



# PACIFIC CITIZEN



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**NATALIE NAKASE**

**The video coordinator intern for the  
NBA's Los Angeles Clippers paves her  
own path on and off the court.**

PHOTO: COURTESY OF NATALIE NAKASE



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# THE SPRING CAMPAIGN IS PIVOTAL

As you read this issue of the *Pacific Citizen*, its annual Spring Campaign is well under way. The Spring Campaign is your single most critical opportunity to support JACL's flagship publication. Each spring, your *P.C.* Editorial Board urges the JACL membership and the newspaper's nonmember subscribers to validate the

fine work of the *P.C.* and its resourceful staff through a financial contribution to the Spring Campaign. Each year, the membership and supportive readers find a way to meet our challenge; some years more so than others, but we all understand that life is, at best, unpredictable.

The *P.C.* itself is emerging from turbulent times, but the future looks bright. For the first time in a long time, we have strong leadership in place and a plan for the future. Executive Editor Allison Haramoto and her amazing staff are excited and ready to take the *P.C.* to the next level of excellence that our membership expects and deserves. The Spring Campaign is a pivotal piece of the financial strategy that will allow this growth to happen.

The *P.C.* is largely self-sustaining and has been that way for a significant amount of time. Except for funds provided by the JACL national budget for staffing, the *P.C.* generates its own funding to help National by paying its operational expenses such as rent, printing, postage, mailing, utilities, supplies and other typical costs associated with running a national publication. The *P.C.* has earned its way and

stood on its own from the beginning. Now it is time for the larger family of the JACL membership to support the *P.C.* as it enters the next stage of its life and grows into a new level of maturity that reflects and embraces technology.

With the financial stability provided through the Spring Campaign, the recently updated *P.C.* media plan can be implemented and the transition to a digital platform to supplement the traditional print version can begin. This long-overdue metamorphosis is vital to engaging fourth- and fifth-generation leaders to ensure that the JACL legacy survives and thrives.

Allison and her staff have taken great care to develop a plan that strives to do as much as possible as efficiently as possible. Creating a pool of "on-the-ground" contributors from within district councils and chapters around the country is a smart and cost effective strategy that will provide timely, diverse and relevant news content and feature stories. The plan also calls for the addition of an assistant editor with the social media and digital expertise desperately needed to update and guide the relaunch of the *P.C.* website.

Your investment in the *P.C.* is an investment in membership. The *P.C.* is truly JACL's communications pipeline. And we all know that membership is the lifeblood of the JACL.

If we do nothing, it is inevitable that the *P.C.* will become an endangered species on the brink of extinction. We cannot allow it to happen. Support the Spring Campaign. Support the *P.C.*

*Respectfully Submitted,*  
**Roberta Barton,**  
CCDC-JACL

## Letter to the Editor

### TULE LAKE INMATES

In John Tateishi's column from the March 21-April 3, 2014, edition of the *Pacific Citizen* titled, "Why . . . And What For?" he acknowledges, "There are those like the resisters, the No-No Boys, the renunciants and others, who may have legitimate gripes against the JACL for what happened during WWII." He goes on but is mistaken if he believes they have been effectively dealt with.

In 2002, the JACL did apologize to over 300 draft resisters, which has brought healing, but there was no mention of the 12,000 Tule Lake inmates who have been stigmatized by the JA community and the JACL as disloyal because they protested their unjust incarceration.

This is a group that has been maligned and unfairly labeled and

stereotyped, and the misunderstanding continues to this day, as evidenced by the common JACL use of the highly derogatory slur "No-No Boys" when referring to former Tule Lake inmates.

I wrote this commentary (*see Tule Lake Background on page 10 in this issue*) to help provide some background about Tule Lake and to urge JACL members to consider how they might heal the rift that has divided our community for more than 70 years.

*Respectfully submitted,*

**Yukio Kawaratani,**  
JACL member, California

**>> See LETTER on page 10**

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The ***Pacific Citizen*** newspaper (ISSN: 0030-8579) is published semi-monthly (except once in December and January) by the Japanese American Citizens League, *Pacific Citizen*, 250 E. First St., Suite 301, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Periodical postage paid at L.A., CA. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to National JACL, 1765 Sutter St., San Francisco, CA 94115.

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Periodicals paid at Los Angeles, Calif. and mailing office.



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# EDUCATION MATTERS

## NEW MEXICO JACL CHAPTER HOSTS FIRST TEACHER-TRAINING WORKSHOP FUNDED BY JACS GRANT

The New Mexico Chapter recently hosted the first teacher-training workshop funded by the Japanese American Confinement Sites grant, where teachers from the Albuquerque area took the day away from their classrooms to learn about the incarceration of Americans of Japanese ancestry by the U.S. government during World War II.

Although none of the 10 camps operated by the War Relocation Authority were in New Mexico, a number of confinement sites that were operated by the FBI or military were in the state. The workshop was able to draw light upon lesser-known confinement sites, including the Lordsburg Internment Camp in Hidalgo County, Fort Stanton in Lincoln County, Old Raton Ranch (Raton Ranch Civilian Detention Station) and the Santa Fe Internment Camp in Santa Fe County.

Jennifer Yazawa, who more than 10 years ago coordinated a teacher-training workshop funded in part through the federal Civil Liberties Public Education Program, again reached out to her cadre of resources to include various public school districts, as well as charter and private schools.

Victor Yamada, a recent “transplant” from Southern California, has been actively involved with the New Mexico Chapter. Yamada worked with Andrew Russell, a



The New Mexico JACL Chapter recently hosted the first teacher-training workshop funded by the Japanese American Confinement Sites grant. Among those who participated are (front row, from left) Nikki Nojima Louis, Ikuko Begay, Esther Churchwell, Jennifer Yazawa and (back row, from left) Steve Togami, Greg Marutani, Sharon Ishii-Jordan, Davis Begay and Victor Yamada. (Not pictured) Andrew Russell, professor at Central New Mexico Community College

professor at Central New Mexico Community College, to prepare the grant proposal to JACS for funds to assemble

a traveling exhibit that would tour throughout New Mexico. Both men recognized that the workshop would provide an excellent opportunity to inform teachers about the exhibit.

Also in attendance at the workshop were JACL New Mexico Chapter President Steve Togami; Davis Begay, honorary consul general for Japan, and his wife, Ikuko; Esther Churchwell; and Nikki Nojima Louis, who took part in the event by contributing her personal stories.

And Frank Fisher from the Federal Bureau of Investigation came for the morning session. He attended the workshop to learn more about the wartime experience of Japanese Americans, particularly Issei's picked up by the FBI during the 1940s. Agent Fisher is currently working with the New Mexico Chapter to have a few members speak to FBI staff so that they in turn can learn a part of the agency's history with the Japanese American experience.

A resource kit of more than 25 items, books, DVDs and teacher guides was presented to the New Mexico Chapter to augment its resource library. These items will now be made available to educators who would like to borrow the material to share in their classrooms.

The next workshop is scheduled for Phoenix, with Houston, Twin Cities and Livingston-Merced in the works. ■



## FOR THE RECORD

### THE NO-NO BOYS

By John Tateishi

Recently, the NCWNP district raised the No-No Boy issue, proposing that the JACL take a thorough look into the controversies surrounding the circumstances that led to the loyalty questionnaire in camp and, ultimately, to produce what amounts to a white paper and what I assume is an honest reckoning on this issue.

The NCWNP civil rights committee, by undertaking this new initiative, hopes to “show that [the No-Nos and renunciants] were not ‘disloyal’ as the government tried to tell us.” Furthermore, this investigation and recent historical research can serve to “debunk this myth [and accusation] of ‘disloyalty’” that “has harmed many families (down through the generations) and divided the Japanese American community.”

The ultimate goal, in addition to clearing the air, is to “hold the government accountable for this.”

I'm curious to know what the recent historical research is because, frankly, I'm not exactly sure what this new enterprise hopes to reveal that isn't already known about the infamous Questions 27 and 28 and their impact on the lives of Japanese Americans.

Will it implicate the JACL somehow in the nefarious workings of the questionnaire? I've no doubt there are researchers in the APA community who would love to find that connection, and frankly, if there is one, I'd like to know.

But I don't want assumptions and vague implications in place of facts and hard evidence. None of this “it appears that . . .” business. This is too serious to be based on nebulous information. But I trust the committee won't let it come down to speculation; I know Andy Noguchi, the chair of the committee, and I trust his integrity. He doesn't do things lightly and without reason.

So, if the research is able to make that connection, then I think we all need to know

about it. Let's get it out in the open and let the JACL's current leaders deal with it honestly and openly.

If the goal is to debunk the myth of disloyalty, however, I think I may have missed something somewhere because I can't imagine anyone in our community who still buys that old nonsense that the No-No Boys were disloyal. Maybe some of the veterans, but my sense is that that's more about hard feelings at this point than accusations of actual disloyalty.

Back in 1975, as the chair of the NCWN district's redress committee, I formed a select committee to put together a survey to measure how the JA community felt about redress. This was at a time when the vast majority strongly opposed the idea and I wanted a questionnaire to give me answers.

The committee consisted of Cherry Tsutsumida, the highest-ranking Asian in the Carter administration (she was temporarily living in S.F.); Ben Takeshita, committee co-chair; Ray Okamura, a virtual walking encyclopedia on the internment; and Mike Honda.

The survey wasn't intended to be statistically valid but to get answers. Cherry kept pointing out that questions were leading and obviously sought certain kinds of responses, which, admittedly, was true, but the questions gave those opposed to redress plenty of opportunities to let their views be known.

We ran into trouble when I wanted to include a question that said something like, “Do you think No-No Boys should be eligible for redress,” a provocative question in those days. Cherry said it was too volatile and would inflame the community.

>> See NO-NO BOYS on page 16



# 'RUSH' HOUR

Japanese American author Naomi Hirahara's new mystery series 'Murder on Bamboo Lane' follows 23-year-old Hapa bicycle police officer Ellie Rush as she pedals during the day through L.A. and rides the subway home at night.

By Nalea J. Ko  
Reporter

**F**ans of Japanese American author Naomi Hirahara's mystery novels have voraciously read for years about the fictitious antics of amateur detective and gardener Mas Arai, a character inspired by her late father, Isamu.

Now, the Pasadena, Calif.-based Japanese American writer has penned a new series "Murder on Bamboo Lane," following newbie bicycle police officer Ellie Rush. The 23-year-old Hapa Japanese American character finds herself involved in a murder investigation of a Vietnamese American college undergrad in the newest Hirahara book that was released on April 1.

