



PACIFIC CITIZEN



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96
Years

White House Honors Mitsue Endo With Presidential Citizens Medal

JACL hails the announcement; organization backed her Supreme Court case in 1944.

By George Toshio Johnston,
Senior Editor

The White House announced that the late Mitsue Endo Tsutsumi was among the 20 individuals who received the Presidential Citizens Medal on Jan. 2 in Washington, D.C. Accepting the medal on behalf of his mother was Wayne Tsutsumi.

The Presidential Citizens Medal is given out to those “who have performed exemplary deeds of service for their country or their fellow citizens.”

In its statement, the White House gave the following reason for the selection of Tsutsumi, née Endo: “In a shameful chapter in our Nation’s history, Mitsue Endo was incarcerated alongside more than 120,000 Japanese Americans. Undaunted, she challenged the injustice and reached the Supreme Court. Her resolve allowed thousands of Japanese Americans to return home and rebuild their lives, reminding us that we are a Nation that stands for freedom for all.”

Originally from Sacramento, Calif., Endo had been employed as a clerical worker for the California Department of Motor Vehicles when Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii, on Dec. 7, 1941. Like all the other Japanese Americans employed by the state, Endo was fired soon thereafter, and would be incarcerated at War Relocation Authority camps, first at Tule Lake in California, then at Topaz in Utah.

The Supreme Court case *Ex parte Endo*, 323 U.S. 283(1944) was one of four Supreme Court challenges filed by Japanese Americans during World War II, when ethnic Japanese living along the West Coast of the United States, the majority of whom were American citizens, were rounded up, removed from their homes and incarcerated en masse in 10 government-operated concentration camps operated by the War Relocation Authority following President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066.

In addition to Endo’s case, the other three high court challenges were *Korematsu v. United States*,



Wayne Tsutsumi accepts the Presidential Citizens Medal on behalf of his late mother, Mitsue Endo Tsutsumi, from President Joe Biden on Jan. 2.

Hirabayashi v. United States and *Yasui v. United States*, filed by Fred Korematsu, Gordan Hirabayashi and Minoru Yasui, respectively.

A Nisei, Endo’s case was the sole SCOTUS case among the four that resulted in a legal victory, on Dec. 18, 1944. According to the Densho Encyclopedia, “. . . the United States Supreme Court held unanimously that the federal government could not confine indefinitely U.S. citizens of Japanese ancestry who were ‘concededly loyal’ in War Relocation Authority (WRA) camps. . . . News of the Supreme Court’s ruling led the U.S. War Department, with the consent of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, to announce the lifting of Japanese American exclusion from the West Coast, and thereby made possible the winding down of the WRA camps.”

Although media-shy, Endo was nevertheless interviewed in John Tateishi’s 1984 book “And Justice for All: An Oral History of the Japanese American Detention Camps.”

Speaking with Tateishi, whose résumé includes serving as JACL’s national redress director, as well as JACL national director, Endo said, “Actually, I didn’t do too much. It was all my attorney’s effort,” a reference to James Purcell, a San Francisco attorney hired by JACL over what it believed was the wrongful termination of Endo and 61 other Japanese Americans who had been employed by the State of California.

Believing that mass incarceration of American

citizens without due process violated the Constitution, Purcell saw Endo as an ideal plaintiff because of her background: She was a Christian, she neither spoke nor read Japanese, had never been to Japan and her brother was serving in the U.S. military.

The resolve that Biden referred to was in reference to Endo’s personal decision. She could have left Topaz when the government offered to release her to join her sister in Chicago — if she dropped her case. Instead, she endured living in camp for two more years until the high court ruled in her favor.

In its statement, the JACL said: “As it was with JACL’s urging that Endo brought forth her case, we have long advocated for presidential recognition of Endo for her actions, including passing a national council resolution in 2014. We thank President Biden for acknowledging and recognizing such a monumental case and the woman behind it all.

Endo eventually did move to Chicago, where she met her husband and raised their three children. She died in 2006. She was inducted into the California Hall of Fame in 2024.

A video about Endo and her case can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YPB5K-OuUTX0>.

Going back to the Obama administration in the runup to Biden bestowing the Presidential Citizens Medal to her, there had been efforts to have Endo receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom, which have been awarded to Hirabayashi, Korematsu and Yasui.

Nineteen other citizens also received the Presidential Citizens Medal with Endo.

The JACL’s statement may be read at <https://jacl.org/statements/jacl-celebrates-announcement-of-mitsue-endo-presidential-citizens-medal>. ■



Mitsue Endo in 1944
PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVES

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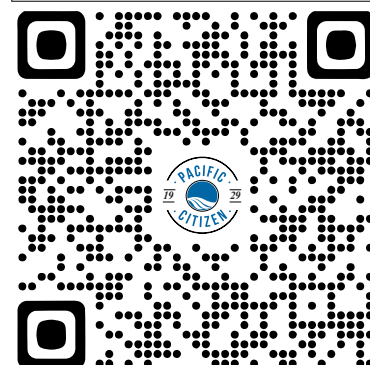
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**LEGAL-EASE:
AN ATTORNEY'S
PERSPECTIVE**

2025 New Year's Resolutions

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

Indeed, the job search company, is currently running a TV commercial called "A Kid's Daily Grind." In it, a little girl says, "Truth is, my schedule is pretty jam-packed these days. I've got school Monday through Friday, Jujitsu on Thursday and library books I've got to get back by Friday. And my weekend? I've got two, no three birthday parties on Saturday. And Sunday — that's my 'Me Time.' I am not willing to give that up."

Imagine, a little kid who knows nothing about going to work, raising a family or paying the bills is teaching us adults the secret to successful aging, i.e., self-care. Why not learn a lesson from the little girl on the Indeed TV commercial and protect your "Me Time" this year. If you can learn how to practice self-care in 2025, you will be better off — both physically and mentally.

Sadly, many of us get so wrapped up in family obligations or career demands that our needs take a back seat to the demands of others instead. As a result, we don't pay enough attention to the essentials of self-care. A healthy diet and regular exercise become afterthoughts. We miss doctor appointments and let our stress build to dangerously high levels.

So, if you're one of the 4 in 10 adults that are not making any resolutions this year ([source: www.statista.com](http://www.statista.com)), I've got a good New Year's resolution for you: Create more "Me Time" by practicing self-care.

In the truest sense of the term, self-care is not about temporary "pick-me-ups." Rather, it is a holistic approach to better overall health that focuses on the body, mind and spirit — a much broader set of practices that will serve you well over the long run.

Self-care is based on lifestyle

medicine — an evidence-based approach to disease prevention and treatment that focuses on adopting healthy habits. It doesn't replace traditional medicine, but it is a powerful complement to it. Americans are far less healthy than they could be. According to the CDC, 6 out of every 10 adults live with at least one chronic disease, and 4 in 10 people have two or more conditions.

The irony is that these chronic diseases are largely preventable. In 2018, researchers from Harvard's T. H. Chan School of Public Health analyzed data from the CDC and two long-term population studies. They found that people who practiced five specific lifestyle habits dramatically reduced their risks of heart disease and cancer, compared to those who did none of these things. The healthy participants:

- (1) Ate a diet high in fruits and vegetables, whole grains and unsaturated fatty acids and low in red and processed meats, sugary drinks, trans fats and sodium
- (2) Did not smoke
- (3) Got at least three-and-a-half hours of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity each week
- (4) Drank only moderate amounts of alcohol (no more than one drink per day for women and two drinks or less per day for men)

(5) Maintained a healthy body mass index (BMI) in the range of 18.5-24.9.

How effective were these measures? The researchers found that practicing all five habits from age 50 onward extended life expectancy by more than a decade compared to practicing none of them.

True self-care goes beyond the five specific lifestyle habits listed above. It also involves fostering (or developing) meaningful social connections. At every stage of life, from birth until death, humans need social connections and support. "That need is hardwired into us," said Julianne Holt-Lunstad, director at Brigham Young University in Utah. She and her colleagues found that being lonely and socially isolated confers as great a health risk as smoking up to 15 cigarettes a day.

