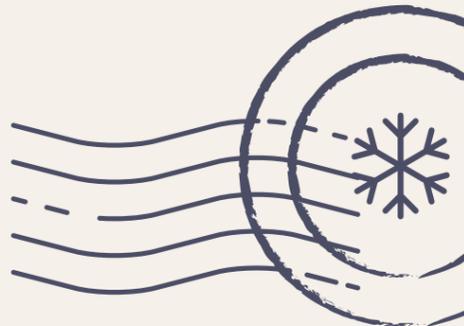


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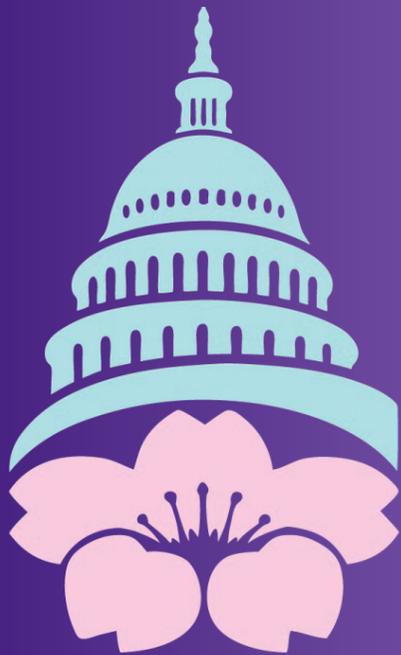
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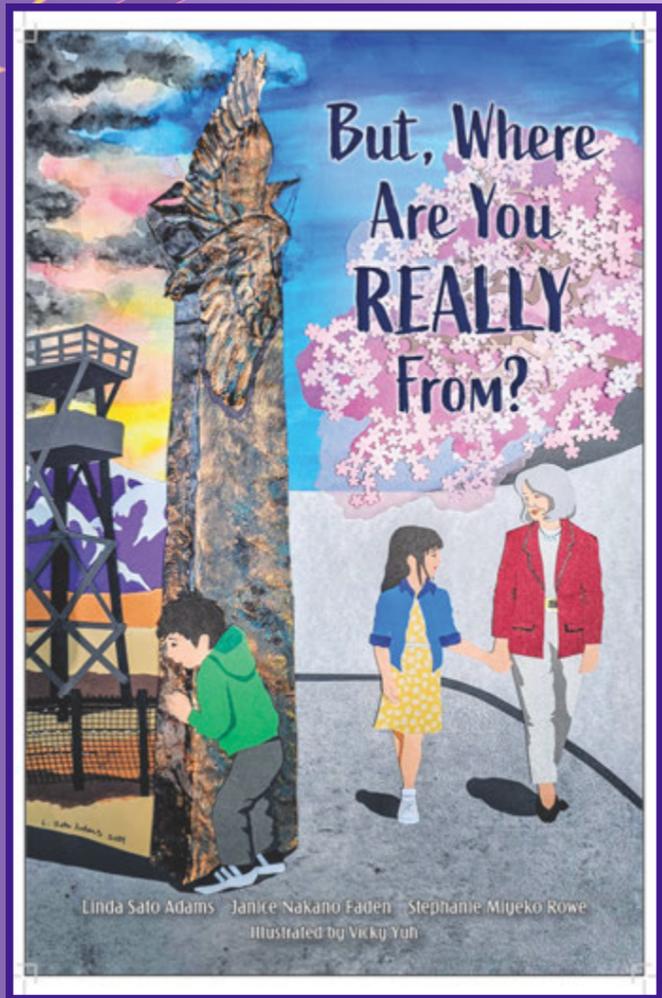
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# LITTLE TOKYO RECALLS ITS PAST FOR THE FUTURE

*Gentrification? Redevelopment? Urban renewal? Pressures facing America's ethnic enclaves are nothing new.*

By George Toshio Johnston,  
P.C. Senior Editor

(Editor's Note: Following is the second part of an article about how recent national trends in redevelopment and gentrification are impacting L.A.'s Little Tokyo, the nation's largest historic "Japantown." Part One was published in the Sept. 20, 2024, issue of the Pacific Citizen.)

When Charles Dickens wrote his 1859 novel "A Tale of Two Cities" and its famous, oft-quoted opening — "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness ..." — he was definitely not writing about Little Tokyo.

First, Dickens was about 25 years too early, since the agreed-upon "birth year" of the area of Los Angeles known as Little Tokyo was 1884, and second, the titular two cities were London and Paris.

In 2024, however, when it marked its 140th year, Little Tokyo seems to be, depending on your perspective and political bent, two very different places in the same space.

In one version of Little Tokyo, legacy Japanese Americans and Japanese American businesses are being displaced and driven out by greedy property owners who could not care less about the area's roots and cultural legacy, such that on May 1 the nonprofit National Trust for Historic Preservation put it on its annual list of "11 Most Endangered Historic Places."

Why the dire designation? "Little Tokyo is one of only four remaining Japantowns in the United States and one of the oldest neighborhoods in Los Angeles, but its unique character is endangered by large-scale development and transit projects and displacement of legacy businesses and restaurants."

In the other version of Little Tokyo, it is busier and more successful than it has ever been in its seven score of existence, according to its boosters. In that version, Little Tokyo attracts 10 million visitors annually — a 10 percent increase over last year — as a destination for domestic cosplayers who might not be able to afford a trip to "Big Tokyo" but can certainly visit the next best thing to buy the latest manga and pop culture artifacts from Japan, as well as the international tourists drawn in by the so-called Shohei Ohtani effect, named after the Los Angeles Dodgers' superstar whose likeness took over a wall of the Miyako Hotel on First Street in the spring.

Then there are, of course, Southern California's Japanese Americans who, despite being dispersed from Santa Barbara and Oxnard to Los Angeles and Orange counties and San Diego, still see Little Tokyo as their cultural and spiritual hometown.

So, in this tale of two Little Tokyos, which version



The Fourth & Central project was the main topic at the Oct. 2 meeting of the Little Tokyo Community Council. A representative from Denver-based Continuum Partners LLC had been scheduled to attend the meeting but did not. PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

reflects objective reality? Is it strictly one or the other? Or, can both be true — or maybe trueish — at the same time?

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Speaking in front of the entrance to the Japanese American National Museum at the May 1 news conference where it was announced that Little Tokyo had been named one of the year's "11 Most Endangered Historic Places" were Linda Dishman, former CEO of the Los Angeles Conservancy, on hand to represent the National Trust for Historic Preservation; Kristen Hayashi, director of collections management and access and a curator at JANM; Kristin Fukushima, managing director of the Little Tokyo Community Council; Bishop Noriaki Ito, Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple; Hirokazu Kosaka, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center's master artist in residence; Carol Tanita, Rafu Bussan co-owner; and Bill Watanabe, founding executive director of the Little Tokyo Service Center, a founder of Little Tokyo Historical Society and Asian Pacific Islanders in Historic Preservation.

As to why Little Tokyo received its new designation, Dishman said, "The National Trust listed Little Tokyo on the endangered list this year because its unique character is under threat."

The nature of that threat was alluded to by the event's other speakers. "I want to thank the National Trust for Historic Preservation for giving Little Tokyo this recognition and designation to help us in that fight to preserve this neighborhood against many threats and obstacles that might be coming our way in terms of gentrification and economic changes," said Watanabe, who also pointed out the Little Tokyo subway station across the street from where he was speaking that had opened in 2023. "It's a good thing that's bringing people to Little Tokyo. But at the same time, it's changing land values and rents here, so small businesses may have difficulty to stay in business from this point on."

Not coincidentally, four of the speakers that day were representing groups from Sustainable Little Tokyo, a four-organization coalition comprised of the JACCC, LTCC, LTSC and JANM.

According to Fukushima, Sustainable Little

Tokyo was formed to find ways to maintain for future generations the Little Tokyo neighborhood, considering its cultural and historical background, arts and culture, as well as its economic and environmental sustainability. For her, its formation more than a decade ago was part of a "new strategy to approach gentrification and displacement."

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Historically, Little Tokyo is no stranger to displacement. After the United States declared war on Japan on Dec. 8, 1941, it was just a matter of months before ethnic Japanese people, U.S. citizens or not, were removed from the coasts of California, Oregon and Washington. Even JACL and this publication, *Pacific Citizen*, had to hightail it to Utah's Salt Lake City, which had an extant Japantown of its own, during the years of World War II.

During that time, Little Tokyo became a new home for African Americans who moved from the South to take advantage of employment opportunities in California's war-fueled manufacturing boom. The area became known as Bronzeville — until Japanese Americans returned from the 10 War Relocation Authority Centers to the West Coast in general and Little Tokyo in particular to reclaim the area and return its name to Little Tokyo. Then, in the late 1940s, under the City of Los Angeles' right of eminent domain, a section of (now historic) Little Tokyo was seized as the site of Parker Center, the headquarters of the Los Angeles Police Department, and an adjacent parking lot.

In the 1970s, the new buzzwords were "urban renewal" and "redevelopment" — and once again, the environs of Little Tokyo were in the crosshairs. Speaking in 2023 at the JACL National Convention's plenary titled "State of Ethnic Enclaves," Fukushima gave background on this era. "In the '70s and '80s, which was both the redevelopment period for Little Tokyo, as well as, of course, the Asian American movement, a lot of folks were finding their identity, saying, 'What's going on back in our home communities?'" she said.

"As young folks came to Little Tokyo, they realized that a lot of things were changing. A lot of small businesses were being displaced. The SRO hotels were being torn down. Small businesses were under threat. Residents were under threat. So, groups like the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization were created. They were an anti-eviction, anti-displacement group. I always make sure I include this history because I really think Little Tokyo would not be here today if it weren't for their efforts to really actively fight for this neighborhood and also create organizations like the Little Tokyo Service Center, the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. A lot of the organizations that serve Little Tokyo and the Japanese American community today were created back then."

After the turn of the century, with construction of a new LAPD HQ a few blocks away at First and Main in

These artist's renditions the Fourth & Central project show how the proposed 44-story tower on the far left was reduced on the righthand side to 30 stories. Meantime, the image on the right shows that the proposed height of the white tower has been increased.

PHOTO: CONTINUUM PARTNERS LLC





**Little Tokyo Business Association President David Ikegami**



**Dr. Mary Yee speaks at the “State of Ethnic Enclaves” plenary on July 22, 2023, in the main hall of JANM during the JACL’s National Convention.**



**Rafu Bussan store manager Carol Tanita speaks at the Feb. 1 news conference in Little Tokyo when it was announced that the Los Angeles district had been named to the year’s list of the “11 Most Endangered Historic Places.”**



**Bill Watanabe, who is now a member of the Little Tokyo Community Impact Fund, speaks at the Feb. 1 news conference in Little Tokyo**

2009, Parker Center’s days were numbered, and it was demolished in 2019 — and that created a rare opportunity whereby a seized area that was once part of an ethnic enclave could be returned to that community and be redeveloped in a way that modernly reintegrates it with its historic roots.

Therefore, on Feb. 13, ground was broken for construction of the ambitious First Street North project, a reclamation of an area once part of Little Tokyo that will become the new home of the Go For Broke National Education Center and also a place for affordable housing, community-based businesses and office space for nonprofits (*see April 26, 2024, Pacific Citizen*).



The machinations and changes occurring in Little Tokyo are not isolated. Historic Asian American ethnic enclaves such as San Francisco’s Japantown, Seattle’s Chinatown-International District, Denver’s Sakura Square, Salt Lake City’s historic Japantown and Philadelphia’s Chinatown are all grappling with different — but similar — scenarios that fall under today’s catch-all description, gentrification — even when the definition of “gentrification” varies depending upon whom you ask.

As was pointed out at the 2023 plenary, when the status quo facing Philadelphia’s Chinatown — namely a bid by the NBA’s Philadelphia 76ers to build a new arena to its south — this latest challenge is nothing new.

“In Philadelphia, we have been saving Chinatown for over 50 years from a range of projects . . . an interstate, downtown mall, casinos, convention center and so on,” said Dr. Mary Yee, who has been active in the fight to protect Philly’s Chinatown and also founded Asian Americans United and the *Yellow Seeds* newspaper.

“The 76ers are thinking of building a stadium for 18,000 people,” said Yee. “We think that it’s disingenuous for them to say that their arena will not harm Chinatown. They’re saying, ‘We’re not going to take any land from Chinatown, so why are you upset?’ But it’s clear to us that there are really serious economic and traffic implications for this project. So, we’re thinking, ‘How will it be if there are 18,000 people entering or visiting this arena during dinner hours for Chinatown restaurants and businesses?’ And you can imagine that this is going to create public security issues, along with impacts on small businesses that will be competing with the concessions in the arena.”

Incidentally, in 2023, Philadelphia’s Chinatown was added to that year’s list of “11 Most Endangered Historic Places.”

If viewed from a summit with sightlines that cross cities and states, it’s safe to conclude, then, that the challenges facing Little Tokyo are A, nothing new; and B, not unlike the pressures that other historic Asian American ethnic enclaves face today.

What might be new, however, at least when compared to, say, the 1940s, is the willingness of

stakeholders to use the political and legal systems, take stands and, to use a term of art from the not-so-distant past, fight the power.

Part of that ethos means participating in the process needed to approve and move forward on redevelopment projects. One example was the discombobulated, snafu-plagued public environmental impact hearing held by the City of Los Angeles’ City Planning Commission via Zoom on Nov. 20 to address the Fourth & Central project.

One speaker, Mia Barnett of Nikkei Progressives, said, “First of all, the city should really be ashamed that you didn’t prepare for this hearing properly and wasted so much time on technical issues. People work during the day, and not everyone can take hours off of work to watch you all struggle to figure out how Zoom works. Secondly, Continuum Partners has failed to present the community with the changes to their project. They were supposed to on Oct. 2, but they canceled, and they never rescheduled.”

Not everyone, however, including some Japanese Americans with ties to Little Tokyo, opposes the Fourth & Central development. Many of the meeting’s participants expressed support. One of the supporters was David Ikegami, president of the Little Tokyo Business Assn. and president of DTI Corp.

No newcomer to Little Tokyo, back in the mid- to late-1980s, Ikegami was involved with the development of Little Tokyo Square at Third and Alameda streets, which is now Little Tokyo Market Place.

Ikegami points out that Fourth & Central is not located in Little Tokyo, but rather in the adjacent downtown industrial district and that the current business on that property, Los Angeles Cold Storage Co., has been around since 1895 and owned by the Rauch family for more than a century.

While he says he understands and appreciates the concerns of Little Tokyo Against Gentrification, Ikegami has a different take on the situation. “Converting what is an existing cold storage warehouse facility into a multistory, multibuilding, \$2 billion development, which is absolutely beautiful, is not gentrification,” Ikegami told the *Pacific Citizen*. “Gentrification is when you displace residents or businesses and . . . there is no displacement going on.”

Regarding accusations that the developer, Continuum Partners LLC, has been uncooperative with different Little Tokyo-based stakeholder groups, Ikegami disagrees. “I think that they’ve bent over backwards listening to all the different constituencies, LTBA included, and really have tried to work concessions and have done so.

“They’ve lowered the height of one of the main buildings, the one closest to Little Tokyo, by 10 or 15 stories — I can’t remember exactly — and they’re going to add that square footage further south on the block, but it’s going to be a much lower skyline when you look at it initially from

Little Tokyo,” Ikegami continued. “They’re creating reduced rents for legacy businesses, so that businesses that wish to move into their property have much reduced risk.”



The saying that “the only constant is change” applies also to what is happening in Little Tokyo. Back in August, LTAG wanted to present a revisit/redo demand regarding the environmental impact report needed to proceed on Fourth & Central to L.A. City Councilman Kevin de Leon. Now that itself needs to be revisited since he lost his seat to challenger Ysabel Jurado after the Nov. 5 election.

Then, there’s the possibility that the Supreme Court’s decision on *Seven County Infrastructure Coalition v. Eagle County, Colorado* may limit how much environmental impact reports can have on the ability to delay or stop construction projects.

Despite the “only constant is change” saying (and the possibility of eminent domain), one constant that still matters is ownership. With ownership comes self-determination because when you own the land upon which your business sits, you can’t be evicted at the whim of, say, a new landlord.

Ownership, it turns out, is a word that both Ikegami and Watanabe can agree upon.

“The businesses that have been able to be successful in the community, some of them have purchased their own properties, which is really amazing,” said Ikegami. “It’s insurance that their rents won’t go up.”

Watanabe, meantime, belongs to Little Tokyo Community Impact Fund. A visit to its website ([littletokyocif.com](http://littletokyocif.com)) reveals why it was created: “We established the Little Tokyo Community Impact Fund (LTCIF) to directly address these challenges and try to preserve the legacy of Japanese American family owned businesses, cultural institutions and spiritual centers in Little Tokyo.” LTCIF is, in his words, a California incorporated investment fund.

“If you don’t own it, you can’t control it. And so ownership becomes the key thing to try it and control what these properties will be,” Watanabe told the *Pacific Citizen*. “So yeah, we want to control it. We want to own it so that we can help direct the future of those properties.”