Hirahara, 51, is preparing to promote the new series at scheduled events across the United States, including an appearance on May 24 at the Japanese American National Museum in Little Tokyo.

The *Pacific Citizen* spoke with Hirahara about how she found the inspiration to create another mystery character and what's in store for Mas Arai in the last installments of that series.

## What was the inspiration for Ellie Rush?

**Naomi Hirahara:** Well, frankly I didn't think I would be writing another mystery series beyond Mas Arai. But my father, who was the inspiration for Mas, got ill. He got stomach cancer. During that time, actually after he passed away, I was trying to do things out of the box. So, I had participated in this Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives Citizen's Academy. It was through the Mystery Writers of America organization.

Basically, it was an eight-week course, once a week. You just learn different aspects of law enforcement.

I thought because I write about mysteries, I need to do my homework and learn about it. That's when we went to the shooting range. I'd never shot a gun before. We went on surveillance exercises.

## Were you a good shot?

**Hirahara:** I was OK. I was a lot better than I thought. I thought that I would be blown back because we were shooting some powerful weapons. But I played like a lot of JAs in L.A. I grew up playing basketball. It's all about stance, right? So, when you shoot, you just have to have your feet planted on the ground.

At the same time, a professor at UCLA, an Asian American Studies and English professor, got ill. Actually, it was professor Valerie Matsumoto who recommended that I take over this class.

It was a creative writing workshop. It was 15 students, and I fell in love with my students.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NAOMI HIRAHARA

Author Naomi Hirahara is now at work on the next Ellie Rush novel and will be finalizing her Mas Arai character with the sixth and seventh novels in the series.



**That's right. You thanked them in the opening of your book.**

**Hirahara:** Yeah. It's been awhile since I've been in college.

But in the class, it was a really interesting picture of the 21st century because I had Hmong students, Cambodian students, Vietnamese students. There was [also] one Japanese American, who was, of course, fourth generation. It was so exciting.

For most of them, writing was new to them. They were doing it as a requirement or as a fun elective. They had really great stories.

**That's probably more freeing to not be restricted by writing rules. They must've had interesting stories.**

**Hirahara:** Exactly. And some of them were scared. One student wrote something that was dark, and he kept saying, "I don't know why this came out of me." (*Laughs*)

This was the fall of 2010. My dad was still alive. He was in hospice care. I was teaching the class and was taking this other class, this ATF class, just on a lark because I just really believe sometimes you have to do things out of the box. And they intersected. Then this character Ellie Rush, who is of mixed race, came into being.

**Was it in the UCLA class that you picked up the lingo Ellie uses with her friends?**

**Hirahara:** What was interesting is, a lot of my stereotypes were broken because I think people say these blanket statements like, "Oh, young people they're all into technology. They're all this, they're all that." But I guess teaching the class made me see that you can't make these blanket statements.

Time will tell if I really picked up their voice of twentysomethings or not. I think as a writer you always have to be listening to people, no matter their age.

I'm still full aware that I'm a middle-aged woman writing about a younger person. So, it's going to be a slightly different book than if a person that age was writing it. But it's OK. You have to experiment.

**Did you get your inspiration for Ellie from a specific student in that UCLA class?**

**Hirahara:** We were talking about this, because I had a signing last night in Pasadena, and we were talking about the character, and I think some of it is me at that age. But replace policing with writing.

It is more than bike riding or policing, I think it's about a young woman trying to find her calling in life. I think that part of it is based on something I felt at that age.

**Do your friends and family think they're the inspiration for the characters in your books?**

**Hirahara:** It's funny. I use a lot of names of people I know. Ellie, I'm playing on the whole thing about L.A. That's kind of my silly word play there. But other characters are kind of named after people I know. But then I know more people with the same name.

So, one person thinks I named it after her, but I really didn't — I named it after another friend. (*Laughs*)

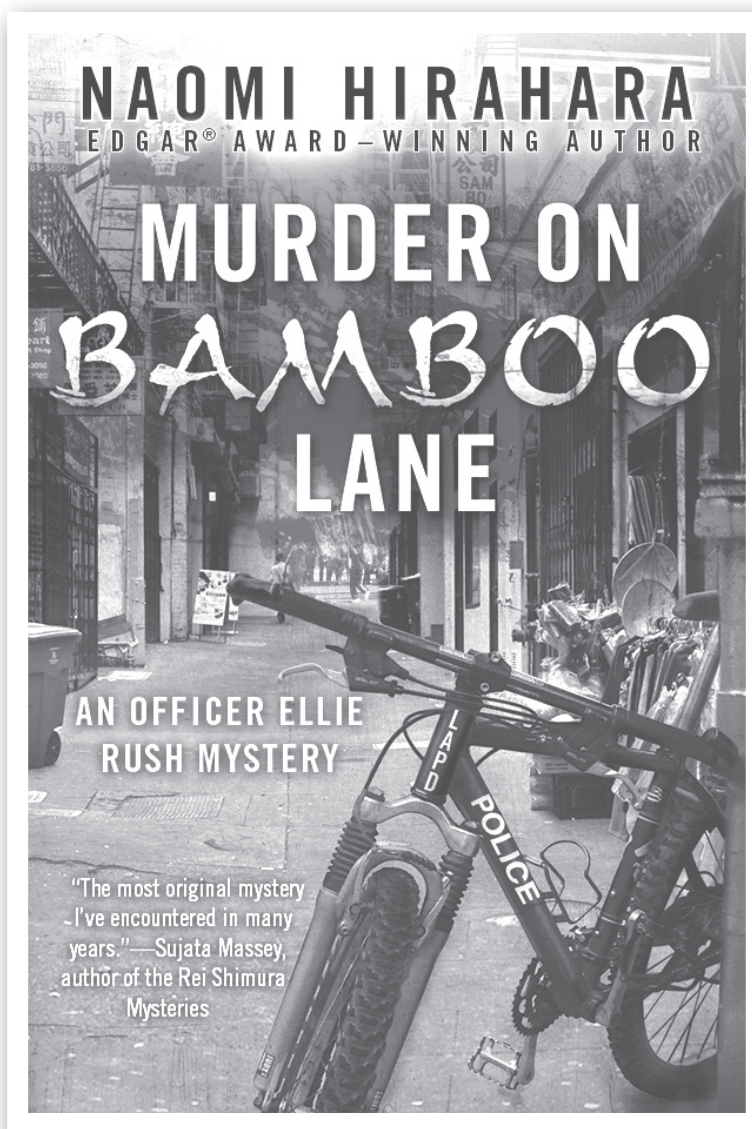
**And you don't tell them?**

**Hirahara:** No, of course not! But it was funny because I was reunited with my fourth-grade friend. We hadn't seen each other since fourth grade. She was my first Jewish friend, and her name is Abbie Gellman. In different books that I've written, I've had a Jewish attorney, Gellman. In my other book, I had an Abbie there, who's celebrating Hanukkah or something. Abbie read all my books, and she said,

"You know, I was telling my mom, there's an Abbie and there's a Gellman, maybe that's me?" And her mother's like, "Abbie, don't be silly! She's thanking her first editor, who was named Abbie. I'm sure it's named after her." And so when we got together after not seeing each other for more than 40 years, I said, "No, Abbie that was you." That was my tip of the hat to this person.

**She must have felt so vindicated and went back to her mom.**

**Hirahara:** A lot of times I like to name my characters after people who I feel were really wonderful, but they weren't famous, so they didn't get much credit. It's kind of my way to say, "Hey, I remember you. I remember you were so kind to me when I was in college or when I had my first job."

**You spent a few months in Ghana after college. Is that where this book's Father Kwame character comes from?**

**Hirahara:** Right! Oh, you picked that up! And with this series, it's mass-market paperback, it's designed to be a fun read. So, I really tried to lean into things that I already knew about rather than trying to open up a whole different can of worms — different research that would take months. I said, "Well, what do I know already? What things do I like already? What can I write about?"

**Did you get on a bicycle and race through downtown?**

**Hirahara:** No! It's funny. One of my colleagues who is a total biker — he took me to task. He was grilling me about my bicycle know-how. (*Laughs*)

**I always wonder if it gets harder as technology advances — with the omnipresence of cell phones and surveillance cameras — to write a mystery novel.**

**Hirahara:** I think it really does.

I try to make Ellie more of, not a nerd, but she's not totally into certain things that other people her age are into. But yeah, it is difficult.

**I can't remember. Do you have children?**

**Hirahara:** No children. I think the fact that I haven't had a kid, I think in some ways it frees me up to write about younger characters. I think sometimes if you have children at a certain age, you think all young people are like your kids.

**Your own perspective binds you.**

**Hirahara:** You make these assumptions like, "My kid's that way, so everybody is like that." No, I think it's just your kid. (*Laughs*)

But I think when you write a character like Ellie, you have to step into her shoes. You're not her mother; you're her.

I think that's what writing is: envisioning yourself in someone else shoes.

**You must be a great observer. Your characters are each so well developed. I feel like you must spend a lot of time people watching.**

**Hirahara:** Yeah, I love it. Most of us writers do. My mom told me growing up one of the teacher's said, "Naomi is very good at observing things." I'm happy to be an introvert in that way because I think it helps.

**How far along are you on the second Ellie Rush book?**

**Hirahara:** Oh, my gosh! It's due in like two months!

Like I said, with this mass-market format, they do have an expectation of one mystery a year. That's why I think I should try to write things that I kind of know about because it doesn't allow for the luxury of doing original research. I hope I'm able to continue. It's really been fun. It's been liberating to promote a book with a young character.

**What was it exactly that made you hesitate to do another mystery series?**

**Hirahara:** I couldn't conceive of a good character, and then also I didn't want to do another amateur sleuth because it's really challenging to figure out why this ordinary person is encountering all these dead bodies. I'm still going to write a couple more Mas books. But it's going to end at seven.

The sixth Mas Arai book will be at Dodger Stadium; it will be around baseball. And the last one, I want to take him back to visit Hiroshima.

**Where do you see most of your book sales? Online?**

**Hirahara:** What's weird, I'm kind of unusual. It really differs with each author. When I first started out with the Mas Arai series, my girlfriend told me, "Naomi, you're actually going to have to get out there and actually meet people so they will know what a Japanese American is." Actually, what she said was absolutely right. The comments that I got about Mas were like, "I didn't know there was a difference between a Japanese person and a Japanese American."

With Asian American writers we have to fight for that sale. One book at a time. We're not household

names.

