



# PACIFIC CITIZEN

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## FROM BASEBALL AND BEYOND

**A new book brings to life the groundbreaking MLB baseball career of Masanori 'Mashi' Murakami.**



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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor and  
Nina F. Ichikawa,

Thank you so much for responding to me about the National Archives' article that I wrote, which was published in the *Pacific Citizen* (June 5-18, 2015).

This article was written in the hope that readers, like yourself, would respond and share your own stories about what can be found in WRA Family Japanese incarceration files.

I hope your letter, which was published in the *Pacific Citizen* (July 24-Aug. 6, 2015), inspires other families to request their own family records from the NARA in Washington, D.C.

I personally was amazed in finding so much information in my own family files of things I had known and did not know about my family in Heart Mountain since three generations of my family lived there. It also brought chills down my spine in reading the actual documents at the National Archives as well as what my husband's mother went through there.

It is readers, like yourself, that makes these efforts worthwhile.

Thank you so much for your letter.

With much  
appreciation,

Patti Hirahara

Dear Editor,

At the risk of giving undeserved attention to Donald Trump and the political spectacle created by his campaign, I feel compelled to respond to his racist and anti-immigrant rhetoric in the context of the history of scapegoating, disenfranchisement and criminalization of immigrants in the United States.

Trump's recent comments characterizing Mexican immigrants as "criminals" and "rapists" that should be purged from the country fit a pattern of abuse that has been used not only against Mexicans and Mexican Americans, but against many groups of immigrants in the history of our country.

Since the founding of this country, various ethnic groups have been targeted with the same attitudes of xenophobia, intolerance and fear, often with amazingly similar depictions and rhetoric.

From Irish and Eastern European newcomers to the East Coast in the 19th century to Chinese, Japanese and Filipino workers in the West Coast and more recently immigrants from Mexico and Central America throughout the country, waves of anti-immigrant sentiment and discourse leading to discriminatory laws have been pervasive.

In the mid-1800s, the Irish were seen as being violent alcoholics, illiterate, greedy and having large, unruly families. They were turned away from places of employment with the pronouncement that "No Irish Need Apply."

The Chinese were also the target of intense and often violent acts of racism beginning in the 1800s. A newspaper editorial cartoon in 1899 entitled "The Yellow Terror in All its Glory" shows a menacing and crazed caricature of a Chinese man dressed in traditional garb, with his hair in a distinctive queue. He is brandishing a smoking gun with a knife clenched in his mouth while standing over a white young woman bloodied and lying lifelessly on the ground. The message is clear, the Chinese are dangerous "criminals" and "rapists" who are culturally alien and threaten the white race.

The anti-immigrant spotlight was then cast on the Japanese as they became settled and gained more economic strength, particularly in California. Existing racial animosity climaxed with the start of World War II when Japanese and Japanese

Americans on the West Coast were rounded up and incarcerated. This may be one of the most horrifying examples of the criminalization of an entire immigrant community.

We, as People of Color and their allies, have the responsibility to respond to both public and private acts of racism and hatred, even if these attacks are not made on our particular racial or ethnic group. It is only in doing so that we are able to support the groups that are unfairly targeted and build coalitions among diverse communities to work toward equality and fair treatment for all people in this country, regardless of citizenship status, country of origin or race.

Interethnic solidarity is a powerful tool to counter intolerance. Investing in interethnic community building, especially at the grassroots level, is more effective than particular groups working alone to advocate for themselves.

As Martin Luther King so aptly said, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere." As Asian Americans, we can look to civil rights activists such as Yuri Kochiyama, who dedicated her life to advocating not only for Japanese Americans but for African-Americans and other communities of color.

In times when racism rears its ugly head, let us, as individuals, organizations and community groups, stand with our neighbors and brothers and sisters to promote a humane and accurate depiction of the groups under attack. Then we can say that immigrants are workers, parents, children, teachers, friends, neighbors, students and activists who will not tolerate being depicted as "criminals."

For readers who are interested in learning more about the accurate history of immigrant communities in the United States, I point you to Ronald Takaki's "A Different Mirror: A History of Multicultural America" and Howard Zinn's "A People's History of the United States."

Sincerely,

Aimee Mizuno,  
JACL Board Member,  
Santa Cruz-Watsonville, Calif.

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## NIKKEI VOICE

# BEING JA IS A CELEBRATION OF BEING AMERICAN

By Gil Asakawa

During a recent trip to San Francisco to attend the annual conference of the Asian American Journalists Assn., I squeezed in two readings from the new revised edition of my book, “Being Japanese American.” The two events reminded me why I wrote the book in the first place and why I love speaking to JA audiences. I love being JA!

The first edition was published in 2004, but a lot has happened since then: Japanese culture is even more popular now in the U.S. than a decade ago, but so is Asian American culture in general. The Internet was around in 2004, but social media has exploded on the scene since “Being JA” vol. 1.0 came out. During those years, Asian Americans have been early adopters and leading lights on blogs, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter — we’ve embraced digital media because we’re invisible in mainstream media.

Yet, even in mainstream media, we’ve made some huge strides: Hollywood movies still suffer from “yellowface” casting of whites in Asian roles, but there are more of us in starring and co-starring roles. John Cho was even cast as the romantic



During a recent trip to San Francisco, Gil Asakawa appeared at two book readings to talk about his book “Being Japanese American.”

lead in a short-lived ABC sitcom this year, and that network’s “Fresh Off the Boat,” the comedy that showcases an AAPI family, is filming a second season.

So, it made sense when Stone Bridge reached out and asked me to update the book with new text, additional historical photos and interviews with more JAs, Japanese Canadians and mixed-race Japanese.

The book covers the history of Japanese immigration and, of course, the WWII concentration camp experience, but it’s also about our culture, community, food and families, as well as the future of JAs. We’re not always accepted as American and have to deal with lingering racism here, but we’re not quite Japanese either. I love the things that make us Japanese (cultural values, food, taking off shoes inside) but also the things that set us apart. Even before we open our mouths, Japanese people know right away we’re American because of our gait, our clothes and the way we make eye contact.

>> See **CELEBRATION** on page 12

## YOUTH PERSPECTIVE

# MY JACL CONVENTION EXPERIENCE WAS EYE-OPENING

By Brandon Yee

I am truly grateful to have been selected as a youth representative of the Philadelphia Chapter to attend the 2015 Las Vegas National Convention from July 13-15. The experience was both eye-opening and inspirational.

As a youth representative, I met future leaders of the JACL, the youth delegates and representatives, in various stages of development. With youth members as accomplished as Kota Mizutani in proposing and passing HR 40 to youth members just beginning to understand their role, I now realized how important gaining youth membership and strong youth involvement are for the JACL. We are the generation of the future, and we can help change the world to be a better place.

Since being introduced to the JACL at a very young age, I admired the numerous contributions of my aunts and uncles, who have all been very active members of the JACL’s New Jersey and Philadelphia chapters. As a first-time attendee of the National Convention this year, I was impressed by how many youth participated at the national level, and I know that they are well on their way to carrying on the mission and vision of this organization.

The youth mixer was great for understanding how the JACL functions from the youth level and who it was that I will be working alongside in future years. The civic engagement presentations presented very well-thought-out solutions on current issues and made me realize the diversity of issues tackled by the JACL. The National Board meetings were run very productively as



Panel discussions held during this year’s National Convention made Yee realize the diversity of issues tackled by the JACL.

I witnessed the best minds of the JACL — young and old — contributing their ideas.

After observing how much influence the JACL has on the nation, attending the convention made me realize that I would like to be a more active part of this powerful organization. For me, meeting the youth and spending time with them was the No. 1 reason why I became inspired to join the JACL in the first place. Every one of them was so friendly, inviting and helpful; I really felt at home there! They did a great job explaining how they got involved and what they have learned from their experience. I was

surprised to find that the newest youth delegates with the ability to vote were reading up on the issues and getting their bearings within the group, just as I was. But I know that everyone must start somewhere.

