



PACIFIC CITIZEN



*Year
of the
Dragon*

New Year
ISSUE

INSIDE:
JACL
National
Board

CELEBRATING
95
Years

On Palestine, Our Language Must Not Blur the Truth

By Kenji Kuramitsu

Kenji Kuramitsu at Yasser Arafat's grave in Ramallah.

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF KENJI KURAMITSU



It is easy to blur the truth with a simple linguistic trick," observed the Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti: Simply start your story with "secondly." Those interested in constructing a false narrative, he argued, need only to elide the prequel, shredding historical context: The arrows of the Native Americans alchemize into the first volleys of unnecessary warfare, the uprisings of enslaved persons become avoidably excessive, Gandhi transfigured into the cruel tormentor of the gentle Raj.

For many in the West, when a coalition of Palestinian militant forces launched Operation Al-Aqsa Flood on Oct. 7, these attacks sprang forth fully formed, with neither a gestational period nor a bitter litany of precipitating events. Yet in order to not "blur the truth," we should consider these convulsions as a part of a much longer story, including the violent foundation of the Israeli state.

Israel is what scholars call a "settler colonial" nation. It is, like the United States, a colony, but not in the traditional sense of having a mother country into whose maw plundered resources are siphoned; settler colonies, rather, are nations whose identity rests on an ongoing structure of genocide and a narrative of replacement of a land's native peoples. Such a narrative distortion is captured in the Zionist slogan "a

land without a people for a people without a land" relies upon such narrative amnesia, blurring the truth by starting the story with that slippery "secondly."

We can appreciate Zionism's emergence amongst Jewish communities long subjected to the viciousness of European Christian antisemitism, peoples who dreamed fervently of freedom from being stalked by constant death. Yet as the warrior-poet Audre Lorde has said, "The master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" — such a fevered dream, bubbled up from within the racist cauldron of European colonialism, remains fatally contaminated by these supremacist elements. Jewish Voice for Peace thus calls Zionism the "failed answer" to a desperately serious question: the futurity of Jewish personhood in a persistently hostile Europe.

That question increased in urgency after the Holocaust. When Edward Said called his people "the victims of the victims, and the refugees of the refugees," he was not only noting how survivors may internalize their oppressors' worst habits but lamenting how Palestinians have been asked to atone for the grievous sins of Christian European antisemitism. The atrocities of Auschwitz remain inextricably linked to Palestine — even the word Shoah, Hebrew for catastrophe, is echoed in the Arabic term Nakba, the disaster marking the mass devastation that occurred at Israel's founding. It is a bitter irony that images of the exterminationist violence inflicted upon Palestinians so undeniably stir up historical associations with the Nazi genocide. Mosab Abu Toha, the Gazan poet who was beaten and incarcerated by occupation forces while fleeing his home with his family this fall, ruefully reflected on these resonances in a recent essay: "The soldiers blindfold me and attach a numbered bracelet to one wrist. I wonder how Israelis would

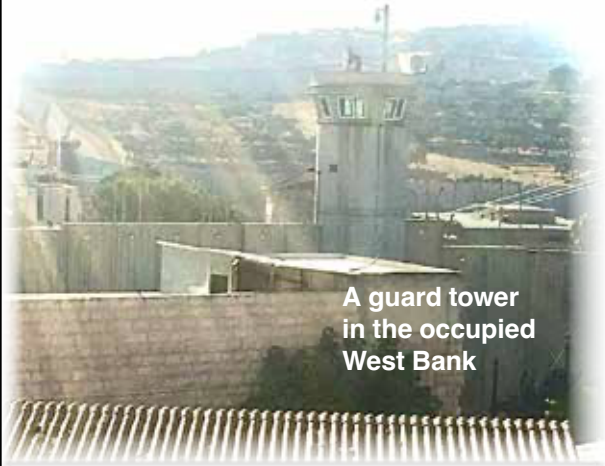
feel if they were known by a number."

Such an association is largely forbidden by postwar discourse that prefers to see the Holocaust as an aberration from human history rather than the industrialized denouement of the horrors long inflicted upon Europe's colonies. Aimé Césaire understood the Holocaust in such terms, arguing that the Shoah horrified the world principally because Hitler dared to apply "to Europe the colonialist procedures which until then had been reserved exclusively for the Arabs of Algeria, the coolies of India and the blacks of Africa," a barbed call emerging from inside the haunted house.