**Did you ever imagine you would have published so many books?**

**Hirahara:** No. No.

**Will you teach again?**

**Hirahara:** I was just filling in that one semester. So, we'll see how it goes. I mean, I'm still learning about writing myself. I want to challenge myself, so I'll be able to teach others. The thing is, I didn't major in English. A lot of things I learned on the job.

**Just like Ellie Rush. Well, thank you for speaking with me. I'm excited to finish the last few pages of "Murder on Bamboo Lane" on the L.A. train tonight.**

**Hirahara:** That's so appropriate. (*Laughs*)

*For more information about Naomi Hirahara's upcoming book signing events, visit [www.naomihirahara.com](http://www.naomihirahara.com).*



# HB 2766 Honoring the Late Kip Tokuda Signed Into Law by Gov. Jay Inslee



PHOTO: NATIONAL JACL

Pictured (from left to right) are JACL Regional Director Karen Yoshitomi, Joanna Yoshitomi, Pei-Ming Tokuda (front), Rep. Sharon Tomiko-Santos, Gov. Jay Inslee, State Sen. Bob Hasegawa, Barbara Tokuda, Molly Tokuda and JACL Seattle President Toshiko Hasegawa

**SEATTLE** — Longtime JACL board member and Washington Rep. Sharon Tomiko-Santos has sponsored a bill honoring her late former seatmate, Seattle JACL chapter past President Kip Tokuda, who passed away in July 2013.

Tokuda served in the State House of Representatives from 1994-2002, where he provided strong leadership on services for developmentally disabled persons; disadvantaged children, youth and families; and race and social justice issues.

And because Tokuda felt that it was important to keep the experience of Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated during World War II alive, he sponsored the Washington Civil Liberties Education Act, which provided grants for educational projects about the legal and human challenges experienced by Japanese Americans during this period.

HB 2776 changes the name of the Washington Civil Liberties Public Education Program to the Kip Tokuda Memorial Washington Civil Liberties Public Education Program.

Tomiko-Santos, who pioneered the bill, budgeted \$100,000 for the memorial fund, saying, "What is the memorial for if there's no money funding the program?" The engrossed striker for the supporting operating budget (ESSB 6002) was also adopted.

It was heard on the floor of the House of Representatives on Feb. 18, where it passed unanimously with a vote of 98-0. On Feb. 26, it received a public hearing, at which Tokuda's family was present, and his teenage daughter, Pei-Ming Tokuda, testified in its favor. It then moved swiftly out of committee to the floor, where it passed unanimously by a vote of 49-0.

On March 19, members of the JACL attended a formal bill signing of HB 2766 alongside the Tokuda family, Tomiko-Santos and State Sen. Bob Hasegawa.

"He died doing what he loved," said Tokuda's wife, Barbara. "We appreciate the honor of this recognition."

— National JACL Staff

## Japan Allows First Evacuees to Live in Nuclear Exclusion Zone

**TOKYO** — For the first time since Japan's nuclear disaster three years ago, authorities are allowing residents to return to live in their homes within a tiny part of a 12-mile evacuation zone around the Fukushima plant.

The decision, which took effect April 1, applies to 357 people in 117 households from a corner of Tamura city after the government determined that radiation levels are low enough for habitation.

But many of those evacuees are undecided about going back because of fears about radiation, especially its effect on children.

More than 100,000 people were displaced

by the March 11, 2011, nuclear disaster, when a huge earthquake and ensuing tsunami damaged the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant, causing meltdowns in three reactors.

Areas within the evacuation zone have become ghost towns, overgrown with weeds. New stores and public schools are planned to accommodate those who move back.

Evacuees now receive government compensation of about 100,000 yen (\$1,000) each month. Those who move back get a one-time 900,000 yen (\$9,000) as an incentive.

— Associated Press

## APAs in the News



### Sen. Mazie Hirono to Chair Senate Judiciary Committee

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Sen. Mazie K. Hirono (D-Hawaii) became chair of the Subcommittee on Oversight, Federal Rights and Agency Action on April 1, after Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vermont) officially announced her appointment on March 27.

Hirono succeeds chair Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), who is leaving to head up another committee. The subcommittee was created at the beginning of the 113th Congress to provide oversight and review of agency rulemaking and agency action.

"I look forward to chairing the Judiciary Subcommittee on Oversight, Federal Rights and Agency Actions and thank Chairman Leahy for this opportunity to help make sure that voices of everyday citizens are heard," Hirono said. "I plan to work so that the unique needs of Hawaii are represented as we review agency actions and Executive Branch initiatives. I will also look for ways to improve oversight of government waste and abuse and strengthen consumer protections for all Americans."



### Christopher Lu Confirmed as Deputy Secretary of Labor

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — The U.S. Senate has confirmed President Barack Obama's appointment of Christopher Lu as Deputy Secretary of Labor in an announcement made last week.

Lu becomes the first Asian American deputy secretary of a cabinet department under President Obama and only the second in history. Lu replaces Seth Harris, who has held the position since 2009.

Lu, who received an A.B. from Princeton University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School, began his career as a law clerk to Judge Robert E. Cowen on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He most recently served as White House cabinet secretary during President Obama's first term.

"I commend the Senate on its confirmation of Chris Lu . . ." said U.S. Secretary of Labor Thomas Perez in a statement. "He will continue to be a tenacious advocate for American workers, and I look forward to working with him on all of our priorities — from job training to wage protection to worker safety to benefits security."



### Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori Suffers Stroke

**LIMA, PERU** — Former Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori, 75, suffered a stroke on March 14 at the police compound where he is serving a 25-year-sentence for authorizing death squads during his 10-year presidency; he was hospitalized in stable condition.

Fujimori, who led the country from 1990-2000, has been jailed in his homeland since 2007, when he was incarcerated following a return from exile in Japan. The former leader resigned and fled in disgrace in 2000 after videotapes emerged of his spy chief, Vladimiro Montesinos, bribing prominent politicians and businessmen.

The disgraced former leader is currently in the midst of his fifth criminal trial, this one for allegedly diverting millions in public funds to tabloids that were used to attack his political opponents and back his 1998 and 2000 re-election campaigns.



### Democrat Louis Watanabe Announces Candidacy

**SEATTLE** — Democrat Louis Watanabe, a businessman and educator, has announced his candidacy to run for the Washington State Senate seat in the 37th Legislative District in November.

Watanabe is hoping to succeed incumbent Adam Kline, who will retire at year's end. A native of Southern California, Watanabe now resides in Washington, where he founded Dynamical Systems Research, Microsoft's first acquisition. He later became an educator, where he taught business and statistics for nine years at Bellevue College.



### Charles Ozaki Receives Commendation From the Consulate General of Japan in Denver

**DENVER** — Charles Ozaki of Colorado has been named the recipient of the 2014 Commendation of the Consul General of Japan, the Consulate General of Japan in Denver announced April 3.

Ozaki, who currently serves as city and county manager in Bloomfield, receives his award for his significant contributions to developing relations with Broomfield's sister city of Ueda in Nagano Prefecture.



# Washington State Legislature Holds Day of Remembrance Event at the Capitol Building



Participants of Washington state's Day of Remembrance event at the capitol building in Olympia

**OLYMPIA, WASH.** — The Washington State Legislature held a Day of Remembrance event at the state capitol on Feb. 19 to recognize the hardships and life faced by Japanese nationals and Japanese Americans that were interned during World War II. The event, which was attended by members of the Pacific Northwest JACL chapters, the Nisei Veterans Committee, the Ladies Auxiliary of the NVC and its Foundation (NVCF), also honored veterans that served in the U.S. Army during WWII.

During the ceremony, two local U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service veterans, Hiro Nishimura and Katz Okamoto, were officially recognized for their bravery and service on behalf of their country. Both men are recipients of the Congressional Gold Medal, which was presented to Nisei soldiers in recognition of their "exceptional service, sacrifice and loyalty to America."

Nearly 19,000 Nisei soldiers served with

the U.S. Army's famed and highly decorated 100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the Military Intelligence Service and other units during WWII. The 442nd RCT and the MIS are the highest-decorated units of any organization that served in the history of the U.S. military.

This annual Day of Remembrance event in Olympia marks the anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1942, which led to the evacuation and incarceration of hundreds of thousands of people of Japanese ancestry.

To commemorate this annual DOR event, House Bill 1460 from the 2003 Legislative session was introduced by the Washington State Legislature and passed. Then-Gov. Gary Locke signed the legislation on July 27, 2003.

— **Bob Nakamura,**  
*Olympia JACL Chapter*

# Mile High JACL Chapter Holds First AAPI Legislative Training and Lobby Day at the Denver State Capitol



(Left) Mile High JACL board member Justin Valas makes a presentation at the AAPI Legislative Training Workshop.

The Mile High chapter of the JACL, along with the Asian Pacific Development Center, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum of Colorado and the National Federation of Filipino American Assn. hosted an AAPI legislative training session on Feb. 22, followed by the first-ever Lobby Day at the Colorado state capitol on Feb. 24.

More than 20 community leaders attended the inaugural event, where participants learned valuable advocacy skills such as writing a strong testimony, conducting an effective legislative visit and learning how to influence elected representatives.

In addition, participants talked about various issues that are affecting AAPI communities, such as health care for the elderly, the application for Temporary Protected Status for Filipinos in the wake of November 2013's Typhoon Haiyan, suicide among refugee communities and the lack of affordable housing for indigent people.

Finally, discussions were held regarding various bills that are pending before the Colorado state legislature, including health equity, wage theft and the recruitment of minority teachers.

"It is important for AAPI communities to become

active in the legislative process," said Mile High JACL President Harry Budisidharta. "There are a lot of AAPI voters in several swing districts throughout Colorado, and our votes can determine the outcome of several federal and state elections. We are very happy with the turnout. All of the participating organizations now regularly communicate with each other, and we are more knowledgeable about various issues that are impacting the AAPI communities in Colorado."

Following the training session, community leaders gathered at the state capitol building on Feb. 24 for Colorado's first-ever AAPI Lobby Day, where they were officially recognized by State Rep. Crisanta Duran, who stood on the House floor and announced their presence in the building. The leaders then met with Colorado Senators Lucía Guzman and Jessie Ulibarri, as well as Representatives Dan Pabon and Joe Salazar to further talk about various issues affecting AAPI communities.

With the success of this year's event, the Mile High Chapter is hoping to turn it into an annual occurrence.

For more information, email **Harry Budisidharta** at [President@MileHighJACL.org](mailto:President@MileHighJACL.org).