Just two summers ago in 2013, I was sponsored by the Japanese government to participate in the Japanese American Invitation Program for High School Students, a nine-day trip to Japan. The trip was absolutely amazing and life-changing, and it set me on the path to pursue a major in East Asian language and culture at the University of Pittsburgh, starting next month. This new interest was also a reason why I wanted to attend the JACL Convention.

I wanted to gain a new perspective on the world, and by attending the convention, I would get to see the viewpoint of a group of dedicated Japanese Americans who address modern societal issues. I also wanted to see how I could connect studying abroad in Japan with Japanese American

civil rights.

Growing up, my involvement in the JACL was mostly a cultural and social experience, such as going to the Obon festival, experiencing taiko drum performances, learning origami and eating traditional Japanese foods. I did hear a few stories about the internment camps, but what happened to my Baachan and aunts and uncles seems so distant to me. In a way, I was shielded from all the negative racial injustice my family encountered in their lives.

>> See **EXPERIENCE** on page 12



## News Briefs/APAs in the News

### Two OC Teens Tragically Killed by a Falling Tree Branch in Yosemite

Two Orange County Asian American teenagers were tragically killed on Aug. 14 in Yosemite National Park by a falling tree branch as they were sleeping in their tent while on a camping trip. Dragon Kim, 14, of Tustin, Calif., and Justin Lee, 13, of Irvine, Calif., were identified as the victims.

Kim was entering his sophomore year at Orange County School of the Arts in Santa Ana, a highly acclaimed school of the arts. Lee was entering his freshman year at Northwood High School in Irvine. The two teens were on a camping trip with their families, when the incident happened on the Upper Pines Campground.

During the early morning hours, a branch from an oak tree fell on the two teens, killing Kim and Lee instantly.

According to the National Park Service, both teens died from their injuries by the time Park Rangers arrived on the scene. This is not the first time that someone has died from fallen tree branches in the park. According to Yosemite officials, the reason for the fallen tree branch is under investigation.

A vigil was held on Aug. 18 for the teens at Northwood High School.

### Sara Hutter Crowned Nisei Week Queen During 75th Annual Coronation Ball

Sara Kuniko Hutter, 22, of Los Alamitos, Calif., was crowned the 75th Nisei Week queen on Aug. 15 at the Aratani Theatre in Los Angeles.

Hutter, a graduate of the University of Southern California with a major in communications, officially represented the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council; her platform is the National

Psoriasis Foundation. She currently works part-time for SockPrints, a company that manufactures custom socks. Hutter plans to work in public affairs or the nonprofit sector.

Veronica Ota was named First Princess, and Karen Mizoguchi was named Miss Tomodachi. This year's Nisei Week court also includes Michelle Kaori Hanabusa, Kelsey Nakaji Kwong, Camryn Michiko Sugita and Tamara Mieko Teragawa.

As part of her reign, Hutter participated in the annual Nisei Week parade on Aug. 16 and will represent the Nisei Week Foundation throughout the year, making appearances nationally and internationally (including Nagoya, Japan).

### Japanese MLB Players Hisashi Iwakuma and Ichiro Suzuki Make History

The Seattle Mariner's Hisashi Iwakuma was named the American League Player of the Week on Aug. 17 after he threw a no-hitter against the Baltimore Orioles on Aug. 12 in a 3-0 victory.

Iwakuma's performance was the club's fifth no-hitter (fourth by a single pitcher). He joins other Mariners pitchers Randy Johnson, Chris Bosio and Felix Hernandez.

Iwakuma also became the second Japanese-born pitcher to throw a no-hitter, joining Hideo Nomo, who has two no-hitters (1996 with the Dodgers and 2001 with the Boston Red Sox).

And Ichiro Suzuki of the Miami Marlins recorded his 4,192nd career hit on Aug. 15, surpassing Ty Cobb in career hits with a first-inning single off the St. Louis Cardinals' John Lackey.

Suzuki's total includes his totals from professional baseball in Japan and Major

League Baseball. He added his 4,193rd hit later that same game.

Ichiro now holds the second-most hits of all time, second only to Pete Rose, with 4,256 hits. Suzuki earned 1,278 hits in Japan and has since added 2,914 hits since making his MLB career debut with the Seattle Mariners in 2001.

### 18 Million Voter Registration Campaign Launches

A new voting project, VoterVOX, is underway to help Asian Americans be better represented in the voting polls. According to a 2012 exit poll from the American Legal Defense and Education Fund, nearly 1 in 4 Asian Americans prefer to vote with help from an interpreter or translated materials. The finding is a major obstacle for many Asian American voters, prompting 18 Million Rising to fund VoterVOX. The project will combine both volunteer multilingual speakers with limited-English speakers to assist voters at the polls and provide information in their language. 18 Million Rising is crowdfunding VoterVox and is hoping to raise \$50,000 by Sept. 2 as the nation begins to approach election season next year.

### Asian Americans at Big Companies Changing Immigration Misconceptions

Google joins the list of top tech companies that now have Asian Americans as their CEOs. Today, the tech giant is one of the 25 percent of all tech start-ups with im-

migrant founders, according to "America's New Immigrant Entrepreneurs: Then and Now" study. Sundar Pichai, Google's new CEO, is one of many Asian Americans that are heading major tech companies in the United States, breaking the bamboo ceiling.

Other tech start-ups include eBay, PayPal, Sun Microsystems, Tesla and Yahoo, to name a few.

Much like his counterparts, Pichai is becoming an example of breaking misconceptions that Asian Americans can only execute but not lead due to language and cultural barriers.

While the presence of Asian Americans sitting at the top in major tech companies is promising, today the percentage of women, blacks and Hispanics is still low. Efforts to change these figures are underway as the industry recognizes that resourcing people of color and different cultural balance is key to staying competitive. Immigration reform and discussions surrounding policy change is not only a tech industry concern but also a nationwide tabletop item for the presidential election next year.

Jeff Yang, columnist for the *Wall Street Journal Online*, poses an important question about Pichai's influence in his CNN Opinion piece "If you see individuals with talent, skills and ambition as your most critical asset, why wouldn't you try to corner the market on these assets?" ■

## JACL MIKE M. MASAOKA CONGRESSIONAL FELLOWSHIP APPLICATION DEADLINE EXTENDED

The deadline for the JACL Mike M. Masaoka Congressional Fellowship has been extended to Monday, Aug. 31. The Masaoka Fellowship is designed to develop leaders for public service, particularly at the national level, and provides fellows the unique opportunity to be placed in a Congressional office where they will gain firsthand knowledge of policy creation.

Each paid fellowship will last for a period of at least one year and is located in Washington, D.C. There are two positions still available for the 2015-16 JACL Masaoka Congressional Fellowship program.

Candidates must be U.S. citizens,

JACL members and students or young professionals who have completed at least an undergraduate degree. Preference will be given to those who have demonstrated a commitment to Asian American issues, particularly those affecting the Japanese American community. Communication skills, particularly in writing, are important. Applicants must submit a completed application form and one letter of reference.

Completed applications and letters of recommendation should be emailed to [pouchida@jacl.org](mailto:pouchida@jacl.org).

For questions, please email [policy@jacl.org](mailto:policy@jacl.org) or call (202) 223-1240.



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# 'THE INKER'S SHADOW' SHINES A FRESH LIGHT ON A YOUNG ARTIST'S COMING OF AGE

Author-illustrator Allen Say is expected to release his newest book "The Inker's Shadow," a coming-of-age autobiography and biography centered around his experience with discrimination and self-discovery, on Sept. 29. Say's previous children's book offerings include the Robert F. Sibert Honor winner "Drawing From Memory" and the Caldecott Medal winner "The Boy of the Three-Year Nap."