The writings of Zionism's founder Theodor Herzl reveal plainly his desire to construct a state that would rely upon such procedures. Herzl had initially advocated for Uganda to become the site for this nation, writing of his vision with refreshing honesty: "It is something colonial." In Herzl's vision for Israel to form "a rampart of Europe against Asia, an outpost of civilization as opposed to barbarism," we can hear echoes of North American settler colonists who excused their genocidal actions under the rubric of bringing "civilization" to the barbarian.

Barbarism, from the Greek barbaros, "to babble like a foreigner" — this racialized term has been frequently invoked by Zionists in the wake of Oct. 7. Israeli premier Benjamin Netanyahu recently declared that his genocidaires were waging "a battle of civilization against barbarism . . . progress against these barbarians." A similar classically colonial logic operates when Israeli state social media labels Palestinians "the children of darkness" who embrace "the law of the jungle."

» See LETTER on page 10



A guard tower in the occupied West Bank

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 — Gil Asakawa

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The Pace of Change in the World Is Accelerating, and We Must Keep Pace'



By **Larry Oda,**
JACL National President

Happy New Year 2024! I am happy to report that JACL has evolved from looking after our own community to engaging the larger community. We are accomplishing this while our own organization is shrinking. In 1942, there were approximately 127,000 Japanese in the U.S. Today, there are about 1.5 million, and our membership stands at less than 8,000. We continue to engage in the larger issues that confront us with changing resources.

The realities that are becoming evident for the rest of the nation and the world are affecting us, and to a larger degree because we are losing our constituency. The JACL National Board has a job that is being repeated

by many nonprofit organizations throughout the nation — adjusting the expectations of the organization in the face of the economic downturn and membership malaise. We have existed for 95 years to protect our community, and we will continue to do so.

While we spend a lot of time reveling in our past accomplishments, we need to prepare ourselves for the future. To this end, I have engaged the board in a visioning exercise to think strategically and imagine for what we need to prepare in the next 20 or 40 years.

At some point in our existence, we stopped growing, not so much in membership, though that is also the case, but more so in leadership, and we have started to fall behind.

I look at the lack of candidates at our biennial elections as a symptom of this. Our mission is education not only to remember the service and sacrifice of our community during World War II but also to prepare our future leaders for the task of guiding us into our next 100 years. We need to strive for constant improvement to keep Mike Masaoka's dream alive to be better Americans in a greater America.

To help us along the way, we need a strong fiscal management team to keep track of our accounts. We now have a team in place to do just that.

David Inoue and Victor Kimura hired a new chief financial officer, Thomas Fernandez, who comes to us with a wealth of experience in both for-profit and nonprofit accounting and

auditing. He is joined by Jonathan Okamoto as secretary/treasurer to give us a formidable team of capable financial managers to give the board a comprehensive view of our finances.

In my first term as president, approximately half of our revenues were from membership dues. Today, with membership at half what it was in 2006, much of the revenue that membership dues contributed has been replaced with investment revenue. The fact that we have investments is a testament to the forward-thinking minds of our predecessors.

Last year, we hired a new investment manager to oversee our investment portfolio. Because of changes in the banking industry, with mergers and acquisitions, the Investment Policy Committee felt it was time to see if there were others who offered a service that could offer better performance of our portfolio or reduced cost.

After an exhaustive search, we were able to identify and retain a firm that met our needs and completed the transition to the new portfolio manager toward the middle of the year. In our initial analysis, if benchmarks were met and expected fees were realized, the new manager could potentially save JACL \$10,000 a month. Staff will be reviewing our account statements for 2023 in the coming weeks to see if our estimates were accurate.

The pace of change in the world is accelerating, and we must keep pace. I live across four generations, and my language has not kept up with the changes. This reminded me that to

communicate with another group, we need to speak their language and communicate in their space. We must go to them.

We have a lot to offer, and unless we can communicate to our target audience in terms that they understand, we are talking to ourselves, and we already know what we are saying. We are lucky to have some staff and board members who live in this new space who can help us bridge the gap. This is something that we need to remember as we try to recruit new, young members. We need to adjust to their norms.

The National Board is thankful for your support and looks forward to another productive year for JACL. Our board and committees have worked diligently to accomplish their goals, and I am proud of their productivity. It seems that the various regulatory agencies demand an increasing amount of accountability for organizations such as ours, and we are able to demonstrate that JACL is showing the appropriate level of prudence in the handling of its affairs by having up-to-date financial audits completed.