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ALL PHOTOS: COURTESY OF NATALIE NAKASE

# NATALIE NAKASE

## Paves Her Own Path On and Off the Court

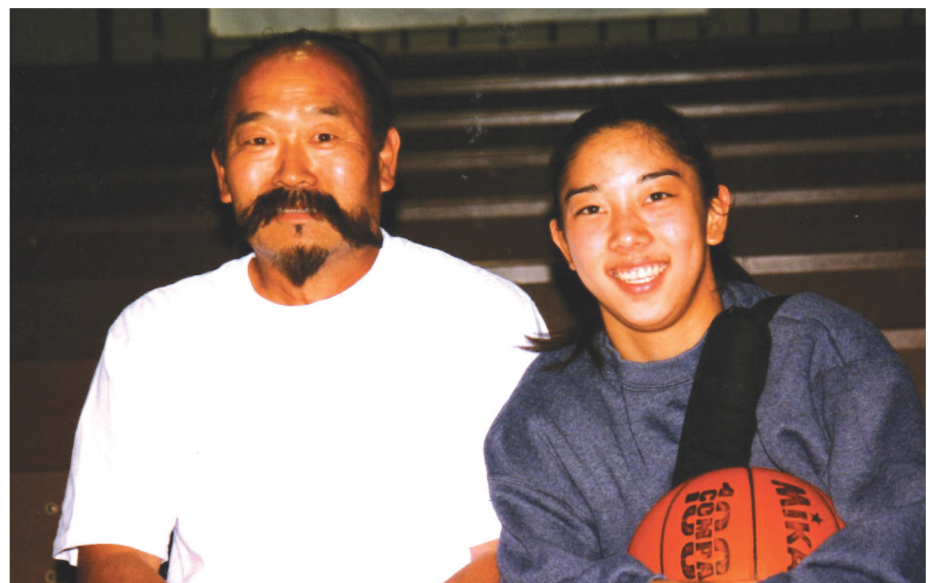
The video coordinator intern for the Los Angeles Clippers knows it takes more than hard work and dedication to realize her lifelong dream of becoming the first female coach in the NBA.

*By Connie K. Ho*  
Contributor

For Natalie Nakase, basketball encompasses almost every moment of her life. A typical day consists of getting in to work early in the morning, sometimes between 6:30 and 7 a.m. She'll work on breaking down videos of past games throughout the day and visit the gym during practice, helping players get up extra shots by rebounding, passing or playing defense. At night, she might be on call if something comes up for the coaching staff or if a player is in need of her assistance.

"The hours are crazy," Nakase said. "We're always working."

As a video coordinator intern for the Los Angeles Clippers, Nakase puts in long hours in her work to support the coaches and the players of the professional NBA team. For Nakase, it's worth it — it's all a part of her journey to become the first female coach in the National Basketball Assn.



Playing basketball allowed Nakase to bond with her father, Gary (pictured above), whom she counts as one of the people she admires most in her life.

Natalie Nakase played basketball for the Bruins while she attended the University of California, Los Angeles.



Nakase began playing basketball early on with her family. A third-generation Japanese American, Nakase grew up in Huntington Beach, Calif., with her two older sisters, Norie and Nicola. All three girls were encouraged to play basketball at a young age.

"My dad is a huge sports fan, but he loves basketball," Nakase, 33, said. "He loved it, so it was a chance for me to bond with my dad. I just instantly kind of fell in love with the sport. We always either watched or played basketball together."

Apart from playing basketball with her siblings, she joined the Japanese American basketball youth leagues.

"Starting something like that really gave me a sense of being a Japanese American and having a second family," Nakase said.

Playing basketball also gave Nakase the opportunity to bond with her father, Gary Nakase, and she counts him as one of the people she admires the most.

"As I started getting older, we always had to travel around the country for tournaments, and I would always be with my dad. I would observe my dad every day, and he worked really hard every day — that was something I think he instilled in me because every day he would work," Nakase said. "The weekends were considered work for him, and he was never big on family vacations when we were younger so basketball ended up being all year round for me. So, that was a huge thing."

After graduating from Marina High School in Huntington Beach, Nakase attended the University of California, Los Angeles, where she made her mark on the basketball team and was already described then as "like a coach on the floor."

Her basketball career eventually took her overseas, where she became the first female coach in the Japanese professional men's basketball league: She was a volunteer assistant for the Tokyo Apache, where she worked with former NBA coach Bob Hill, and coached the Saitama Broncos.

"My first year, I was assisting a former NBA coach, so that was why it triggered me to want to coach in the NBA — I started to learn a completely different style of coaching that I never experienced. It was the highest level of coaching," Nakase said. "I remember just learning from Bob Hill and Casey Hill to be prepared for anything, be prepared for the next step."

Even though she enjoyed coaching in Japan, Nakase's dad pushed her to pursue her dream of working in the NBA. She contacted everyone she knew in the organization and worked the NBA Summer League, but didn't have any luck in securing a position. On a fluke, she decided to attend a Clippers coaching clinic with a friend and ended up meeting Dave Severens, one of the current assistant coaches of the Clippers, who she peppered with questions about the NBA.

After the two-hour clinic, Nakase asked if she could observe a workout with Clippers power forward Blake Griffin. He said yes to her request, and Nakase went to the gym the next day with her arms full of notebooks and pens.

"I was so excited to come into the facility and watch an NBA player work. And then that's when coach introduced me to other coaches, and I asked, 'Do you guys need help? I know video.' I knew video was the direction that I wanted to go," Nakase said. "It took me two to three weeks. I kept coming back every day because they allowed me to come back every day, and I showed them that I was there to work and learn. After a couple of weeks, I got the job."

Nakase's now in her second year as a video coordinator intern, and she has soaked up every experience.



Nakase guards Clippers point guard and NBA All-Star Chris Paul (right) during a warm-up session at Los Angeles' Staples Center.



*'... at the end of the day, how am I going to help people be better, how am I going to help people believe in themselves — that's the important thing.'*  
— Natalie Nakase

"Last year was great because it was so new to me, so every day was like a dream," she says. "Then this year is even better because I'm now more experienced with the video, and now it's not tedious for me — I can do things faster with the video. You're pretty much like an assistant to all the assistant coaches. Whatever they want from games, you'll have to break down and prepare for them. At the end of the day, you learn so much because you're so hands on. And these coaches here love to teach. I am truly blessed."

One memorable experience for Nakase has been working with the professional basketball players.

"Because basketball is so hands on, a huge experience for me was working with J.J. Reddick, who was injured a couple months ago," Nakase said. "He stood back and asked me [if I could come] in early. I was like, of course, anything that you need. I was able to help him workout with shooting and dribbling drills one-on-one."

With all of her various coaching experiences, it's no wonder that she has been honored by a number of community groups for her contributions. Most notably, she received the "Champion of Change" award from the White House last May. "That was very surreal," Nakase recalled.

"I was a rookie last year here in the Clippers facility. So, when the phone rang for me, which never rings for me in the office, I honestly thought (former Head) Coach Vinny Del Negro was playing a joke on me because he's done that before," said Nakase, who was honored along with 14 other Asian American Pacific Islander women who are breaking barriers. "When they called, I completely thought it was bogus, and within a day, I got an email and it said, 'You're invited to the White House.' I still couldn't believe it until I emailed back."

To stay focused and driven, Nakase practices meditation. She also cites reading as one of her motivational tools and

has delved into books such as Tim Grover's "Relentless: From Good to Great to Unstoppable," Jerry Lynch's "The Way of the Champion" and Phil Jackson's "Eleven Rings."

"My dad told me to read when I was younger, but I never did. Now I see the importance," Nakase said. "My best friend, Billy Knight, got me into reading books about being successful or controlling your mind, controlling your thoughts. That for me over the past couple of years has helped me so much because I've been in such crazy situations with being a female in the NBA world or being in an environment, especially with video — I'm a coach going into video, and I've never worked with video before. I was frustrated a lot, and I understood by reading, you could control every thought that goes into your mind. It helped me so much."

Other coaches Nakase works with have also encouraged her to read more. She explains how Kevin Eastman, an assistant coach with the Clippers, is an avid reader himself who gave her the tip of scanning books quickly to find words and phrases that might attract her eyes. Her Twitter feed is full of inspirational passages, highlighted in yellow with lessons she's gleaned from her reading.

"I've learned the importance of eliminating distractions, whether it's friends or even some family members or TV or going out. I got rid of a lot of distractions that I used to do," Nakase said. "And who you surround yourself with I think is the second most important thing that I've learned."

Nakase has determined that even though her end goal is to coach in the NBA, her bigger mission is to serve others.

"I think going through these books, they tell you how to be successful, but [what] I've learned beyond that is, the purpose of life, or what I think it is, is to help people and to serve people," Nakase said. "That means a lot because at the end of the day, how am I going to help people be better, how am I going to help people believe in themselves — that's the important thing."



LETTER &gt;&gt; continued from page 2

## COMMENTARY

## TULE LAKE BACKGROUND

By Yukio Kawaratani

The World War II concentration camp experience was the darkest time in Japanese American history. It was also a black mark on America, as the government trampled on our constitutional rights. Except for the Issei, we were all American citizens. All 120,000 of us suffered. With the short notice of forced removal, we had to sacrifice and sell homes, businesses, farms and possessions at a fraction of their value. Then we were herded like cattle on to trains to be incarcerated in 10 American concentration camps, located in isolated areas of the country.

My family was first sent to Poston, Ariz., in the desert on Indian reservation land. It looked like a large Army post, with almost 50 blocks and rows and rows of newly constructed wooden barracks covered on the roof and sides with black tarpaper. The camp was hot and dusty, and my parents were highly perturbed. Mama kept saying, *Shikata ga nai* and *Gambare*, which means “it can’t be helped” and “endure.” Papa, a simple farmer with 9 children, was very angry, and his favorite expletive was, *Gato damu sano bichi*.

In the summer of 1943, the notorious loyalty questionnaire was thrust upon all adults, 17 years old or more, in the 10 concentration camps. Question 27 asked, “Are you willing to serve in the armed forces of the United States on combat duty, wherever ordered?” And Question 28 asked for unqualified allegiance to America and to forswear any other allegiance. There were misunderstandings, as some said answering “Yes” meant volunteering for the Army. And some parents were reluctant to give up the only citizenship they had. They would become stateless, as they were always denied American citizenship.

About 90 percent of the adults answered “Yes, Yes” to conform to what they knew the government wanted. Some people were indignant about being forced to answer a questionnaire on loyalty while they were being incarcerated. They protested by refusing to fill out the questionnaire. For various reasons, including keeping the family together, some inmates answered “No, No.” Others answered “No” to one question. Some answered “Yes, Yes” with qualifications. They were all categorized as “disloyal” by the government.