His newest effort is the only nonpicture book Say has ever done. "Inker's Shadow" tells the story of the author's formative years in Japan when he served as an apprentice to Noro Shinpei. At the time, Shinpei was a post-war master cartoonist in Japan who taught Say about art and often made him draw copies of Michelangelo's "David" and visit Vincent Van Gogh exhibitions.

"The Inker's Shadow" follows Say's character to an American military academy in Southern California, where he experiences discrimination among the cadets and teachers, all the while echoing his life-long love for art.

"For this book, I picked out some of the episodes that are still floating in my head and arranged them into a story about my first years in America," Say wrote in his author's note. "It's a patchwork of memories, and memories are unreliable, so I am calling this work of fiction made of real people and places I knew."

Say was born in Yokohama in 1937 to a Korean father raised by a British family in Shanghai and a Japanese



Allen Say on his first visit to Knott's Berry Farm in August 1953

American mother born in California. According to an article from the *Oregonian/OregonLive*, Say lived with his mother and his mother's uncle at a home near Tabuse, Japan.

Say's parents divorced when he was 8, and he found himself living with his grandmother until he was 12. When his father remarried, Say was given the opportunity to move to the United States.

Hesitant and unsure, Say made the move with assistance from his father after speaking with Shinpei about the decision. He was placed in a military academy for young boys in Glendora, Calif., where orange groves blanketed the city with a population of around 5,000 and one movie house. While in the military academy, Say learned to carry elementary conversations in English, explaining to his classmates that trains existed in Japan.

After a year in the military academy, Say left to attend Citrus Union High School in nearby Azusa, Calif., and he moved into a hotel in order to continue his education at the school.

During high school, Say worked to make \$12-\$15 a week to cover his rent, which was \$8.50 a week. Every four to five months, his mother would send a check for \$30 even when Say didn't ask for money. It was a fortune for Say that ultimately funded his dream for art, as he often used the money to purchase more paint than food at times.

School wasn't difficult for Say, besides English, and he would frequently cut class to paint and draw in the junior college art room. His hunger and passion for art only grew.

"The Inker's Shadow" began for Say as he reflected on his beginnings at Citrus High School, finding his yearbook online and paying tribute to his art teacher, Laura Swope, and the school's principal, Nelson Price.

Upon graduating from Citrus High School, Say went on to study three years at Aoyama Gakuin, Tokyo; one year at Chouinard Art Institute; one year at Los Angeles Art Center School; two years at University of California, Berkeley; and one year at San Francisco Art Institute.

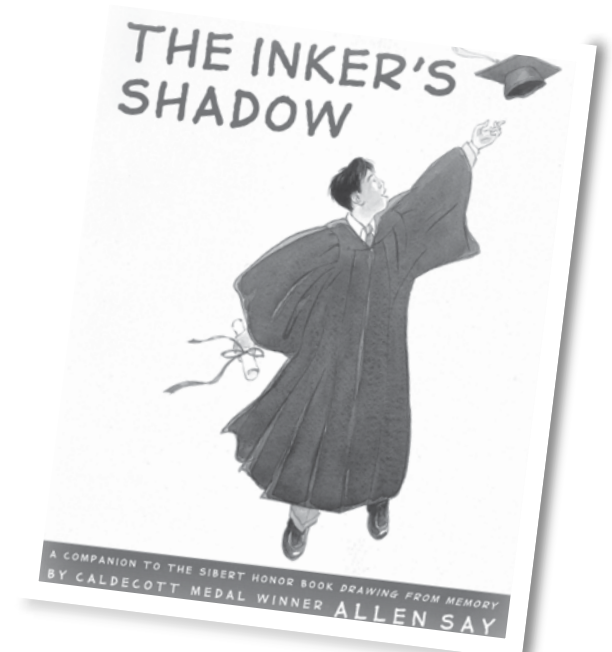
"We parted after my graduation, each of us going our separate ways," Say wrote about his memories of those who touched his life from Citrus High School. "I still wonder what my life would have been without them. 'Would I be an artist today?' Before I could thank them again, they were gone. I know they would have waved away my thanks and said they were only doing their job. A job that changed lives."

**"The Inker's Shadow" will be available at booksellers on Sept. 29 for \$19.99. Visit [www.scholastic.com](http://www.scholastic.com) for more information or call (800) 724-6527, ext. 4.**

— Pacific Citizen Staff



Say as a cadet private wearing his shooting metals in October 1953

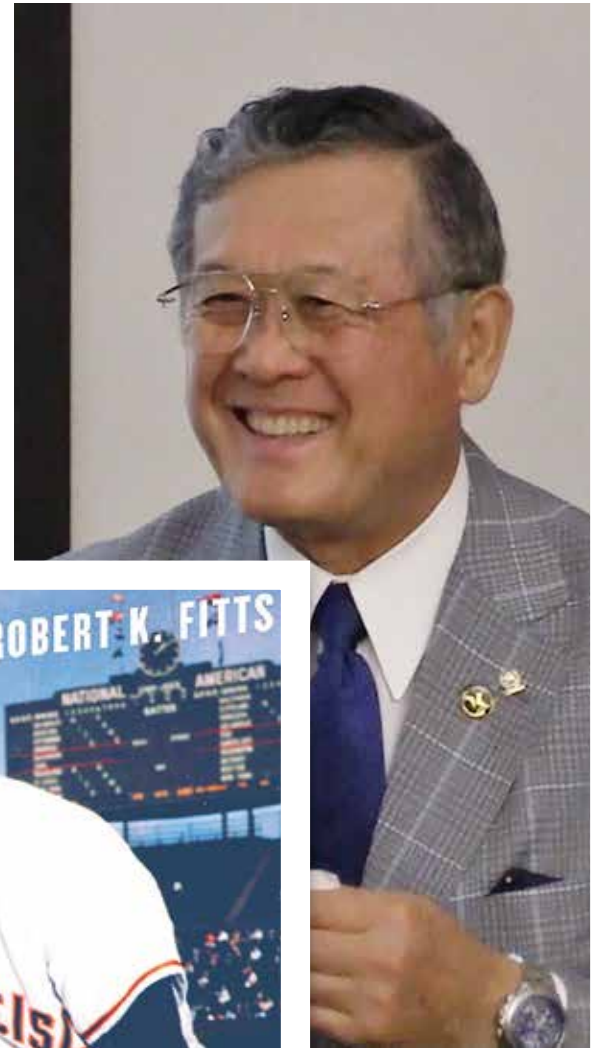


Say's latest graphic novel is a companion to the Sibert Honor book "Drawing From Memory."





During his nationwide U.S. book tour, Masanori Murakami stopped in Whittier, Calif., and Little Tokyo in Los Angeles to meet and greet his fans.



PHOTOS: COURTESY MASANORI MURAKAMI

# FROM BASEBALL AND BEYOND WITH MASHI MURAKAMI



Masanori 'Mashi' Murakami made MLB baseball history when he became the first Japanese national to play in U.S. professional baseball. He made his debut with the San Francisco Giants as a left-handed relief pitcher in 1964.



Author Rob Fitts accompanied Murakami on his U.S. promotional book tour. In addition to his book about Murakami, Fitts is the author of "Wally Yonamine: The Man Who Changed Baseball."



Murakami went on to become the Giants' top reliever and also one of the most-beloved players on that team's roster.





During his book tours, Murakami took the time to personally sign his book and greet his fans.

## The baseball legend and author Rob Fitts travel the U.S. to meet fans and speak about a new book detailing Murakami's experience in Major League Baseball.

By **Connie K. Ho,**  
Contributor

Before Yu Darvish of the Texas Rangers and Ichiro Suzuki of the Miami Marlins, there was Masanori “Mashi” Murakami, who became the first Japanese national to play in Major League Baseball. His story has now been documented by New York City-based author Rob Fitts in his new work “Mashi: The Unfulfilled Baseball Dreams of Masanori Murakami, the First Japanese Major Leaguer.” For more than two weeks in June, Murakami and Fitts traveled the U.S. to meet fans and speak about the book.