I guarantee that we will continue to show due diligence and fiduciary responsibility with which the membership has entrusted us while staying true to our mission of protecting our civil rights and preserving our cultural heritage.

On behalf of the JACL National Board, thank you for your support and encouragement, and I wish you a prosperous Happy New Year! ■



'Looking Into the Future Together'

By **David Inoue,**
JACL Executive Director

Twenty-twenty-four promises to be an intense and possibly interesting year, for lack of a better word. The 2024 election will dominate most storylines and is a big part of why we will be in Philadelphia for our annual convention. In addition to JACL-specific aspects of convention, we will also be working with OCA Asian Pacific Advocates and APIAVote, among others, to share joint programming, culminating in the APIA Presidential Town Hall on July 13.

This collaboration highlights what might be considered a theme for the coming year and something that is integral to all of JACL's work. I often try to emphasize, more often than not in this column, that we always are working together with our allies. In fact, I will take this opportunity to share that the title for this column is also the theme for the 2024 JACL National Convention: "Looking Into the Future Together (LIFT)"

This year is also the 40th anniversary of our first Leadership Summit, one of our premier programs, which is now done in collaboration

with OCA. For participants of this program, we want them to leave with an understanding of all the partnerships JACL engages in, first of all with our partners in Congress and the administration. But also, we introduce them to our partners in the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights (Leadership Conference) and the National Council of Asian Pacific Americans. It is our hope that the alliances that they see us working with here in D.C. might extend to the local work they do when they return home.

Many of our partners in Washington, D.C., have local chapters or offices just like JACL does. With significant time spent with counterparts from OCA, we hope those relationships might continue well beyond the four days they spend in Washington, D.C. We introduce them to other organizations such as the NAACP, one of the few organizations older than us and whose structure is very similar to JACL's.

As we look toward the 2024 elections with our various partner organizations and

coalitions to which we are members, we are largely concerned about threats to our democracy and how we can protect it and also ensure the safety of our communities as we see ourselves coming under target

Election denialism continues to flourish, and misinformation and disinformation are becoming the norm. We will need to work with our coalition and corporate partners to combat these forces in the upcoming elections. Social media and FOX news have supplanted traditional news sources and their accordant journalistic standards.

We need to counter the misinformation and disinformation on social media and try to convince the outlets to better control what is presented on their platforms. Again, we will need to work together to make this possible to have any hope of making a positive impact.

And then there are the threats more directly to us as a community and individually. Some of the angry campaign rhetoric is targeting immigrants and threats from countries like China. This anger when



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directed personally will fall upon our communities, much like the anti-Japan rhetoric of the 1980s led to Japan bashing and serious repercussions on the Asian American community.

Just as we did throughout Covid, we will need to work together to combat any increases in hate against us as Asian Americans and against any other communities that find themselves targets.

As we work together, we will also need to use our partnerships to fight back in the name of women's reproductive rights, gun safety and fair representation for minorities in higher education and the workplace. Some of this work will mean collaborating with our traditional partners. Others will be an expansion of our coalitions, which can only mean greater overlap of force and increased strength together.

We need to look to a brighter future and work together to achieve it — Looking Into the Future Together.

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

Streamline to Empower and Benefit Our Organization

By Jonathan Okamoto,
JACL National Secretary/Treasurer

It is a welcome honor to have joined the board of directors as the secretary/treasurer in late 2023. I've used the past few months to review the many years of budget cycles, which has allowed me to gain valuable insights into where we have been, where we are and, most importantly, the opportunities that lie ahead.

To better understand the path that we had taken, I have spoken with many of our past and present leaders to understand the rationale behind key decisions we've made to study the outcomes, mostly positive, but sometimes negative. Critical analysis of our successes and failures in accounting will allow us to improve in key areas by capturing performance data.

Over the past few months, I have been working very closely with Thomas Fernandez, our new CFO, to streamline our financial processes into a more transparent format, a

format that seeks to use technology to capture performance metrics more effectively from each of our programs. Our belief is that the optimization of internal processes will not only empower our organization to save time, but also generate more opportunity to create more revenue-generating programs to benefit JACL.

Increased costs, mostly unforeseen, and overly optimistic goals of donations ended 2023 with a shortfall of dollars. And due to the negative impact on our biennial budget, we sail into some financial headwinds in 2024.

We've implemented some new budgetary processes, which place a more granular reporting structure around each of our programs.

While this requires some additional reporting by our staff, it will ultimately allow our leadership to identify and address potential issues much more quickly than is possible today.