The connection between mind and body has never been clearer than it is today. For instance, research shows that both objective isolation (actual physical separation) and perceived isolation (the feeling of being alone) can lead to the release of stress hormones. While these hormones play essential roles in the body, persistently high levels can be harmful. Over time, elevated stress hormones can contribute to chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular disease, high blood

pressure, diabetes, dementia, anxiety and depression.

"There is something about relationships, social connectedness, community life that is central to what it is to be human, what it is to flourish," said Tyler VanderWeele, professor of epidemiology at the Harvard T. H. Chan School of Public Health.

In conclusion, "Volunteering is a proven buffer against stress and depressive symptoms and can be particularly effective in lessening feelings of isolation. That is because loneliness tends to draw people's attention inward, while giving back turns it outward," said Dr. Kory Floyd, a professor of communication at the University of Arizona and the author of "The Loneliness Cure." "You are focusing on the joy and comfort you can bring to others."

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. 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.



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JIMMY CARTER DIES AT 100

The 39th American president helped redress by creating the CWRIC.

James Earl Carter Jr., who served as the 39th president of the United States, died Dec. 29, 2024. He was 100.

The longest-lived president in U.S. history had faced several health challenges in his latter years. He had been in hospice care since February 2023. He was predeceased by his wife, Rosalynn Carter, in 2023.

For Japanese Americans and the redress movement, Carter played an instrumental role in its 1988 eventual success — when President Ronald Reagan signed legislation that had apologized for the government's actions during World War II and also paid token monetary compensation — when he signed S.1647, the War-time Relocation and Internment of Civilians Act on July 31, 1980 (see *Pacific Citizen's* Aug. 15, 1980 issue).

With that legislation came the formation of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which then held several hearings in the early 1980s.

Although the CWRIC tack was derided initially by many Japanese

Americans, including some JACL members, the testimony proved to be a turning point for redress. The Commission's findings would also prove invaluable in convincing members of Congress to assess and understand how the WWII treatment of ethnic Japanese in America, most of whom were U.S. citizens, was a mistake.

Speaking at an event in 2018, on the 30th anniversary of redress becoming a reality, John Tateishi, who served as chair of JACL's National Committee for Redress contemporaneously to Carter's presidency, said the following with regard to the CWRIC: "We would not have ever gotten redress without everything entailed in that Commission function — the hearings, the exposure, the publicity, the change in the public's attitude, public opinion. My mantra was 'convince the public, and you can convince Congress,'" he said.

In an email to the *Pacific Citizen*, Tateishi expanded upon the role the CWRIC had in securing redress — and how, if not for Carter's role in creating it, the movement might



As representatives of the Japanese American and Aleut communities looked on, President Jimmy Carter on July 31, 1980, signed into law a bill that established a Commission on the Wartime Evacuation and Internment of Civilians. Members of Congress at the signing ceremony at the White House included (from left) Sen. Ted Stevens (Alaska), Sen. Daniel Inouye (Hawaii), Rep. Norman Mineta (California), Sen. Spark Matsunaga (Hawaii) and Rep. George Danielson (California). Other identifiable faces are JACL President Dr. Clifford Uyeda (behind Stevens), John Tateishi (between Stevens and Inouye), Ron Ikejiri (behind Inouye) and Mike Masaoka (over Matsunaga's shoulder).

PHOTO: OFFICIAL PHOTOGRAPH, THE WHITE HOUSE

have stalled.

Not long after Jimmy Carter lost his re-election bid to Ronald Reagan, I was talking to Dan Inouye, who said that President Carter faced a confluence of global events that made his presidency a tough one, "But mark my words," Inouye said, "he will go down in history as the greatest humanitarian ever to occupy the White House."

Prescient words.

I also remember Sen. Inouye telling me in the early days of the redress campaign — when virtually the entire country seemed angry at our redress demands and a huge majority of Congress strongly opposed our commission bill — that the president shared our conviction that the injustices of our wartime experience needed to be rectified. That was one

of those intangibles that would often prove useful in chipping away at the resistance to our bill, especially with Blue Dog Democrats, those social and fiscal Southern conservatives who were some of our most troublesome opponents.

In 2010, 30 years after President Carter signed the Commission bill, I had an opportunity to talk personally with him at UC Merced, where he was being honored as that year's recipient of the Spendlove Prize on Social Justice, Diplomacy, and Tolerance. At a private reception for prize recipients (there were only five of us at the time), we talked about Sen. Inouye, whom he admired greatly, and about the Commission report and its importance in changing public opinion and breaking down much of the resistance of congressional members opposed to our money bill.

When I thanked him for the important role he played in all of that, he told me that as president, he signed hundreds of bills but that particular bill would always be for him, one of the prouder moments of his presidency.

Hearing that, I wondered if he understood just how profoundly he had changed our lives for the better. But of course he did. This was the Jimmy Carter Dan Inouye had talked about. ■

News Briefs

Trump Inaugurated as 47th U.S. President

On a day that American flags were still flying half-staff nationwide in mourning for a recently deceased one-term president, another one-term president was succeeded by yet another one-term president. On Jan. 20, just days after the late Jimmy Carter, the nation's 39th president who died at 100 was lying in state at the Capitol Rotunda, the United States continued its Inauguration Day tradition of peaceful transfers of power, also at the Capitol Rotunda due to cold temperatures. Returning for his second and final term, Donald John Trump became the 47th president, four years after skipping the presidential inauguration of Joseph Robinette Biden Jr., the man who beat him in the general election of November 2020 to become America's 46th president. After taking office, Trump issued 26 executive orders that, among other things, sought to override the Constitution's 14th Amendment, pulled the U.S. from the Paris climate agreement and rescinded his predecessor's repeal of a ban on transgender persons serving openly in the U.S. armed forces.

Seattle: Mural's Defacement Decried

The Seattle JACL chapter issued a statement condemning an act of vandalism discovered on Jan. 20 in which a mural in Nihonmachi Alley, at Sixth Avenue South and South Maynard Street, was defaced with black paint and a reference to a Bible verse. In the

statement, the chapter called the defacement "... an act of hateful vandalism that strikes at the heart of our community's shared history and values." The mural, by Erin Shigaki, depicted an iconic photo of Fumiko Hayashida (tinyurl.com/8z5tya6r) of Bainbridge Island, Wash., holding her daughter, Natalie, as they awaited a ferry to take them to the mainland and eventual incarceration at the Manzanar WRA Center. Their faces were covered in black paint. Also defaced were informational panels by Amy Nikaitani. To read the Seattle JACL chapter's statement, visit tinyurl.com/yh64zc7w. To see a *Seattle Times* news article with images of the vandalism, visit tinyurl.com/5n73s3r5. (Editor's note: *The Seattle Day of Remembrance takes place on Feb. 8 at the Washington State Fair Expo Hall. Details: tinyurl.com/bdfju9vy*).

MLB: Sasaki Joins Dodgers; Morii to A's

World Series champs Los Angeles Dodgers signed Chiba Lotte Marines pitcher Roki Sasaki. The 23-year-old Japanese player is reputed to have a 100 mph fastball. ¶ The Oakland Athletics signed 18-year-old Sho-taro Morii to a minor league contract. Like Dodgers superstar Shohei Ohtani, Morii — a shortstop and a pitcher — is also a two-way player. ¶ In the aftermath of the fires that destroyed large swaths of Pacific Palisades and Altadena in Los Angeles County, Shohei Ohtani is reportedly donating \$500,000 to help firefighters, as well as "animals forced to flee" the conflagration. ¶ Ippei Mizuhara, the former interpreter for Shohei Ohtani who pleaded guilty last June to bank fraud and tax

evasion charges, is scheduled to be sentenced Feb. 6 in Santa Ana, Calif.

Oregon's Watanabe Sworn in as State Rep.

Democrat Mari Watanabe was sworn in Jan. 19 to represent House District 34 following a joint meeting of the boards of Multnomah and Washington Counties, at which she was unanimously approved to succeed state Rep. Lisa Reynolds. A Sansei, Watanabe is the state's first Japanese American woman in the state legislature. She had previously served for 11 years as the Japanese American Museum of Oregon's executive director.