With differences, we became a divided but predominately No-No family because my mother, with tears in her eyes, said, “I cannot bear to have five sons who might be taken into the Army and killed in the war. Let’s keep as many family members together as possible and face whatever additional punishment the government gives to us.”

Soon, eight of us were sent to the Tule Lake Segregation Center in Northern California. It was a maximum-security prison. There was a 6-foot-high barbed-wire fence, then about 30 yards of vacant no-man’s land, an 8-foot-high chain-link fence with 3 feet of barbed wire on top and many watch towers with armed guards surrounding the camp of 18,000 men, women and children.

The Tule Lake Segregation Center had dissention, demonstrations and strikes, which were primarily about farm working conditions, camp living conditions and poor food. For a while, the Army took over, and Nikkei leaders were picked up and put in a primitive Army stockade. Rumors, like we would be deported to Japan during and after the war, sapped our spirits and made it difficult to know what to believe. To prepare for the possibility of a prisoner exchange and deportation, some of us children were sent to Japanese school to learn the language. There was a pervasive feeling of abandonment by the U.S. government, who treated us like enemy prisoners. It was a time of confusion, intimidation, anger and large-scale civil disobedience that caused many adult inmates in Tule Lake to renounce their American citizenship — a spiteful but regretful decision made under duress and traumatic conditions. It took decades, but due to the heroic efforts of former ACLU lawyer Wayne Collins, one by one, nearly all renunciants legally regained their American citizenship. Even most of those who expatriated to devastated Japan after the war eventually returned to America.

The great majority of those in Tule Lake were victims of the government for many different reasons, and misunderstandings that had nothing to do with loyalty. But for many years, we have all been stigmatized by the Japanese American community and labeled as the “troublemakers” and “disloyals.” After the war, the standard question was, “What camp were you in?” I was always angered by those who raised their eyebrows and

instinctively reacted negatively to Tule Lake. They didn’t understand the difficult positions we were placed in by the government or how greatly some of our families suffered as a consequence. That is why many former inmates would not admit they were in Tule Lake.

Four U.S. presidents understood. Under redress, President Ronald Reagan apologized for a grievous wrong and Congress authorized reparations to all. President Bill Clinton awarded Fred Korematsu a Presidential Medal of Freedom, the nation’s highest civilian honor. President George W. Bush designated Tule Lake a WWII Valor in the Pacific National Monument, in recognition of the punishment suffered there. And President Barack Obama awarded the late Gordon Hirabayashi a Presidential Medal of Freedom for his protest against America’s concentration camps. These actions were all praised by the JACL.

Over a decade ago, the JACL finally issued a public apology to the draft resisters for not recognizing their wartime stand of protest. But the protests of those segregated in Tule Lake have been treated as a shameful secret. The JACL should recognize their constitutional right to protest injustice, the duress and suffering they have endured and bring reconciliation and closure. Only the JACL can bring closure, as they have been favorably recognized as the public spokespersons representing and defending all Japanese Americans and as an advocate of the civil rights of all Americans.

You are asked to help reconcile the community divisions that were created by the government, to re-examine this historical travesty and help lift the stigma placed on those who resisted the government’s injustice.

*(The opinions expressed in this column are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect policies of this newspaper or any organization or business.)*

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# Arthur A. Hansen and Mas Okui Named Co-Recipients of the 2014 Sue Kunitomi Embrey Legacy Award

**LOS ANGELES** — The Manzanar Committee announced March 26 that Arthur A. Hansen, a renowned scholar and co-founder of the Japanese American Oral History Program, and educator Mas Okui are this year's recipients of the Sue Kunitomi Embrey Legacy Award.

The award, named after the late chair of the Manzanar Committee and also one of the founders of the annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, as well as a driving force behind the creation of the Manzanar National Historic Site, will be presented at the 45th Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage, which is scheduled for April 26 at the Manzanar National Historic Site.

## ARTHUR A. HANSEN

Hansen, 75, a native of Hoboken, N.J., began his work at California State University, Fullerton's Department of History in 1966, where he would later immerse himself in the field of ethnic studies.

"In the early 1970s, I was provoked by the upsurge of protest and dissent on the campus and in the outside world, along with the rise of ethnic consciousness and Ethnic Studies, to redirect my attention to Asian American Studies and, in particular, the social disaster inflicted by the U.S. government upon Americans of Japanese ancestry during the Second World War," Hansen wrote. "However, convinced that the standard historical version of what Japanese Americans had experienced during America's so-called 'good war' was severely compromised by a criminal neglect of the voiced perspective of the victimized population. In 1972, I launched, in concert with one of my graduate students, Betsy Mitson, the Japanese American Oral History Project within Cal State Fullerton's Oral History Program."

A pioneering effort over four decades that focused on the unjust World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans, the Japanese American Oral History Project recorded and transcribed hundreds of interviews and, periodically, illuminated their contents and perspectives in published anthologies and unpublished theses.

Along with Mitson, Hansen also coordinated the first lecture series on the WWII incarceration of Japanese Americans, which included a presentation by Embrey. Hansen and Mitson authored the pioneering oral history book "Voices Long Silent: An Oral History Inquiry Into the Japanese American Evacuation." In addition, Hansen edited the six-volume anthology "Japanese American World War II Evacuation Oral History Project," which received a Special Recognition Award from the Japanese American Historical Society of Southern California in 1997.

Hansen, along with Embrey and Mitson, co-edited "Manzanar Martyr: An Interview With Harry Y. Ueno," who was the principal figure in the Manzanar Riot.

He is now editing "Nisei Naysayer: The Memoir of Militant Japanese American Journalist Jimmie Omura" and "Barbed Voices: Oral History, Resistance, and the World War II Japanese American Social Disaster."

"My work has embraced the full extent of Japanese American history, society and culture, [but] the lion's share has riveted upon the protest, dissent, and resistance of Japanese American individuals and groups in relation to the history and legacy of the World War II Japanese American experience," Hansen noted. "This is rooted in my impassioned belief that, contrary to popular belief, Japanese Americans possess a robust tradition of active opposition to unbridled, unjust and unprincipled authority."

Manzanar Committee Co-Chair Bruce Embrey praised Hansen's contributions and achievements.



Arthur A. Hansen speaks at the Japanese American National Museum's National Conference in Seattle, Wash., in July 2013.



Mas Okui is pictured at the 43rd Annual Manzanar Pilgrimage on April 28, 2012.

"One of the Japanese American community's most ardent and consistent allies, Art Hansen is one of our country's leading scholars on the forced removal and incarceration of the Japanese American community," said Bruce Embrey. "Working to capture and record the history through oral histories of all who suffered, including residents of the Owens Valley, Art is known for his thorough and democratic approach."

"Art is no mere academic," Bruce Embrey continued. "As a scholar, his focus is to get to the underlying truth. But his thorough research is imbued with fierce and tireless advocacy for social justice. He was a colleague, friend and confidant of my mother, Sue Kunitomi Embrey, and it is both fitting and long overdue that he is recognized for his role in our long struggle for justice."

## MAS OKUI

As a 10-year-old boy, Okui, 82, spent more than three years behind the barbed wire at Manzanar.

That experience — the unjust incarceration of more than 110,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry during WWII — shaped his life's purpose and dedication to keep the story alive.

Active in Asian American issues since the 1960s, Okui initiated the Asian American Studies course at Gardena High School in Gardena, Calif. He was also involved with the Yellow Brotherhood and worked with the City of Gardena's teenage drug avoidance program.

Since the 1970s, Okui has conducted tours of Manzanar and for more than 30 years led the United Teachers Los Angeles seminar on its annual trip to the Manzanar Pilgrimage, the purpose of which was to educate teachers on how to teach their students about the Japanese American incarceration. Dozens of other groups, including the Japanese Consulate, the JACL, the L.A. Department of Water and Power, CNN, CBS, public and private schools and civic organizations were among those that visited Manzanar with Okui.

At the Eastern California Museum in Independent, Calif., Okui has led school groups and worked with the Shiro Nomura Manzanar exhibit. During the 1990s, he served as a docent at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, talking to scores of groups about the Japanese American experience, and, as part of JANM's outreach program, has spoken to groups throughout the nation.

For 10 years, Okui served on the Manzanar National Historic Site Advisory Commission. What is on display in the exhibit at the Visitors Center is, in part, the product of their efforts.

Additionally, Okui served on the board of the Friends of Manzanar, playing a key role in raising funds to rebuild Block 14 (demonstration block).

Today, Okui continues to visit schools, telling his story of life behind Manzanar's barbed wire.

"Mas Okui has been a tireless advocate and educator, telling the story of Manzanar and the forced removal of the Japanese American community to literally thousands of people, including many Los Angeles Unified School District teachers," said Bruce Embrey. "With humor, wit and poise, Mas is one of the most ardent advocates for keeping our story alive."

"Mas served on the Manzanar National Historic Site Advisory Commission, along with my mother, helping to create and shape the Manzanar National Historic Site," Bruce Embrey continued. "He is one of our community's unsung heroes. This recognition is long-overdue."

*For more information on the Manzanar Pilgrimage and the popular Manzanar at Dusk program, including bus transportation to the afternoon Pilgrimage program, visit the Manzanar Committee's official blog at <http://blog.manzanarcommittee.org> or call (323) 662-5102.*

## Polaris Tours 2014 Schedule

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May 17 ~ May 25	<b>Wonders of Iceland:</b> "Stunningly Beautiful"
May 24 ~ Jun. 02	<b>Gardens &amp; Villas of the Italian Lakes:</b> "Venice, Como, Bellagio, Lugano"
April / May / June	<b>Spring Las Vegas Show:</b> "TBA"
Jun. 21 ~ Jun. 29	<b>The Best of Switzerland:</b> "Matterhorn, St. Moritz, Lucerne, Zermatt"
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Sep. 07 ~ Sep. 18	<b>Tohoku &amp; Hokkaido:</b> "Simplistic & Natural Beauty"
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# PSW District and SFV JACL Chapter Host 'Nikkei Intersections: An LGBTQ Forum for Everyone' Event

By Traci Ishigo

More than 40 community members gathered for "Nikkei Intersections: An LGBTQ Forum for Everyone" at the San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center on March 23. As a part of the JACL Pacific Southwest District's new Nikkei LGBTQ Initiative, the event was the first of many educational forums intended to bring gender, sexuality and LGBTQ awareness and inclusion to the greater Nikkei community.