If there is a place where the tale of the two Little Tokyos can meet and find common ground, literally, ownership may be the key by which all parties live happily ever after. ■



**(From left) Carol Tanita, Bill Watanabe, Gilda Hernandez and Hirokazu Kosaka listen to Kristin Fukushima on Feb. 1.**

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

# Celebrating the Season

**JACLers share holiday family traditions and their hopes in the new year.**

By Emily Murase,  
P.C. Contributor

**H**appy Holidays! As we celebrate our history and its many stories, one's favorite holiday traditions certainly play an important role in who we are and where we come from. Celebrating the season with family and friends makes each tradition even more special and creates memories to last a lifetime. What are your favorite holiday traditions? Several JACLers from across the country shared their childhood memories and current practices to bring holiday cheer to your home this season.

**Sarah 'Remy' Kageyama, JACL NY/SC Youth Chairperson**

Sarah "Remy" Kageyama, youth chairperson of the JACL National Youth/Student Council, is currently a Cornell University student studying archaeology and moral psychology who has traveled to Belize to investigate the remains of Mayan households and Quito, Ecuador, to study the relationships between culture, community and development. She has fond memories of her childhood holidays.

"One of my favorite holiday traditions when I was younger was to drag my parents to a Christmas tree lot and pick out the biggest tree for our home, then decorate it as a family while listening to Christ-

mas music and eating warm homemade cookies," Kageyama recalled.

"In recent years, my parents have switched to putting up a reusable tree, which just hasn't felt the same. However, this year, my partner will be celebrating the holidays with us, and I was able to convince my parents to splurge one last time to give him a proper first-Christmas experience," she said.

As past EDC Youth Representative and current NY/SC Representative on the *Pacific Citizen* Editorial Board, Kageyama is focused on cultural connections, diversity and advocacy. She also serves as president of the Ithaca-based Watermargin Cooperative, which is dedicated to interracial and interfaith understanding, and served as production designer on the short Western film "And They Were Cowgirls," as well as a summer intern for New York Congressman Grace Meng (D-N.Y.).

Kageyama's Japanese grandmother was a backbone to her family. "My favorite holiday food is my *obaachan's* homemade *ozoni*. Every year, she put so much love and labor into making the homey mochi soup, and it always provides our whole family with comfort and warmth in the coldest months, preparing us for the new year."

Kageyama's hope for the future is optimistic: "I hope that our youth members become even more empowered to make impactful, sustainable change, both in the JACL and beyond!"

**Carol Kawase, JACL NCWNP District Governor**

JACL Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District Governor Carol Kawase of Fort Bragg, Calif., recalls holidays in Northern California. "My fondest memories of early childhood holidays were spending them at my maternal Aunt Mary's house in Sacramento and my paternal Aunt Alice's house in San Francisco for New Year's. Besides the amazing array of New Year's foods, it was fun to play with all the cousins," she remembered.

Kawase has seen holiday traditions change over the generations. "Since then, Aunt Mary has passed away of cancer, and Aunt Alice is now 101, so we spend all holidays with my immediate family at my mom's house. Brother Wes does most of the cooking. Thankfully, he has great home-chef abilities!" Kawase said.

"I miss my aunties' *osechi ryori* New Year's extravaganza spreads and now realize how much it was a HUGE labor of love. Nowadays, for some weird reason, my brother's special clam dip appetizer and chocolate-covered toffee are my most memorable holiday foods. Probably because they are only available on Thanksgiving and Christmas dinner and signifies one of the rare times the entire family gets together," she said.

The granddaughter of hard-working Japanese immigrant farmers, Kawase was born and raised in Sonoma County. Her parents were mostly nonsense. "Gift giving is probably my most memorable tradition," Kawase said. "Most gifts were always practical, but my parents always splurged on one fun Christmas gift for each of us.

"One gift memory that stands out was the first 'Meet the Beatles' mono album, released in 1963. Given that I hardly played it, it is in mint condition and apparently very valuable. Now 60 years later, it's being rereleased on colored vinyl and is all the rage now that turntables have made a comeback."

Kawase continued, "Christmas was my daughter's favorite holiday. My most treasured gift from her was a paper panda bear that she handcrafted from two sheets of typing paper edge-glued together, stuffed with cotton balls and the 'made in China' printing she wrote encircling the panda's pen-drawn tail."

Active in the JACL for decades, Kawase served as past president of the JACL Sonoma County chapter and NCWNP District Governor for many years while working as a clinical laboratory scientist. Now retired, Kawase seeks to pass on her considerable leadership skills to the next generation.

She offers a social justice wish for the new year: "I hope we can continue to raise our voices for hope, respect and liberation of the oppressed."

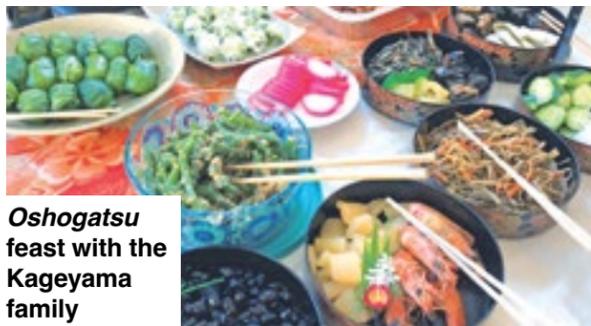
**Rob Buscher, JACL Philadelphia Chapter Board Member**

Rob Buscher, former *P.C.* Editorial Board chair who also serves on the JACL Philadelphia chapter board, usually spent the holidays with his parents in Connecticut and occasionally with his maternal grandparents. "We would travel to San Francisco to spend [the holidays] with my *obaachan* and grandpa," he recalled.

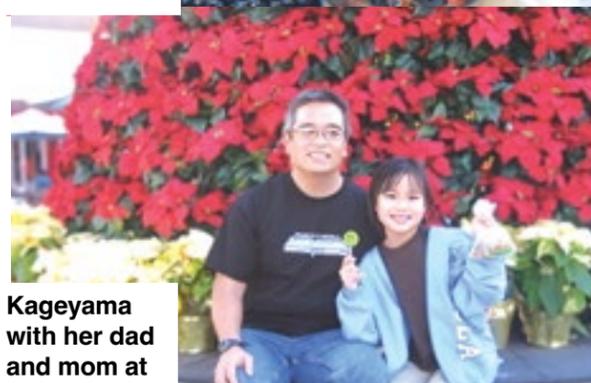
However, since becoming a father, his plans have changed. "Now with our own child, we split time between in-laws and will be visiting my wife's grandmother in Italy this year for Christmas."

And yet, some of Buscher's holiday traditions continue. "I've always enjoyed rewatching the old stop-motion animations like 'Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer' and 'Jack Frost.' It's been fun to share these treasured childhood cartoons with my own son," he shared.

"In revisiting these a couple years ago, I was surprised to learn that a Japanese animation studio actually co-produced these and other popular



**Oshogatsu feast with the Kageyama family**



**Kageyama with her dad and mom at Christmas**



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SARAH 'REMY' KAGEYAMA



**Carol Kawase's "Meet the Beatles" album is a treasured Christmas gift.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CAROL KAWASE



**Oshogatsu plate at the Marumoto home in Westminster, Calif.**

**Homemade omanju sweets at the Marumoto family oshogatsu meal**

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF ROB BUSCHER





**JACL Philadelphia chapter members take part in Japanese folk dancing during the holidays.**

**Taiko drumming at a JACL Philadelphia chapter holiday gathering**



**A Christmas gathering with (from left) Riki Ito, Akiko Katagami, Julie Azuma (host) and Masao Katagami**



**An intergenerational gathering with Washington University alumni (from left) John Lee, Julie Azuma, Young Kwon, Delia Shen and Calla Zhou.**

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF JULIE AZUMA



**Larry Oda with his parents, Junichi and Maki Lorraine, photographed at Crystal City, Texas, just before Junichi was repatriated to Japan**



**Larry Oda's mother, Maki Lorraine, when she was about 30 years old, taken in San Francisco**

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF LARRY ODA

holiday stop-motion films of the 1960's-'70s. Check the credits if you see them this season, and you will notice a number of Japanese names."

Living on the East Coast, 3,000 miles away from his Japanese American grandmother, Buscher did not enjoy a traditional Japanese New Year regularly, and yet he has found ways to promote the tradition in Philadelphia.

"I've only been able to celebrate *oshogatsu* with my extended family on one occasion, but I was absolutely stunned by my Aunt Seiko's *osechi ryori*. When celebrating at home, I try to cook some dishes like *ozoni* and *toshikoshi soba*. Then with our local chapter, we celebrate with a potluck lunch the Saturday after New Year's. There, we serve *ozoni* prepared by the daughters of a now-deceased founding member of the Philly chapter, who continue the tradition in her honor."

Trained at the University of London, Buscher has dedicated his career to educating the public about Japanese American history and culture, including work with the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium and the Japan America Society of Greater Philadelphia, where he was responsible for managing the Shofuso Japanese Cultural Center in Fairmount Park and the revitalization of the Shofuso Cherry Blossom Festival post-pandemic.

As a film critic and program director, he grew the Philadelphia Asian American Film Festival to become a leading internationally recognized annual event. Throughout his work, Buscher has found ways to strengthen relationships with the Japanese American, Japanese and Black communities, primarily through connecting music, arts and culture.

Social justice is at the heart of his holiday wish. He reflected: "I wish for collective liberation from the horrors of the next administration. That can only be accomplished through organizing and building solidarity across racial/ethnic, religious, political, socioeconomic and regional divides."

#### **Julie Azuma, JACL New York Chapter Member**

While founding her pioneering company Different Roads to Learning, which provides teaching tools for families and educators of children with autism, Julie Azuma was also raising a family and conducting pivotal work on redress and reparations. She is considered a force of nature in New York.

A longtime member of the JACL New York chapter, Azuma was raised in the close-knit Japanese American community of Chicago. "I spent my holidays always in Chicago until later in life, when I had

children of my own. *Oshogatsu* was spent with my mother's family, aunts, uncles, cousins and many of their friends," she recalled.

"My father, a remarkable cook, used to make *anpan* from memory," she continued. "He did most of the cooking for my family. After he passed away, my mother learned to make both futomaki sushi and inari for larger family gatherings on the New Year. The extended family always had *nishime*, sashimi, shrimp with their heads on, chicken teriyaki and chashu, along with the sushi. It was always very festive with lots of family and many friends."

Nurtured by the Japanese American community of Chicago, Azuma moved to New York to pursue a career in fashion. She soon became active in several Asian American advocacy groups, including the JACL, and her volunteer service has been enduring.

Azuma serves in leadership roles in multiple Nikkei organizations, including as a board member of the Japanese American Association of New York and a member of the Japanese American National Museum board of governors. For her tireless volunteerism and inspired leadership, she was honored at the 2024 New York Day of Remembrance.

Above all, Azuma is known as one of the founders and monthly host of ZAJA-NYC, an informal network of Japanese Americans, Japanese nationals, their families and friends.

"Since 1983, my home in NYC has an *oshogatsu*, where many people come over the night before to prepare and others come early to roll sushi on New Year's Day. We make the food I remember from my childhood and the food that other friends remember from their family traditions. People will bring oden or pick up BBQ from Chinatown or bring things from the Japanese store to share. It's a community event that I hope to continue as I age," she said.

Azuma is an expert at building community and offered this wish for 2025: "I hope our community stays strong together as we face the future."

#### **Larry Oda, JACL National President**

JACL National President Larry Oda has served JACL at many levels, including stints as JACL Monterey Peninsula chapter president, delegate to the organization's District and National Councils and convention chair or consultant in 2000, 2002 and 2004. A veteran of the National Board, this is his second term as president. He has also served in leadership positions with several key Japanese American organizations, including roles as chair emeritus of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation and a board member of the Buddhist

Churches of America.

Oda was born at the Justice Department Incarceration Camp in Crystal City, Texas, and his family returned home to Monterey, Calif., in 1946, where he spent his childhood. A third-generation resident of Monterey, he attended local schools and earned a B.A. and M.A. from California State University, Fresno, in industrial arts and math.

Oda's mother was an excellent cook. "My mother was a caterer, so she was always quite busy during the holidays," he recalled. "She was superstitious, so she never worked on New Year's Day, but she did not consider preparing our traditional New Year's meals as 'work.' There is something wonderfully familiar about your own mother's cooking.

"The holiday foods I look forward to the most are the Thanksgiving turkey dinner and New Year's *osechi ryori*," Oda continued. "Although my mom never cooked a dry turkey, my favorite part of the meal was the gravy and rice. That's all I really wanted. I'd eat the turkey and dressing, sure, but would load up on rice and gravy."

Nourished by a loving family and strong community, Oda has had a diverse career, from working for an international motorcycle road race team to active involvement in the political process. He retired from the City of Salinas as maintenance superintendent. "These different occupations gave me a different perspective of the world and how things are accomplished," he said.

Oda offers a cautionary wish for 2025: "Our future looks bleak for the next few years, so we need to be vigilant to protect our constitutional rights. Let's not get distracted by other events, but focus on what is important for our community."

*Emily Murase is looking forward to spending the New Year in Japan for a short visit to celebrate the retirement of her spouse, Neal Taniguchi. Her wish is for a stronger and deeper peace in our community, locally, regionally and internationally this new year.*

# Riverside

## Season's Greetings

FROM CONGRESSMAN MARK TAKANO

Thank you for all that you do. Let's make 2025 a great year!

PAID FOR BY MARK TAKANO FOR CONGRESS



<p><b>Seasons Greetings</b> <b>Beverly Inaba</b></p>	<p>Happy Holidays! Judy Lee, Lee &amp; Koga Family</p>			<p>William Takano and family Mark Takano Douglas and Helen Takano and Mia Derrick and Judy Takano Riley and Julia Takano, Aria and Cadence Nick and Paula Takano Gerry and Angela Takano, Erin</p>
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<p>Happy Holidays Best Wishes to everyone in the New Year Kenny &amp; Gina Kamoto</p>	<p><b>Happy Holidays</b> Akio and Helen Yoshikawa</p>	 <p>Here comes Santa-paws! Dolly &amp; Irene Ogata</p>		<p>Happy Holidays from the Riverside Chapter!</p> <p>Home of the Harada House "A powerful civil rights landmark."</p>  <p>haradahousefoundation.org</p>
<p>Social Justice through Unity 2025 CLYDE and KATHERINE WILSON</p>	<p><b>Happy Holidays!</b> Doug Urata and Alice Roe djurata@aol.com</p>	<p><b>Peace and Joy</b> Richard and Anne Mikami, Meiko Inaba, Doug and Resa Inaba, Gary and Laurie Oshiro</p>		<p>Happy Holidays from the Riverside Chapter!</p> <p>Home of the Harada House "A powerful civil rights landmark."</p>  <p>haradahousefoundation.org</p>

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<p>Holiday Greetings from the <b>Matsubara Family</b></p>			<p>Frank Kawase Brea, CA</p>

<p>HAPPY HOLIDAYS</p> <p>From Tomo No Kai 友の会</p> 	<p>HOLIDAY GREETINGS FROM <b>THE INOUE FAMILY</b></p> <p>Kenneth and May Nicole, Eric, Amelia and Grace Erin, Steve, Langston and Paxton Shannon and David</p> <p>Huntington Beach, CA</p> 	<h1>Greater LA</h1> <p>Happy Holidays</p>   <p>羅府大都市支部</p> <p>www.glaajcl.org greaterlajacl@gmail.com</p>
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<h1>Cincinnati</h1>	<p>Pacific Southwest District Council</p>	<p>羅府大都市支部</p> <p>www.glaajcl.org greaterlajacl@gmail.com</p>
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<p>Happy Year of Snake</p> <p>2025</p> <p>Cincinnati Chapter</p>	<p>Wishing you all a safe and healthy holiday! From the PSWD Board</p> <p>Joseph Gu - Governor Andrew Gruhn - Secretary Alayne Yonemoto - Treasurer Takeshi Gasha - District Youth Representative Ryan Yoshikawa - Immediate Past Governor Nancy Takayama - Member-at-Large</p> 	<p>HAPPY HOLIDAYS</p>  <p>Miyako Kadogawa Nakazawa Family</p>
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# San Jose

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Terry and Shirley Ota  
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Maria Hughes,  
& Trevor Masao Nose

May 2025 Bring You  
Joy, Health and  
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for more information about us: www.jamsj.org

Holiday Greetings from the  
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From  
The  
St. Louis JACL



# Arizona



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JACL Arizona Chapter



# EMBRACING ITS *Roots* AND SPREADING ITS *Wings*

*The story of Ryoko Rain: a community for artists and athletes*

By Erika James,  
P.C. Contributor

The pandemic of 2020 had many of us out searching for ourselves, and in different ways, the quarantine had a lasting ripple effect on everyone. Some completely re-invented who they were and what they were doing, and some adventured to take the first step in something that they wouldn't have done under ordinary circumstances. But regardless of how we embraced the discomfort of what was going on in the world around us, we looked at things differently.