Ex-Oakland Mayor Thao Among 4 Indicted

(AP) Former Oakland Mayor Sheng Thao, her longtime partner Andre Jones and two local businessmen Andy and David Duong were named in an indictment unsealed Jan. 17 alleging the four conspired to funnel city business to companies owned by the men in exchange for money and benefits to Thao and her partner. The four were indicted on charges of bribery, conspiracy and mail and wire fraud. Andy Duong also was charged with one count of lying to federal agents. If convicted of all counts, each faces up to 35 years in prison. Thao was elected Oakland's mayor in 2022 and ousted in a recall election in November two years after she became the first Hmong American woman to become the mayor of a major U.S. city.

Philly: 76ers Scrub Chinatown Arena Scheme

(AP) The Philadelphia 76ers have decided not to build a \$1.3 billion downtown arena, a

surprising move that comes just weeks after the team received approval for the controversial project from the city council. Two City Council members who voted against the plan, Jamie Gauthier and Rue Landau, said the reversal shows that the 76ers' development arm had not dealt in good faith with the city. The 76ers' downtown development plan had pitted working-class Philadelphians against each other and the team had pressured City Council to consider a "half-baked" proposal that left open questions about gridlock and the displacement of the city's Chinatown section, they said.

Ikeda GFBNEC Programs, Engagement Director

Go for Broke National Education Center has named Kurt T. Ikeda as its new director of programs and engagement. In that role, the former chief of interpretation and education and education specialist for the National Park Service at the Minidoka National Historic Site in Idaho and education manager for the Japanese American Museum of Oregon in Portland will help guide GFBNEC's growth and sustainability by defining and refining how the nonprofit will attract and connect with new audiences.

Man Pleads Guilty for Hate Crime Assault

Jesse Lindsey pleaded guilty to one hate crime count in December for punching an Asian American woman in the head in June 2021 in Culver City, Calif. The victim received 11 sutures after falling and hitting her head. A Fox 11 report with video may be viewed at tinyurl.com/skktf7n2. ■



99th Percentile

By Larry Oda,
JACL National President

Happy New Year! On behalf of the JACL National Board, I hope you had a successful year and look forward to a healthy and prosperous 2025!

Our last year started off with intense discussions of our involvement protesting the war in Gaza, culminating in a National Council resolution calling for a cease fire and resumption in humanitarian aid for the region. Unfortunately, the conflict still rages on, but we can be proud that our voices were heard.

Happily, JACL ended 2024 on a high note because we survived the national elections, completed an audit of our 2023 finances under our new audit manager, Moss Adams, and have

come through with a clean bill of health under the prudent management and watchful eye of Secretary/Treasurer Jonathan Okamoto. We completed the first full year with our new investment portfolio manager, Vanguard, and are happy to report that our investment balances have grown. You may recall that for our investments, our goal in seeking a new investment manager was to realize increased revenues by meeting our investment benchmarks, but also for significant savings from an alternative fee structure. The goal was to increase our distribution of earnings for chapter rebates, program funding and Legacy Fund grants. The stock market has been kind to us, and we are achieving our goal.

With the outgoing administration, we enjoyed unprecedented access to the White House and other activities that we were previously uninvited. Plus, we've increased our public profile by participating in the dedication of the Norman Y. Mineta Memorial Statue at the Mineta San Jose International Airport in January and in April attending the official welcome ceremony of Prime Minister of Japan Fumio Kishida to the United States that included a wreath laying at the National Japanese American Memorial to Patriotism in the nation's capital and a luncheon at the State Department. The vp of the United States again invited JACL to her home to observe Asian American and Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month with a Night Market and hosted a holiday reception in December. We look forward to continuing this relationship with the incoming administration.

We begin our 96th year with high hopes and a desire for a deeper understanding of the needs of our organization, and I reflect on how the organization has remained constant and consistent. We started in 1929 as an organization that fought for our constitutional rights as American citizens.

At that time, only the Nisei, as birthright American citizens, could play a part in the political process and affect the destiny of our community. The Issei were prevented from doing so because in the earliest part of the 160-year history of our presence in the U.S., there were over 500 discriminatory laws written to limit the participation of Japanese in American society.

The effort to erase these laws and realize other wonderful things for our community came from JACL — from you.

You are a member of a very elite group. According to the 2020 Census, there are approximately 1.4 million people of Japanese heritage living in the United States. Approximately 400,000 are Japanese nationals living here on a long-term or permanent basis, so that means there are about a million of us Japanese Americans.

JACL now has about 8,000 members, or less than one percent of the Japanese American population in the United States. It is through the leadership of this one percent that all the legislative accomplishments of our community have been realized. It is important for us to maintain this effort, and JACL must expand your training to prepare you for an expanded role for leadership in the larger community.

JACL has many strengths, besides being an effective champion for civil rights, such as having a nationwide network of chapters; credibility and presence in the seat of government; and the expertise to develop political leaders.

I have always held that JACL is a perfect training ground for those in our community with political aspirations. We have excellent programs to give our members training and insight into the political process.

The Washington D.C. Leadership Conference has trained over 500 of our members to develop their leadership skills. You have already demonstrated your leadership by being a JACL member, and I encourage you to take advantage of the opportunity to become more engaged. Our mission is to have influence in the world, and public service is the way for us to continue to be effective and successful.

We need to seriously think about our future. I encourage you to take the opportunity to affect the direction of the organization, whether it is by participating in convention operating committees, being a chapter delegate to the National Council or by taking a leadership position by running for a National Board position.

I look forward to hearing about you and your continued successes on behalf of our community of Japanese Americans and JACL, to take advantage of the opportunities that present themselves to keep Mike Masaoka's dream alive, to be "Better Americans in a Greater America." ■



A More Perfect Union

By David Inoue,
JACL Executive Director

Hopefully, every American recognizes this phrase as coming from the preamble of our Constitution: "We

the people, in order to form a perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America."

Some may also recognize this as the title of then presidential candidate Barack Obama's speech on race in America. From the Japanese American community, even more hopefully recall this as the title of the long-standing exhibit at the Smithsonian National Museum of American history, further subtitled, "Japanese Americans & the U.S. Constitution."

What the Founding Fathers knew then and is both captured in Obama's speech and the Smithsonian exhibit is that our Union will never be perfect. It may continue to strive toward perfection, but we will never achieve

it. The Civil War served as the greatest test to the strength of our Union, and given the examination of racism's impact on our country both in Obama's speech and the experience of Japanese Americans, race continues to be what separates us from that perfect Union.

There are some that believe that we had a perfect nation years ago, that the time of the Founding Fathers was one of simplicity and purity of ideology, when America was truly great as a nation. This ignores the fact that those Founding Fathers knew things were not perfect and the Constitution might need amendment.

Among the many amendments we have adopted were those that addressed our troubled race relations. The abolishment of slavery, granting the right to vote for black men (the right of women to vote would come years later) and the important 14th amendment, which guarantees birthright citizenship and

that people should not be treated differently on account of race, religion or national origin.

We now have a president who seeks to pervert the meaning of "birthright citizenship" and believes that the equal protection clause is to protect white men from the injustice of DEI and affirmative action programs that were created in response to the 14th amendment as a means to respond to the racism that necessitated the 14th amendment. As with much of the language of the Constitution, it is intentionally vague and imprecise, but no reasonable person has any doubt about the intent of who the 13th, 14th and 15th amendments were written for.

And yet, we remain in this imperfect union, bound together as a nation, still often separated along racial lines.

And that is the important aspect of what makes us Americans, that despite our differences, we hopefully will continue

Happy New Year 2025!

From the Salt Lake City chapter

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to strive toward that perfection together, as we the people. Justice, Tranquility, common defence and general Welfare are all shared values that every U.S. citizen should be afforded, even if they have not been equally distributed. That is the ideal and what we strive for. The language of the Constitution is inclusive rather than exclusive and selfish. Rather than one's self, we seek these things and liberty for "ourselves."

And finally in the preamble is something

that any Japanese American might recognize as a common phrase if it were in Japanese, that this is for our "Posterity," or for our descendants. *Kodomo no tame ni*.

For just a few words in the overall document, the preamble of the Constitution establishes two key themes that are especially important in these times, that we are part of a collective and that this collective is not perfect but continues to strive toward that perfection.

Just as Martin Luther King Jr. stated, "The

arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends towards justice," so to will the life of our nation to go on and despite bumps along the way, we will continue to work toward the ideals established so broadly in our Constitution, even as we approach the 250th birthday of our country since the Declaration of Independence.