I cannot express enough my sincere appreciation to the board and national staff



that have supported me in my efforts to build new paths forward for JACL. Success would be difficult without the solid support of everyone.

Thank you and Happy New Year! ■

Next Stop: Philadelphia!

Happy New Year



By Carol Kawamoto,
JACL VP for General Operations

Looking back on 2023, the JACL had a successful convention in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo area with the focus being "Rooted in Community." Let me start by expressing our organization's deep appreciation to all the hard-working volunteers in the Pacific Southwest District and the assistance and cooperation of our Little Tokyo community partners, including the Japanese American National Museum and the Go For Broke National Education Center. Without their efforts, this convention would not have been possible.

Due to a labor dispute less than a week before the start of the National Convention, JACL honored the organized picket lines and relocated our convention to another hotel. This sudden change required the tireless efforts from our great staff members, who arranged new rooms for participants, worked with our community partners to find new venues for convention events and

communicated these changes to all attendees. Please join me in expressing our gratitude for their truly tremendous and significant work. It was amazing how quickly they were able to pull this off after the decision was made.

Our 53rd National JACL Convention was well-attended and had great representation from community members in the Pacific Southwest District, especially the many youth and young adults who were attending their first convention experience. I hope all who attended had an enjoyable time.

On a most deserving and historical note, it was particularly pleasing to see the JACL's Ruby Pin awarded to Sharon Ishii-Jordan, Carol Kawase, Alan Nishi, Travis Nishi and Paul Uyehara.

With apologies to my recipient friends, a younger JACLer asked why this award was only given out to "old people."

The Ruby Pin was originally awarded in 1948 to recognize the contributions of JACL's staff and officers who made personal sacrifices and devoted their lives during World War II to maintain the organization and be a voice

for our community during those trying times. Subsequently, the Ruby Pin was awarded to recognize many years of loyalty and service to the JACL at the district and national levels.

Around the turn of the 20th century, the National Board chose to quantify the award and instituted a requirement of at least 20 years of service.

The Ruby Pin is the highest honor awarded to a JACL member and now connotes a lifetime of service to our organization.

All of the recipients are decades-long volunteers who made significant contributions to the benefit of JACL and our entire JA community.

Congratulations to these worthy recipients and heartfelt appreciation for your longtime commitment to our community.

The 2024 JACL National Convention will return to Philadelphia. Stay tuned for more information and details to come as we return to this historic city in this very important election year.

Thank you all for your support and Happy New Year! ■

'It Is Critically Important for Us to Find New Sources of Funding If We Want JACL to Continue to Grow'

By Gary Nakamura,
JACL National VP for Planning and Development

Happy New Year, JACLers! I hope this finds each of you and your loved ones in good health and enjoying a great start to your new year!

It's been exactly one year since I joined the national board, and I can honestly say that it's been a very interesting and educational experience for me. I am grateful to our national president, Larry Oda, for inviting me to join the board and working very closely with me throughout 2023.

Larry and I have spent countless hours on the phone and on Zoom discussing a variety of matters affecting JACL, so I am very thankful to Larry for his time and his guidance during this past year. I also would like to thank former National President and VP for Planning and Development David Lin for the invaluable feedback and wise counsel that he always provides to me whenever I need to pick his brain. Also, I feel truly honored to be able to work closely with my colleagues on the national board, all of whom are extremely dedicated and thoughtful leaders, along with all of our very hard-working and talented JACL staff members.

I would like to take this opportunity to give you an overview of the programs under my purview:

The Legacy Fund Grants Program

I am happy to report that the following chapters received Legacy Fund Grants during 2023: Alaska; Idaho Falls; New Mexico; Washington, D.C.; and Wisconsin. Congratulations to each of these amazing chapters! I am very grateful to the two wonderful co-chairs of the Legacy Fund Grants Program Committee, Sheldon Arakaki and Lisa Olsen, for their leadership, dedication and hard work in overseeing



the grant application, review and approval process. I would also like to thank Patty Wada for her hard work in helping with the administration of the LFG Program. We are lucky to have these very experienced and dedicated people heading this important program, and I would like to encourage more chapters around the country to apply for the LFG Program in 2024.

Investment Policy Committee

Under the stellar leadership of Investment Policy Committee Chair David Lin, JACL's long-term investments are doing well, and his committee had a very busy and productive year. After a successful transition to a new portfolio manager, Vanguard, the IPC updated and revised the Investment Policy Statement to guide JACL's long-term investments.