Ryoko Rain is a brand that was born out of these challenging circumstances, but its story has been

culminating for generations. When Garrett James founded Ryoko Rain, he knew sports, he knew business and he knew leadership, but he had no experience in the fashion industry and no blueprint to follow. He would have never predicted the way Ryoko Rain has trailblazed the luxury streetwear industry and gained the traction and recognition that it has.

The Ryoko Rain butterfly is donning superstars and professional athletes around the world, and the hype is selling out the brand's online drops in minutes! The distinct patterned mesh is a garment that sports and streetwear enthusiasts follow, waiting for unique and premium pieces to add to their collection. Still, it's the storytelling and community that connect us all to the roots of this humble brand.

James was born into the Japanese community and a village of family, friends who were *like* family, coaches and athletes. He was raised in Fountain Valley, Calif., by Jesse James and Judy James, both Japanese Americans who were largely involved in their local community and leaders in several organizations. Jesse James founded OCO (Orange Coast Optimist Club) in 1988 as part of a larger community of Japanese American basketball leagues, and this community would become Garrett's childhood.

The James family has always juggled the pursuit for excellence and the mission to give back. It's who they are, it's what they stand for and it's in Garrett's blood. As a child, this meant steak for breakfast every morning, becoming class president, leading community service groups and leaving everything better than he found it.

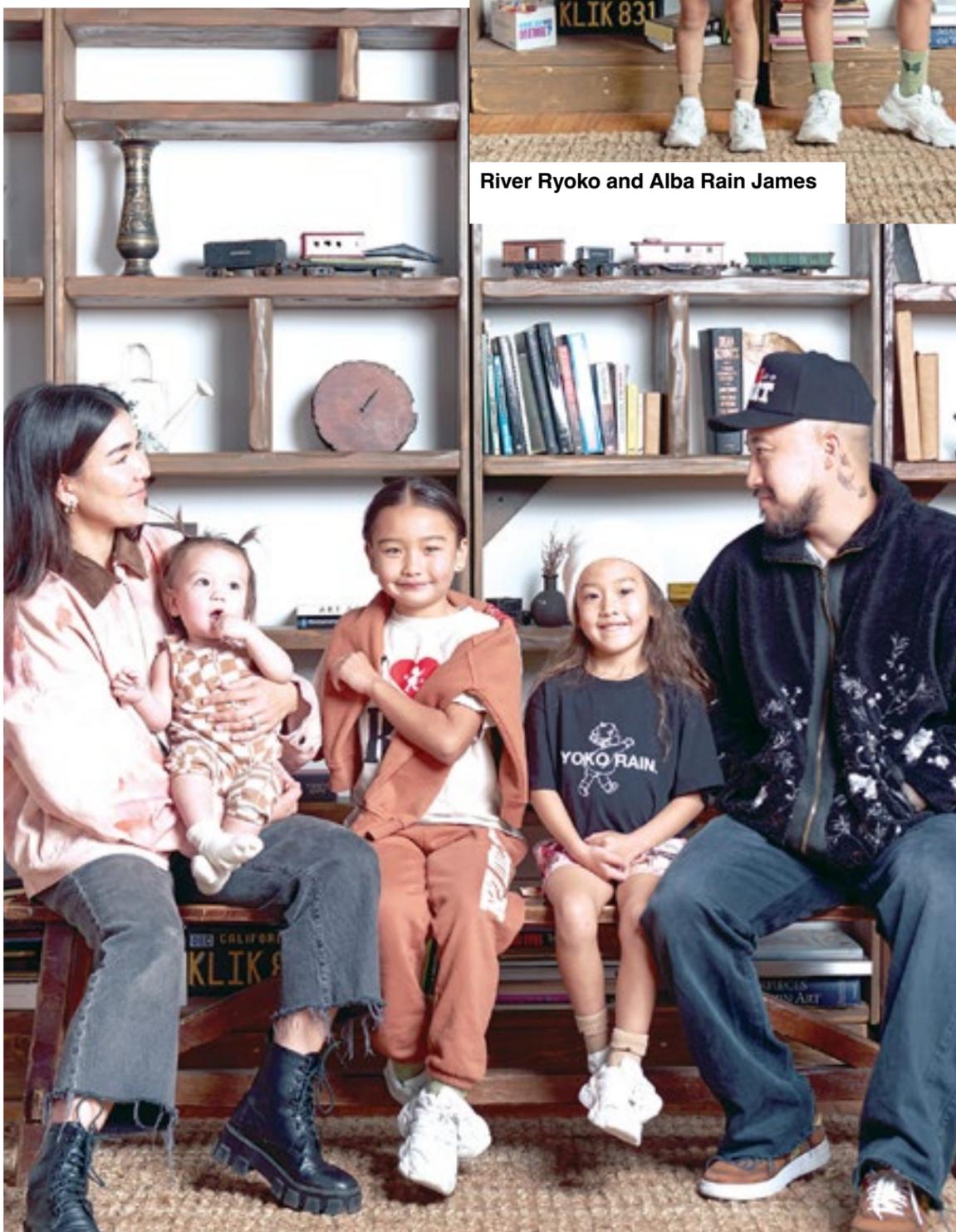
Still, amidst all of the commotion and ambition were roots that grounded it all: family, his Japanese culture and community and the values and traditions of generations before him. These roots became a force for how Garrett moved through the world. He was a chaser of big dreams, and he thrived in the pursuit. His goals would take him all over the world, but at the heart of it all, he is rooted in origins.



Garrett James, founder and creative director of Ryoko Rain



River Ryoko and Alba Rain James



The James family  
PHOTOS: KADIAN HALL



Ryoko Rain jacket  
PHOTO: ALARIC MA



**Ryoko Rain jacket**



**Track and field star Alaysha Johnson**

PHOTOS: ALARIC MA

With a childhood dream to be an NBA basketball player, Garrett devoted his life to basketball. The three James brothers left a legacy at Marina High School in Huntington Beach, Calif., and he continued his accolades and successes at Stoneridge Preparatory, Concordia University and Chapman University. If you know Garrett, then you know he doesn't pursue anything half-heartedly, and his basketball career, full of recognitions and awards, proves that.

Garrett met his wife, Erika, through OCO when they were in the fifth grade. After they were married in 2015 and their daughters were born, Garrett found a passion and niche in creating Ironmen Basketball. Today, it's one of the top club basketball programs in Orange County, with 20-plus teams, and it hosts the largest — and most sought after — youth summer basketball camp.

When he came up with the idea of Ryoko Rain, Garrett recalled, "The brand name and butterfly logo, surprisingly, came to me pretty easily. My daughters' middle names are Ryoko and Rain. This was going to be for them."

The essence of the brand was inspired by the butterfly, a symbol that reflects the stories and life of his family as it evolved and transitioned with the generations. Garrett's daughters, River Ryoko and Alba Rain, grew up raising caterpillars at his parents' house. They would help them transition through the stages and finally release them. His family's tradition of supporting this delicate, yet powerful, metamorphosis was everything his daughters embodied and everything he wanted to create.

With no background in fashion school or train-

ing in design, Garrett built his knowledge from the ground. "I obsessed over the details for so long, and so much, that it was self-taught through trial and error," he explained. "It started with a lot of cold-calling, and then the shorts slowly took off from one athlete to another. Now, my consumers are worldwide, and athletes are reaching out to me."

Garrett eventually partnered with Justin Otsuka, a fellow OCO teammate and friend, who is the CFO of Paul Martin's American Grill, a classic and popular American cuisine restaurant chain throughout Arizona, California and Texas. Otsuka advises the analytics and finances, and together, they're taking Ryoko Rain to new heights.

Ryoko Rain Inc. is now an umbrella company to brands: Ryoko Rain, Bucketsquad Apparel and A Baana Club. From collaborations with Matsumoto Shave Ice, Tanaka Farms, Angel City FC, Breast Cancer survivors, Athlos NYC and more, Ryoko Rain is a growing influence. The brand is working with big and small names to share stories and spark conversations that honor the past, present and future of who we are.

Ryoko Rain recently partnered with all-pro NFL star Maxx Crosby, as he became the first professional athlete investor and stakeholder. The Las Vegas Raiders' superstar was an early supporter of the brand, but this new collaboration really puts Ryoko Rain on the radar in the sports community. There is a shared purpose to highlight the authenticity, the intentional design and the community that is Ryoko Rain, and Crosby's commitment is pivotal for Ryoko Rain as the brand expands its audience and amplifies its voice.

With the growing reach of the brand, Garrett's

life as founder and creative director has become an intense juggling act with way too many balls in the air, but he feels like he gets to slow down and ground everything when Ryoko Rain tells a story.

Ryoko Rain is not just producing clothes. Every design and every garment is an expression in someone's story. Garrett wants the work he does to highlight the beauty of the human experience in every shape and form, and it's the people that bring his work to life. The Ryoko Rain Instagram profile is a grid of professional athletes, local athletes, celebrities, family members, farmers, artists, creators and warriors. It's a carousel of unique individuals and experiences, but within every story and caption, we find pieces of ourselves.

Ryoko Rain is sharing what we're all doing, where we're going and where we came from. We all have roots, and to have the power and the platform to put meaning to that is what has built the community that is Ryoko Rain.

Garrett has further goals for Ryoko Rain, and his ambition does not rest. He dreams about the culmination of his brand, the worlds he wants to highlight and how he can continue to give back. When asked what's next, Garrett reflected, "I don't know what the future has in store, but I'm enjoying the process. I'm just really grateful for the journey and all the support of the brand. I never thought Ryoko Rain would be where it is today."

*For more information about Ryoko Rain, visit <https://ryokorain.com>. Join the Ryoko Rain SMS club for early access to drops and follow @ryokorain on Instagram for updates about when drops are happening.*



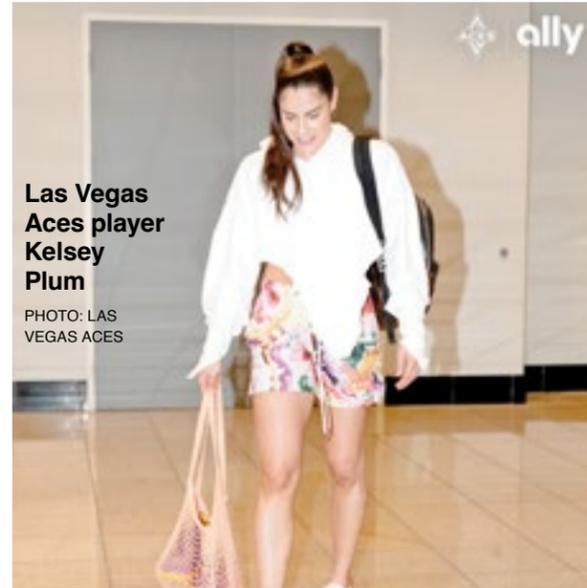
**Boston Celtics and Team USA Basketball star Jayson Tatum**

PHOTO: CAMERON LOOK



**Ali Riley and Jun Endo with Garrett James**

PHOTO: ALARIC MA



**Las Vegas Aces player Kelsey Plum**

PHOTO: LAS VEGAS ACES

# Ventura County

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The Miyasaka Family

**Seasons Greetings**  
Ben Wada

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to our friends in  
Ventura and Riverside JACL  
Francis and Gayle Fujioka

**Happy New Year**  
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# Paying It Forward

**Businessman-philanthropist  
Glen S. Fukushima emphasizes  
education via endowments.**

By George Toshio Johnston,  
Senior Editor

**G**len S. Fukushima has been making an impact for decades.

Now 75, prior to him currently serving as vice chairman of the Securities Investor Protection Corp. and a senior fellow at the policy institute Center for American Progress, Fukushima's C-suite level business experience included stints at Airbus Japan, NCR Japan, Cadence Design Systems, Arthur D. Little Japan and AT&T Japan. He also was a two-term president of the American Chamber of Commerce in Japan and after earning his law degree, served as the deputy assistant, U.S. trade representative for Japan and China.

"While many are not aware of it, he is a highly sought after authority on U.S.-Japan relations," said JACL National President Larry Oda. "He is always at the right hand of the decision-makers." The pair gave a presentation in 2023 in the Aratani Theater during the JACL National Convention in Los Angeles.

Over the course of his career, Fukushima's drive, smarts, advanced academic background, bilingual fluency in English and Nihongo and multicultural upbringing (American, Japanese American, Japanese, overseas military dependent) have taken him into lofty realms of government and business where the United States and Japan intersect in both geopolitics and economics. It's fitting, then, that it was Fukushima who gave the nonprofit U.S.-Japan Council, founded in 2009, its moniker.

Possessing an impressive curriculum vitae that includes a stellar list of elite educational institutions — Deep Springs College, Stanford University, Harvard University, Harvard Law School, University of Tokyo and Keio University — and later taking leadership roles at big-name multinational corporations and government entities, Fukushima and his accomplishments are all the more impressive when examining the humble circumstances from whence he came.

His Nisei father was incarcerated by the U.S. government during World War II at Colorado's Camp Amache. He later joined the Military Intelligence Service, was stationed in postwar Japan and married a Japanese woman. Glen was born on a U.S. military hospital in Japan as a U.S. citizen.

Although neither of his parents were able to pursue higher education, that path was their son's rocket fuel that propelled his notable career. That may explain in part why Fukushima's dedication to supporting education has been so important to him over the years.

"The level of a country's education is really important in terms of its economic competitiveness but also its level of culture and intelligence," Fukushima told the *Pacific Citizen*.

One decision that was a no-brainer for the well-educated, well-connected businessman, governmental adviser and expert's expert: donating large sums of money to help ensure the educational opportunities Fukushima had will be there for others in the future.

In 2022 — the 70th anniversary of the creation of the Fulbright Japan program — Fukushima, according to Philip Roskamp, minister-counselor for public affairs for the Embassy of the United States of America, provided "the single-largest donation ever made to Fulbright Japan and one of the largest ever made to the Fulbright program anywhere."

Announced during President Joe Biden's May 2022 visit to Japan, the \$1 million donation created the Fulbright-Glen S. Fukushima Fund, which annually lets a Japanese study here and an American study in Japan. U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel arranged a meeting where Biden personally thanked Fukushima.

Then in spring 2024, the Lifetime JACL member



JACL National President Larry Oda (left) and Glen S. Fukushima at the Aratani Theater in Los Angeles during the 2023 JACL National Convention

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

and his wife made a \$3 million donation to create the Glen S. and Sakie T. Fukushima Fund for one of his several alma maters, the aforementioned, monasterial Deep Springs College, which has been described as "the least known selective college in the United States."

The two-year institution only accepts 13 students each year and has a student body of 26. (Along with Fukushima, the only other Japanese American alumni of the 107-year-old institution are the late John "Jack" Aoki and Danny Ihara.) Although he only attended for a year before transferring to Stanford, the experience left a lasting impression on him.

Also in 2024, Fukushima donated \$100,000 to the Inter-University Center for Japanese Language Studies, administered by Stanford University, and another \$100,000 to Harvard University's Master's Program in Regional Studies — East Asia. More recently on Aug. 15, at an event to mark the 90th anniversary of the creation of the Japan America Student Conference, Fukushima announced a \$1 million contribution to create the Glen S. & Sakie T. Fukushima JASC Alumni Fellowship Fund.

The conference holds a special place for him. In his speech, he noted, "I was a member of the American delegation that attended JASC 22 in 1970 at Stanford University, where I was an undergraduate. . . . JASC 22 changed my life because there I met Sakie Tachibana, a Japanese delegation member. Two years later, in the fall of 1972, we got married, which remains, to this day, the single-best decision of my life."

In the present day, the ever-busy Fukushima maintains a transcontinental, transpacific schedule, with residences in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Tokyo. Nevertheless, he took time to chat with the *Pacific Citizen* about what shaped him, his views on the importance of education and the activities he supports. (Editor's Note: This conversation has been edited for clarity and brevity.)

**PACIFIC CITIZEN:** Glen, you've dwelt in some rarified areas, attended and operated at elite levels of corporate, political and educational realms. While philanthropy is nothing new to you, what does seem to be new are the amounts you donated to the Fulbright Japan program and Deep Springs College. What initiated you to go down this road?

**GLEN S. FUKUSHIMA:** I had been thinking about it for quite some time because I had benefited from being a Fulbright fellow at the University of Tokyo in 1982, '83. I know many Americans and Japanese have benefited from the Fulbright Program, but what was the spark for that was that in 2021, Hiroshi Mikitani, the president of and founder of Rakuten, and a friend of mine, contributed \$800,000 to the Fulbright Program because his late father, a professor of economics at Kobe University, really felt he had benefited from being a Fulbright Fellow at Stanford one year and Harvard one year, during the 1950s.

As for Deep Springs College, I benefited from its educational philosophy of developing the three intelligences — No. 1: analytical, logical intelligence; No. 2: creative intelligence; and No. 3: the practical intelligence, getting things done.

**P.C.:** On that topic, what impact did each of the universities you attended have on you?

**FUKUSHIMA:** The thing that I really gained at Stanford was the exposure to excellence — intellectual excellence, as well as people with tremendous abilities. . . . Because it is a West Coast university, I think there's a certain freedom of

thinking, not being shackled by history and tradition. It is innovative and forward-looking, and it's very interdisciplinary.