As we look forward to the new year, I hope that JACL's board, staff, districts, chapters and individual members will all work together to

ensure that these lofty ideals for our country are not forgotten and that we remember the times when our country has fallen short, in the hopes that when we fall short again, we do not do so in the same way or maybe the fall is not as far.

I have hope and faith in our country, but I know that it will take all of our efforts together to make sure that our ideals are someday fulfilled. ■

A Vision for 2025: Expanding Connections and Building Resilience Together



By Dominique Mashburn,
JACL VP of Membership

As we step into 2025, I am inspired by the limitless potential of JACL to forge deeper connections, embrace new communities and strengthen our collective resilience. This year, we aim

to broaden our reach, finding spaces JACL has yet to explore and engaging individuals who might benefit from the mutual support our organization offers — not just in times of crisis but as an enduring resource of connection and advocacy.

Membership is the heartbeat of JACL, and as your vp of membership, I am committed to reimagining how we find and connect with one another. In 2025, my goal is on crafting systems that go beyond traditional structures, ensuring our members feel supported, informed and empowered no matter where they are in the country.

A key focus this year is on young professionals and young adults. We recognize the unique challenges facing this group, from navigating the complexities of job searches, housing availability and rising costs of living to balancing personal and professional goals. These issues are real, pressing and impact how we connect with and contribute to our communities.

At JACL, we want young adults to know it's OK to get involved in or-

ganizations in ways that align with their own lives and values. Volunteering and engaging with JACL doesn't have to look the same for everyone. Your unique perspectives, talents and passions are invaluable, and we are committed to creating spaces where you feel seen, supported and empowered.

This vision came to life at the 2023 Caregiving Café, hosted by Keiro at our National Convention. While caregiving is often stereotyped as a responsibility for older individuals supporting aging populations, this event shattered those assumptions.

It became a breakthrough moment, highlighting how caregiving spans generations and showing the critical role young professionals play in offering care and support — not just for others but for themselves as they navigate their own challenges. By bridging these generational divides, the Caregiving Café demonstrated the transformative power of community spaces where all ages could connect, learn and share experiences.

Building on this success, JACL will continue to innovate and create opportunities for connection — not just for caregivers and aging populations but for young professionals as well. By addressing real-life challenges with empathy and action, we aim to provide a platform for growth and a shared sense of purpose, reinforcing the importance of unity across generations.

The need for inclusive and accessible support has never been more urgent. Approximately 61 million Americans live with disabilities, and 4.5 million of them belong to the Asian American and Pacific Islander community.

Caregivers, many of whom are within our own AAPI community, play a vital role in this landscape. Their efforts are a testament to resilience and compassion, and JACL is responsible for standing beside them, advocating for better resources and building spaces where they can thrive.

This commitment to inclusivity and support is critical to ensuring that JACL thrives for future gener-

ations. We must cultivate a thriving young membership base for our organization to remain sustainable.

By acknowledging the realities of life today and meeting young adults where they are, JACL can break new ground, reach across divides and foster a sense of shared purpose, no matter where our members are located.

Twenty-twenty five is a year of transformation and action. By expanding our reach and building systems to keep us connected, JACL will strengthen its role as a cornerstone of support and advocacy for all of its members. Together, we will create a network where everyone — young and old — feels valued, supported and seen.

As we embark on this mission, let us remember the wisdom of the *Uchinaaguchi* proverb: *Shikinoo chui shiihii shiru kurasuru* — "Let's live helping each other in this world." This spirit of unity and mutual support is our guiding light as we navigate challenges, celebrate milestones and continue to champion social justice. ■

'We Should Always Look for Opportunities to Seek Support'



By Gary Nakamura,
JACL VP for Planning and
Development

Happy New Year, JACLers! I hope this finds each of you and your loved ones in good health and having a very pleasant 2025! For those of you who are affected by the tragic wildfires in California, my thoughts and prayers

are with you and your loved ones. Please stay safe!

I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the following people for their stellar leadership and tremendous dedication to JACL:

- National Scholarship Program Co-Chairs David Kawamoto and Carol Kawamoto and the hard-working members of the National Scholarship Committee. Also, Matt Weisbly and Patty Wada for their invaluable assistance.
- Legacy Fund Grants Program Co-Chairs Sheldon Arakaki and Lisa Olsen and each of their committee members. I would like to congratulate the following chapters for receiving grants during 2024: Portland; San Jose; Selanoco-OC; Twin Cities; and Wisconsin. I also appreciate Patty Wada for helping with this important program.
- Investment Policy Committee Chair David Lin and all the esteemed district leaders who serve on the IPC.
- Our longtime Legacy Planning Officer Steve Okamoto for doing such a wonderful job in helping

JACL receive bequests from our members and friends in the community.

- I would also like to thank National President Larry Oda and past National President and VP of Planning and Development David Lin for their continued tutelage and guidance.

I am also putting a lot of time and effort into developing initiatives that will provide new revenue streams for JACL. One involves working very closely with our community partners in my home state of Texas, since the Lone Star State has become the hotbed of highly discriminatory legislation over the past two biennial State Legislative Sessions.

Soon after the 21st-century versions of the anti-alien land laws were introduced in Texas in 2023, similar bills have been introduced in over 35 states, and they continue to proliferate.

Our Houston chapter became one of the most vocal and visible opponents of the land law bills in Texas, and we continue to do so during the 2025 State Legislature, which just began.

I am trying to make sure that our community understands that this is the kind of important and relevant advocacy work that JACL does today, in 2025. In tandem with our community activism, we should always look for opportunities to seek support for JACL from business and community leaders from around the country.

The second of my two big initiatives that I have been working to develop is the traveling Japanese American (Nikkei) Baseball Exhibit.

We are planning to launch our traveling exhibit in Texas later this spring and have it showcased at our National Convention in Albuquerque in July, before moving on to California and other states in the future.

Our main goal for this exhibit is to very gently educate the American public about the Japanese American experience and the dangers of racism and prejudice that led to the mass removal and incarceration of our community during World War II.

The main thing that has been hindering my ability to conduct business

development meetings more effectively over the past year has been the fact that we do not have anyone on staff that is dedicated to business development.

Since I work full-time and have commitments to my various clients, this has been an excruciatingly difficult problem for me to handle.

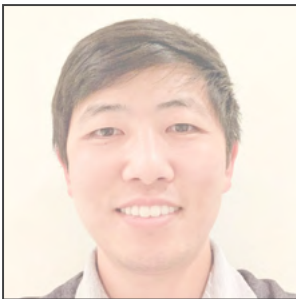
It has been almost 10 months since our former director of membership and fund development, Phil Ozaki, left JACL to pursue other opportunities, and we still have not been able to fill that critical position.

Kim Hirose of the Washington, D.C., chapter and Saki Mori of the N.Y. chapter had kindly volunteered during convention to help us review and vet candidates who apply for that position.

Unfortunately, there has been a very prolonged delay in starting the review process due to a misalignment of priorities.

However, we finally have access to the résumés, so we have started that process in earnest, and we hope to be able to start interviewing candidates in the very near future. ■

'Our Members Are What Ground and Guide Us'



By Ryan Yoshikawa, JACL VP for General Operations

Hello, *Pacific Citizen* readers! I am Ryan Yoshikawa, the newly elected vp for general operations for the 2024-26 term. I am honored to represent the members of the JACL and strive to improve our organization and uphold the principles we hold.

Now, 2025 marks a new era for the JACL. The New Mexico Chapter will have the unprecedented challenge of hosting a National Convention without a National Council business session. The New Mexico chapter and its convention committee are excited to face this new challenge and create a brand-new experience for all 2025 attendees.

The National Board also recognizes the actions we will have to take as the new administration takes over. The JACL will stand and protect the civil rights and liberties for all people in this country. Empowering our members through our programming will be a key focus for myself. I want to focus on our young professionally aged members and community supporters to garner more engagement and awareness on the issues affecting everyone across the country.

While the future may be filled with uncertainties, our members are what ground and guide us. I will focus on creating more opportunities for our membership to create the positive change we wish to see in our country.