I would like to sincerely thank David and the following members of the 2024 IPC for their diligence, dedication and hard work to ensure that JACL's long-term investments are being invested very carefully and wisely: David Lin (EDC), IPC chairman; Chip Larouche (PNW), secretary; Darcy Dahl (MDC); Matt Farrells (MDC); Travis Nishi (CCDC); Kirk Tambara (PNW); and ex-officio members Larry Oda, David Inoue, Ken Massey, Jonathan Okamoto and Tom Fernandez.

I would also like to thank and acknowledge two former IPC members who played important roles on the committee but transitioned off in 2023: Dale Ikeda (CCDC) and Gerald Kita (EDC), both of whom played significant roles in the selection of Vanguard, while Dale was also instrumental in getting the IPS revised.

Fund Development

It is critically important for us to find new sources of funding if we want JACL to continue to grow and fulfill our mission as a leading national civil rights organization. I have been working very closely with Larry Oda to come up with innovative new strategies to raise funds for JACL so that we can make our organization more sustainable in the future.

I am also making concerted efforts to visit with potential sponsors whenever I travel to California to attend JACL national board meetings and in my home state of Texas, as well. Additionally, I have been working closely with Phillip Ozaki, our program director for membership and fund development, to create some new marketing collateral that we can use to approach brand-new donors, even if they may not yet be familiar with JACL.

We have raised over two-thirds of the \$3 million goal for the

Centennial Education Fund, and I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to all of you who have made monetary contributions to support JACL. Both Phillip and David Inoue did a great job in finding new sponsors for our 2023 National Convention, so I would like to thank them both for their hard work.

Fundraising is a very time-consuming endeavor that could be done more effectively if we can get the assistance of a few key people who have good relations with potential funders. My predecessor, David Lin, started the Leadership Fundraising Committee, and I would like to ask our JACL members to consider joining this special committee to help JACL become more financially sustainable. If you have experience in fundraising or have good connections with potential funders and would like to help us with our national fundraising efforts, please email me directly at gnakamura@jacl.org. Thank you very much!

Visioning Initiative

I have been tasked by Larry Oda to oversee our new National Visioning Committee, and we had a successful launch during the plenary session at convention last summer in Little Tokyo. We are extremely fortunate to have the very kind assistance of Michael Kanazawa, who is a partner at EY, and we are very grateful to Michael for his time and expertise and for all the insightful advice he has given to JACL.

Currently, we are in the process of formulating a series of questions that we will be asking various stakeholder groups during listening sessions, which we will conduct over the next several months. Our goal is to get a good sense of what our stakeholders think about JACL and our future, and how we can prepare ourselves to stay relevant over the next 10, 20 and 30 years.

We hope to be able to present a preliminary report of our findings during our next convention in July 2024. As you can imagine, trying to figure out how a 95-year-old organization like JACL needs to change in order to stay vibrant and relevant is a colossal effort.

This visioning initiative will take time and a very dedicated team of people to complete, so we ask you in advance for your patience, understanding and cooperation.

In closing, I would like to express my most heartfelt gratitude to our JACL members, our community partners and our corporate funders and donors. Thank you for all that you do for JACL, and I wish you and your loved ones a happy, healthy and prosperous 2024! ■

Let's Recruit, Train and Engage Members in 2024

By Paul Uyehara,
JACL Eastern District
Governor

Last June, I was elected Eastern District governor and returned to the national board. The time was right. After retiring in 2021 as a lawyer for the Justice Department and having to attend a series of board meetings before and after the 2022 Las Vegas convention to debate Legacy Fund endowment management policy, I was ready to put my time into having a seat at the table rather than lobbying others. Or so I thought.

Having been a governor and board member for a single term some 20 years ago, I should have remembered how much time and energy it takes to fulfill those roles. It makes me thankful to past governor Michael Asada from the Seabrook chapter for his conscientious leadership for the previous four years, including the unprecedented challenges of the pandemic. There are so many big and little things for which I am now responsible that I am grateful for each person in the district that has helped me manage EDC's work so far.

Maintaining the vitality and relevance of JACL requires continual recruitment of members and their effective engagement in leadership and support roles of all kinds, together with thoughtful leadership at all levels.

Leaders are important, but they can't be effective alone. There is a lot of work to be done, and we need people to do it. We should constantly strive for new blood and identify new leaders. Indeed, it should be the responsibility of established leaders to render themselves obsolete by recruiting and training their successors.