One of the interesting things that I gained going to Keio was to open my eyes to the possibility of going to the East Coast for graduate school. . . . A lot of Keio people studied at Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Columbia.

I went to Harvard for eight years, so that really opened my eyes to the East Coast and traditional America and Europe. There was so much European influence, whether it's architecture or history or literature or people. The Harvard experience really did open my eyes to the traditional origins of the United States. And Harvard obviously draws some of the best minds from around the world.

Tokyo University at that time was like combining Stanford, Harvard, MIT, Caltech and all the major schools, so being at Tokyo University in the '80s . . . I got a lot of exposure to people who later became leaders in Japan.

**P.C.:** In addition to donating to the arts, music and education, you have also donated to political candidates and activities.

**FUKUSHIMA:** Yes, in 2013, I contributed \$500,000 to create a PAC (political action committee), CAPA21 (Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans for the 21st Century) to support Asian American candidates running for political office. I also served on the Asia Policy Working Group for Hillary Clinton when she ran for president in 2016 and on the Foreign Policy Advisory Group for Kamala Harris when she ran for president in 2024, and I supported both candidates, as well as others, with financial contributions.

**P.C.:** You've seen the highs and lows of U.S.-Japan relations. In a broad sense, are "things Japanese" — whether it's pop culture or traditional culture, Shohei Ohtani, Marie Kondo, "Godzilla Minus One" and "Shogun," anime, manga — kind of having a moment, and if so, how can Japanese Americans take advantage of this trend?

**FUKUSHIMA:** That's an excellent question. Basically, from 1975-95, it was a period where Japan was really admired and respected, but also feared to some extent. In 1989, there was a Harris public opinion poll asking the American public between the Soviet military threat and the Japanese economic challenge, which was the bigger threat to America? Sixty-eight percent of Americans said the Japanese economic challenge was a greater threat to America, and only 22 percent said that it was Soviet military threat. It's really quite incredible thinking back now as to how much Japan was feared.

I'd say from about the 2000s on, Japan is no longer seen as a threat. But because, in part, of North Korea and China, and with Russia and Ukraine, Japan is increasingly seen by the United States, Australia, Britain, France, and Germany as a very reliable country.

Japan now usually ends up in public opinion polls as one of the most-trusted, liked and admired countries in the world. I think there's a real cultural, artistic side of Japan that is really valued.

Because the U.S. is so important for Japan and Japan is so important for the U.S. right now means that there are opportunities for Japanese Americans to get more engaged. Generally speaking, though, they do have to have something they can offer. It helps if you have a special skill or knowledge base that people or institutions in Japan value.

**P.C.:** When is the Glen S. Fukushima book coming out?

**FUKUSHIMA:** I don't think I'll write it right now. I'm hoping that I'll live a few more years — I'm hoping to have some interesting experiences still. I'm not retired yet. But I do hope at some point to write a book. ■



(From left)  
President Joe Biden, U.S. Ambassador to Japan Rahm Emanuel and Glen S. Fukushima at the ambassador's residence in Tokyo in May 2022

PHOTO: U.S. STATE DEPT.

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# Storykeepers Preserve History

## Part I: Nikkei descendants visit France to honor their families' WWII legacy.



PHOTO: NORA DE BIEVRE

By Nancy Ukai,  
P.C. Contributor

Annual trips to historic Nisei military sites in France, Italy and Germany that are organized by Nora de Bievre of Nisei Legacy Tours feel more like pilgrimages. In October, 45 pilgrims traveled for one week in the Vosges mountains in Northeast France to take part in the 80th anniversary celebrations of the 100th/442nd Regimental Combat Team's liberation of Bruyeres, Belmont and Biffontaine and the rescue of the Lost Battalion during World War II.

The 100th/442nd RCT is the most highly decorated unit in WWII. Members, which includes the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion and the 232nd Engineer Company, earned more than 18,000 individual decorations, including more than 4,000 Purple Hearts and 21 Medals of Honor. A total of 650 men in the 100th/442nd were killed in action.

Nikkei descendants from California, Colorado, Hawaii, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada and Virginia walked on sacred ground, visiting battlefields, cemeteries and monuments to lay flowers, paper cranes, ribbon leis and even a volcanic rock to honor fallen Nisei heroes.

Storytelling became an important part of each day. During the trip, pilgrims learned from each other's histories and met storykeepers in France and Germany who are dedicated to ensuring that future generations do not forget the human cost of liberation and peace.

The following photos capture stories from the French trip. Part II of this story, which will detail 28 pilgrims' return to Germany and the Nisei liberation of Dachau subcamps, will be published in 2025.

For more information on Nisei Legacy Tours, visit <https://nisei-legacy-tours.com/>.



Joanne Sakai (left) and Janet Ito are the daughters of Lawson Sakai, who served in the 100th/442nd RCT and was the last Nisei veteran to visit the Vosges in 2019. Here, Joanne places a strand of hand-folded paper cranes on the French monument in Fremifontaine that honors the soldiers of the 45th Infantry Division who liberated the town. Janet lights incense that she carried from Los Angeles, infusing the mountain forest with the fragrance of a temple.

PHOTO: NANCY UKAI



Larry Yogi (right) of Honolulu, who visited France for the first time, is pictured with his son, Philip. Larry carried a 1942 photo of his older brother, Matsuichi, who was killed in the Vosges mountains. *Matsu* means "pine," Larry said, and *ichi* means "one" — Matsuichi was the first-born son. Larry, 87, found a pine tree and placed a small lava rock beside it in remembrance of the lava wall Matsuichi built before he left Hawaii. In so doing, he fulfilled a promise to his late mother to pay the family's respects at the place of Matsuichi's sacrifice.

PHOTO: NANCY UKAI

Michel Pierrat was 12 years old during the war. In 1947, his family erected a small wooden memorial in honor of Yohei Sagami, who enlisted in the Army from the Minidoka, Idaho, concentration camp and died from a shrapnel wound to the neck on the first day of the battle for Bruyeres on Oct. 15, 1944. Today, a permanent granite memorial built by the Sagami family with the support of the Pierrats is cared for by Michel, now in his 90s. At a ceremony in Laval-sur-Vologne, Marsha Hamamoto of Honolulu gave a lei of kukui nuts to Pierrat, who apologized for not being able to bend down to care for the flowers as he used to. Marsha's father, Richard A. Aseka, was a staff sergeant in the 100th Battalion, D. Company. Michel's son will continue to care for the Sagami memorial.

PHOTO: NANCY UKAI



Berton Hamamoto (left) shines a light on WWII dog tags shown by Quentin Thiaville, a community historian, as Dennis Mukai views them. Thiaville and two colleagues in the Bruyeres area have "adopted" Nisei graves, which they care for at the Epinal American Cemetery. They also collect artifacts to preserve the history of the Nisei liberation. "It's moving," said Jonathan Mukai, "that a sense of stewardship exists across the ocean to keep the history alive."

PHOTO: NANCY UKAI



It was a solemn moment when Kristen Hayashi of Los Angeles stood in the place, almost 80 years to the day, where it is believed that her great-uncle Henry Kondo lost his life on Oct. 19, 1944. "It was strange to be smiling," she wrote, "but it was sunny and serene that day, which made me feel like Henry's spirit was there." Henry, 23, was from Pasadena, Calif. He was a member of E Company in the 100th/442nd and was killed in action during the Battle of Bruyeres.

PHOTO: MG MONTEMAYOR

Milo Yoshino learned from his cousin, John, that the name of his uncle, Roy T. Tsutsui, a member of F Company, 442 RCT, might have been carved in a village home while the second battalion was billeted in the Vosges from Nov. 9-12, 1944. Nearly 80 years later, Yoshino touched his uncle's name (circle added to show carved detail). With the help of Kristen Hayashi and volunteer historians Cyril Toussaint, Quentin Thiaville and Clement Derudder, he was able to visit the home in Fays.

Videographer Amy Watanabe captured the moment Yoshino saw his uncle's name, unit and the date, Nov. 11, 1944. Viewing the video later had "an emotional impact that I can't explain," Yoshino said. "But it's not about me, it's how the citizens of Bruyeres remember and honor the 100th/442nd RCT. This includes the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion and 232nd Engineer Company."

PHOTO: KRISTEN HAYASHI



"I have never come to a commemoration, but this year I had to," said a Bruyeres resident whose mother, Marie Ancel, hid in her basement for five months during the war, afraid to leave after her uncle went to fight the Germans and never returned. The daughter told Gerry and Gail Nanbu that the town would never forget the courage of the soldiers from the U.S. mainland and Hawaii. Pictured (from left) are Gail Nanbu, Marie Ancel, Gerry Nanbu and volunteer interpreter Anna Taft. Gail's uncle, George Yaki, served in the 100th/442nd RCT. ■

PHOTO: NANCY UKAI



# Chicago



Headbanger, 2024, acrylic on canvas, 30 x 40 in.

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*Wishing everyone a  
healthy and joyful  
New Year!*

Steve Arima & Elaine Ogawa

Happy Holidays  
**SHARON HARADA**  
Livermore, CA

**Happy Holidays  
to all**

Anne Shimojima & Jonathan Friedman  
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**In memory of these and other friends and neighbors  
who raised their families, contributed to their community,  
served their country, and enriched our lives.**

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<p><b>HAPPY HOLIDAYS</b> <i>Pat Harada &amp; Tom Rowland</i> <i>Northfield, Illinois</i></p>	<p>HAPPY HOLIDAYS  IN MEMORY OF RICK &amp; KAREN OKABE</p>	<p>SEASON'S GREETINGS  Lary Schectman Chicago, Illinois</p>
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Tonko, Paula Mitchell and Toni Doi  
SJ, Josh and Juno Toshiko Cave' Doi  
Jason Doi  
Tom and Verna Muraoka  
Laura Muraoka and Peter Izui  
Grace Kido

In loving memory of  
Paul Doi  
Tomoye and Shiro Muraoka  
George Izui  
George Kido  
Mitsuji and Ritsue Doi  
and  
Friends who are with us in our hearts and memories

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**Kiyoshi Kuromiya and his mother at Heart Mountain**



**The late Kiyoshi Kuromiya**

PHOTO: PETER LIEN



**William Way archivist John Anderies displays objects from the Kiyoshi collection.**

# Kiyoshi Kuromiya: INTERSECTIONAL IDENTITY OF A SANSEI GAY RIGHTS ACTIVIST

*The activist devoted his life to civil rights, gay rights and the antiwar movement.*

By Rob Buscher,  
P.C. Contributor

**K**iyoshi Kuromiya (1943-2000) was a Sansei activist born at the Heart Mountain concentration camp during World War II. As a follow-up to the recent article (*see P.C.'s Nov. 15, 2024, issue*) offering a behind-the-scenes look at the new biopic documentary being produced on his life, this article will offer a brief summary of Kuromiya's many accomplishments as an activist who devoted his life to multiple causes, including civil rights, gay rights and the antiwar movement.

Born as Steven Kiyoshi Kuromiya to Nisei parents Hiroshi and Amiko, Kuromiya was the eldest of three and first of two children born in the hospital complex at Heart Mountain. There, he spent the first two-and-a-half years of his life in a 20-by-20 foot apartment that housed a total of seven family members until the end of the war.

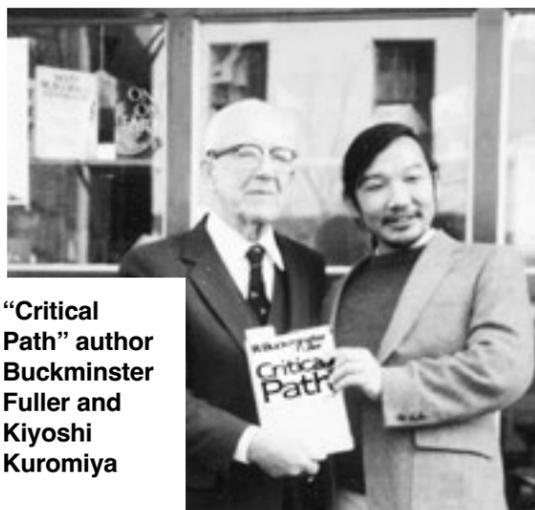
Upon their release, the Kuromiya family first resettled in Ohio before making their way back to Monrovia, Calif., in 1946, where Kiyoshi and his siblings were raised.

Kuromiya realized that he was gay early in life and knew it was an important part of his identity, even if he did not have the words to describe it. In 1955, Kuromiya was arrested for consorting with another boy in a public park in Monrovia and was sent to juvenile detention for three days as punishment.



**Kiyoshi Kuromiya is pictured in Alabama with Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES AND HISTORY/DONATED BY ALABAMA MEDIA GROUP/PHOTO BY SPIDER MARTIN, BIRMINGHAM NEWS



**"Critical Path" author Buckminster Fuller and Kiyoshi Kuromiya**

Kuromiya recalled in a 1997 interview, "They said, 'Well, gee, we've never seen a Japanese American here.'" The judge told Kuromiya and his parents that he was in danger of leading a lewd and immoral life. Kuromiya continued, "I kept looking up the word 'lewd' in the dictionary and not knowing how to spell it, I could never find it. So, I didn't know what kind of life I had in store for me."

After graduating from high school, Kuromiya decided to try his luck on the other side of the country in the city of Philadelphia, in part because it was known as the "City of Brotherly Love." There, he enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania and began studying architecture.

There, Kuromiya came into contact with large numbers of Black Americans for the first time, which greatly expanded his racial consciousness.

By 1962, he had joined the Congress of Racial Equality and began participating in restaurant sit-ins and other nonviolent direct actions. In 1963, he was invited to attend the March on Washington. Kuromiya remembered, "In '63, I flew with Hollywood entertainers in a chartered plane from Burbank Airport to Washington for the March on Washington. I sat next to Mark Crawford, who was foreign editor of *Ebony* magazine. All the bars were closed in Washington that day, and so we went to all the Black clubs. So, I was in all the Black clubs, hearing the talk on the day of the March on Washington. I stood maybe a 100, 120 feet in front of King when he made the 'I Have a Dream' speech."

Following the rally, Kuromiya accom-

**Kiyoshi Kuromiya at the CORE Liberty Bell sit-in during his days at the University of Pennsylvania**



panied Mark Crawford to the Willard Hotel, where they met James Baldwin for drinks and a chat. There in the lobby of the hotel, he also met Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rev. Ralph Abernathy.

Recognizing aspects of his own struggle in the civil rights movement, Kuromiya recalled, "I felt a common bond with the people who were struggling for what seemed to be an inalienable right." Kuromiya devoted himself to increasingly public displays of civil disobedience, including a sit-in at the foot of the Liberty Bell later in 1963 and a full takeover of Independence Hall in March 1965. The Independence Hall action was done in support of the people injured at Pettus Bridge during the Bloody Sunday incident that took place at the first failed march to Selma.

Following his leadership in this action, Kuromiya was invited to join a group of protestors organized by the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee to help protect local high school students who were doing voter registration work in Alabama. With unlikely help from Duke Ellington, they were able to charter a plane that brought them there.

This led to one of the more notable stories in Kuromiya's civil rights movement career, when he was separated from the group and badly beaten by white supremacists riding on horseback. "I was surrounded by the sheriff's volunteer posse. They were specifically going after me," he said. "They cornered me against the wall and clubbed me on the head. I had 20 stitches down my head. They carted me off. The last thing people saw was me with a blood-soaked shirt down to my waist."

In another interview recorded in 1994, Kuromiya reflected, "When you get treated this way, you suddenly know what it is like to be a Black in Mississippi or a peasant in Vietnam." More incredible still was that upon hearing how this young Japanese American put his body on the line for Black voting rights, Dr. King and Abernathy came to the hospital to represent Kuromiya.

He recounted, "The next day, we confronted Sheriff Butler in Montgomery. . . . He accused me of going after him with a knife and brought a pair of pants



**Kiyoshi Kuromiya at a 1997 ACT UP protest in Philadelphia** PHOTO: HARVEY FINKLE

with a slice down it and said we have videotapes. That's not true. Then, he apologized, and we got a statement out of him, which was drafted by King and myself. And King said, 'This is the very first time a Southern sheriff had apologized for injuring a civil rights worker.' Well anyway, the following day, President Johnson federalized the Alabama State National Guard to protect the Selma to Montgomery March." In a fourth attempt resulting in the final successful march, Kuromiya joined the color guard, marching one row behind Dr. King.

Later that year, Kuromiya's activist focus would undergo a major shift as he began publicly demonstrating with Philadelphia's first gay rights organization called the East Coast Homophile Organizations. "I knew what it felt like to be arrested, I knew what it felt like to be beaten, so I wasn't afraid to challenge authority when the issues were gay, rather than race," he said.