Thank you, and I look forward to seeing you all in Albuquerque! ■

'We Continue to Take Steps to Drive JACL Into the 21st Century'



By Jonathan Okamoto, JACL Secretary/Treasurer

As 2024 ends and 2025 begins, we continue to battle the challenges brought forth

by decreasing membership numbers combined with increasing expenditures. We approved our 2025-26 budget with a positive outlook on our ability to quickly bring our revenue generation abilities back up to speed with strategic hiring.

Unfortunately, we ended 2024 with a key position left unfilled. The gap in revenues, against the 2024 budget, led to an even greater shortfall than expected and triggered an even greater concern about our ability as an organization to balance our 2025 and 2026 budgets. The board of directors recognized our dilemma and have been actively discussing potential steps for remediation.

JACL's budget, in a highly simplified view, derives revenue from membership dues and investment income. Investment income is fixed, as per JACL bylaws. Our membership numbers continue to fall with dues having remained relatively flat.

On the expense side of the ledger, labor costs represent 57 percent of the budget, with the second-highest cost being only 7 percent for contract services.

Expenses by the top three program areas are General Operations at 25 percent, National Convention at 20 percent and *Pacific Citizen* at 15 percent of program costs. While many may think a "silver bullet" exists that will quickly resolve budget shortfalls, the realistic solution must consist of both small and large changes within our organization.

We continue to take steps to drive JACL into the 21st century, but with limited resources, this journey has looked to be a prolonged adventure. While desperate times are demanding some desperate measures, the positive benefits are that some long-needed "upgrades" to the JACL infrastructure can potentially be fast-tracked into production to make

operations less labor intensive.

A deeper analysis into all of our programs will allow us to streamline the programs to deliver better results for lower costs. And a focused effort to recruit new members with new and innovative programs can help to build a consistent and sustainable revenue stream. This multipronged approach is actively being discussed, with immediate actions expected in the upcoming months.

My thoughts and outlook for the upcoming year remain relatively positive. JACL continues to grow and evolve and similarly, so must our approach to running JACL in a fiscally sustainable manner. I believe the unfortunate events over the past few years will invigorate each of us to see the value of JACL, encourage our friends to join and ultimately strengthen the organization.

Best wishes and hoping for a positive 2025! ■

IPC's Significant Accomplishments on Behalf of JACL



By David Lin, Chair of JACL Investment Policy Committee

Welcome to the New Year's issue of the *Pacific Citizen*, and I wish you and your family a happy, healthy and prosperous 2025!

It has been my honor and privilege to lead the Investment Policy Committee for the past couple of years. I am grateful to the National Board, President Larry Oda and my fellow committee members for the opportunity of serving in this capacity as the committee continues

to act responsibly as the steward of the JACL investment portfolio.

As we begin the new year, I would like to take this opportunity to share with you and recap our most significant accomplishments in the past two years, since an IPC report was not filed in the New Year's issue of the *Pacific Citizen* in January 2024:

- New Investment Manager Appointed in 2023. The IPC began the review/selection process of a new investment manager in 2022 since we have not done a Request for Proposal (RFP) for this important position for well over 10 years. As such, the IPC went through a very rigorous RFP process and selected Vanguard as the best investment manager to manage JACL funds under the stewardship of the IPC. With the transition in 1Q23 to Vanguard, JACL has been able to realize significant cost savings in investment expenses while delivering returns consistent with JACL's investment objectives. Subsequent to this appointment, the part of Vanguard managing the JACL portfolio was merged into another financial services firm, Mercer, in 2024, and we continue to receive excellent service.

- Investment Policy Statement Updated in 2023. Another major item

that the IPC undertook during this period was the update and revision of the Investment Policy Statement (IPS), since it was last updated in 2016. As its name implies, the IPS provides guidance to the committee and the investment manager on how JACL funds should be invested, with a detailed list of permissible and nonpermissible investment vehicles, given JACL is a nonprofit organization, so the committee can fulfill its fiduciary duties to the organization.

- Investment Results for 2023-24. For the year 2024, the value of JACL's portfolio under management by Mercer has seen a net increase of over \$900,000, after subtracting out withdrawals of more than \$700,000 in support of JACL operations, Legacy Grants and the Scholarship Program, etc. The total return of the JACL portfolio was 13.81 percent for 2024, and 14.56 percent since 2023, both exceeding established benchmarks. Overall, a very good news story!

I want to add that the investment results have been reported out at the National Convention and at National Board meetings, thanks to President Oda for adding this topic to the agenda, so that the committee can share the investment results with

the entire organization in a timely and transparent way.

Looking forward, the committee will continue monitoring investment performance closely; reporting out to the National Board and National Council; working with Mercer to ensure that we follow the best practices of the investment community; and recruiting the best JACL talents to serve on the committee.

I want to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to my fellow IPC members for their contributions: Darcy Dahl (MDC), Matt Farrells (MDC), Chip Larouche (PNW), Travis Nishi (CCDC) and Kirk Tambara (PNW); along with Messrs. Larry Oda, David Inoue, Jonathan Okamoto, Ken Massey and Tom Fernandez for their participation on the IPC.

In closing, I think the JACL is in the best position in managing its investment portfolio in a responsible way, with complete transparency to the National Board and JACL members, while delivering excellent results.

Once again, please accept my gratitude for this opportunity to serve the JACL and my best wishes for the new year! ■



Thank You for Your JACL Membership!

We're grateful to have some of the most engaged and committed members around! Because of your loyal support, we have more premium membership upgrades and generous additional gifts than ever. We're also appreciative for those who renew year after year (some for 50 years or more!) and for our increase in new members. Your dedication is essential to our ongoing mission for social justice, education, and community! Thank you! - JACL Membership Department



Not a member? Join us today!
Visit jacl.org/member
or contact us at mbr@jacl.org

Involvement Matters



By Carol Kawase,
JACL Northern California-Western
Nevada-Pacific District Governor

Born in the Year of the Snake, I have to admit I'm hissing anxiety, agitation and anger.

Bakersfield, Calif., Jan. 7, just a day after Congress certified the election on Jan. 6, it started . . . round-ups under the guise of detaining criminals for deportation. Federal agents in unmarked SUVs rounded up people into vans outside a Home Depot and gas station that serves a breakfast popular with field workers. White families weren't approached, uniformed service workers weren't accosted, only customers who wore field worker clothing were demanded to produce documentation. Two days later, Border Patrol is found in Modesto working their way up the Central Valley. Schools are warning Latinx parents to keep their children at home. Profiling pure and simple.

This recent deportation raid reminds me of two separate late-night occasions, when I was stopped in a lineup of vehicles on Highway 12 in Sonoma County, Calif., during the "Operation Return to Sender" ICE raids.

Under the glare of roadwork lighting, it was painfully obvious what was happening with the tow trucks lined up along the side of the highway and two large prisoner transport vans waiting to collect any of the unfortunate drivers who couldn't produce documentation.

A flashlight in my face to determine if I was Hispanic or not and then waved on through verified that pull overs were based on profiling. The campaign progressed to ICE agents pounding on the doors of homes in primarily Hispanic neighborhoods in the West Sonoma County area and the Canal District of Marin County.

When the residents of the houses answered the door, the officers demanded proof that they were U.S. citizens. If they couldn't produce some form of ID, they were arrested. The officers didn't even allow them to dress. They just handcuffed them and led them through the street in their nightwear. Children were also arrested, according to witnesses, including a child who is an American citizen.

That experience fully cemented my understanding of how JA communities felt on Dec. 7, 1941, starting just hours after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, when the FBI rounded up 1,291 Japanese American community and religious leaders.

Panic, fear and confusion abounded in the JA communities back home. Ten weeks later, with few willing to stand up for the JA community, racism, prejudice and mass hysteria resulted in the implementation of EO 9066 under the Alien Enemy Act of 1798.

History has been repeating itself since the Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798. Mass deportation is a political publicity campaign to appeal to the xenophobia of the times.

The Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 emboldened the U.S. to implement race-based immigration policy that supports harassing our communities of color today. In 1929, Section 1325 of Title 8 criminalized undocumented immigration for the first time. It's what fueled the political campaigns of the 1930s — 'American Jobs for Real Americans'; 1954's Operation Wetback; 1997's Chandler, Ariz., Round-up; 2007's Operation Return to Sender and 2016's Zero Tolerance Policy.