Fitts, author of books such as “Wally Yonamine: The Man Who Changed Baseball,” first had the idea to write the book in 2003. He had interviewed Murakami for another story and realized that there was a larger narrative at play. He began working on the book in 2012, completing a year of research.

“When I start a project, I read everything possible out there, anything that possibly could be of interest,” Fitts said. “It gives me the background to figure out what’s important.”

Fitts also traveled to Japan, spending a week with Murakami and a translator, as well as interviewed several former San Francisco Giants players who were teammates of Murakami.

“What was surprising about Mashi’s story was when I first thought about writing this book, I thought it was going to be the story of the difficulties a 20-year-old Japanese would encounter — the stereotypes against the Japanese were really strong back then. I thought it would

be a book about perseverance, overcoming hardship, but it wasn’t,” Fitts said. “Mashi’s personality is so outgoing, so easygoing — he has a good sense of humor, he embraced American culture and he had very few hardships.”

Murakami and Fitts recently embarked on a nationwide tour to promote the book, and their visit to the U.S. corresponded with the 50th anniversary of the first Japanese baseball player in the major leagues.

To raise funds for the tour, Fitts launched a Kickstarter campaign and was able to raise more than \$6,000. Some of those who participated in the fundraiser were able to receive rewards, such as signed memorabilia and copies of the book, and the funds helped cover the travel costs of Tokyo-based Murakami. The Kickstarter campaign description listed some of the trials and tribulations Murakami faced as a baseball player:

“In March 1964, the Nankai Hawks of Japan’s Pacific League sent three teenagers to the U.S. to train with the San Francisco Giants’ minor league teams. One of them was Murakami, a 6-foot left-handed pitcher who was sent to the Fresno Giants of the Single A California League. Mashi worked hard to learn American customs and fit in.

“In need of a left-handed relief pitcher for the pennant race, in September, the San Francisco Giants called up Mashi to the big leagues. With an inning of relief against the New York Mets on Sept. 1, Murakami became the first Japanese to appear in a major league game. Mashi went on to become the Giants’ top left-handed reliever and one of the most popular players on the star-studded team.

“Not surprisingly, the Giants offered him a contract for the 1965 season. Murakami signed, announcing that he’d be thrilled to stay in San Francisco. There was just one problem — the Nankai Hawks wanted him to return to Japan.

“The dispute over Murakami’s contract would last all winter and cause Major League Baseball to suspend all ties to Japan. Finally, in May, the two teams reached an agreement. Mashi would pitch for the Giants in 1965 and then would be allowed to decide where he’d wish to finish his career. Murakami pitched well and yearned to remain in the major

leagues, but cultural ties and obligations forced him to return to Japan.”

Stops on the book tour included visits to Los Angeles and Whittier, Calif. The visits included remarks by Fitts, a Q & A session with Murakami and a screening of a clip from Yuriko Gamo Romer’s upcoming documentary “Diamond Diplomacy,” which centers on the relationship between U.S. and Japan via baseball.

One of the visits took place at the Japan Foundation, Los Angeles. Murakami spoke about his first pitch in the major leagues against the New York Mets. He described how he walked up to the pitching mound, humming [the] ‘Sukiyaki’ song to become more at ease in front of a crowd of 40,000. He also shared some amusing anecdotes, including his proud moment of making a hit from legendary Dodgers pitcher Sandy Koufax.

“About 60 people attended. Most of them are local fans of MLB,” said Tatsuya Kawashima, a program officer for arts and culture at the Japan Foundation. “I am surprised local Americans have more interest in Mashi than local Japanese.”

Joseph Price, professor of religious studies and co-director of the Institute for Baseball Studies at Whittier College, enjoyed hearing the presentation at Whittier College and learning more about Murakami’s story. The evening was the first speaker series hosted by the college’s Institute for Baseball Studies.

“I knew that we were in store for a dynamic evening,” said Price.

During the evening presentation in Whittier, Murakami fielded a question from a former umpire and described an experience at Dodger stadium where his pitch had appeared to be a strike but had been called a ball. Murakami gestured to the umpire, asking him what was wrong with the pitch. The umpire wanted Murakami to return to the mound, but Murakami instead took the rosin bag, tossed it in the air and then was ejected from the game by the umpire. For Murakami, the experience was significant in that, a week later, Japanese men approached him to thank him for acting in such a way. To them, it felt like a silent protest against the ways they had been treated at the internment camps in World War II.

Speaking to the crowd of over 100, Murakami also expressed that he would have liked to have pitched more for the Giants and had a longer career in the U.S. major leagues.

Reminiscing on his trip with Murakami, Fitts noted that it was fun to spend time with his subject after completing years of research and writing for the biography.

“It was the trip of a lifetime,” he said.



Murakami (right) and author Fitts signed numerous copies of the book during their nationwide tour.



PHOTOS: API EQUALITY-LA

# SUPPORTERS OF LGBT EQUALITY RALLY AGAINST HOMOPHOBIA IN THE SAN GABRIEL VALLEY

By Marshall Wong

Ten years ago, anti-LGBT forces gathered in vitriolic protests in the San Gabriel Valley — the heart of Los Angeles' Chinese American community — against same-sex marriage and LGBT equality. It was a jarring sight: hundreds of Chinese people, young and old, led by religious extremists, carrying signs with hateful messages denigrating the LGBT community. Even more distressing was that these protests went virtually unchallenged, and coverage by the Chinese-language media made it appear that homophobia was a Chinese cultural norm.

Those protests in 2005 catalyzed the formation of API Equality-LA, a grassroots organization committed to advancing LGBT equality in the Asian American community. Now 10 years later, as a result of those efforts, there has been a seismic shift in public opinion in support of LGBT civil rights.

On July 19, barely a month after the Supreme Court's decision that legalized same-sex marriage through-out the U.S., API Equality-LA learned that conservative Chinese clergy in the San Gabriel Valley had planned a march on July 19 to protest the Supreme Court ruling.

API Equality-LA, Asian Americans Advancing Justice-LA and other allies sprang into action and in less than 48 hours, mobilized more than 125 supporters to rally across the street from the church leading the homophobic march.

In the face of hate and intolerance, the crowd delivered a message of hope and equality. LGBT supporters chanted "open hearts, open minds, this is how our community shines," throughout the organized gathering.

Speakers included Congresswoman Judy Chu; L.A. Community College Board Members Mike Eng, Mike Fong and Scott Svonkin; and San Gabriel Mayor Jason Pu; West Covina Mayor Pro-Tem James Toma; and Rosemead City Council Member Polly Low.

Several ministers, including Rev. Nori Ochi, Rev. Mark Nakagawa and Rev. Gary Oba also spoke of their support for the LGBT community, demonstrating that intolerant clergy do not speak for all Christians.



More than 125 supporters showed unity and compassion during the July 19 LGBT rally.



Rally participants held up bilingual signs in support of equality.

In addition, representatives of Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (API Chapter), OCA (Greater Los Angeles chapter), Asian Pacific AIDS Intervention Team and Chinese Rainbow Assn. were also in attendance. It was a stunning demonstration of the growing breadth of support for LGBT equality in the Asian American community.

In contrast, the opposition drew fewer than 20 supporters, illustrating their declining influence.

Said API Equality-LA Executive Director Eileen Ma: "Throughout history, Chinese Americans have fought back against discriminatory immigration laws, bans on interracial



API Equality-LA Executive Director Eileen Ma said, "Today's outpouring of support for marriage equality and LGBT rights is a powerful symbol of the progress we've made."