Co-organized by the San Fernando Valley JACL chapter, this event was an opportunity for multiple generations, including many Nisei, Sansei, Yonsei and Shin-Issei attendees, to learn from the moving experiences of the program's panelists, riKu Matsuda, Ellen and Harold Kameya and Eric Arimoto.

Before the panel, attendees had the opportunity to reflect on various questions to understand how they have experienced homophobia and transphobia, as well as how inclusive they perceive the Japanese American community to be. As evidence of how much cultural change is needed, an overwhelming majority of attendees responded "Yes" to the question, "Have you ever sensed or heard homophobic and transphobic comments/language in your family and/or community?"

Matsuda, from the L.A. County Commission on Human Relations, then led the group through an important LGBTQ 101 terminology lesson and answered many audience questions to clarify the difference between multiple and fluid gender identities and sexual orientations. Moreover, as a queer mixed-race Nikkei transman, Matsuda's personal story spoke to the importance of making the effort to

intentionally understand all of a person's identities, including his or her gender and sexuality. One audience member commented how "it was most touching" that Matsuda's open dialogue with his family about his identities has also made space for younger family relatives to feel open about their LGBTQ identities as well.

The Kameya's, parents of a lesbian daughter, shared the importance of the greater community showing support for LGBTQ community members. When their daughter came out to them in 1988, Ellen and Harold Kameya were fearful of what their friends and family would say and faced painful discomfort from their church. The Kameya's are now strong leaders in Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbian and Gays (PFLAG), and they have started their own Asian Pacific Islander chapter in the San Gabriel Valley.

Said one attendee, who expressed happiness that the two LGBTQ-rights advocate parents speak to multiple audiences: "Ellen and Harold are so outspoken to share their story that many people can find a way to connect to."

Arimoto, an LGBT-affirming psychotherapist, shared his journey of struggling with his gay identity since he was a child. As a young adult, with fear of what would happen if his parents knew the truth, he joined the military to suppress his sexual orientation but decided to come out during his time and was discharged due to the recently overturned "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy. Coming out as a gay Asian man also meant that he would face intense anti-Asian racism from the majority white LGBTQ spaces through which he navigated. Since then, Arimoto has reconciled with his parents, who support



PHOTO: NANCY TAKAYAMA

Among the participants at the "Nikkei Intersections: An LGBTQ Forum for Everyone" event were panelists (seated, from right) Harold Kameya, riKu Matsuda, Eric Arimoto and Ellen Kameya.

him, and also shared how "healing" it is to have the opportunity to publicly discuss his experiences in the Nikkei community.

Future LGBTQ educational events centering on Nikkei experiences will be programmed throughout the year, leading up to the Nikkei LGBTQ Gathering/

Conference, which will be held on Nov. 15 at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo. Everyone is encouraged to attend all events.

For additional updates, visit the JACL-PSW website at [www.jaclpsw.org](http://www.jaclpsw.org) or log on to its Facebook page.

## MEMBERSHIP COORDINATOR

The **Japanese American Citizens League (JACL)** is seeking to fill the position of Membership Coordinator. The position is located in the national office of JACL in San Francisco, Calif. The person will be responsible for developing and maintaining member and member services on a national level. This includes assistance to local chapters, management of the membership tracking system and development of membership policies and procedures and related materials.

Requires two years experience working in a nonprofit, above-average writing and communications skills and working as a team player, experience in the use of Microsoft Office and web-related software and a variety of office equipment. Experience with Asian Pacific American organizations a plus. College graduate preferred, with a degree in a related field of study such as nonprofit management, business or sociology.

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# Japanese Court Frees World's Longest-Held Death Row Inmate

**TOKYO** — The world's longest-serving death row inmate was freed March 27 by a Japanese court that found investigators had likely fabricated evidence in the murder case that put Iwao Hakamada, a former professional boxer, behind bars for nearly half a century.

The Shizuoka District Court suspended the death sentence and ordered a retrial for the 78-year-old Hakamada, who had been convicted in the 1966 murder of a family and was sentenced to death in 1968. More than 45 of his 48 years in prison have been on death row, making Hakamada the longest-serving such inmate, according to Guinness World Records.

Hours later, Hakamada walked out of the Tokyo Detention Center, escorted by his sister, as dozens of journalists and supporters waited outside. Hakamada looked briefly at the crowd and got inside a car without speaking.

Hakamada was not executed because of a lengthy appeals process. It took 27 years for the Supreme Court to deny his first appeal for a retrial. He filed a second appeal in 2008, and the court finally ruled in his favor on March 27.

"It is unbearably unjust to prolong detention of the defendant any further," presiding Judge Hiroaki Murayama said in a statement. "The possibility of his innocence has become clear to a respectable degree."

Hakamada was convicted of killing a company manager and his family and setting fire to their central Japan home, where he was a live-in employee.

The court said Thursday that a DNA analysis obtained by Hakamada's lawyers suggested that investigators had fabricated evidence.

The court's order for a retrial makes Hakamada only the sixth death row inmate to get a retrial in Japan's history of post-World War II criminal justice.

Japan is highly secretive about executions. Death row inmates are informed the morning they are hanged. Critics say executions without prior notice violate basic human rights and that secrecy and uncertainty cause unnecessary suffering for inmates. The Justice Ministry discloses only limited details afterward.

— Associated Press

# Heart Mountain Pilgrimage to Honor World War II Veterans

By P.C. Staff

This year's Heart Mountain annual pilgrimage will honor the late Sen. Daniel K. Inouye and all Japanese American veterans who were unjustly interned at Heart Mountain during World War II.

The theme of the 2014 pilgrimage, scheduled from Aug. 22-23 at the Heart Mountain World War II Japanese American Confinement Site in Wyoming, is "Honoring Selfless Service."

The Honor Roll, created by internees in 1944 to recognize the men and women who served in the military during WWII, will be dedicated to the memory of Inouye, the nation's longest-serving senator and a decorated veteran who lost his arm in combat.

"As our most important event, the annual pilgrimage serves our mission by educating the public about the history of Japanese American confinement and engaging visitors in a discussion about racial prejudice and civil rights, as well as hopefully providing an opportunity for healing for former internees and their families," said Brian Liesinger, executive director of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

Officials with the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation are seeking former Heart Mountain veterans to invite to the pilgrimage. Pilgrimage travel stipends may be available to veterans.

Scheduled guest speakers include Inouye's widow and U.S.-Japan Council President Irene Hirano, former Sen. Al Simpson and former Secretary of

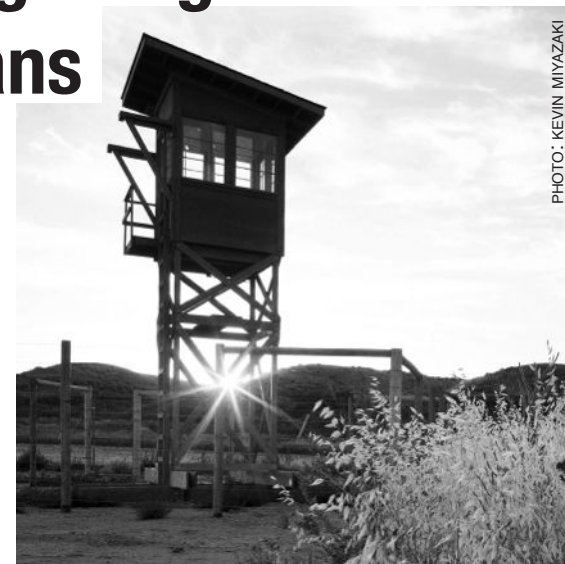


PHOTO: KEVIN MIYAZAKI

Transportation Norman Mineta. The event includes a banquet dinner on Friday, Aug. 22, at the Holiday Inn in Cody, Wyo. There will also be a screening of the film "A Flicker in Eternity," which tells the story of Stanley Hayami, who was interned at Heart Mountain as a teen and died serving in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

Registration begins April 15 and includes Friday's dinner banquet and lunch on Saturday at Heart Mountain, which is located between Cody and Powell, Wyo., off of Highway 14a.

*For more information or to register for the pilgrimage, visit [www.heartmountain.org/pilgrimage.html](http://www.heartmountain.org/pilgrimage.html), email [info@heartmountain.org](mailto:info@heartmountain.org) or call (307) 754-8000.*