Mass deportations do little to capture criminals. Research demonstrates that not only do immigrants commit fewer crimes, but they also do not raise crime rates in U.S. communities where they settle.

Immigrants in the U.S. have had lower incarceration rates than the native-born population since at least the 1870, when such data was first recorded, which has been confirmed by a 2020 study by the National Bureau of Economics that immigrants were 60 percent less likely to be incarcerated than U.S.-born citizens.

Mass deportation campaigns instead cause massive fear in immigrant communities, ensnare U.S. citizens of color regardless of age and disrupt the workforce in agriculture, hospitality, food processing and construction industries.

On Jan. 20, 2025, when the new administration starts to implement its first "100 Executive Orders on Day One," discrimination, threats, physical violence, bullying of children, scapegoating and hate violence against Latinx communities is predicted to increase and likely carry over to other communities of color.

In the coming year, NCWNP will be working on ways to educate, network and address any profiling to support the people in our communities of color.

As the Year of the Snake unfolds, I hope JACL members and allies are anxious, agitated and angry enough to get involved. ■

Greetings From CCDC



By Brian Tsukimura,
JACL Central California District
Governor

Happy New Year 2025!

The Central California District Council is looking forward to our Day of Remembrance event on Feb. 8 at the Fresno Fairgrounds Historical Museum. This year, we will have a panel consisting of the texts from "Meguru: Dreams of Harvest" by

Mas Masumoto. It tells the story of Japanese immigration to the U.S. through the lens of four generations (Issei, Nisei, Sansei and Yonsei) of Japanese women. It is also the inspiration for a new musical work by Hitomi Oba and Erika Oba, commissioned by the Fresno Philharmonic and Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music.

In addition, music director Rei Hotoda will conduct the piece the following week in its world premiere, which coincides with the Feb. 19 Day of Remembrance of Executive Order 9066, which led to the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. In addition, conductor Hotoda will speak about her experience as a women of color conductor in the symphony world.

Later this year, CCDC will host a Memorial Day service at the Japanese American Memorial in Roeding Park on May 26. Dr. Ernest Kazato will be the master of ceremony for the event, which will

honor veterans of foreign wars of the United States. This event is open to all.

Also, our CCDC members will participate in the 80th commemoration of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima (Aug. 6, 1945) in the Peace Garden at California State University, Fresno, on Aug. 6.

In addition, CCDC will participate in the 80th commemoration of the atomic bombing of Nagasaki (Aug. 9) in the Shinzen Friendship Garden in Fresno's Woodward Park on Aug. 9. These events will be open to the public. Last year's events included words from California State University, Fresno, President Saúl Jimenez-Sandoval and Japanese Consul General Yo Osumi.

Last year, the CCDC supported its NY/SC representative to NY/SC events and the JACL National Convention. In addition, CCDC supported local events such as the Asian American/Pacific Islander Graduation Celebration at Fresno State in May and the Asian Fest at Fresno City College. ■

Looking Forward in the PSW and Beyond



By Joseph Gu
JACL Pacific Southwest
District Governor

Greetings, JACL. I hope you all have had a wonderful start to 2025 so far, despite the tumultuous weather and political climate we currently see in our midst. As the Pacific Southwest District governor, who only recently stepped into this role after our previous governor, Ryan Yoshikawa, was elected to become vp of general operations, I still feel like I have big shoes to fill. The JACL, whose mission and vision is more important than ever heading into 2025, is led by strong and passionate leaders who have so many diverse backgrounds and bring so many insights from across the nation, and I hope that I can grow into such a leader during my term.

For those who may not know who I am, I previously served on the JACL

SELANOCO-OC chapter board for about four years, starting as a Tomo no Kai at UCI Liaison, board member, then chapter co-president. Although I will continue to remain involved with the SELANOCO-OC chapter, I decided to take the next big step onto the district level of the JACL, of course with all its responsibilities and hats.

However, inexperienced as I may be, I am thankful to be supported by a wonderful PSW District board, as well as all of the PSW chapters. I'd like to extend a special thank you to Nancy Takayama, Ryan Yoshikawa, Alayne Yonemoto, Andrew Gruhn, Ryan Takeshi Gasha and Sebastian Carbajal. Twenty-twenty four was not without its troubles, yet the board has been more than capable of navigating all of our challenges.

Aside from supporting our JACL/OCA Leadership Summit attendees and connecting with our Kakehashi alumni, the PSW also brought back our Awards Luncheon that was unfortunately discontinued due to the Covid-19 crisis.

Several chapters and guests were able to attend, including JACL Honolulu chapter's Bill Kaneko, who gave attendees the opportunity to watch his film "Removed by Force" and ask questions about the stories and the filming process.

Chapters were able to honor and

recognize several awardees, and our very own Nancy Takayama received a Sapphire Pin for her selfless passion and dedication to both the PSW District and JACL National for so many years. It was a wonderful luncheon that we hope to resume again next year.

Looking forward into 2025, it is my hope that the district can expand on more district programming to support our local chapters and youth.

Our youth representative has formed a district youth board, and we are excited to see what programming this board will bring to the table to promote youth and student engagement.

I'm excited to begin a monthly newsletter informing chapters of JACL happenings as well as giving other chapters the opportunity to share events or updates as well.

And most importantly, I'd like for the PSW District to be a place of assistance for our chapters and our ally communities, especially as the civil rights of our constituents and our community members continue to remain at risk. My email inbox is always open for ideas, suggestions or requests to the district, and it would be our pleasure to assist in any way possible to allow anyone to feel heard, accepted and empowered. ■

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

'Who Is JACL? We Are! We Are All JACL'



By Lisa Olsen,
JACL Intermountain District
Governo

Thinking about goals for the next year for the Intermountain District Council always causes me to reflect on the previous year. This past year, I heard multiple

individuals make comments about JACL's actions or inactions.

After I listened to them say, "JACL did . . ." or "JACL did not . . ." it made me contemplate this question: "Who is JACL?" Who is it that "did" or "did not" do something? Is it the National Board, the grassroots chapters or an ambiguous and outdated concept.

So, I evaluated who served in key positions for my local chapter, district council and National Board to find an answer to this question.

My local chapter board is composed of students, parents, retirees, veterans, church members, volunteers and, most importantly, friends.

My district board is composed of individuals who are professors, college students, IT professionals, educators, parents, children, lawyers, business owners, community members, volunteers and, most importantly, friends.

The National Board is also composed of educators, IT professionals, medical professionals, college students, lawyers, retirees, veterans, volunteers and, most importantly, friends.

All of these people are individuals that I value, respect and trust, even when we disagree on an issue. They are individuals that I know and that you know. The same individual who serves as the chapter treasurer is also the same individual who serves in a national position. The person who decorates graves for our chapter, cleans headstones, prepares bento boxes or takes minutes at a meeting is also an elected officer on the National Board. Seeing them as individuals led me to an empowering answer to my question: "Who is JACL?" We are! We are all JACL.

So, why does this even matter? It is essential to know who you are when you are defining what you want to

become. If we are all JACL, then we can all make a difference and a change wherever we are serving and in whatever position we are serving in. If we are all JACL, then we all have a responsibility to make this change. It doesn't matter if we are a chapter member or an elected officer.

This is what makes JACL so powerful and amazing. We don't have to wait for National JACL to make an official statement about key issues. We can and should write our senators and representatives. We can speak out about educational curriculum that is hurtful to those in our community and in other minority communities. We can initiate chapter statements in our own areas. If we don't feel that our chapter events are engaging for our youth, we can invite them to create events they would enjoy. If we want to see more diversity in who belongs to JACL, we can invite those individuals to join our local chapters

and create a welcoming environment for them. If we want to hear different topics discussed at convention, then we can respond to the surveys that the JACL staff and elected officers send to us. We can even volunteer to be a presenter at the National Convention.

It's not about what's "in it for you or me," but what we can contribute to help create a better community for everyone. We are JACL, so we are the ones that make JACL what it is. And, we are desperately needed in our communities, especially with the upcoming political changes.