Over the next few years, Kuromiya continued to participate in a myriad of civil rights, gay rights and antiwar protests. Another turning point in Kuromiya's activist journey occurred with the Stonewall Riots in June 1969. Following decades of violent police raids on gay bars in New York City's Greenwich Village, the community fought back over several nights for their right to openly congregate. In the aftermath, several prominent New York gay rights groups were established, including the Gay Liberation Front. Kuromiya would become a founding member of the Gay Liberation Front-Philadelphia and had an increasingly public presence within the gay rights movement.

Up until this point, Kuromiya's association with the gay rights movement had been largely separate from his race consciousness work. The militant nature of the post-Stonewall Gay Liberation Front brought new intersections into the movement, as Kuromiya remembered, "I don't think I saw any people of color in the early days at all. I'm trying to think. There may have been at the East Coast Homophile Organizations conferences, but they certainly weren't in a prominent place there. . . . And that's why when Gay Liberation Front was formed in 1969, we were particularly proud because we had a significant proportion of African Americans, Latinos and Asians."

While his activist work continued, Kuromiya was diagnosed with metastatic lung cancer in 1974. Miraculously, he survived, and by 1977 was declared cancer free. This near-death experience segued into one of the most prolific periods of Kuromiya's work life, when he began a writing partnership with technoutopian Buckminster Fuller.

Kuromiya biographer Che Gossett elaborates on the origins of their partnership. "In 1977, while hospitalized with metastatic cancer, Kuromiya met Buckminster Fuller. This meeting began a collaboration that lasted the rest of Fuller's life."

Indeed, Kuromiya would spend the rest of Fuller's life until he passed in 1983 in his employ. Together, they traveled worldwide as Kuromiya worked on several of Fuller's books during his last six years of life, one of which was published close to a decade after his death in 1992.

Borrowing the title from a book that he collaborated on with Fuller, Kuromiya began publishing the Critical Path Newsletter in 1987. By this time, the AIDS crisis had been in full swing for the better part of a decade since the early 1980s. Kuromiya suspected that he had contracted HIV as early as 1984, though he was not diagnosed with AIDS until 1989.

Kuromiya was deeply involved in AIDS activism in a period when even some medical professionals refused to treat HIV-positive patients. A founding member of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power (ACT-UP) Philadelphia, Kuromiya dedicated the remaining years of his life to learning as much as he could about HIV/AIDS treatment and sharing that information with anyone who could benefit from it.

Published monthly, the Critical Path Newsletter included up-to-date treatment plans that in many cases were recorded by Kuromiya himself, who began attending medical conferences around the world. What began as a newsletter would grow into a free medical journal and eventually evolved into a 24-hour hotline, computer bulletin board and website that provided the latest information about HIV/AIDS and experimental treatment plans. His work in the HIV/AIDS space led to two landmark Supreme Court cases initiated by Kuromiya in the last decade of his life.

In 1997, Kuromiya's Critical Path AIDS Project was the lead plaintiff in a class-action suit *Reno v. American Civil Liberties Union*, which succeeded in striking down parts of the 1996 Communications Decency Act that had banned sex education as indecent speech, such as the guide to safe sex on Critical Path's website. By successfully overturning parts of the legislation, Kuromiya and his fellow plaintiffs helped to safeguard freedom of speech on the internet.

In 1999, Kuromiya led a second unsuccessful class-action suit titled *Kuromiya v. United States*. Kuromiya and over 150 other plaintiffs attempted to sue the federal government over access to medical marijuana in the treatment of HIV/AIDS. While this effort was ultimately unsuccessful, it did open the conversation on a national scale about the effectiveness of medical marijuana in stimulating appetite and other medical benefits as part of a comprehensive treatment plan.

Alas, even a larger-than-life figure like Kuromiya was not immune to the terminal prognosis of his illness. After more than a decadelong battle with AIDS, Kuromiya succumbed to complications of cancer on May 10, 2000, just one day after his 57th birthday.

In his last weeks of life, Kuromiya received round-the-clock care from a core group of his closest friends and activist comrades. Shortly after he was declared dead, a lightning bolt lit up the sky, followed by a momentous thunderclap, taken as a final sign of his electrifying presence by all those who knew him.

Kuromiya attributed to his Japanese American ethnicity within his intersectional identity that informed his activism. This can be stated with confidence thanks to a few key discoveries during the production process of the new documentary film about his life.

While conducting research for Kuromiya's biography, Gossett discovered a collection of unused video interviews featuring Kuromiya in the N.Y. Public Library collection that were recorded in the early 1990s about the history of ACT UP. These interviews,

alongside additional footage taken in the years before his death, will be central to the film's narrative, enabling Kuromiya to tell his story in his own words. It was in this ACT UP footage that Kuromiya said, "I was a born felon. I was born in a U.S. concentration camp in Heart Mountain, Wyo., along with 120,000 other Japanese Americans. And not because of any crime but because of race." Kuromiya goes on to explain how he felt his origins in Heart Mountain set him on the path toward activism.

The significance of Kuromiya's Japanese American identity was also confirmed by longtime friend and movement comrade David Acosta, who shared during his interview that "after two drinks, Kiyoshi would always bring up Heart Mountain. It was very important to him that he never forgot where he came from."

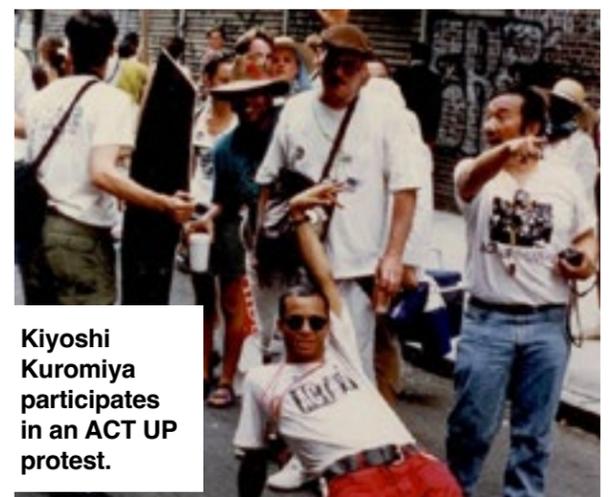
The last piece of evidence, which might be considered the "smoking gun" was a discovery that took place during the film's first day of shooting at the William Way LGBT Center on what would have been Kuromiya's 80th birthday on May 9, 2023. After commemorating his birthday with a city council proclamation and birthday cake, William Way archivist John Anderies pulled a selection of artifacts from the Kuromiya collection for the filmmaking crew's perusal. Among these were a photo album showing the 1983 trip that Kuromiya took with his mother to one of the very first Heart Mountain Pilgrimages.

Remarking on how his parents spoke about their wartime ideal, Kuromiya recalled, "They call it the camp days. And generally, it's treated sort of like, 'Let's not dwell on the ugly side of it.' It's sort of like, 'Well, that's something we accepted, and it was our own little thing, and we don't make a big deal out of it,' although a few people did and consequently reparations were paid to survivors, about two-thirds of the people who were still alive in 1992. We were given \$20,000. I got my \$20,000 grant in 1992."

Shortly after receiving his redress check, Kuromiya would begin the last stage of his activist career, devoting his remaining years to the Critical Path AIDS Project. Kuromiya even invested some of his own redress compensation into the Critical Path project. In this way, Kuromiya's story and legacy of activism is bookended by the important milestones of camp, pilgrimage and redress — like so many Sansei of his generation.

Let us remember Kuromiya among the cadre of Japanese American civil rights pioneers. The work he did extended far beyond the typical definition of a Japanese American activist, and yet his pathway to activism and views on racial justice are rooted in the same shared experiences of the community. Although Kuromiya was not celebrated as such during his life, it is high time that we reclaim him as one of our own.

**To learn more about Kiyoshi Kuromiya and support the upcoming documentary feature film about his life, please visit: <https://www.pewcenterarts.org/grant/kiyoshi-project>.**



**Kiyoshi Kuromiya participates in an ACT UP protest.**

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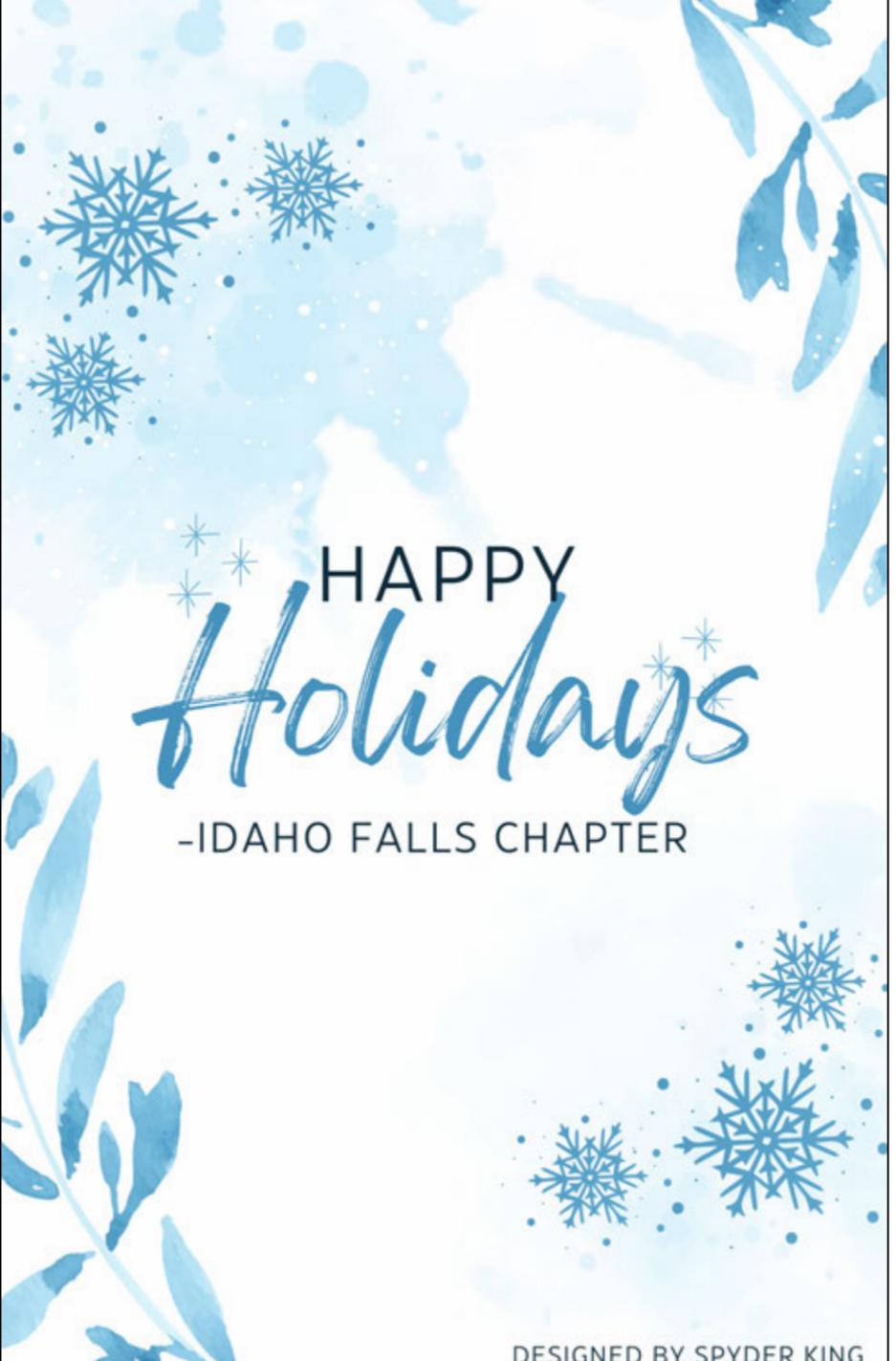
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# Legal-Ease: An Attorney's Perspective

## HANASHI GA ARU: WE NEED TO TALK

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Respect for the elderly is deeply rooted in Japanese culture. In Japan, it is viewed as something all children should have. However, third, fourth and fifth generations of Japanese Americans, most of whom don't even speak Japanese, have a much more diluted sense of respect for the elderly. This is a very touchy subject, but it needs to be addressed.

I see it all the time — an adult child yelling at, scolding or reprimanding their elderly parent. I understand that the adult child is acting out of a desire to help, especially after a medical diagnosis of dementia or Alzheimer's. However, while the adult child begins with the best of intentions, the strains of a "role reversal" can start to cause dysfunction in the relationship.

Little children will often play house, pretending to be the parent. That's perfectly fine when they're little. But adult children playing "parent" to their elderly parent, i.e., "role reversal," is never right and doesn't work. When our parents age, mutual respect and honor should remain (source: [www.sageminder.com](http://www.sageminder.com), "Role Reversal With an Aging Parent," Jan. 14, 2024).

Adult children caregivers must never forget that there is a major difference between caring for elderly parents and children. Children are just learning — one day, they will grow out of their dependency. Elderly parents, however, are suffering enormous losses, of which they are keenly aware. They are not going to learn, adapt or "grow out of it." Instead, they will continue to decline and gradually lose their independence.

When our parents age, mutual respect and honor should remain. Preserving an elder's dignity, independence and sense of control as much as safely possible should be a priority for caregivers (source: [www.agingcare.com](http://www.agingcare.com), "How Role Reversal Skew Your Thoughts," Carol Bradley Bursack; [www.sageminder.com](http://www.sageminder.com), "Role Reversal With an Aging Parent," Jan. 14, 2024).

An adult child's role, therefore, is not to "parent" the parent, but rather help the parent deal effectively with the changes that age brings. Obviously, when there are extreme mental limitations, it is very difficult to not become parental. But, if your parent is functioning cognitively, there is no real reason to take on a parenting role.

The parent's role is not to become dependent. Caregivers should never do something for someone that he or she can and should be doing for themselves. An elderly parent will stay stronger if we allow him or her to do as much as they can. When they can't do it, parents need to acknowledge when help is needed. Then, the adult child can step in, e.g., ask or pay others to help.

That doesn't mean that things stay the same. Ideally, by adulthood, most of us "children" have grown up enough that we are on some kind of level playing field with our parents by our early 20s. This means that parents and children should ideally honor and respect each other in the same way they would their own peers. In a healthy parent/adult-child relationship, no one feels obligated to fulfill basic adult obligations for each other.

Aging, however, comes with some declines that make this mutual "peer" relationship difficult. The reality is, our parents may need us in ways that are very new to us. The key to handling these changes is acceptance and honesty on both sides and good communication. The adult child needs to be able to speak honestly and frankly about



the concerns he or she has related to the parent's health or situation.

The elderly parent also needs to accept new limitations as they come and be able to ask honestly and clearly for help when needed because sometimes, both parent and child do not notice the gradual changes taking place.

The best thing to do is to assess the situation together or look for warning signs to determine if you're in an "unhealthy" parent-child role: (1) You feel guilty if you are not doing what they want you to do; (2) You feel incapable of saying no to requests; (3) You feel controlled and judged; and (4) You are not taking responsibility for your own finances or other adult responsibilities, e.g., acting as wife for your husband.

It is important to remember that if you have not established a healthy peer or same adult-level relationship with your parent thus far, it will not get better as they age. Consider what you need to do to fully separate as an adult and take full responsibility for your choices and your own life.

One area many adult children get stuck in is approval. If adult children are still making decisions related to their parents to garner their approval, they have not fully separated in a healthy way. We all want to be liked and approved — but if you find yourself making certain types of decisions only because you cannot bear the disapproval of a parent, it is time to become more independent and take full responsibility for your own affairs.

All relationships change over time. The key is to acknowledge the changes and adapt. The best attitudes to have to help with this process are acceptance, honesty and faith in one another. If you start to feel strain about how you are relating to an aging parent, it may be wise to talk with others about it. Your siblings may be a great resource as they may have similar concerns; but sometimes, a person outside of the family — like a friend or a counselor — can help sort out where your boundaries should be.

In conclusion, remember that you don't have to do it alone. Your parent may need more support and one-on-one care than you can provide. They may benefit from getting to interact with another friendly face. You may not be able to find time in your schedule to be with your parents as often as you'd like.

In all of these cases, your loved one could benefit from the help of a professional caregiver service. Professional caregivers can assist with many different aspects of caring for your elderly loved ones, from providing transportation services to assisting with housekeeping and meal preparation to helping with ADLs, like grooming or bathing.

Finally, here's the most important part — don't let the responsibilities of caregiving get in the way of you experiencing life together, as a family. Remember to go out, share meals, watch movies, talk about old times and have a relationship with your elderly parent beyond providing care. Trust, love and respect are often built on these mutual experiences.

**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](mailto:judd@elderlawcalifornia.com). The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.**

## Takashi Hoshizaki RECEIVES JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER'S COMMENDATION

Takashi Hoshizaki, a member of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation board and a former World War II draft resister, received the Japanese Foreign Minister's Commendation during a ceremony at the Japanese American National Museum on Oct. 5.

Kenko Sone, the Japanese consul general in Los Angeles, presented the award.

The ceremony took place two days after Hoshizaki turned 99 years old. He is the oldest member of the Heart Mountain board and is one of the few surviving draft resisters from the camps that held more than 125,000 Japanese Americans during WWII.