Congresswoman Judy Chu voiced her support during the LGBT rally in the San Gabriel Valley.

marriage, legal segregation and hate violence. Based on this legacy, we should be the first to stand up against all forms of bigotry, including homophobia. Today's outpouring of support for marriage equality and LGBT rights is a powerful symbol of the progress we've made. Together, we are making history."

## SECRET MANZANAR GUAYULE RUBBER PROJECT TO BE SPOTLIGHTED IN EDUCATIONAL FORUM

LOS ANGELES — The Secret Manzanar Guayule Rubber Project, a program sponsored by the Manzanar Committee about the high-quality, natural rubber from the Guayule (pronounced y-yoo-lee) plant that was researched and developed, in part, by Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated at the Manzanar concentration camp during World War II, will be held on Aug. 30 at 1 p.m. at the Merit Park recreation room in Gardena, Calif.

Rubber was in short supply during World War II, and

with the United States in need of a new source of rubber, the United States Government invested \$37 million to support the Emergency Rubber Project (ERP) in Salinas, Calif., where more than 1,000 scientists and technicians worked to plant and grow 32,000 acres of Guayule, a plant native to Mexico.

A smaller Guayule rubber project was started at Manzanar to develop techniques for faster growth of the plant and to increase yield of a higher-quality rubber.

On five acres of land, and at a cost of about \$100, 40 Manzanar incarcerated produced a higher yield plant and a higher-quality rubber than the Salinas Project or natural tree rubber.

Featured at the event will be Glenn H. Kageyama, Ph.D., Professor of Neuroscience and Cell Biology at California Polytechnic University, Pomona, whose father was the late Frank Kageyama, a horticulturalist who was a key figure in the Manzanar project during his incarceration. Glenn Kageyama will speak about the history of Guayule and his father's work. He also will demonstrate how to make rubber from Guayule.

Also featured will be Colleen McMahan, Ph.D., lead research chemist for the Agricultural Research Service Domestic Natural Rubber Project, United States Department of Agriculture, who will talk about Guayule as a domestic source of high-quality natural rubber, as well as its potential for low-cost bioenergy fuel.

The Manzanar Committee is dedicated to educating and raising public awareness about the incarceration and violation of civil rights of persons of Japanese ancestry during World War II and to the continuing struggle of all peoples when Constitutional rights are in danger. A non-profit organization that has sponsored the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage since 1969, along with other educational programs, the Manzanar Committee has also played a key role in the establishment and continued development of the Manzanar National Historic Site.

*The event is free and open to the public. The Merit Park recreation room is located at 58 Merit Park Dr. For more information, call (323) 662-5102 or e-mail [info@manzanarcommittee.org](mailto:info@manzanarcommittee.org).*



## LITTLE TOKYO DEDICATES SEI FUJII MEMORIAL LANTERN

The galvanized steel monument honors the life and legacy of the community newspaper publisher and civil rights activist.

A monument honoring newspaper publisher and civil rights activist Sei Fujii was dedicated in Little Tokyo on Aug. 1 at the former site of the *Kashu Mainichi* to pay homage to Fujii's lifelong efforts to better further the lives of Japanese Americans.

Fujii, who immigrated to the U.S. in 1903, graduated from USC Law School in 1911, but was not able to become an attorney because he was not an American citizen.

However, he worked alongside classmate J. Marion Wright, a civil rights attorney, and together they appealed and won a U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1928 to allow Japanese physicians in Los Angeles to construct one of the first Japanese hospitals in the country.

Fujii and Wright also challenged the Alien Land Act, which prevented Japanese and other "aliens" ineligible for citizenship from owning land in California. In *Fujii v. California*, the

duo was able to appeal the challenge to the California Supreme Court. The California Alien Land Law was ruled unconstitutional in 1952.

Fujii also became publisher of the *Kashu Mainichi*, a daily Japanese newspaper. During his work there, he worked to inform and unite the growing immigrant community within Little Tokyo.

In 1954, Fujii finally became a U.S. citizen. He passed away from a heart attack at age 72, only 51 days after being granted citizenship.

The 8-foot-tall galvanized steel lantern, located on Second Street at the entrance to the Japanese Village Plaza, was designed



A photo of Sei Fujii from the USC School of Law Class of 1911 album



The new Sei Fujii monument is located at the entrance to the Japanese Village Plaza on Second Street in Los Angeles.

by Miles Endo of Studio Endo and is an interpretation of a lantern located in Fujii's birthplace in the city of Iwakuni in

Yamaguchi Prefecture.

The Little Tokyo Historical Society helped raise more than \$30,000 to bring about the lantern's completion. The LTHS also produced the award-winning 2012 short film "Lil Tokyo Reporter," which starred Chris Tashima as Fujii and was directed by Jeffrey Gee Chin, both of whom were in attendance at the ceremony.

"Sei Fujii contributed greatly to the lives we live today," said Chin.

Also present were Fujii's daughter, Ruth Toshiko Matsuo Brandt, and her daughter, Lucia, both of whom were grateful that Fujii's legacy to improve the lives of others would forever be remembered. ■

## SNOWBALL WEST'S PETITION TO NEGATE TUNA CANYON'S LANDMARK STATUS DENIED

Judge Joanne O'Donnell on Aug. 12 denied Snowball West's petition to negate the 2013 resolution by the Los Angeles City Council to set aside one acre of land — now the site of the Verdugo Hills Golf Course — for a memorial to the Tuna Canyon Detention Station.

Present at the decision, which was handed down at the Stanley Mosk Courthouse, were Tuna Canyon Detention Station Coalition members Lloyd Hitt, Nancy Oda, Kanji Sahara, Bill Stiles, Marc Stirdivant and Nancy Takayama.

After three trips to the Stanley Mosk Courthouse with coalition members, Oda recalled, "We look forward to working with the owners to make a memorial onsite. We are pleased that the city's designation was upheld as legal."

Upon hearing O'Donnell's ruling, Snowball West lawyer Fred Gaines argued that the resolution was faulty because the land designated was a geometric shape that was drawn on a photograph, further stating that a memorial cannot be built with information that is not concise.

Snowball West Investments currently owns the golf course, and it wants to build a housing subdivision on the property, which is located in Tujunga, Calif. During World War II, Tuna Canyon Detention Station held more than 2,000 people, mostly Japanese Americans. At one point, there were seven barracks, an infirmary, mess hall and office buildings. The camp closed in 1943 and buildings were torn down to make way for the golf course.

Snowball West has acknowledged the significance of the area but has maintained that formal landmark status will make development more difficult.

In the meantime, more details on the site may be necessary. If Snowball West appeals the decision, the current City Council would then review the new report. The current makeup of the City Council has changed since the 2013 council voted unanimously in favor of the resolution, introduced by then-Councilmember Richard Alarcon.

O'Donnell is the third judge on this case. She is expected to make her final ruling in the next few weeks. ■

## Consul General Furusawa Hosts Reception for New Honorary Consul

Robert Hirai is appointed Honorary Consul of Japan in Idaho.

Consul General Hiroshi Furusawa of the Consular Office of Japan in Portland, Ore., hosted a reception recently to recognize the appointment of Robert Hirai of Boise as Honorary Consul of Japan in Idaho.

More than 100 people were in attendance, which included state and city officials, congressional staff members, business executives, family and friends.

In his remarks, Consul General Furusawa expressed his goal of expanding the ties of both commercial and cultural interactions between the nation of Japan and the state of Idaho.

He has visited with the mayors in the Treasure Valley to encourage the establishment of a Sister City relationship, which will lead to more frequent people-to-people exchanges, thus nurturing the understanding and friendship of people at the grass-roots level.

Lt. Gov. Brad Little reiterated those comments in his remarks, in which he also cited



(From left) are Consul General Hiroshi Furusawa, Idaho Japanese Assn. President Rika Torres, Honorary Consul Robert Hirai and State of Idaho Lt. Gov. Brad Little

the strong ties between Idaho and Japan and the importance of maintaining and growing these relationships.