In 2024, I suggest we "recruit, engage and train."

Recruit. Successive vp's for membership and hard-working membership staff always prod us to recruit new members. We are a membership organization, and we need to recruit to maintain our numbers and our chapters and financially support the organization. Sometimes, it's a matter of asking people you meet or making sure that membership recruitment is part of our events. Last year, I met someone at the Jerome/Rohwer pilgrimage and sent him an email afterwards inviting him to join our chapter, which he did. When I was a Kakehashi supervisor in 2016, I found out that JACL membership wasn't a requirement and asked three active youth members to give a membership



pitch to our group while we were on a bus ride.

Engage. As someone born into JACL as the child of two JACL leaders, I've always treasured JACL as a community where I was comfortable and could be heard. Nonmembers may or may not have a family JACL history, but we always want to provide a community that is welcoming and values its members. We should try to connect to individual members to encourage them to attend events, see if they need a ride and be sure to spend time with them. Figuring out each member's interests, skills and willingness to help in any way is important;

asking members to help in some way helps to build the organization, retain them as members and promote our work. Some engagement can be big, such as when I was able to recruit two highly skilled lapsed members to accept appointments to the national board last year. But it can also mean reaching out to a member to see if he/she needs a ride to a chapter event or inviting a member to serve on a committee. Asking people to pitch in is a way to make them feel welcome.

Train. For more than two decades, I have chaired either the Constitution & Bylaws Committee or the Resolutions Committee. And for much of that time, I've prodded a succession of national presidents to use the convention committees and other national committees to engage members and cultivate new leaders, especially women. The same goes for the boards and committees at all JACL levels. It's good to have experienced and capable committee chairs and members, but sometimes we miss opportunities to identify capable people to serve and train and support our replacements. Good leaders should always be searching for and nurturing their replacements. We should always have candidates for office. Contested elections create energy.

As you read this, it is time for the vp for general operations to appoint the convention committee chairs and for governors to appoint committee members. Are you interested? Contact Carol Kawamoto or your governor! Let's all put some energy into recruiting, engaging and training members this year.

Finally, I hope to see you at convention in Philadelphia this July! (And yes, we need volunteers to help there, so let me know.) ■



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Let's Continue to Train and Mentor to Prepare for Continued Leadership and Growth

By Lisa Shiosaki Olsen,
JACL Intermountain District Governor

The past year has been a busy and memorable one for the Intermountain District Council since many chapters have returned to holding their events in person. Day of Remembrance events were held in Denver, Colo.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Idaho Falls, Idaho; and Boise, Idaho. Chapter picnics, memorial events, bento box fundraisers, bento meal delivery, BBQs, fund-a-ramas and holiday celebrations were held while still fighting for important civic issues such as the Lava Ridge Wind Project, library access and ending discrimination.

All of these important events could not happen without the volunteers who support

JACL from the chapter to the district to the national level. These individuals are often unseen except for those closest to them. They make phone calls, arrange events, apply for grants, serve on boards, balance budgets, create spreadsheets, send thank you notes, write letters of support/opposition, conduct meetings, take minutes, make food, teach skills, mentor members and faithfully attend events. These individuals serve without expectation of payment but hope to leave a better legacy for the next generation. Thank you to all of you who serve in JACL. This organization could not continue to exist without your efforts.

Thank you to our JACL staff, *Pacific Citizen* staff, fellows and Executive Director David Inoue. You keep the organization running at the national level and support our chapters in

so many ways. We appreciate you.

As I look forward to 2024 and my fifth year as governor of IDC, I plan "to continue a systematic approach to training and mentoring. So many individuals in my district have expertise that can and should be shared with others to strengthen local chapters and prepare for continued leadership."

I am grateful that we were able to recognize the efforts of some individuals by awarding them JACL Sapphire Pins. Larry Grant, Sandra Grant (posthumously), Marion Hori, Karl Endo and Janet Komoto were all recognized at the fall 2023 IDC meeting for their many contributions to JACL. Thank you for setting a high standard of service in this organization.

As I plan for this year, I hope to emulate your example and the words of Dr. Martin



Luther King Jr.: "Whatever your life's work, do it well . . ."



By Eric Langowski,
JACL Midwest District Governor

JACL's strength is its members and community. I want to write this year about what living in community means to me as we begin to tackle difficult conversations about civil rights, Palestine and how we will respond together.