Hoshizaki was recognized for his contributions to U.S.-Japanese relations, leadership in creating the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation and career in the space program. An eminent botanist, his research into circadian rhythms took him to Antarctica and a career at the Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"I have known Takashi Hoshizaki since my mother died in 2005, and over the years, I've worked closely with him in building our museum and now the Mineta-Simpson Institute," said Shirley Ann Higuchi, chair of the HMWF board. "He's taught me a lot about the need for civility, patience and integrity. These attributes are now part of our core values at Heart Mountain."

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation, a Smithsonian Affiliate, preserves the site where some 14,000 Japanese Americans were unjustly incarcerated in Wyoming from 1942-45. Their stories are told within the foundation's museum, Heart Mountain Interpretive Center, located between Cody and Powell. ■



**Takashi Hoshizaki (left) and Japanese Consul General Kenko Sone of Los Angeles hold the special Japanese Foreign Minister's commendation.**

PHOTO: HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

## Jani Iwamoto NAMED HONORARY CONSUL OF JAPAN IN SALT LAKE CITY

**The former U.S. senator is the first person to hold the position in Utah.**



**Before her honorary consul appointment, Jani Iwamoto served as a U.S. senator for the state of Utah.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF JANI IWAMOTO

SALT LAKE CITY — Former U.S. Sen. Jani Iwamoto has been appointed honorary consul of Japan in Salt Lake City by the government of Japan. The August appointment makes Iwamoto the first person to hold this position in Utah.

Honorary consuls are appointed in areas where there is no official office established by a country. The assignment includes such matters as promoting and facilitating mutual working relations, in addition to cultural and commercial exchange between Japan and the U.S.

In 2017, Iwamoto received the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs Commendation at a ceremony presided by Consul General of Japan in Denver Hiroto Hirakoba, and in 2023, she received the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays, at a ceremony presided over by Consul General of Japan in Denver Yoichi Mikami.

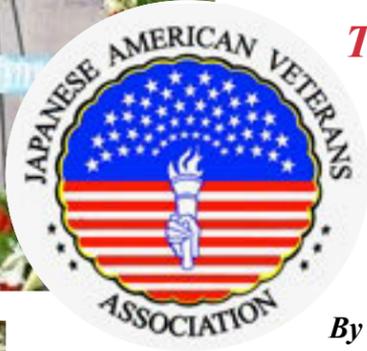
Iwamoto holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Utah and a law degree from UC Davis School of Law (King Hall). She served on the Salt Lake County Council from 2009-13, becoming the first Asian American woman to be elected in Utah. She served in the Utah State Senate from 2015-22, during which time she was elected assistant minority whip by the Democratic senators.

She is also an active member of the Salt Lake City JACL chapter and the Japanese Church of Christ, in addition to being involved in matters pertaining to the preservation of the history of the former Salt Lake City's Japan Town, which was destroyed in the early 1960s. ■



**Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670 past three-time Post Commander Norio Uyematsu**

# JAVA — Championing Veterans' Causes Now and Into the Future



*The 32-year-old organization continuously works to inspire generations to carry forth Japanese American service members' legacy of patriotism, service and resilience.*

*By Patti Hirahara, P.C. Contributor*



**JAVA President Howard High (left) gives a token of appreciation to Veterans Day keynote speaker Norio Uyematsu at the organization's Nov. 11 event.**

PHOTOS: PATTI HIRAHARA

**W**hen we think about military organizations, the American Legion, the VFW — Veterans of Foreign Wars and Disabled American Veterans come to mind, but for Japanese Americans, national veteran organizations such as Go for Broke and the Japanese American Veterans Assn. are the ones who tell our stories.

JAVA, which was formally established in 1992 in Washington, D.C. as a 501(c)(19) nonprofit Veterans Service Organization — though its roots date back to earlier informal gatherings of Japanese American Nisei soldiers who served during World War II — functions as an educational, patriotic and fraternal organization dedicated to maintaining and extending the institutions of American freedom while honoring the valor, patriotism and sacrifices of Japanese American service members.

The organization includes veterans of WWII, Korea, Vietnam and the Gulf Wars, in addition to active-duty Japanese American service members. Its goals and objectives are varied, namely focused on providing assistance, as needed, to member veterans and their spouses, care givers and dependents; perpetuating the memory of Nisei veterans and their families; conducting educational programs to emphasize the contributions of Asian American Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander war veterans; sponsoring social and recreational activities in keeping with the patriotic spirit of national holidays; providing financial assistance and scholarships for deserving descendants of Japanese American veterans; and working with other veterans' organizations, including the Military Intelligence Service, the 442nd Regimental Combat

Team and the 100th Infantry Battalion groups.

**Patti Hirahara** for the *Pacific Citizen* had the opportunity recently to interview Howard S. High, who is the new president of JAVA, overseeing more than 1,000 members in the organization's database.

**PATTI HIRAHARA FOR THE PACIFIC CITIZEN: What makes your organization different from other military organizations?**

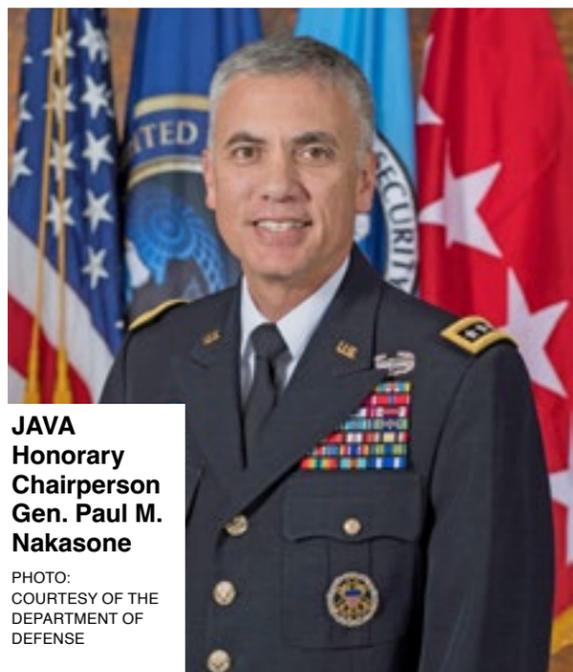
**HOWARD S. HIGH:** JAVA serves as both a historical and advocacy organization, focusing on educating the public about this paradox of loyalty and injustice. Unlike many military organizations, JAVA intertwines the preservation of history with outreach to inspire younger generations.

Additionally, JAVA honors the service and sacrifices of all veterans, inspired by the WWII Nisei soldiers' values of courage, equality and loyalty. We preserve their legacy, support veterans and families and promote unity and understanding through education, service and advocacy. JAVA is involved internationally and maintains and strives to strengthen its friendship with Japan, honoring the Issei who instilled the ethics and values resulting in the unparalleled service of the WWII Nisei soldiers.

**HIRAHARA: Your new honorary chairperson is Gen. Paul M. Nakasone. Can you tell me about his background?**

**HIGH:** Retired U.S. Army Gen. Paul M. Nakasone is a distinguished leader and trailblazer in the field of cybersecurity and national defense. On June 1, 2024, he joined Vanderbilt University, following an illustrious military career highlighted by his tenure as the commander of U.S. Cyber Command, director of the National Security Agency and chief of the Central Security Service from May 2018-Feb. 2, 2024.

A native of White Bear Lake, Minn., Gen. Nakasone's



**JAVA Honorary Chairperson Gen. Paul M. Nakasone**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

## JAVA HOSTS VETERANS DAY PROGRAM IN D.C.

*Korean War veteran Norio Uyematsu serves as the event's keynote speaker.*

**T**he Japanese American Veterans Assn. held its 2024 Veterans Day program at the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism During World War II in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 11, welcoming 93-year-old keynote speaker Norio Uyematsu, a veteran of the Korean War, who traveled from California to attend the event.

This year marked the 70th anniversary of the official name change from Armistice Day to Veterans Day in 1954. Originally, Armistice Day was a holiday dedicated to those who fought in what had been known as "the war to end all wars" following World War I, but Congress changed the name to Veterans Day to reflect a broader purpose to honor veterans of all war conflicts on Nov. 11 each year.

Among the dignitaries present at the event were JAVA President Howard S. High; event emcee and JAVA VP Col. Danielle Ngo, U.S. Army, Ret.; Col. Mia Walsh, U.S. Space Force; Masaru Sato, minister and head of chancery, Embassy of Japan; Katsumi Ishiguro, consul, Embassy of Japan; JACL Executive Director David Inoue; former JAVA President Gerald Yamada; and Lt. Col. Mark Nakagawa, U.S. Army Ret., a JAVA executive council member.

Japanese American Korean War veteran Uyematsu is a three-time post commander of the Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670 and its oldest member. In his speech before the gathered audience, Uyematsu gave a new perspective on what the Nisei endured during WWII who were too young to enlist.

Uyematsu remembered what the 442nd accomplished during WWII, and he wanted to enlist in the U.S. Army to honor those brave men and women who came before him. Uyematsu was honored to talk about his service in the Korean War as a member of the 521st Military Intelligence Service, one of 5,000 Japanese Americans who fought and served in that conflict.

The Korean War began on June 25, 1950, and ended on July 27, 1953, without an official end. In all, some 5 million soldiers and civilians lost their lives in what many in the U.S. refer to as the "Forgotten War" for the lack of attention it received. It was one of the shortest wars but also the deadliest.

"I don't think many of you know that the 521st Military Intelligence Service platoon was cited for exceptionally meritorious conduct in the performance of outstanding services in support of combat operations in Korea," Uyematsu



**Dignitaries at the JAVA/NJAMF 2024 Veterans Day event in Washington, D.C. Pictured (from left) are Carolyn Hoover, NJAMF board member; Col. Danielle Ngo, U.S. Army, Ret., Veterans Day program MC and JAVA vp; Taylor Walsh and Col. Mia Walsh, U.S. Space Force; Masaru Sato, minister and head of chancery, Embassy of Japan; Howard High, JAVA president; Katsumi Ishiguro, consul, Embassy of Japan; Ryoko Nakanishi, first secretary, Embassy of Japan; Fumiho Suzawa, first secretary, Embassy of Japan; David Inoue, JACL executive director; and Lt. Col. Mark Nakagawa, U.S. Army, Ret., JAVA executive council member.**

PHOTOS: PATTI HIRAHARA

career spans a series of critical assignments across the United States and abroad, including deployments to Iraq, Afghanistan and the Republic of Korea. His command roles include leading the U.S. Army Cyber Command and the Cyber National Mission Force. He has also served as a senior intelligence officer at the battalion, division and corps levels, as well as director of intelligence for the International Security Assistance Force Joint Command in Kabul, Afghanistan.

His contributions to national security have earned him numerous awards and decorations, including the Distinguished Service Medal (with oak leaf cluster), the Defense Superior Service Medal (with three oak leaf clusters), the Bronze Star and the Legion of Merit, among others.

Gen. Nakasone's life and career are a testament to his unwavering commitment to service, leadership and the advancement of cybersecurity and intelligence, while maintaining a profound connection to his heritage and community. We are so happy he has become our JAVA honorary chairperson, where he actively supports our mission to preserve and celebrate the contributions of Japanese American service members. His involvement reflects his dedication to ensuring future generations recognize and honor the sacrifices and achievements of these brave individuals, and we look forward to his participation.

**HIRAHARA:** What activities do you hold each year?

**HIGH:** JAVA hosts a variety of events and activities annually, which includes:

- **Annual "Freedom Walk,"** co-hosting with the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation

- **Annual Memorial Day Ceremony,** held at Arlington National Cemetery
- **A Scholarship Program**
- **Day of Affirmation,** named because of President Harry Truman's salute to the Japanese American troops where he said, "You fought not only the enemy, but you fought prejudice — and you have won." This affirmed that the Japanese American troopers, women and men, who served throughout WWII are America's heroes and removed any doubt that they are loyal citizens of America
- **Veterans Day Program,** recognizing and celebrating veterans from all conflicts
- **Speaker Series,** including lectures, webinars and panel discussions on topics related to Japanese American military history and ongoing service
- **Community Outreach,** collaborating with schools, museums and cultural institutions to educate about Japanese American military history
- **JAVA Luncheons and Social Gatherings,** fostering camaraderie and connection among members
- **Support for Exhibits and Publications,** supporting photo exhibits, books and documentaries showcasing the Japanese American military experience.

**At the conclusion of the program, Lt. Col. Mark Nakagawa, U.S. Army, Ret., and JAVA executive council member salutes those who lost their lives during WWII with Col. Danielle Ngo, U.S. Army, Ret., and JAVA vp, and speaker Norio Uyematsu (in foreground). In the military, the salute is a time-honored tradition that symbolizes respect, recognition and unity.**



**Col. Mia Walsh (left), U.S. Space Force, at the JAVA event in Washington D.C. alongside Minister and Head of Chancery Masaru Sato, Embassy of Japan in USA; JAVA President Howard S. High; and Taylor Walsh**

said. "In the commendation, it said, 'The determination, technical skill and willingness to assume additional responsibilities exhibited by the members of this platoon reflect great credit on themselves and the military service of the United States.' This was quite an honor for us in this forgotten war."

He continued, "It is interesting, in recent years, that the term the 'Nisei Experience' only reflects the service of those that served in WWII, and the U.S. Army Museum has no mention of our service and only a small display on the Korean War.

"Those of us that served in the Korean War were also second generation or Nisei, incarcerated in concentration camps on American soil behind barbed-wire fences, fought for our country of the United States of America, but too young to enlist when we were in camp. Our service has been forgotten to be recognized, but our experience was real."

Uyematsu also added, "For those of us who fought in the Korean War, our race was labeled as 'Mongolian' rather than Japanese, and it has never been corrected on our personnel records to this day."

He also told the audience about a disastrous fire at the National Personnel Records Center on July 12, 1973, where approximately 16 million-18 million Official Military Personnel Files were destroyed. "That day, our sacrifices went up in a cloud of smoke," Uyematsu recalled.

The records affected personnel who served in the U.S. Army and were

discharged from Nov. 1, 1912, to Jan. 1, 1960. Eighty percent of the records were destroyed, as well as those belonging to members of the U.S. Air Force.

No duplicate copies of these records were ever maintained, nor were microfilm copies made. This disaster was a tragedy to many Japanese American veterans in both WWII and the Korean War.

Uyematsu also said that many of his fellow Japanese American comrades who served in the Korean War have passed away, and the 247 Japanese Americans who were killed or missing in action in the Korean War need to be remembered for their heroism, sacrifice and service.

For Uyematsu, this is his mission, until he dies, to ensure that their Korean War stories will be told to future generations.

In addition, to Uyematsu, it's also important to appreciate all of our men and women in uniform and those who have served in the U.S. military to continually thank them for their service. "I am always surprised when people come up to me and thank me for my service, which began in 1949, 75 years ago," he said.

Uyematsu ended his presentation by saying, "As my late friend Bob Wada always said, 'To forget would be a dishonor, to remember will be everlasting.'"

— Patti Hirahara



## AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

### 2025 TOUR SCHEDULE

- HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVALS TOUR** (Ernest Hida) **WAITLIST** . . . . . Feb 3-14  
 Abashiri, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Otaru, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.  
 Hyobaku Ice Festival, Asahikawa Snow Festival, Sapporo Snow Festival,  
 Hyoto Winter Festival.
- CLASSICAL JAPAN HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . **WAITLIST** . . . Mar 16-27  
 Tokyo, Mt Fuji, Yamanashi, Shizuoka, Hiroshima, Kyoto.
- TREASURES OF IRELAND TOUR** (Carol Hida). . . . . Apr 7-15  
 Dublin, Limerick, Killarney, Blarney.
- KOREA HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Apr 10-23  
 Seoul, Bullet Train, Gyeongju, Busan, Jeju Island, Jeonju, Daejeon,  
 Nami Island, Seoul, DMZ, K-Drama sites.
- JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . May 11-23  
 Tokyo, Ashikaga Flower Park, Yamagata, Sakata/Shonai, Akita, Morioka,  
 Sanriku Railway coastal train ride, Hanamaki Onsen, Matsushima,  
 Nikko/Kinugawa Onsen, Tokyo.
- MUSIC CITIES HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida). . . . . May 12-19  
 New Orleans, Memphis, Nashville.
- GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Jun 15-25  
 Tokyo, Hakone, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experiences.
- HOKKAIDO SUMMER HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Jul 13-25  
 Hakodate, Lake Toya, Noboribetsu, Otaru, Sapporo, Wakkanai,  
 Rishiri Island, Asahikawa, Furano, Tokyo.
- DANUBE RIVER CRUISE** (Carol Hida) . . . **WAITLIST**. . . . . Aug 27-Sep 9  
 Pre-cruise in Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Weissenkirchen, Linz, Passau,  
 Vilshofen, Post-cruise in Prague. **Bonus Discount - Limited Time Offer.**
- JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Oct 16-27  
 Tokyo, Sado Island, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori,  
 Matsue, Tamatsukuri Onsen, Hiroshima.
- KENYA WILDLIFE SAFARI HOLIDAY TOUR** (Carol Hida) . . **WAITLIST**. . Oct 15-29  
 Nairobi, Amboseli-Nakuru Lake-Masai Mara National Parks, Mt. Kenya Safari Club,  
 Sweetwaters Tented Camp, Jane Goodall Chimpanzee Sanctuary. **FINAL TOUR**
- OKINAWA HOLIDAY TOUR** (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Nov 13-23  
 Naha, Onnason, Islands of Ishigaki, Iriomote & Taketomi.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL  
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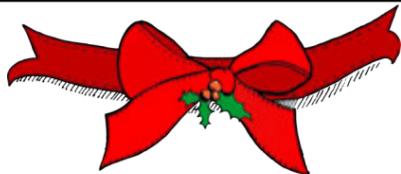
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David Ono addresses the Sayonara Gala audience in Philadelphia on July 13, when he was honored with a Japanese American of the Biennium Award in the arts/literature/communications category at the 2024 JAACL National Convention.

PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA



## 'WITNESS: THE LEGACY OF HEART MOUNTAIN' Wins Three Emmy Awards



LOS ANGELES — "Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain" won three Emmy Awards at the 69th Annual Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards on July 26.

Co-Producer David Ono won for Outstanding Writer — Programming and Co-Producer Jeff MacIntyre won for Outstanding Editor — Programming and Outstanding Videographer — Single-Camera Programming.

"This isn't just a win for the show, it is a win for the entire Japanese American community," said MacIntyre, the owner of Content Media Group, a Los Angeles-based production company.

Ono, who has been the co-anchor for ABC7 Eyewitness News in Los Angeles since 1996, said he believes the stories are so rich that they write themselves. "I'm deeply honored to have the opportunity to keep these important stories alive. Over 70 years later they are still so relevant," he said.

"Witness" also received the Radio Television Digital News Assn.'s Edward R. Murrow Award and the RTDNA's National Unity Award, which honors outstanding achievements in the coverage of cultural

David Ono (left) and Jeff MacIntyre display some of the five Emmy Awards they won at the 69th Annual Los Angeles Area Emmy Awards on July 26 for their documentary "Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain."

diversity in the communities they serve. Ono and MacIntyre, who collectively have earned more than 25 Emmy Awards, look forward to more opportunities to screen their documentary across the country. In addition to airing on KABC-TV, Los Angeles, and KGO-TV, San Francisco, the film has been screened in Los Angeles; Portland, Ore.; and at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center in Cody, Wyo. It is also scheduled to have a showing at Washington State University in Pullman, Wash., on Oct. 15.

For more information on "Witness" as well as future screening dates, visit [www.HeartMountainofHon.com](http://www.HeartMountainofHon.com).

A *Pacific Citizen* article from 2014 reported the Emmy win by David Ono and his producing partner, Jeff MacIntyre, for "Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain."

# Oh Yes to David Ono's Career

*The L.A. TV journalist wins awards and finds personal rewards as a storyteller.*

By George Toshio Johnston,  
P.C. Senior Editor

When "Jaws" hit theaters in 1975, it became an instant classic. One of the lines of dialogue that also became an instant classic was when Amity Island police chief Martin Brody deadpanned, after a close encounter with the great white shark, "You're gonna need a bigger boat."

Similarly, for KABC Channel 7 news anchor David Ono — who after nearly three decades of working in the Los Angeles TV market has himself achieved classic status among the legions of telejournalists who have appeared on the local airwaves over the past several decades — one might look over his list of awards he has amassed over the years — and just recently — and say, "You're gonna need a bigger trophy room."

In the past couple of years alone, Ono has received more professional accolades than one mere shelf could hold, among them in 2024 an Edward R. Murrow award from the Radio Television Digital News Assn. for best news series in America for "FACEism" to KABC-TV\* and the team behind the series, his 12th Murrow award, a Japanese American of the Biennium award in the category of arts/literature/communications from the JAACL at its 2024 National Convention and the Legacy Award from the Japanese American National Museum for his live/multimedia "Defining Courage" (see Nov. 4, 2022, *Pacific Citizen*, [tinyurl.com/yc7w8kv7](http://tinyurl.com/yc7w8kv7)).

Add to that 31 Emmys, two RTDNA National Unity Awards, six Asian American Journalists Association National Journalism Awards, a Distinguished Journalist Award from the Society of Professional Journalists and, in 2021, the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Rosette decoration from the Japanese government.

But who's counting? Because here's the thing about Ono: As much as he no doubt appreciates getting recognized for his work (and who doesn't?), for him, journalism is not about the awards. Someone who would know firsthand is his self-described "work wife," fellow ABC7 news anchor Ellen Leyva. In a video recorded for the Los Angeles AAJA chapter's 2024 Lunar New Year Party, she said, "Here's the thing about David. His real passion is storytelling. That's his spark."

And when he's not engaged in journalistic storytelling like working on an award-winning project like his "FACEism" series or "Defining Courage," Ono can be found performing master of ceremony duties with humor, grace and aplomb for Japanese American and Asian American community organizations like JAACL, JANM, Go for Broke National Education Center and AAJA.

Also speaking at the L.A.-AAJA Lunar New Year Party was JANM President and CEO Ann Burroughs, who also began to notice how Ono was more often than not on hand to lend a hand as the emcee for various events. "I slowly got to realize this was somebody who wasn't just emceeing these events because of his star power," she said. "He was asked to emcee these events because he cared so incredibly deeply about each of those organizations, about each of those missions, about what they stood for, and about what the people did, who worked there and why they worked there."

With all the professional accolades, recognition and acceptance Ono has received in his nearly three decades working in the L.A. market, there is no doubt that he made his bones here, becoming the TV news equivalent of a sports franchise's superstar who is the face of his team. Since arriving in L.A., he also hasn't station-hopped in a quest for a bigger payday. He remains a KABC newsman to this day.



KABC Channel 7 news anchor David Ono and Los Angeles Times reporter Teresa Watanabe at the Los Angeles chapter of Asian American Journalists Assn.'s Lunar New Year party on Jan. 27 at JANM.

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

Married couple Daniel Blinkoff and Tamlyn Tomita flank David Ono at the 65th annual Los Angeles Press Club's Southern California Journalism Awards in 2023, at which he was awarded the Joseph M. Quinn Award for Lifetime Achievement.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



“Because of my time at ABC7, they’ve allowed me to evolve as a journalist, and they’ve allowed me to be more and more creative and more unique in what I deliver to our audience,” Ono said. “And so I’m happy about that, and I have this opportunity that almost nobody else has, and that is to create what I want to create in a form that I want to create. And if I want to be really creative and take some risks and do it in a different way entirely, they’ll let me, and I think that’s really important because the vast majority of people are highly restricted on what they can and can’t do.”

That doesn’t mean, however, that making the leap from the L.A. market to a national network gig was a move Ono never contemplated. After all, Tom Brokaw, Connie Chung and Ann Curry made names for themselves in Los Angeles before going to the news division at a Big Three network. Why not him, too? But those examples reflect a different ecosystem of a generation or two ago, when the power and prestige of working as, say, the news anchor of “The CBS Evening News” was a really big deal, a career pinnacle.

As it turns out, Ono could have followed that path prior to coming to Los Angeles. “I did get multiple network offers. I turned them down, or I wasn’t available via my contract,” Ono told the *Pacific Citizen*. “I had, I would say, three legitimate offers to go to the network, and one of them was really, really good. I literally turned that one down. I even had an office already set up in New York, but I hadn’t signed the contract yet, and that’s when L.A. came around, and I decided to stay local and come to L.A. instead. And that was a good offer.”

In retrospect, it was a crossroads moment for Ono that worked out for the best for him, his career and his new hometown. Not only did his career’s rise coincide with the tectonic shifts that saw the bedrock of legacy TV networks weaken, coming to Los Angeles was an opportunity to put his TV news career into overdrive.

But the X factor of him coming to the part of the country with the largest Japanese American population in the contiguous United States created a synergy and personal evolution that simply would not have happened in the Big Apple.

As he has noted onstage while facilitating events, even though Ono considered himself a history buff, he was chagrined to learn how little he knew from attending schools and growing up in Texas of the travails his fellow Japanese Americans experienced during World War II, namely the abrogation of civil liberties and constitutional protections that are supposed to be part of the American promise. Coming to L.A. also allowed him to learn from still-living individuals of the exemplary valor of Japanese Americans who served their country during those

trying times.

Thanks to his natural curiosity and position as a TV newsman, with the reach and resources that provided him, Ono would start a years-long deep dive into learning about that overarching story and sharing it, whether it was via his Emmy-winning “Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain” or the acclaimed “Defining Courage.”

Remarkably, there was no master plan behind “Defining Courage.” According to Ono, it was more along the lines of a “demo on innovative storytelling.”

“It was an accident, but it was also an effort to take those storytelling skills and make it really kind of deeply personal and impactful to a smaller audience,” he said. “And I don’t think ‘Defining Courage’ would have existed maybe 15 years ago, but it exists now.”

And, lest anyone think telling that story of Nisei veterans has allowed him to do well by doing good, think again. “I don’t make a penny on it,” said Ono. “I actually lose money because a lot of it comes out of my own pocket, but I love doing it because it resonates so well with the community. . . . That’s rewarding.”

Still, as he revealed while addressing his fellow journalists at January’s Lunar New Year party, he has been questioned about his commitment to telling stories about the Japanese American experience to a wider audience.

“I was always told, ‘Why do you concentrate so much on Japanese Americans? It’s such a small community when you can be bringing your skills to something bigger, to more people?’ And I always felt that the answer to that was because all of us live in a microcosm, we’re all human, and all of our stories are connected. What happened to Japanese Americans during WWII can certainly be relatable to the rest of the folks who aspire to be in America, to believe in democracy, to believe in what this country stands for. It doesn’t matter how many people are within this community. What matters is the importance of the story.”

Just as the TV news game is not the same as it was 30 years ago, neither is Ono. For one, he’s married and the father of a 13-year-old. “Anybody who has a child understands that a whole new world opens up to them, a whole new, scary, frightening, pressure-filled world,” said Ono. “And I think that’s good for a journalist. I think it’s good to see the perspective of people who have so much weight on their shoulders, where they’re not only worrying about themselves, but they’re worrying about their family and their

children, their children’s future, and that’s important to understand as we go forward and tell the stories we need to tell.”

Although career longevity may still be easier in TV journalism, where appearance and visuals matter greatly, Ono has nevertheless crossed over the 60-year threshold. However, he’s not ready to call it a career.

“I obviously don’t have 40 years ahead of me, but I think I could have maybe 10 really good years of hard work, and that’s why I’m working harder now than I’ve ever worked in my life,” said Ono. “People say it’s unhealthy. I don’t think it’s unhealthy because it drives me. It keeps my brain working, it keeps me moving. And I think that’s important in life.

“But now that I’m older, I’m kind of really into this new evolution of my career with ‘Defining Courage.’ . . . I think there’s a lot of other projects that are now coming up that kind of put me more in the realm of filmmaking.”

What might some of those other projects entail? “I’m working on a letters project,” Ono said. “I really would love to continue to gather the personal letters of members of our community during the war, going back and forth between the soldiers in the Pacific and Europe, as well as folks in camp or Hawaii or at home, prewar and during the war, as well a little bit postwar.

“It breaks my heart to hear when I talk to families who say, ‘We destroyed all of those letters from back then because they just were sitting around.’ I feel like we need to put the word out — ‘Don’t do that!’ They’re like gold. They’re so valuable. If you feel like you have no place to put those beautiful artifacts, send them to me, or at least get me copies of them. Send me what they said because I think we’re going to be coming out with a beautiful piece in a couple of years that is going to be deeply personal to the community. And I definitely need their help.”

As might be expected, journalism has shaped, driven and consumed Ono for much of his adult life. But it’s a vocation that has been hurting and shrinking contemporaneously to his journalism career, despite all those awards, accolades and trophies he has amassed. Is there, then, any wisdom he can pass along to younger people who, despite the challenges, are looking to become working journalists?

Said Ono: “I think that an important lesson to learn if you’re a journalist is to follow your heart. Tell a good story. Let things fall into place. Always keep your eyes open and know who your friends are that can help you.”

*(Editor’s Note: Videos from Ono’s FACEism project may be viewed at [faceism.org](https://faceism.org).)*

**\*Murrow awards go to news organizations, not individuals.**



David Ono speaks at the 65th annual Los Angeles Press Club's Southern California Journalism Awards in 2023, when he was awarded the Joseph M. Quinn Award for Lifetime Achievement.

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The Okaeri book team and contributors

PHOTO: ALAN KUBOTA, LENScape PHOTOGRAPHY

## A Mother's Take

# OUR HISTORY AND OUR STORIES MATTER

By Marsha Aizumi

I love this theme of “History and *Hanashi*” (stories) that the *P.C.* has selected for this holiday issue. There is beauty and connection to our history and our stories. They define where we have been, where we are now and where we will go. This connection was very evident to me while Aiden and I were speaking at an event in Honolulu this year. The event was about LGBTQ+ equity and inclusion in Hawaii’s Japanese Community. Initially organized by the Honpa Hongwanji Hawai’i Betsuin, at least six other organizations, including JACL Honolulu, also participated.

At the event, Bill Kaneko, former JACL Honolulu president, talked about how he led JACL National to become the first non-LGBT civil rights organization to support marriage equality. Also speaking on the panel was Justice Sabrina Shizue McKenna, the first openly LGBTQ+ Asian American to serve on a state supreme court. Justice McKenna came out as a lesbian to show that anything is possible. Bill and Justice McKenna talked about the history of LGBTQ+ inclusion in Hawaii, both past and present.

Aiden and I were asked to share our story and represent the future hope for our Japanese community. As I looked out into the audience, I saw people who were there with their same-gender partner, parents and children who looked on with anticipation as to how Aiden and I were able to navigate this challenging journey.

After the event, one of the things that touched me the most was a person who shared that while I spoke, they focused on Aiden’s face. What his face revealed was pure love. Just 10 days before the election, I felt we were all united in seeing a world that would support love in its broadest sense. Of course, we know that the outcome of this election made this hope fragile, but that is a story for another issue.

A week after the Hawaii event, Aiden and I were at an event for Okaeri’s recently published book, “Letters to Home: Art and Writing by LGBTQ+ Nikkei and Allies.” Both of us contributed to this anthology. I wrote the history of Okaeri, and Aiden submitted a poem, “What is Pride?” Again, here was the theme of history and storytelling woven together. I loved all the pieces of this book, but a few stood out to me personally.

Nikiko Masumoto’s piece called “A Long Welcome”



Carrie Morita (center) with her kindergarten student on the left that she invited to the Okaeri book launch

PHOTO: COURTESY OF CARRIE MORITA

spoke to my heart when I read these words:  
*You who are raising our children to love themselves*  
*You who are seeking healing and relief*

Ellen Tanouye’s piece called “Feet” made me smile when I read:

*I would like to focus on feet. Just plain feet. Since I am short my feet are puny. But they are what gets me to the places I need to go . . .*

She ends by saying:

*We realize that sometimes our feet just need to be patient and step forward when the timing is right. . . One step at a time. And if our feet could tell the story, they would certainly say that no matter what, love is beyond all understanding and reason. Love is love. Our feet just know that.*

Finally, Aiden’s piece that I referred to in a previous article called “What Is Pride?” made me feel proud of him.

I have highlighted these two events because they certainly fit the theme of “History and *Hanashi*,” and they represent the hope I have in these uncertain times for our LGBTQ+ community and nation. I am looking for small moments of hopefulness to help me move forward because I already see areas



Participants at the Hawaii LGBTQ+ event are (seated, front row from left) Bill Kaneko, Justice Sabrina Shizue McKenna, Aiden Aizumi, Marsha Aizumi and (standing, from left) moderators Haylin Dennison and Cam Miyamoto.



Marsha Aizumi discusses living in hope with Aiden.

The “Letters to Home” anthology, published by Okaeri



that are threatening our community.

But I can’t lay down in despair because those who came before me persevered so that Aiden could have the life and rights he has today. To give up would not be honoring the work and courage that Bill Kaneko and Justice McKenna spoke about in Hawaii. To give up would not be honoring all the contributors to the Okaeri book who openly shared their experiences and hopes for the future.

Being silent does not change the world. It is our voices, our experiences, our stories that can reach into the hearts of others and bring out the humanity that lives in us all. It is our history that can show us the way. And it is the support of one another that can give us strength and determination when times look the darkest. Please visit [www.okaeri.org/connects](http://www.okaeri.org/connects) if you need a community to support you or if you want to provide support to others.

As we celebrate the holiday season, it is my wish that we use our history and the stories that we have heard or possess to bring more acceptance and love into our moments together. And if you need a beautiful gift for someone in your family for Christmas, perhaps you will consider buying Okaeri’s book on Amazon under “Letters to Home Okaeri,” which is also at the Japanese American National Museum bookstore in Los Angeles’ Little Tokyo.

What we do today will be the history for future generations. I am hopeful that when they look back on these days, our grandchildren and others will say that we were courageous, acted with love and came together to support those in our Nikkei community who needed us the most . . .