Honorary Consul Hirai is a native of Idaho and has a vast background in finance and organizational development. He was previously the president of the Boise Valley Japanese American Citizens League.

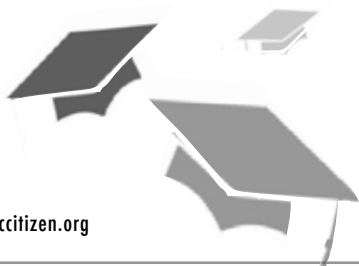
The Government of Japan, in accordance with regular practice, appoints Honorary Consuls in order to maintain the interests of their country and citizens, as well as promote cultural exchanges with foreign countries where official government offices cannot be established. ■

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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

# CALENDAR

## NCWNP

**Fun Nikkei Dog and Cupcakes Scholarship and Youth Fundraiser**  
Sacramento, CA

**Aug. 29; 5:30 p.m.**

**Buddhist Church of Florin**  
7235 Pritchard Road

**Price: Ticket prices vary.**

Support the Florin chapter's youth with hot dogs and cupcakes at its Scholarship and Youth Fundraiser this year. Ticket orders, sponsors, donors and volunteers are all encouraged to support this year's event. Bingo and a raffle are among the few activities anticipated this year, along with a dinner.  
**Info: Email Cindy Kakutani at [ctkakutani@frontiernet.net](mailto:ctkakutani@frontiernet.net).**

**'Fire of Freedom' Premiere**  
San Francisco, CA  
**Sept. 10-13 and 17-20; 8 p.m.**  
Fort Mason Center  
1 Franklin St.

**Price: General admission \$16**

Fort Mason Center presents in association with Asian Improv aRts, API Cultural Center and the Chinese Historical Society of America the 'Fire of Freedom,' a new site-specific multimedia immersive dance piece by Lenora Lee Dance.

**Info: Email [lenoraleedance@gmail.com](mailto:lenoraleedance@gmail.com), call (415) 345-7575 or visit [www.lenoraleedance.com](http://www.lenoraleedance.com).**

**35th Japantown Kimono Day**  
San Francisco, CA  
**Sept. 14**  
Kinokuniya Building  
1581 Webster St.

Put on a kimono and join the annual kimono celebration in Japantown. Enjoy shopping and dining with local shops and restaurants participating in the festivities. Advance registration is required, and kimono rentals are available. Special workshops will include a special dance from the San Francisco Awakko-Ren with an odori performance.

**Info: Register at [sfkimonoday@gmail.com](http://sfkimonoday@gmail.com) or visit <http://sfkimonodayen.blog.132.fc2.com/>.**

**'Above and Beyond Chinatown: CHSA Gala 2015'**

San Francisco, CA

**Sept. 19; 4-8 p.m.**

**Chinese Historical Society of America Museum**  
965 Clay St.

**Price: Single ticket \$150**

The Chinese Historical Society of America's annual gala will honor Cecilia Chiang and Liam Mayclem. Chiang is best known for bringing authentic and high-quality cuisine to American audiences and was featured in the PBS TV documentary "Soul of a Banquet." Mayclem is a hot at CBS 5's "Eye on the Bay" and is frequently heard on KCBS' "Foodie Chap."  
**Info: Visit [www.chsa.org](http://www.chsa.org) or call (415) 391-1188.**

**'The Legend of Ko'olau'**  
Berkeley, CA

**Oct. 2-3; 8 p.m.**

**La Pena Cultural Center**  
3105 Shattuck Ave.

**Price: Advance purchase \$25; general admission \$30**

Award-winning writer Gary T. Kubota presents the Northern California premiere of his national touring play "The Legend of Ko'olau" for two nights. The historic-based play is about one man's fight against forced internment that leads to a historic gun battle between him and the army that overthrew the Hawaiian monarchy in 1893.

**Info: Visit [www.legendofkoolau.com](http://www.legendofkoolau.com) or call (510) 849-2568.**

**Kimochi Silver Bells: Arts, Crafts and Food Fair**  
San Francisco, CA  
**Dec. 12; 10 a.m.-4p.m.**  
St. Mary's Cathedral  
1111 Gough St.

**Price: Free**

Don't miss this one-stop shopping event for all your holiday gifts at the annual Kimochi Silver Bells event. This all-day event will feature Asian- and Pacific Islander-themed arts, crafts and foods from more than 90 vendors, including the Soap Nymph, Jade Chocolates, Beefy & Co., Pigs Fly, Sente, Patricia Jeong and Totally Oishii.

**Info: Visit [www.kimochi-inc.org](http://www.kimochi-inc.org), call (415) 931-2294 or email**

**[kimochikal@kimochi-inc.org](mailto:kimochikal@kimochi-inc.org).**

## PSW

**'Never Forget' Gala**

San Diego, CA

**Sept. 19; 3 p.m.**

**Mission Valley Marriott**  
8757 Rio San Diego Dr.

**Price: Single ticket \$125**

The San Diego JACL chapter invites all to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, honoring veterans of the 100th and 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Military Intelligence Service and all Nisei WWII veterans and their families. Invited guests are Adm. Harry B. Harris Jr., commander of the U.S. Pacific Fleet; San Diego Mayor Kevin Falconer; Congressman Scott Peters; and members of the San Diego City Council.  
**Info: Call Robert Ito at (619) 954-7017 or email at [Robert@itogirard.com](mailto:Robert@itogirard.com).**

**'Legacy of Heart Mountain' Screening**

Orange, CA

**Oct. 1; 7-9 p.m.**

**1 University Dr.**

**Price: Free**

Chapman University will be hosting a free showing of the Emmy Award-winning documentary "The Legacy of Heart Mountain." The documentary is about the imprisonment of Japanese Americans in incarceration camps during World War II, specifically Heart Mountain Camp in Wyoming. Toshi Ito, a Chapman alumna, will also be sharing his stories during the event.

**Info: Call Stephanie Takaragawa at (714) 532-7771.**

## EDC

**'Samurai' Exhibit**  
Worcester, MA

**Sept. 6**

**Worcester Art Museum**  
55 Salisbury St.

**Price: Adult \$14**

Editor and founder of Giant Robot Magazine Eric Nakamura will explore the history and popular culture of

the samurai at this groundbreaking exhibit, which will combine historical Japanese arms and armor from the Worcester Art Museum and John Woodman Higgins collections with work by contemporary artists inspired by samurai and their enduring myth.  
**Info: Visit [www.worcesterart.org](http://www.worcesterart.org) or call (508) 799-4406.**

**'Allegiance'**

New York, NY

**Nov. 8**

**Longacre Theatre**  
220 W. 48th St.

George Takei's "Allegiance" is a dramatic musical that tells the story of siblings Sammy and Kei Kimura, a brother and sister. Together, they face the challenges and struggles of incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II.

**Info: Visit [www.allegiancemusical.com](http://www.allegiancemusical.com).**

## MDC

**Art Event and Musical Evening presented by New Mexico**

JACL Albuquerque, NM

**Sept. 19; 5:30-9 p.m.**

**1701 Fourth St.**

**Price: Free**

The evening will showcase internationally renowned artist and photographer Patrick Nagatani and other artisans such as Betty Hahn, Wendy Kawabata, Takashi Murakami, Yoshiko Shimano and Shira L'Heureux. New Mexico Taiko will also make an appearance at this special evening of art and music.