Growing up, I looked forward to the annual Hoosier JACL picnics held in Indianapolis. My brother and I were often in charge of designing the games and would design exceedingly complicated puzzles. I am grateful that everyone humored us. In JACL, we are in community with so many. I work with members in Nebraska, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Michigan, Illinois, Kentucky, Iowa,

Ohio and Texas.

These chapters have responded to hate crimes, book bannings and alien land laws in their states this year. They have worked to save historic buildings and incarceration sites, educate others on the Japanese American story and support our neighboring communities in their own (and our collective) battles. And we have done this together in community.

The power of this community is immeasurable. The fights that we take on in memory of our ancestors (Never Again Is Now!) and the love we put into creating Japanese American spaces are our acts of resistance. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's 1944 vision of resettlement was "one or two families to each county" for the purposes of "internal quiet." In my vision, the simple

existence of our Midwest chapters is an act of resistance in loving community.

This brings me to the present day. This year, our many communities will join together in July at the Philadelphia National Convention, and I am so excited to see old and new faces again. I expect that calls will continue for JACL to take action on the issue of Palestine. My heart is heavy as the people of Palestine continue to suffer greatly.

What JACL should do in response to this suffering is an extremely complex problem but one that necessitates that we listen and speak with humility. We must work to find our way back to each other and understanding across generations, states and backgrounds.

Living in Community

'What Is Our Lasting Impact as Leaders?'

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

Happy New Year! For 2024, I resolve to explore and answer the question, "Am I a leader who leaves a legacy for the next generation to follow?"

As I officiate 2024 installations of chapter board members, it is always a pleasure to see familiar faces and meet new members. As I scan the room, I often open the proceedings with the question to the attendees, "How many here today have been a member for 30-plus years, for 20-plus years, for 10-plus years?" It gives us a chance to focus on the makeup of the audience and applaud these stalwart members for their many, many years of dedicated service to the chapter and forwarding the mission and goals of JACL. I am always uplifted by the sighting of younger members and the hope for that long-awaited generational shift.

I first became involved as a leader on the NCWNP District executive board in 2016 as secretary. Those first two years were spent getting a lay of the land and assessing how my contributions to the board could strengthen the district. In my second term, I was surprisingly appointed as governor and spent most of that term bolstering communications

and sharing important information between National JACL and chapters.

Our biggest challenge was chapter apathy, as sometimes we couldn't meet quorum to conduct District Council business. Albeit the pandemic didn't help. Third term was spent finding and sharing resources on a wide variety of subjects through the creation of a monthly Executive Leaders Caucus Roundtable. These last couple of years, we learned about the importance of nonprofit compliance and succession planning. The information was very complex and challenging to assess, and it has become apparent that many chapter leaders are overwhelmed with the rules and regulations to be accountable, transparent and fiscally responsible nonprofit organizations as mandated by the CA State Charities Trust.

Last September, with the announcement that district elections were coming due, I discovered that my term was up! Hallelujah! Time flies, and at the end of eight years of executive board duty, I pondered, "Haven't I given enough blood, sweat and tears to this organization, or have I given enough blood, sweat and tears?" When I look in the mirror and see the gray hairs and collagen-depleted skin, a bit of soul searching was in order.

I am often challenged by the question that JACL is viewed as a dying organization, so why continue to be actively involved?

On the eve of the deadline for submitting my candidate's intention to run application, I was stumped by the final question, "What goals do I have to offer the district for the 2024/2025 year?"

With no ready snappy answer, I took to the internet and googled leadership management trends. I came across a 2012 article written by a leading leadership training consultant. The intriguing part of the article was the opening question, "Are you a leader who leaves a legacy for the next generation to follow?" I wish I discovered this article back in 2016.

After 18 months of research and roundtable discussions, we discovered that a successful succession strategy is a multiperson, multi-level, multistep process that takes a minimum of three to five years to implement. Maybe this is why JACL is viewed as an outmoded organization.

Based on a Deloitte study of global millennial leaders, Tanner Corbridge extrapolated his reasons as to why organizations are struggling today to retain strong leaders. Two-thirds of present-day leaders give their all and usually leave within two to five years, and of those, only a third have a succession plan for their specific expertise. Sixteen percent of leaders usually stay five to 10 years, and 11 percent are the diehard leaders that are committed to the organization. The remaining leaders are undecided. Are our diehard leaders exposing JACL as a dying organization?