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Niagara Falls, Lancaster-Amish Country, Gettysburg, Wash. DC, Williamsburg.	
NEW YORK CITY HOLIDAY TOUR .....	MAY 15-19
"Big Apple", 9-11 Ground Zero Memorial, Greenwich, Wall Street District, Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2 Broadway Shows, Statue of Liberty	
AUSTRIA-SWITZERLAND HOLIDAY TOUR .....	JUNE 5-17
Vienna, Salzburg, Oberammergau Region, Black Forest, Zermatt, Lucerne	
OREGON TRAILS HOLIDAY TOUR .....	JUNE 5-10
Portland, Mt. St. Helens National Park, Portland Rose Festival, Winery Visit & Tasting, Paddle-wheeler Boat Cruise on Columbia River, Tillamook Cheese Factory	
CANADIAN ROCKIES VIA RAIL HOLIDAY TOUR .....	JUNE 18-25
Vancouver, Vancouver Island, Victoria, Butchart Garden, The Canadian VIA Rail, Jasper, Maligne Lake, Columbia Icefields, Lake Louise, Banff	
GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR .....	JUN 23-JUL 2
Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto	
SOUTH DAKOTA ADVENTURE HOLIDAY TOUR .....	JUL 9-15
Rapid City, Mt. Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial, Devil's Tower Monument, Custer State Park, Buffalo Jeep Safari, Fort Hays "Dancing with Wolves" Movie Set	
EAST-WEST MEDITERRANEAN HOLIDAY CRUISE .....	AUG 2-16
Barcelona, Marseille, Monte Carlo, Livorno(Florence/Pisa), Rome, Naples, Messina-Sicily, Olympia, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Venice. Holland America Nieuw Amsterdam	
ALBUQUERQUE BALLOON FIESTA HOLIDAY TOUR .....	OCT 6-11
Albuquerque, International Balloon Fiesta, Route 66, National Museum of Nuclear Science & History, Pueblo Cultural Center, Santa Fe School of Cooking	
HOKKAIDO-TOHOKU HOLIDAY TOUR .....	OCT 6-17
Tokyo, Lake Akan, Abashiri, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Noboribetsu, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Aomori, Lake Towada, Morioka, Sendai	
AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND HOLIDAY TOUR .....	NOV 3-17
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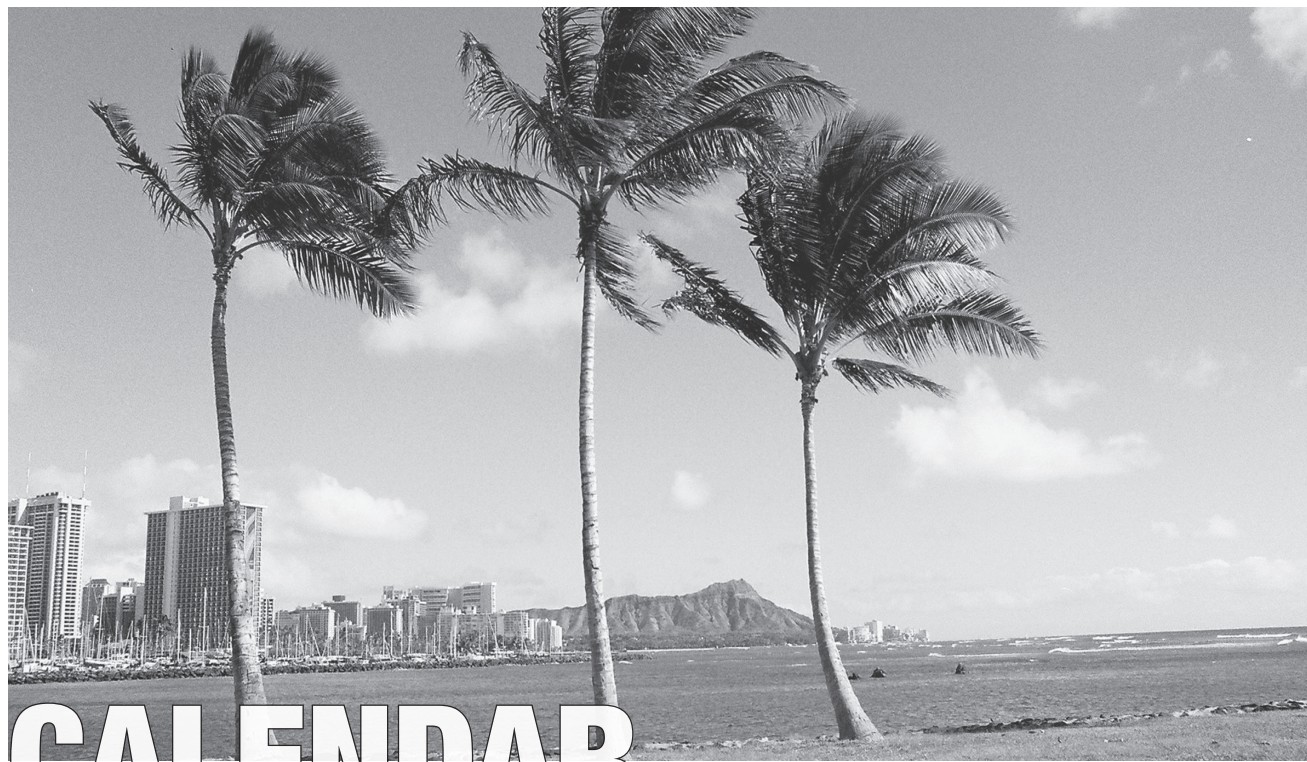
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## A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS



# CALENDAR

## >>NATIONAL

**The 45th Annual National JACL Convention**  
**SAN JOSE, CA**  
**July 9-12**

**Double Tree by Hilton**  
**2050 Gateway Place**

The 2014 JACL National Convention's theme is "We Are America." National JACL is accepting proposals for convention workshops scheduled on July 11 from 10 a.m.-Noon. The deadline to submit a workshop proposal form is April 30.  
**Info: Email [dc@jacl.org](mailto:dc@jacl.org) or visit [www.jacl.org](http://www.jacl.org).**

## >>EDC

**The Heart of the Community: A Dim Sum Breakfast**  
**BOSTON, MA**  
**May 2, 7:30 a.m.**

**China Pearl Restaurant**  
**9 Tyler St.**

**Cost: \$100/Individual Tickets; \$500/Friend; \$1,000-\$25,000/Tables**

The second annual Heart of the Community Breakfast is a fundraiser held by the Asian Community Development Corp. The morning will feature a tea tasting, silent auction, dim sum meal and keynote address by the Boston mayor's chief of staff, Daniel Arrigg Koh.

**Info: [www.asiancdc.org/content/heart-community-gourmet-dim-sum-breakfast](http://www.asiancdc.org/content/heart-community-gourmet-dim-sum-breakfast) or call (617) 482-2380.**

**The Pivoting for Peace in Asia Pacific Conference**  
**CAMBRIDGE, MA**  
**APRIL 19, 9:30 a.m.-5 p.m.**

**Cambridge Friends Meeting**  
**5 Longfellow Park**

**Cost: \$10/Registration; \$20/Registration and Lunch**

This one-day conference is aimed to raise awareness about U.S. relations in Asia and the Pacific.

Environmental campaigner Hideki Yoshikawa will give the keynote address. Scheduled workshops include: China and the Peace Movement, Trans-Pacific Partnership, Domestic Impacts of U.S. Asia-Pacific Policies, Okinawa and Korea.

**Info: Visit [www.masspeaceaction.org](http://www.masspeaceaction.org), email [info@masspeaceaction.org](mailto:info@masspeaceaction.org) or call (617) 661-6130.**

**The 8th Annual Dessert Tasting Fundraiser**  
**BROOKLINE, MA**  
**April 26, 6-8:30 p.m.**

**Korean Church of Boston**  
**32 Harvard St.**

**Cost: \$17/Early Bird; \$20/Advanced Tickets; \$27/At-the-Door; \$10/Children**

The Asian American Resource Workshop's A Little Peace, the 8th Annual Dessert Tasting, benefits social justice and nonprofit organizations. Proceeds will also go to Activist Training Institute, Asian & Pacific Islander Movement and Boston Korean Adoptees, Inc.

**Info: Visit [www.aarw.org](http://www.aarw.org) or email [bostondessertnight@gmail.com](mailto:bostondessertnight@gmail.com).**

## >>PNW

**Portland Taiko Annual Benefit Banquet**  
**PORTLAND, OR**  
**April 23, 6:15 p.m.**

**Wong's King Seafood Restaurant**  
**8733 S.E. Division St.**

**Cost: \$75/VIP Admission (Includes \$50 tax-deductible donation); \$60/General Admission (\$35 donation)**

Celebrate Portland Taiko's 20th Anniversary Season at its Annual Benefit Banquet. The night begins with a no-host bar, silent auction, mystery origami prizes and a Chinese feast. Portland Taiko will perform a private show for guests, followed by the Golden Bachi Awards, which will recognize Alice Sumida and Oregon Nikkei Endowment.

**Info: Visit [www.portlandtaiko.org](http://www.portlandtaiko.org) or call (503) 288-2456.**

## >>NCWNP

**Japan Day Festival**  
**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**  
**July 13, 1-5 p.m.**

**Japantown Peace Plaza**  
**Between Geary Boulevard and Post Street**

Japan Day is a community event sponsored by Genryu Arts, featuring performances by Bay Area taiko, martial arts demonstrations and koto groups.

**Info: [www.japancentersf.com](http://www.japancentersf.com) or call (415) 440-1171.**

**Chinese for Affirmative Action**  
**45th Anniversary Celebration of Justice**  
**SAN FRANCISCO, CA**

**June 12, 6 p.m.**  
**Empress of China**  
**838 Grant Ave.**

The Chinese for Affirmative Action's Celebration of Justice is a fundraiser, where civil rights, LGBT rights and

political leaders gather to honor extraordinary community members.

**Info: Visit [www.caast.org](http://www.caast.org) or call (415) 274-6750.**

**Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL Community Picnic**  
**APTOS, CA**

**June 28, 11 a.m.-4:30 p.m.**  
**Aptos Village Park**

The Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL chapter is hosting its annual community picnic, which will feature traditional races and family-friendly entertainment.

**Info: Email [wsc.jacl@gmail.com](mailto:wsc.jacl@gmail.com) or visit [www.watsonville-santacruzjacl.org](http://www.watsonville-santacruzjacl.org).**

**The Pacific Rim Street Festival**  
**SACRAMENTO, CA**  
**May 18, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.**

**Old Sacramento**  
**Downtown Plaza**  
**547 L St.**

The Pacific Rim Street Festival celebrates Asian Pacific Rim heritage with a day of fun for the whole family, with food, live entertainment, arts and crafts and community booths.

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

## >>IDC

**Traci Kato-Kiriyama Leads Art and Activism Workshop**  
**DENVER, CO**

**April 30, 7 p.m.**  
**Sakura Square**  
**20 Street and Larimer**

Writer, actor and activist Traci Kato-Kiriyama, who previously taught "Wellness & Expression in the Asian

**Sharing the Spirit of Aloha Gala**  
**HONOLULU, HI**

**June 21, 6-9 p.m.**

**Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki**  
**Beach Resort, Coral Ballroom**

**2005 Kalia Road**

**Cost: \$200/JCCH Members; \$250/Non-members; \$3,000-\$25,000/Tables**

The Japanese Cultural Center of Hawaii's Annual Sharing the Spirit of Aloha Gala will honor Issei pioneers David Ikawa, Wayne Kamitaki, Richard Matsu and George and Willa Tanabe. Dinner begins at 6 p.m., after registration and the silent auction.

**Info: Visit [www.jcch.com](http://www.jcch.com) or call (808) 945-7633.**

American Community" at Claremont Colleges, presents this workshop, which will incorporate writing, performance and arts activism.

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

## >>PSW

**Dodgers Gallery Talk**  
**LOS ANGELES, CA**

**May 10, 11:30-1 p.m.**

**Japanese American National Museum**  
**100 N. Central Ave.**

Join "Dodgers: Brotherhood of the Game" curators Mark Langill and Koji Steven Sakai for a behind-the-scenes gallery tour. RSVP early, as there are only 30 available spots.

**Info: Visit [www.janm.org](http://www.janm.org) or call (213) 625-0414.**

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# In Memoriam

**Abe, Satsuki, 93, L.A., CA;** Feb.



24; born in San Juan Bautista, CA; predeceased by her husband, Shiyoji Abe, and grandson, Christopher Ige; survived by son, Stephen (Jan); daughters, Carolyn (Danny) Hashiba, Doreen (Edwin) Ige, Lillian (Eiji) Takagi, Charlene (Ted) Elias and Marlene; sisters, Sueyo Yamaguma, Sumiye (Art) Ogisaka, Asaye Hatai, Yukiye Hatai; sister-in-law, Sue Toyoshima; brother-in-law, Masami Nawata; also survived by many nieces, nephews, other relatives and friends; 6 gc.