My vision for the Intermountain District Council and my challenge to all members of JACL is to embrace the "we" that makes us the oldest civil rights organization, embrace our voices in our local communities and embrace our shared responsibility to create the JACL that we want to see in the future. ■

NEW YEAR NEW OPPORTUNITIES



By Paul M. Uyehara,
JACL EDC District Governor

Happy New Year to all! I don't say that thinking 2025 will in fact be a happy year. Having already seen waves

of intensely bad weather across the country, mass murder in New Orleans, destructive wildfires in Los Angeles, an unexpected hospital stay and the beginning of new government administrations, 2025 certainly is starting inauspiciously.

The greeting remains apt because a new year is a time of hope, change and possibility. In closing the last year, it is also a time to reflect on the passage of time and be grateful for what was accomplished in 2024. Three things come to mind from last year and three more for this one.

Adoption of the Gaza resolution by the National Council was an achievement for JACL. It was made possible by countless hours of work by many members from the beginning of 2024 until the vote took place at convention.

The resolution was useful in educating members, adding JACL's opposition to the war and encouraging

members to engage with the Biden administration and Congress to take action to end the war and address the humanitarian crisis. NCWNP Governor Carol Kawase and other governors were substantially involved in this effort.

Gobs of my time were also consumed from the beginning of the year through convention in the continuing effort to clean up Legacy Fund records, account for errors discovered and devise revisions to the National Council's Legacy Fund Management Policy.

This required many meetings with our affable and number-savvy fiscal officer Tom Fernandez, several reports to the National Board and a convention update for delegates.

I think we have cleaned up the Legacy issues for now. Let's hope that the strong market growth for last year continues this year, so that the endowment can build for the future.

Governors can also have an impact by serving as a two-way conduit — bringing information and issues to the chapters and conveying chapter insights and concerns back to the National Board.

As EDC reviewed the proposed 2025-26 national budget, Saki Mori (N.Y.) and Kim Hirose Tobe (D.C.) used their nonprofit experience to challenge dubious revenue projections attributed to a new development director to be hired.

At convention, they explained their concerns to the delegates, Secretary/Treasurer Jonathan Okamoto and the CFO. Although EDC had not discussed our views on the budget as a whole in advance of convention, our district ended up voting together against the budget, though other delegates were not persuaded. (More on this later as well.)

The new year gets underway with JACL facing an old challenge — the

budget. Unless we are surprised by an unexpected substantial donation, it looks like we'll have to make some hard decisions soon to bring expenses back in line with revenues.

EDC has also joined with others in prioritizing the development director hiring effort at a time that we are desperate for new funding.

Looking forward to convention in Albuquerque, I am hoping the absence of a National Council meeting will allow us more time to engage members about the future of JACL.

Last year, I wrote that we need to recruit, train and engage members and leaders in 2024. This remains an urgent task for leadership and important for members to consider how they might step up their involvement.

We need all kinds of members to propel JACL forward, one in which protecting civil rights will be vital. It's a new year. Let's work together to make it a good one! ■

Participation Matters



By Sheldon Arakaki,
JACL Pacific Northwest
District Governor

Sitting at the back of the ballroom watching the 2008 National Council work through constitutional bylaws and amendments, a convention corporate sponsor representative turned to me and said, "Democracy is messy." He loved what he was seeing and hearing.

A National Council delegate moved to adopt a constitution bylaws and amendment. Another seconded. National Council delegates lined up behind microphones labeled "for" and "against," and debate began bound by time limits, Roberts Rules of Orders, convention rules and general civility.

Our process allows for friendly and not-so-friendly amendments to be made. Debates on the amendment to the main motion can occur.

Then, standing votes on the amendments. Sometimes, there are votes to extend debate time. Or, votes to end debate. And finally, votes on the main motion. Most delegates focus on the destination, but I focus on the journey.

Civic engagement and the democratic processes are what I believe distinguishes JACL from other APA organizational experiences because of how we run and move the organization forward — however slowly.

The opportunity to participate in this type of process and have a role is what we have to offer our members in a marketplace of nonprofits — especially given how many have "social justice" in their mission.

Chapters choose delegates to represent them at National Council, where we conduct the business of

National JACL. The delegates come from all over the country; red and blue states, large metro areas and small cities; private and public sectors of the economy.

The delegates bring different perspectives of being Japanese American or Asian American to the discussion, but what we have in common the most is our immigrant story, EO 9066 and the 442nd RCT.

All the floor votes require delegates to be educated about various issues and topics. Many times, much of the action occurs before the floor debate, where JACLers again participate in a process to listen, learn, collaborate, negotiate and compromise. The off-floor action occurs because members rise to take the lead, for

or against, and work to shape the outcome.

In 2016, we saw this off-floor action applied to the proposed 2017-18 biennium budget with the *Pacific Citizen* surcharge, we saw this in 2022 with passage of a policy for our endowment and we saw this especially in 2024 when makers of two resolutions of the same topic were asked by the Resolutions Committee to work together to produce a single resolution for the National Council.

Topics may not always be of interest, and the floor debate can appear to be long, tedious and exasperating at moments, but this is how our democracy works. From this participation, we become more informed, better citizens and more engaged participants in our society at large. ■

'It Is Lucky We Are Going Into the Year of the Snake'



By Ariel Imamoto, JACL Membership Manager

Akemashite omedetou gozaimasu!

Hello, Pacific Citizen readers, and welcome to the Year of the Snake! My name is Ariel Imamoto, and I am the JACL membership manager. What does that mean? It means that sometimes I am doing "fun" stuff like playing with spreadsheets and our membership database (my background is in accounting, so I LOVE spreadsheets) to make sure we have accurate membership information. It also means that sometimes I am working on new benefits and actually fun events for you all, our members. But the best part of my job is speaking and getting to know as many of you as I can.

I am still learning the ropes of my role, and I think it is lucky that we are going into the Year of the Snake. The snake is said to be a symbol of wisdom, creativity and adaptability. As we learn together, I hope to pull from the wisdom of all of you readers and JACL members, the creativity of our staff and volunteers to put on our 2025 National Convention and the adaptability of the board and staff to work through some of the challenges we face this year. Overall, my mission as membership manager is for you to be seen, be heard and be informed.

On that note, yoroshiku onegaishimasu!

Biden Awards Medals of Honor at the White House

Wataru Nakamura, a veteran of WWII, Korean War, is among the cohort.

By George Toshio Johnston, Senior Editor

With his term as the 46th president of the United States of America winding down, Joe Biden, as commander-in-chief of the nation's armed forces on Jan. 3 awarded seven Medals of Honor — the highest military decoration, awarded only to those who "distinguish themselves conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of their own lives — to U.S. servicemen at a White House ceremony, all but one posthumously.

Five of the medals were awarded to Korean War veterans: Gen. Richard E. Cavazos, Pfc. Charles R. Johnson, Cpl. Fred B. McGee, Pfc. Wataru Nakamura and Pvt. Bruno R. Orig. Cavazos was Mexican American; Hawaii-born

Orig was Filipino American; Los Angeles-born Nakamura was Japanese American; and McGee and Johnson were African-American.

According to *Military.com*, the Medals of Honor awarded to Cavazos, Nakamura and Orig were made "... pursuant to laws providing for reviews to determine whether prejudice may have been involved in denying the Medal of Honor."

Two of the medals were awarded to Vietnam War veterans: Capt. Hugh R. Nelson Jr. and Pfc. Kenneth J. David, who was the sole living recipient present.

"I'm deeply privileged to honor seven American heroes," Biden said to those gathered. "Heroes of different ranks, different positions and even different generations ... who all went above and beyond the call of duty."

Nakamura's nephew, Glenn Takashima, attended the ceremony to receive the Medal of Honor — an upgrade from the Distinguished Service Cross — from Biden.

Prior to the Jan. 3 ceremony, the only other Japanese American to receive the Medal of Honor for service during the Korean War was Hiroshi "Hershey" Miyamura (*see Pacific Citizen's Dec. 12, 2022, issue*).

A member of I Co., 38th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, Nakamura was killed in action on May 18, 1951. He was 29.

Prior to America's Dec. 8, 1941, declaration of war on Japan that marked its entry into World War II, Nakamura, the second of seven children, had lived and worked in San Francisco but would move to Arkansas to join his family, who were incarcerated at the Rohwer War Relocation Center after President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 on Feb. 19, 1942.