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



Marsha and Aiden Aizumi with Debbie Kubota and Jon Masuoka from Honpa Hongwanji Hawai’i Betsuin





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# In Memoriam



*The Women and Men  
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The Legislative Education Committee  
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1985 -1992*



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*In memory of Grant Ujifusa  
from the Pacific Citizen*

# JAPANESE AMERICANS LOVE TO HAVE FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Gil Asakawa

Japanese Americans, and Asian Americans in general, love to talk over meals, snacks, tea and other drinks. We're social and sociable, and we plan get-togethers with family, friends, board members and volunteers of organizations. We catch up on each other's lives, strategize and plan events, discuss and argue over politics and sports. Meetings in the Asian community are often held in restaurants or accompanied by food. Food is a reward. Then again, sometimes the food isn't quite the culturally appropriate option. For one AANHPI organization's meeting where board members rotated bringing dinner, one guy actually brought bags of Taco Bell. It was tasty enough, but definitely not Asian!

I thought about my love for food and community on a trip to California's Central Valley a couple of months ago, when I visited Koda Farms, the iconic source of the Japanese American community's rice for almost 100 years. We all recognize the brands and packages found in Japanese groceries and Asian markets throughout the land: Kokuho Rose rice, Blue Star Mochiko flour and Sho Chiku Bai sweet rice.

You can read my article in this issue of the *Pacific Citizen* about what's happening at Koda Farms, which the Koda family is licensing out to another family owned company to continue producing their rice. So relax, folks — our *kome* will remain in good hands and in your kitchens.

At Koda Farms, I met Robin Koda, her mother, Tama, and her brother, Ross, to write about the family's enormous legacy in our community. Early new coverage about the licensing of the farm's products sparked a panic with JAs because they thought they would lose their beloved rice or not be able to make the yummy butter mochi cake that has become a staple of family gatherings and potluck meetings.

Los Angeles' Japanese American National Museum, which is planning a big JA foodways exhibit in 2027, wanted the Kodas' fascinating story included in the exhibit. So, the museum sent me, Jane Matsumoto of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center, also in Little Tokyo, and a documentary film crew led by Evan Kodani, along with Kristen Hayashi and Alexa Nishimoto, to travel to the farm to chronicle the harvesting of the rice and interview the Koda family.



(From left) Gil Asakawa with Robin Koda and Jane Matsumoto at Wool Growers Restaurant

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA

Along with the trip, of course, was a lot of food. Wonderful food. The highlight was a vegetarian curry rice lunch that was cooked by Matsumoto, an expert chef and foodie who led the JACCC's addition of a kitchen and food-related programming (she's since left the JACCC). She made the curry, while Robin Koda made the rice using her family's Heirloom Kokuho Rose, the one with the image of her grandfather, Keisaburo Koda, who was called "The Rice King" on the sack. We all watched her closely as she poured the rice into her Zojirushi electric rice cooker, a familiar sight in many JA kitchens.

When I asked what method she uses to judge the amount of water — does she use the "knuckle method"? — she good-naturedly scolded me and laughed that she can't believe people think you can stick your finger in the pot and measure up to the first knuckle. "Do you think your fingers are the same as Michael Jordan's?" Umm, point made. Palming a basketball isn't one of my skills.

The Kokuho Rose was delicious: fragrant and chewy and a star in its own right, not just a "side dish." It was so good, I had seconds of just plain rice.

Our team learned so much about Keisaburo Koda and his family's legacy and impact on rice farming and all Japanese Americans in just a few days. Their story will be a terrific addition to the 2027 JANM exhibit, which is being planned by museum curator Emily Anderson. Stay tuned!

We also got to have a fabulous Mexican lunch at Firebaugh Restaurant, a bright diner where Robin Koda obviously dines often — the staff knew her and her favorite order. I had a huge plate of machaca — shredded pork — and vegetables with sides of refried beans and rice. Firebaugh (not "Fireball," which is what I thought I heard) is just a few minutes down the road from the farm, which is outside the small town of Dos Palos. There's a livelier town, South Dos Palos, not far off that has subdivisions, a wide main street, stores and restaurants. But Dos Palos is a sad-looking collection of homes and quiet streets that we drove through to get to Koda Farms.

Although I had terrific meals in San Jose when I arrived there at the Norman Y. Mineta International Airport and the day Jane Matsumoto and I drove back to San Jose and stopped at the city's Japantown (a big nod to Kaita's mentaiko cold udon!), my second most memorable meal was at the cool-named Wool Growers Restaurant, a French Basque



Jane Matsumoto and Robin Koda prepare lunch.



Curry rice with condiments



Machaca plate at Firebaugh Restaurant

culinary bastion in Los Banos, another town not far from the Kodas' HQ.

The place opens into a bar and pool hall, but when you walk through the hallway past the bar, you enter a big high-ceilinged dining room. Basque immigrant sheep herders and ranchers came to the area in the 1890s and early 20th century and established communities in California. The food is Basque American and delicious. And filling!

Picon Punch cocktail for Robin Koda and Jane Matsumoto, as well as soup, lamb stew, lamb shank and the special, ox tail served fall-off-the-bone tender and tasty. The joint wasn't jumping that night (it was late and by the end, we were the only table), but the service was wonderfully friendly — the staff probably also knew Robin Koda because she's the Rice Queen.

At all our meals, including the non-Japanese ones (there are not a lot of Japanese choices near the farm, except whatever Robin cooks up), we were able to have great conversations about the past, the present and the future of the community, the food, the traditions and farming.

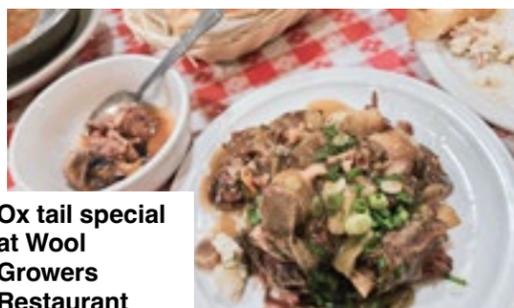
It was a fabulous trip full of "History and Hanashi," indeed.

**Happy Holidays, everyone, and Happy Eating!**

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



An array of products at the Koda Farms office



Ox tail special at Wool Growers Restaurant



Mentaiko udon at Kaita



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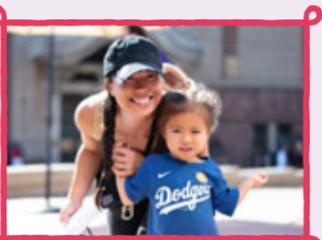


## Janm on the go

Beginning on January 5, 2025, the Japanese American National Museum embarks on a renovation of its Pavilion and an ambitious reimagining of its core

exhibition. While the Pavilion is closed, JANM will reach beyond the Museum's walls with a lively schedule of special exhibitions, public programs, family festivals, education programs, and more on the JANM campus, throughout Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, Southern California, and beyond!

**From January 2025 through 2026, watch for JANM on the Go programs in locations near you, including:**



Family Festivals in Little Tokyo and pop ups at community events throughout Southern California



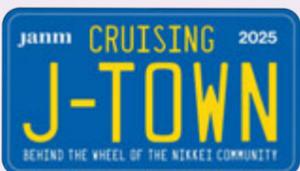
Virtual field trips for students grades 1-12, online exhibitions, and virtual programs



Regular public programs at JANM's Daniel K. Inouye National Center for the Preservation of Democracy, Plaza, and Historic Building



*Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi, and Miné Okubo* in Washington, DC, Philadelphia, and Monterey, CA



*Cruising J-Town: Behind the Wheel of the Nikkei Community* at the Mullin Gallery, Pasadena (Summer 2025)

and much more!

Find out more at [janm.org/OnTheGo](http://janm.org/OnTheGo)

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[www.PacificCitizen.org](http://www.PacificCitizen.org)

# NOTABLE 2024 LOSSES



**Sakaye Aratani, 104, March 18**

A former incarcerated of Arizona's Poston WRA Center, the widow of businessman and philanthropist George Aratani was herself also a philanthropist as president of the Aratani Foundation. Active with several community organizations — Japan America Society, Nisei Women's Golf Club, Japanese American Montebello Women's Club and Japanese Women's Society of Southern California, to name a few — she was recognized by Japan's government with its Order of the Sacred Treasure, Fourth Order in 1983. Aratani is survived by her daughters, Donna Kwee (Kwee Liang Tek) and Linda Aratani; and grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

**Akira Hirose, 70, Sept. 26**

The Kyoto-born chef and restaurateur who trained in France went on to combine that background with his native Japanese cuisine to acclaim in Los Angeles at L'Orangerie, Belvedere at the Peninsula Beverly Hills and Maison Akira in Pasadena. His family continues to operate his Little Tokyo restaurant, Azay. In addition to creating the menu for Japanese American National Museum and Go for Broke National Education Center events, Hirose and his team prepared the Sayonara Gala dinner at the JACL's 2023 JACL National Convention in Los Angeles. Hirose is survived by his wife, Jo Ann; and their children, Michelle and Philip, as well as other relatives in the U.S. and Japan.



**Harry Kawahara, 92, May 10**

Co-founder and first president of the Greater Pasadena JACL chapter in the 1960s, the educator, activist and counselor was a pioneer in getting Asian American studies classes into high school and college curricula in the early 1970s. He also served as the founding president of Pasadena City College's Coalition of Asian Pacific Employees in the 1980s. The San Leandro, Calif., native was with his family when they were incarcerated at the Topaz War Relocation Authority Center in Utah. The graduate of UC Berkeley, Pasadena's Fuller Theological Seminary and California State University, Los Angeles, was Monrovia High

School's first Asian American faculty member. He also testified in 1981 at Los Angeles' Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearing, served as the JACL's Pacific Southwest District Council vice governor and board member and helped Pasadena establish Fred Korematsu Day in 2011. Kawahara is survived by his wife, Jane; and sons, Tim Kawahara and Reed Kawahara (Trish); and two grandchildren.

**Gann Matsuda, 61, Oct. 12**

The Culver City, Calif., resident was known equally for his leadership and activism with the Manzanar Committee and his enthusiasm for NHL team Los Angeles Kings. His Japanese American community involvement stretched back to his days as an undergrad at UCLA, at which he was one of the founding members in 1981 of the UCLA Nikkei Student Union and later helped in the campaign to gain tenure for UCLA Professor Don Nakanishi. Matsuda is survived by his parents, Sue and Morley Matsuda; and many friends.

**Gary Okihiro, 78, May 20**

The educator and author of 12 books died in New Haven, Conn. He taught at Yale, Cornell, Princeton, Columbia, Humboldt State University, Santa Clara University and Nihon University. In addition to serving as president of the Association for Asian American Studies, he was the recipient of the Association for Asian American Studies' Lifetime Achievement Award and the Carl Bode-Norman Holmes Pearson Prize for lifetime contributions to American studies. Okihiro is survived by his wife, Marina Henriquez Okihiro.

**Seiji Ozawa, 88, Feb. 6**

The Grammy-winning internationally acclaimed maestro who spent 30 years at the helm of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and later served as music director of the Vienna State Opera died at his Tokyo home. During his career, he also directed the San Francisco Orchestra and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, prior to his tenure in Boston, which began in 1970.

**Yosh Uchida, 104, June 27**

The Calexico, Calif.-born judo instructor helped to popularize judo in America and build the program at San Jose State University into a judo powerhouse. He held the rank of 10th-dan and is the namesake of SJSU's Yoshihiro Uchida Hall. When judo was introduced as an Olympic sport at the 1964 Olympic Summer Games in Tokyo, he coached the U.S. team, a duty he would repeat on several more occasions. He was an inductee into the San Jose Sports Authority Hall of Fame and SJSU's Legends Hall of Fame, as well as the recipient of SJSU's highest award, the Tower Award, for his decades of service to SJSU. From the Japanese government, he received the Order of the Sacred Treasure with Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon. Uchida was predeceased by his wife, Ayame, and daughter, Janice Uchida. He is survived by his daughters, Lydia Uchida Sakai (Steve Sakai) and

Aileen Uchida (Steven Shimizu); and grandchildren, nieces, nephews, grandnieces and grandnephews.



**Bob Suzuki, 88, May 1**

A founding member of the Greater Pasadena Area JACL, he died at his Alhambra, Calif., home. During WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at Idaho's Minidoka War Relocation Authority Center. He earned his B.A. and M.A. (mechanical engineering) at UC Berkeley and his Ph.D. (aeronautics) at Caltech. He served as California State Polytechnic University Pomona's president; California State University Northridge's vp, academic affairs; California State University Los Angeles' dean of graduate studies and research; and was a member of the National Science Board; the National Science Foundation; and the California Student Aid Commission. He was also the recipient of the San Gabriel Valley Economic Partnership's Technology Leadership Award and the National Education Association's Human Rights Award for Leadership in Asian and Pacific Island Affairs and from the Japanese government, the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon. Suzuki is survived by his wife, Agnes; and their children and grandchildren.

**Hisako Terasaki, 95, April 15**

The artist and philanthropist from the Los Angeles neighborhood of Boyle Heights was incarcerated during WWII with her family at Arizona's Poston War Relocation Authority Center. With her late husband, Paul Terasaki, she helped the Japanese American community and promoted Japanese culture via their philanthropic efforts. She is survived by Mark (Rindy) Terasaki, Keith (Cecilia) Terasaki, Taiji (Naoko) Terasaki and Emiko (Daniel Cook) Terasaki; grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.



**Grant Ujifusa, 82, Oct. 21**

The co-founder and co-editor of "The Almanac of American Politics" was also the JACL-LEC's legislative strategy chair who helped with getting passage of the 1988 Japanese American redress bill. The longtime Chappaqua, N.Y., resident had moved to the Philadelphia suburb of Lafayette Hill a few years ago. The

Wyoming-born Sansei graduated from Harvard University and earned a master's degree from Brandeis University and later worked in publishing. The Japanese government bestowed its Order of the Rising Sun, Gold and Silver Rays to him in recognition of redress work. In 2022, he established the Harry K. Honda Memorial Journalism Fund to help the *Pacific Citizen* pay current and new contributing writers. Ujifusa is survived by his wife, Amy Brooks Ujifusa; sons, Steven Ujifusa (Alexandra Vinograd), Andrew Ujifusa (Jennifer) and John; grandsons; and his sister, Susan Diamond.



**Raymond Uno, 93, March 8**

The Utah-born Nisei who became Utah's first minority judge and in 1970, the youngest person ever elected to the office of national president of the Japanese American Citizens League, died at Salt Lake City's Veteran's Hospital. During WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at Wyoming's Heart Mountain War Relocation Authority Center. Postwar, he enlisted in the Army and was assigned to the Military Intelligence Language School and later was transferred to Japan. Using the GI Bill, he earned an associate's degree from Weber Junior College and then transferred to the University

of Utah, earning a bachelor's degree in political science, followed by a juris doctor degree. In 1976, the Salt Lake City mayor tapped him for the Salt Lake Court bench. In 1984, he won the race for Third District Court and retired as its senior judge in 1990. He later became a senior judge who heard cases until 2003. In 1991, when the Utah Minority Bar Assn. was founded, Uno served as its first president. Japan's government awarded him with a Foreign Minister's Commendation in 2012 for promoting mutual understanding between Japan and the U.S. Uno is survived by his wife, Yoshiko; five sons, Tab (Bobby), Kai (Sheri), Mark (Kris), Sean and Lance; and grandchildren.



**Patti Yasutake, 70, Aug. 5**

The actress, whose career included appearing in the award-winning Netflix series "Beef," died in Los Angeles. She also acted in episodes of "Star Trek: The Next Generation," the movie "Gung Ho" and its short-lived sitcom offshoot, as well as the 1988 indie film "The Wash" and the play "Tea." Yasutake was predeceased by her parents and sister, Irene Hirano. She is survived by her siblings, Linda Hayashi and Steven Yasutake; and other relatives, friends and colleagues. ■

## TRIBUTE

### YOSHITO NAKAHARA



Yoshito Nakahara, 102, of Redwood City, Calif., passed away peacefully at home on Nov. 14. He is survived by his wife, Toyoko; daughters, Amy Moon and Judy (Mitchell) Rossi; siblings, James Nakahara and Miyuki Fukudome; and grandchildren, William, Andrew and Kimiko.

Born in 1922 in Kailua, Oahu, he was an avid gardener who enjoyed growing orchids year-round, bird watching, fishing, stamp collecting and following Bay Area sports teams. After being educated in Japan, he returned to San Francisco, eventually co-owning a family pearl restringing and jewelry business for 40 years. He enjoyed a good life, supported by many caring nieces and nephews.

Per his wishes, he will be laid to rest in a private ceremony. In lieu of flowers, kindly consider a memorial contribution directed to Stanford Medicine's Senior Care Clinic. Checks may be made payable to: "Stanford University," with a memo, "In memory of Y. Nakahara for Dr. Meera Sheffrin." Mail to: Stanford Medicine, U465, 485 Broadway St., Redwood City, CA 94063.

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