**Dote, Chiyeko Anna, 90,**



Redondo Beach, CA; March 1; she is survived by her daughter, Diane (Don) White; son, Ty Dote; granddog, Riley; sister, Yaeko Ishii; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives in California and in Kochi, Japan.

**Goto, Chiyoko, 100, Pasadena,**



CA; Feb. 25; survived by daughters, Takako Murashige and Misako (Richard) Kawano; brother, Masato (Ayako) Yagami; sister-in-law, Yasuko Yagami; she also has family members in Japan, brother, Toshio Yagami; sister-in-law, Yasuko Yagami; she is also survived by nieces, nephews and other relatives; 1 gc; 2 ggc.

**Hamamoto, Yasuto, 90, San Juan Capistrano, CA;** March 5; born in Hilo, HI; survived by

his wife, Marie; children, Dennis (Patty) Hamamoto, Barbara (Gary) Burnett, Kathleen Kikawa of Hawaii, Phyllis (Dorai) Paris and Sandra (Fred) Luckau of Arizona; sisters, Fujiko (Fumio) Oshita and Taeko Toki of Ohio; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives; 6 gc; 1 ggc.

**Ibushi, Tomio Tom, 72,**



Northridge, CA; a Kagoshima-ken Issei; survived by his sons, Roy Tetsuya of Seattle and Richard Makoto (Marlene); sisters, Yori Fukunaga and Miki Maeda and Itoe (Kiyokazu) Watanabe, both of Japan; sister-in-law, Emiko Ibushi of Japan and many nieces, nephews and relatives both in California and Japan; 1 gc.

**Inagi, Akiko, 94, L.A., CA;**



March 5; survived by her daughters, Cheryl Yamaguchi and Irene (Ronnie) Ikeda; 4 gc; 2 ggc.

**Kawamoto, Wendy Yuki, 42,**



Glendale, CA; March 16; predeceased by her father, Roy Kiyoshi Kawamoto; survived by mother, Diana L. Kawamoto; brother, Chris (Aileen) Kawamoto; Aunt Bernice (Walter) Nishikawa, Misato (Ken) Nakamori, Judy (Tosh) Tawatari, Alice (Minoru) Furuno of Japan, Sally (Sam) Ariza and Patsy (Tom)

Narasaki; also survived by many other relatives.

**Kimura, Fred Ichiro, 96, L.A.,**



CA; March 9; he is survived by his wife, Yoshiko; son, Bruce Kenichi (Lorraine Lee) Kimura; brother, Shigemi Kimura of Japan, and many nieces, nephews and other relatives here and in Japan; 2 gc.

**Lee, Maj. Kurt Chew-eeen, 88,** Washington, D.C.; March 3; the first Marine Corps Chinese American regular officer; he was awarded the Navy Cross, Silver Star and two Purple Hearts; he helped rescue 8,000 American troops at the Chosin Reservoir in Korea; predeceased by his brothers, Col. Chew-Mon Lee and Wilbert Lee, and beloved wife, Linda; survived by his brother, Chew-Fan Lee; his sisters, Faustina Lee, Betty Mar and Juliet Yokoe; brother-in-law, LTC Yukio Yokoe, Ret.; sisters-in-law, Rose Lee and Frances Lee; and many nieces and nephews.

**Mano, Susumu Henry, 74,**



Seal Beach, CA; March 7; he is survived by his wife, Darlene M. Mano; sons, Randy H. and John R. Mano; brothers, George (Grace) Mano, Ronnie (Janet) and Bill (Linda) Mano, both of NV; sister, Emiko Graham; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Matsumura, Beatrice Setsuko, 85, Torrance, CA;** March 4; predeceased by husband, Fred, and son, Deane; survived by her son, Dane (Della) Matsumura; daughter-in-law, Diana Matsumura; grandchildren, Dalyn and Lani Matsumura; sibling, Walter (Jean) Ogata and Elsie

## TRIBUTE

### LILLY (TOKIWA) BERCHEM



Lilly was born on Oct. 30, 1929, in Salinas, Calif. Her parents were Shizuo George and Sodeko Betty Ikeda. She had 2 brothers, Robert and Elmer, and 5 sisters, Jean, Ritsko, May, Carolyn and Michiko. The family was part of the internment of Japanese Americans and were relocated to Poston, AZ. After leaving Poston in 1945, her family moved to San Jose. Her family farmed at the Overfelt Ranch, where everyone helped. Lilly attended San Jose High School during her junior and senior years.

Lilly married Rudy Tokiwa and had 4 children, Roy, Russell, Robin and Rochelle. Lilly was a longtime resident of San Jose. She worked for many years at San Jose Hospital and also for Katsumi Tokunaga. Lilly was then married to Jules Berchem for 18 years. Lilly was preceded in death by her father, George; her mother, Sodeko; her sister, Michiko; her brothers, Robert and Elmer; and her eldest son, Roy. She is survived by her son, Russell, who resides in San Diego; her daughter, Robin Tokiwa of Morgan Hill and her 2 children, Kayla McElvy and Darren McElvy; and her daughter, Rochelle (Scott) Kennedy and their daughter, Kaitlyn. Lilly respected her children and loved them unconditionally.

Funeral services were held at Willow Glen Mortuary on April 3. An additional memorial service will be held in Lodi at the Church of Christ at 600 S. Ham Lane on Tuesday, April 8, at 11 a.m.

Sakai, the latter from Hawaii; brother-in-law, Chuck (Merrilyn) Matsumura; also survived by many nieces, nephews and other relatives.

**Mizuta, Fred Toshio, 92,** Payette, ID; March 9; formerly of Vale, OR; Fred was born on Dec. 28, 1921, in Wapato, WA; private family inurnment will be at a later date in Tahoma Cemetery, Yakima, WA; cremation is under the direction of Shaffer-Jensen Memory Chapel, Payette.

**Obata, Shuichi, 91, Carson, CA;** March 17; survived by wife, Emie; sisters-in-law, Hinae and Michiko Sakakura; brothers-in-law, Arthur Sakakura and Pete Kurihara; also survived by many nieces.

**Oyama, Alan, 91, Caldwell, ID;** March 3; survived by husband, Roy; sister, Fumi; and sons, Terry (Kathleen), Alan and Greg (Laraina).

**Yamamura, Betty, 89, Glendale, CA;** March 11; predeceased by husband, Ricardo, and son-in-law, Alex Shelehov; survived by daughters, June Shelehov, Teresa (Eric) Miyamoto and Sandy (David) Shin; 6 gc; 4 ggc.

**Yoshimoto, Geoffrey Sadamu, 56, Santa Monica, CA;** March 4; survived by his siblings, Linda Young, Amy (Greg) Jyo and Steve (Cynthia); nieces and nephews, Stanton and Brenton Young, Tori Jyo and Jason and Michelle; also survived by many other relatives.

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'In Memoriam' is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis. Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$20/column inch.

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## DELEGATION OF JAPANESE AMERICAN LEADERS MEETS WITH JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER SHINZO ABE



Members of the Japanese American Leadership Delegation, led by USJC President Irene Hirano Inouye (*front row, second from right*), met with Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (*front row, center*) in Tokyo.

**TOKYO** — The 2014 Japanese American Leadership Delegation met with Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on March 12 to discuss issues pertinent to the U.S.-Japan bilateral relationship.

The 10-member delegation and U.S.-Japan Council President Irene Hirano Inouye shared that a stronger U.S.-Japan relationship benefits not only both countries but also the entire Asia-Pacific region. The delegation also described the purpose of the trip as building people-to-people relationships with Japanese leaders from all sectors of society in order to strengthen and diversify U.S.-Japan relations.

"I would like to renew my appreciation for the Japanese American Leadership Delegation. For Japanese Americans, JALD provides a better understanding of Japan. I am counting on your continued cooperation to build bridges across our two nations in the future. I also would like to express my sincere appreciation for the late Sen. Daniel K. Inouye's great contributions to the strengthening of Japan-U.S. relations," said Abe.

Before traveling to Tokyo, the delegates visited Fukuoka in the Kyushu region, a prefecture where many Japanese Americans (including two of the delegates this year) have their ancestral roots. The delegation also participated in the seminar "Finding a Voice in Government: Japanese Americans Making a Difference in Their Communities and in U.S.-Japan Relations," co-sponsored by the Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership and the U.S.-Japan Council.

The JALD is sponsored by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan and organized by the U.S.-Japan Council.

For more information, visit [www.usjapancouncil.org](http://www.usjapancouncil.org).

## NO-NO BOYS >> continued from page 3

She was right, of course. In those days, the No-No Boys topic was never talked about and was a taboo subject. It was like talking about someone's crazy aunt who was locked away in a bedroom somewhere. Nobody, and I mean *nobody*, ever talked about the No-No Boys in public.

Maybe it was the maverick in me that wanted that question, but I felt strongly that we needed to bring it out in the open once and for all. The committee discussion went around and around on this subject until Ben, one of the nicest, gentlest and kindest guys you'd ever know, said quietly in the middle of the heated debate that he was a No-No Boy. The conversation came to a dead stop. Total silence like we'd all been sucker-punched in the stomach.

Ben explained that he felt he couldn't abandon his elderly Issei parents and so he answered "No" to the questions, knowing the consequences would not be good. We all realized what courage it took for Ben to tell us he was a No-No Boy, but it also made us realize that at least some answered "No" to the questions for reasons other than defiance.

I honestly didn't know how many of the No-No Boys were like Ben or like some other Nisei friends I had who were so offended by the questionnaire that they answered the only way they could do honestly. I always strongly doubted any of the No-Nos were actually disloyal. I just wanted this issue out in public so we could talk about it.

In the end, Cherry was right: It was a volatile question that created a huge reaction, but I was also right. We brought the subject out into the light and debated it and confronted it. Brothers finally broke a silence of decades and began talking to each other again, families healed, and the community found the courage to put this issue behind us.

In the end, however one felt about the No-Nos, there was a consensus in the community that we were all screwed in so many ways, and we all deserved better.

If the current discussion in NCWNP uncovers new information, I'd like to see it. I think it's always healthy to deal honestly with the truth, especially when it's so profound a truth for our community.

*John Tateishi is a former JACL national director.*



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