**Info: Visit [www.nmjacl.org](http://www.nmjacl.org) or call (505) 883-5320.**

**Aki Matsuri 2015**

Albuquerque, NM

**Sept. 20**

**National Hispanic Cultural Center**

**1701 Fourth St.**

**Price: \$5 donation**

Join the New Mexico JACL chapter at its annual Aki Matsuri celebration supported in part by an award from New Mexico Arts. This year's theme is "Mukashi Banashi: Japanese Folk Tales," featuring dancing, storytelling

and other activities related to popular ancient folk tales passed down for generations. Enjoy a full day of food and live entertainment. Free parking will be available.  
**Info: Visit [www.nmjacl.org](http://www.nmjacl.org) or call (505) 883-5320.**

## PNW

**'Growing Up Behind Barbed Wire'**

Kent, WA

**Sept. 19; 3 p.m.**

**Kent Lutheran Church**  
335 Second Ave. South

**Price: Donation \$10**

Following a showing of "The Legacy of Heart Mountain" by David Ono, Amy and Lilly Kato will share their personal recollections of being forced to move from Kent to Heart Mountain. These two sisters were teenagers at the time of E.O. 9066. The event will be moderated by Puyallup Valley Chapter VP Eileen Yamada Lamphere and is sponsored by the Greater Kent Historical Society.

**Info: Visit [www.gkhs.org](http://www.gkhs.org) or call (254) 854-4330.**

**20th Annual Japanese American New Year Celebrations**

**Mochitsuki**

**Portland, WA**

**Jan. 31**

**Portland State University**

**1825 S.W. Broadway**

Portland's annual Japanese New Year celebration has been going on since 1996. The goal of Mochitsuki is to celebrate tradition by sharing Japanese and Japanese American culture. Portland welcomes all to join the celebration while enjoying great food, performers and activities.

**Info: Visit [www.mochipdx.org](http://www.mochipdx.org). ■**

## ADVERTISE HERE

Events in the calendar section are listed based on space availability. Place a 'Spotlight' ad with photos of your event for maximum exposure.

**FOR MORE INFO:**  
[tiffany@pacificcitizen.org](mailto:tiffany@pacificcitizen.org)  
(213) 620-1767





# In Memoriam

**Ito, Sachiko, 83**, Culver City, CA; Aug. 16; she is survived by her husband, Soki Ito; children, Christine Naomi (Kenji) Kobayashi and Andy (Mayumi) Ito; siblings, Hideko (Keiichiro) Sekiya, Machiko Bessho, Setsuko (Kazuhiko) Nabeshima and Koichi (Emiko) Bessho; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; gc: 2.

**Makiyama, Ben Hayato, 82**, Rosemead, CA; Aug. 6; he is survived by his son, David Kazuo Makiyama; daughter, Pamela Kimiye Makiyama; brother, James Shoji (Takako) Makiyama; sister, Takaye (Richard) Kawashima; sister-in-law, Kiyomi Makiyama; he is also survived by many nephews, nieces and other relatives; gc: 3.

**Takahashi, Masao, 91**, Modesto, CA; July 25; he was a 100th and 442nd veteran; he was predeceased by his brother, Hideo "Pete" and Yoshio "Weesh" Takahashi; sisters, Mito Takeshita and Toshi Nakahira; he is survived by his wife, Elma; children, Larry Scott (Susan Markee), Donna (Dwayne McMullen), Gail (Christian Schmitz) and Teresa (Eric Eaton) Takahashi; he is also survived by many relatives and

friends; gc: 2.

**Tanaka, Joy Ihoko, 83**, Los Angeles, CA; July 20; she was an atomic bomb survivor; she is survived by her husband, Osamu Fred Tanaka; daughters, Cindy (Shigeto) Inoue and Cathy T. Tanaka; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Toji, Robert Kazunobu, 63**, Los Angeles, CA; Aug. 9; he is survived by his wife, Suzanne Mayumi Toji; children, Marcus Mamoru Toji, Jared and Kirk Nishikawa; siblings, Dean (Gisele) Toji, Suzanne (Michael) Tobin and Gail Finney; sister-in-law, Jamie (Tim) Hamano; brother-in-law, Ron (Geri) Tostubo; he is also survived by other relatives and friends. ■

## TRIBUTE

### KEIJI JOHN HIRAGA



Keiji (Kei) John Hiraga was born Oct. 31, 1920, in Belvedere (East Los Angeles) CA. He passed away at his home in Fresno, CA, on Thursday, July 9, 2015, at the age of 94.

Kei spent his early childhood in Southern California, eventually moving to Castroville, CA, where he graduated from Monterey High School in 1939. In 1942, he and his family were interned during World War II, at Tule Lake Relocation Center, CA. Kei joined the U.S. Army in 1944, serving in the Military Intelligence

Service (MIS). He was stationed in the Philippine Islands and postwar Tokyo, Japan. He and other members of the MIS were recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal in 2011.

After the war, he met and married his wife, Catherine, in Chicago, IL. They resided in New York, Missouri and Kansas before settling in Sanger, CA, where they resided for 50 years. Kei worked as a chick sexer for 40 years, retiring in 1985. Kei could be found on the Airways Golf Course or attending his grandsons' sporting events. He was an avid follower of football, his allegiance with the Los Angeles (St. Louis) Rams and Sanger High Apaches. He also enjoyed track and field, and served as an official at local track meets for many years.

Kei enjoyed spending time with his friends and relatives, especially over a meal that included shrimp tempura and orange chicken. Kei is survived by daughters, Donna Hiraga-Stephens (Alan Stephens) of Berkeley, CA, and Iris Hiraga of Fresno, CA; son, Ronald Hiraga (Gayle Nishikawa) of Albany, CA; and five grandsons, Evan and Cory Hiraga, Nicolas and Daniel Stephens, and Troy Higgins. He is also survived by his brother, William (Willy), and his sister, Shirley Ito, as well as many in-laws, nieces and nephews and their families.

### TOSHIKO SHIMOURA

Toshiko K. Shimoura, age 88, Feb. 28, 2015. Beloved wife of the late James N. Shimoura. Dearest mother of James, the late Gerald, Steven and Susan (Gerald) Hane. Sister of the late Hideo Katsumoto, the late Tomi (Fred) Miyamoto, Kiyoshi (Irene Emiko) Katsumoto and Takeshi (Eleanor) Katsumoto. Loving grandmother of Michael, Robert and Elizabeth Shimoura; and Carolyn and Evan Hane.

Born and raised in Fremont, CA. Interned at Topaz, Utah, relocation center during World War II. Proud attendee of Michigan State University and graduate of University of California, Berkeley, Class of 1949 with a bachelor of science in public health.

A dedicated community leader and volunteer for the Japanese American Citizens League Detroit Chapter for over 60 years. A professor and mentor in teaching and demonstrating the art of Ikebana flower arranging, and founding member of the Ikebana International Society-Detroit Chapter. She was recognized for the promotion of Japanese culture in the United States as the recipient of the Foreign Minister's Commendation by the Government of Japan in 2014.

Memorial Service was held on Thursday, March 26, at Christ Church Cranbrook, Bloomfield Hills, MI.

In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made in Memory of Toshiko Shimoura to the: "Ikebana International Society-Detroit Chapter #85", c/o Stephanie Green, 9000 E. Jefferson Ave., Apt. 23-3, Detroit, MI 48214 or the "Japanese American Citizens League-Mike M. Masaoka Fellowship Fund," Japanese American Citizens League, attn: Business Office, 1763 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

## TRIBUTE

### YUKIKO YUGE

Yukiko Yuge (94) passed away on May 8, 2015 in Gardena, CA. She is predeceased by her husband, Kanji Yuge, and son, Steven Yuge; survived by her son, Kenneth (Dora) Yuge; grandson, Keith Yuge; sister, Midori (Roy) Sakamoto; brother-in-law, Masakazu Sameshima; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A private funeral service was held on Thursday, May 21, 2015, at L.A. Hompa Hongwanji Buddhist Temple. (213) 749-1449 [www.kubotanikkeimortuary.com](http://www.kubotanikkeimortuary.com).