With the war still being prosecuted, Nakamura joined the Army from Rohwer in April 1944 and was assigned to K Co. of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the famed segregated Army unit comprised mostly of Japanese Americans from the Hawaii territory and the U.S. mainland.



Gary Takashima shakes hands with President Joe Biden on Jan. 3 after receiving the Medal of Honor awarded posthumously to his uncle, Wataru Nakamura.

(Bottom) Pfc. Wataru Nakamura

PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVES



In 2000, when President Bill Clinton belatedly awarded 22 Medals of Honor to WWII veterans of Asian heritage, 20 had served with the 442nd.

After the war's end, Nakamura stayed in the Army Reserve, moved to Chicago and was called back to active duty after America entered the Korean War.

According to the Army, Nakamura received the belated honor because he "... singlehandedly attacked and destroyed a hostile machine-gun nest and drove the enemy from several of the bunkers they had captured. When his ammunition was depleted, he withdrew while under enemy fire.

"Nakamura then met an ammunition party ascending the hill. After briefing the officer in charge, Nakamura rearmed himself and, covered by the fire of the officer and two fellow soldiers, returned to the attack. He killed three of the enemy in one bunker and killed and seriously wounded another in the last enemy-held bunker. Continuing to press the attack, he fell mortally wounded by an enemy grenade."



A June 16, 1951, Pacific Citizen article reporting that Nakamura had been killed in action while serving in the Korean War

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JEANNE WAKATSUKI HOUSTON DEAD AT 90

Her 'Farewell to Manzanar' shared story of Japanese American incarceration with generations of young people.

By George Toshio Johnston,
Senior Editor

Author Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston died at her Santa Cruz, Calif. home, the *Pacific Citizen* has confirmed. She was 90.

According to next of kin, the co-author of the acclaimed book "Farewell to Manzanar" died of natural causes on Dec. 21.

The book, published in 1973 and co-written by her husband, Air Force veteran James D. Houston, was Inglewood, Calif.-born Houston's recollection from her childhood when, at age 7, her family and she were forced by the federal government to leave their Santa Monica, Calif., home, move to an assembly center and eventually become incarcerated at California's Manzanar War Relocation Authority Center, one of 10 such remotely located concentration camps that during World War II detained ethnic Japanese, the majority of whom were U.S. citizens.

Houston's experience that was chronicled in "Farewell to Manzanar" — later adapted into a 1976 telefilm of the same name — paralleled what had happened to more than 125,000 Japanese Americans residing along the U.S. West Coast following Japan's Dec. 7, 1941, attack on American naval facilities at Pearl Harbor in the then-territory of Hawaii — and President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Feb. 19, 1942, issuance of Executive Order 9066, which authorized the Army to evacuate and relocate from the Western Exclusion

Zone persons of Japanese ancestry. "Farewell to Manzanar" was named by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as one of the 20th century's 100 most important works of Western literature. As assigned reading in schools, generations of young people became familiarized — as told through the eyes of a child — with the experience of Japanese Americans who were incarcerated by their government for, according to the conclusions of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, "racism, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership."

"Farewell to Manzanar" would lead to Houston receiving many accolades in her lifetime. The Japanese American Citizens League recognized her in 2004 with a Japanese American of the Biennium Award for achievement in Arts, Literature and Communication. In 2019, she became a California Hall of Fame inductee. Among the other recognitions she received were the Japanese American National Museum's Award of Excellence (2006); a Certificate of Commendation for Literature and History from the California Senate, Legislature and City of Los Angeles (2001); and the National Women's Political Caucus' Women of Achievement Award (1979).

The Houstons also co-wrote the screenplay for the book's telefilm adaptation with its director, Oscar and Emmy award winner John Korty (see *Pacific Citizen's* April 15, 2022, issue, tinyurl.com/3as4jd94). The telefilm aired on NBC on March 11, 1976, and would be nominated

for an Emmy Award. It won the 1977 Humanitas Prize in the 90-minute category.

In an email to *Pacific Citizen*, actor Clyde Kusatsu, who co-starred in the telefilm, wrote: "I was saddened to learn of Jeanne's passing last month. . . . It was my honor to have been part of the realization of her book 'Farewell to Manzanar' into a film for NBC. She and John Korty came to East West Players to view a few of us in a play we were doing at the time, and I was cast in the role of Teddy, her brother!"

"During the shoot, she came up to me to say how much I was able to capture her brother for the film. It was also an honor and privilege to contribute to the first film to tell the story of a Japanese American family and their part in the relocation experience, which was little known at the time we gathered to produce the film in 1975. It still stands as the only significant film on the subject. We were lucky to get it filmed."

In 2018, accompanied by her daughter, Corinne, Houston returned to Santa Monica and spoke about her book at the auditorium of the main Santa Monica Public Library as part of its "Santa Monica Reads" program on the 45th anniversary of "FTM's" publication, where she was presented with a proclamation by the city.

"I remember that trip to Santa Monica with my mom like it was yesterday," Cori Houston wrote to the *Pacific Citizen* via email. "It was extraordinary to see her welcomed back by the current mayor and given



Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston, with daughter Corinne Houston, displays the proclamation presented to her on May 12, 2018, by the city of Santa Monica.

PHOTO: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON

a city proclamation to the community that she and her family had been taken from so many years ago.

"To me, it was an example of what my mom always believed was truly the strength of this country. That we live in a society where dissent and disagreement are allowed and when a light is shined on an injustice, there can be resolution. I hope we don't lose that."

Jim Houston predeceased his wife and family on April 16, 2009, at 75. The couple is survived by their three adult offspring, Corinne, Joshua and Gabrielle.

A full version of this article can be viewed online at the *Pacific Citizen's* website at tinyurl.com/yck9yy9a.

"Farewell to Manzanar" the book and movie are available for purchase

from the Japanese American National Museum's gift shop. The paperback is available for \$10.99 at tinyurl.com/5n6jyw7m. The DVD, now with Japanese language subtitles, is available for \$24.95 at tinyurl.com/yx87v6sb.

Home movies of Manzanar from the family of Ralph Merritt that includes footage of Manzanar high school's 1945 graduating class and other Manzanar footage may be viewed at youtube.com/watch?v=vToNvZ6Vq2Y.

To listen to a 2020 interview with Jeanne Wakatsuki Houston conducted by Guy Kawasaki for his "Remarkable People" podcast, visit guykawasaki.com/jeanne-wakatsuki-houston/.

Keith Terasaki Dead at 68

By P.C. Staff

Dr. Keith Kenji Terasaki, chairman of the board of the nonprofit Terasaki Institute for Biomedical Innovation, died Dec. 22, 2024, in Houston. He was 68.

A son of the late philanthropists Hisako and Dr. Paul Terasaki — a pioneer in the field of organ transplant technology — Keith Terasaki had served as the chief of interventional radiologists for the Southern California Kaiser Permanente system.

In addition to serving as TIBI's board chair, Terasaki was a board member of Little Tokyo Service Center, Wesley Health Center, Metropolitan YMCA of Los Angeles, Vista Del Mar Children's Services, Colburn School of Music, TreePeople, Los



Angeles Philharmonic, Japanese Institute of Sawtelle and the UCLA Terasaki Center for Japanese Studies.

Terasaki also helped with the completion of Little Tokyo's Terasaki Budokan, thanks to a \$3.5 million donation from Terasaki Family Foun-

dation. For that, the LTSC, which operates the facility in partnership with the City of Los Angeles, named it to recognize Paul Terasaki, who died in 2016.

Keith Terasaki earned both his undergraduate and medical degrees from UCLA. He went on to train in general radiology at Los Angeles County-USC Hospital and interventional radiology at Stanford University. He was recognized early in his career with a Best Clinician Award, and toward the end of his medical career for his volunteer work on Skid Row, Kaiser awarded him its Top Physician Humanitarian Award.

Terasaki is survived by his wife, Cecilia Terasaki; his son, Paul Terasaki, and daughter, Susie Terasaki; siblings, Mark (Rindy) Terasaki, Taiji (Naoko) Terasaki and Emiko (Dan) Terasaki; and many nieces and nephews.

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**Emily Murase, Neal Taniguchi,
Junko & Izumi**

Wish everybody the very best in 2025!

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