### TOSHIYE OHIGASHI

Toshiye Ohigashi (92) passed away on June 28, 2015, in Santa Monica. She is survived by her husband, Yutaka Ohigashi; son, Steven Ohigashi; granddaughter, Kristy Ohigashi; brothers-in-law, Itsuto (Shizuko) and Mamoru (Tetsuko) Ohigashi of Japan; sister-in-law, Suemi Miyamoto; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives in the U.S. and Japan.

A funeral service was held on Friday, July 31, 2015, at West L.A. Buddhist Temple. (213) 749-1449 [www.kubotanikkeimortuary.com](http://www.kubotanikkeimortuary.com).

### ASAKO SAKAI YAMASHITA



Asako Sakai Yamashita died at the age of 98 in Santa Cruz, CA. Born in San Francisco, she was the fifth child in a family of nine children. Her Japanese immigrant parents, Tei and Kitaichi Sakai, opened the Uoki Sakai Fish Market, operated by the family for 103 years in Japan-town/Nihonmachi, San Francisco. Asako graduated from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1941 with a degree in psychology. The following year, wartime Executive Order 9066 forced the incarceration of 110,000 Japanese Americans in concentration camps, and Asako and her family were imprisoned in one of 10 camps — Topaz, in Delta, Utah. Returning to San Francisco at the end of the war, she met and married the Rev. H. John Yamashita in 1948 and supported his work at the Oakland West Tenth Methodist Church. In 1952, she moved with her husband and baby daughter to Los Angeles, continuing to support John's work at the Centenary Methodist Church and raising two daughters. In the 1960s, she returned to school and received her teaching certificate from the University of Southern California. She taught elementary school in the Los Angeles Unified School District for 19 years. After John's retirement from the ministry, the couple traveled together through Japan, Europe and South America. Asako also traveled with her sisters and close friends to over 50 countries across the world. And she took her grandchildren on many trips, from the Galapagos to Rome. In 2003, she moved from Gardena, CA, to Santa Cruz to live with her daughter, Karen Tei Yamashita, professor of literature and creative writing at UCSC. Over the next 12 years, Asako tended her garden of orchids, continued to be an avid reader, and attended classes and lectures, enjoying the company of UCSC colleagues and students.

Asako was predeceased by her husband, Rev. H. John Yamashita; and is survived by daughters, Karen Tei Yamashita and Jane Tomi Boltz; their spouses, Ronaldo Lopes de Oliveira and Howard "Pat" Boltz; grandchildren, Jane Tei and Jon Oliveira, Mary Jane and Lucy Boltz; great-grandchildren, Milton, Andrew and Andrea Oliveira, and Javon Oliveira Chavez; sister, Iku Hopes of Evanston, Illinois; brother, Dr. Hisaji Sakai of Walnut Creek, California; and many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

A committal service will be held at 11 a.m. on Saturday, Sept. 26, 2015, at Green Hills Memorial Park, 27501 S. Western Ave., Rancho Palos Verdes, CA. A memorial service will be held at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 7, 2015, at Lake Park United Methodist Church, 281 Santa Clara Ave., Oakland, CA.

Contributions in Asako's honor may be made payable to JACL, with notation, "Rev. H. John & Asako Yamashita Memorial Scholarship Fund" addressed to National Japanese American Citizens League, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

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## CELEBRATION >> continued from page 3

Also, the way we speak — some of us know a lot, some hardly any at all — marks us as sort-of-Japanese. That's because most JA families arrived in the U.S. between the 1880s and 1924, when immigration from Japan was sealed off. So, some of our culture, including some of our words, are old fashioned and little-used today.

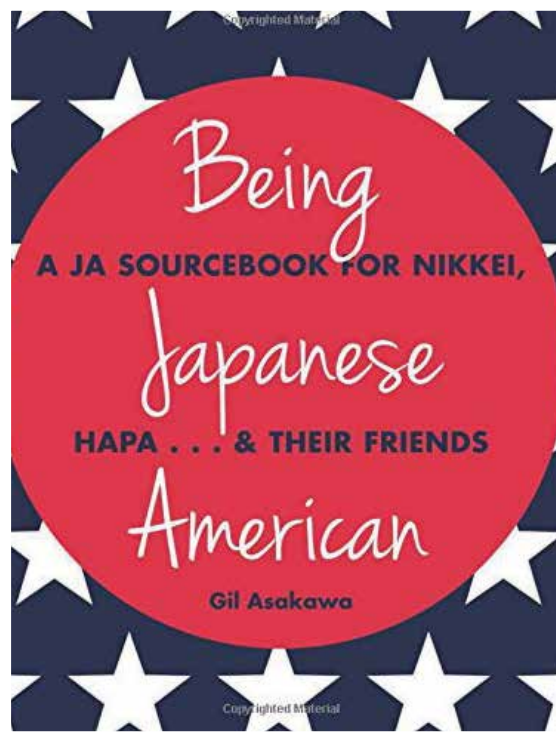
My favorite distinctly JA word is one I like to use to describe my book: "Being Japanese American" is a perfect "benjo book."

*Benjo*, or "O-benjo," means "bathroom" to JAs, and to Japanese way back in the day. But Japanese today use more refined words. The most polite term is *o-te-arai*, or "place to wash hands." But most common today is *toi-leh*, which is how Japanese pronounce "toilet." But JAs still use the old word. At the end of every big holiday feast as people are leaving with the *nokori* or "leftovers," you'll hear Auntie so-and-so yell out, "Wait a minute, I have to go benjo first."

I tell audiences that my book is a perfect benjo book. Japanese Americans guffaw and everyone else gives me a quizzical look. Japanese from Japan frown slightly because they think I'm just being rude and crude.

But the book is organized in chapters with short bits of text in the margins (common words and phrases and their meanings, or quotes from JA and Japanese Canadians, and increasingly, mixed-race people, about how they relate to the ethnic identity). So, it's easy to read in small chunks, a few minutes at a time.

Like I said, a perfect benjo book!



I often sign my books with the phrase, "To celebrate JA culture is to celebrate *American* culture!" But I'm going to add a new phrase next to my signature: "Be JA!"

*Gil Asakawa is a P.C. Editorial Board member and former Board Chair. He is AARP's AAPI Marketing Communications Consultant, and he blogs at www.nikkeiview.com. A new revised edition of his book, "Being Japanese American," has just been published in August by Stone Bridge Press.*

## EXPERIENCE >> continued from page 3

During the convention, I learned more about social justice, racial equality and current political issues. It really surprised me that JACL was so involved in so many current civil rights activities. I always thought from growing up that the organization was now more for maintaining our civil liberties and the group was most active during the time of internment and terrible segregation. That turned out to be definitely *not* the case.

It also surprised me that the JACL not only tackled political and social problems regarding Japanese Americans but also has recently expanded its influence to other minority groups such as African Americans and the LGBTQIAAP community. It was extremely thought-provoking and valuable to hear first-hand stories from LGBT members about their hardships and struggles growing up.

Now that I'm of voting age, learning about political issues such as these is becoming more important for my development as a Japanese American citizen. I now see the JACL as an invaluable organization for me to be a part of. There, I can build up my political awareness and

views in hopes to contribute to the JACL and the world.

All in all, I really enjoyed my experience as a youth representative in the 2015 National Convention, and I wish to spread awareness of our existence to many more people. I have learned so much about the goals of the JACL as well as its legacy from the past. Seeing how the JACL functions first-hand, I am certain that I would like to become a more active member and participate in fighting whatever social or political issue that may arise.

From what I saw during the convention, the JACL will only grow larger and widen its powerful, positive influence to minority groups around the globe. We are living in a rapidly evolving world, and the issues of today can only be solved through the dedicated, strategic approach of experienced, informed civil rights advocates.

I have high hopes that the JACL will continue its strong influence and aim to make the world a better place.

*Brandon Yee is the JACL Philadelphia Chapter Youth Representative.*






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