Maintaining a legacy organization depends



on a succession planning strategy to be the PRIORITY in order to be sustainable. There are lots of reasons it's not a priority for most executive boards — who has the extra time, not enough people to handle the business at hand, apathy, dependance on the longstanding board members to juggle multiple jobs, can't find willing new volunteers, belief that it's going to be the next chapter president's problem, don't know it's important or know where to start, dependance on replacement planning when an emergency arises and the age-old condition of BO (Burn Out). Here's where I discover the difference between classical leadership vs. legacy collaborative leadership.

So, what's a chapter executive board to do? Mr. Corbridge counters that leaders must go beyond conventional succession planning and include developing legacy leadership strategies. He identified three main principles for a lasting legacy.



➤ First, prioritize long-term principled leadership over short-term tactical leadership. For example, start finding and mentoring members willing to become more actively involved, matching their expertise to the position and/or the assignment at hand. Second, JACL can't be the be-all-to-end-all organization and must define and articulate the core convictions of the chapter's goals.

An initial start might be focusing only on fulfilling goals that capitalize on the chapter's strengths and as more members get involved, expand the programming and projects. And finally, delve deep to examine internal organizational systems, policies, reporting requirements and other business practices that may actually be contradicting and inhibiting a strong operational infrastructure. This is where I plan to concentrate efforts to create an online toolkit for chapter leaders to review and implement systems to support their own organizational operations.

Another piece of the succession strategy puzzle is what management consultants identify as collaborative leadership. Legacy leaders need to understand how their work intersects with and influences other members of the board, the chapters and the membership. A more interconnected, up-to-date and engaged org-wide chapter would hopefully inspire members to get involved.

What is our lasting impact as leaders to ensure that sharing our great-grandparents' and AAPI community stories continue to be a powerful educational resource that is preserved for generations to learn from and be motivated to protect civil rights and equality for all?

As a 94-year-old legacy organization, we want to ensure that our JA Incarceration experience legacy continues to inspire, engage and motivate the next generation.

That means we need to prioritize and transform our organizational leadership culture to align and be accountable for achieving the change we need to be sustainable. Here's the million-dollar question that I pose to our incoming leaders: "Are you a leader who leaves a legacy for the next generation to follow?" ■

Happy New Year!

*Ann, Scott and
Maki Winner*

5722 N. Omaha Ave.
Portland, OR 97217

Centennial Education Fund, Sponsors and My Legacy Plans



By Phillip Ozaki,
JACL Program Director — Membership
and Fund Development

At JACL, we are very grateful to have some of the most loyal and community-minded donors of any nonprofit organization!

In 2024, we enter the last year of the Centennial Education Fund, where we have raised \$2,054,000 out of our ambitious goal of \$3 million. Our community has gone above and beyond to contribute to this once-in-a-lifetime campaign

in anticipation of JACL National's 100th anniversary, which is only five years away.

Through the fund, we have expanded our education programming. In 2023, we held four teacher-training workshops. History and social studies educators were empowered by the stories of Nisei survivors and expert panelists to pass the lessons of the incarceration to their students. In 2024, we will have an updated digital curriculum resource to reach more students, teachers and communities.

We have made strides in our educational documentary, "The League of Dreams," a film about the history of the JACL. Director Lane Nishikawa ("Our Lost Years") has filmed over 108 community members. We look forward to watching the film with you this year!

I also want to highlight a few special sponsor moments from 2023. East West Bank, our new partner, hosted a dynamic panel that featured and was called, "The Next Generation of Japanese American Civic Leadership." AARP and Keiro co-hosted "Caregiving Café," which was a moving and meaningful program to discuss caregiving over lunch. Food for thought (literally!): What would you choose as your last meal?

Speaking of end-of-life plans, during the hol-

idays, I had to contemplate mine because I'm a new parent. This exercise is difficult; confronting mortality is difficult. I actually enjoyed it because you realize who and what matters to you. What legacy do you want to leave behind?

I added JACL into my bequest plans because I want the organization to continue for the next generation. My son, like his mixed peers, is one-quarter Japanese. I want them to have a JACL. I want the stories of our Issei, Nisei, Sansei and youth to be told not only to teachers and students, but also to political and business leaders. JACL will continue to fulfill these wishes well beyond myself.

I may not have a lot of assets (I work at a nonprofit!) but my allocation was meaningful because JACL's mission is important to my legacy and my family's. If you would like to discuss ideas or plans or help with our Legacy Giving Program, please reach out to me at pozaki@jacl.org or leave a voice message at (415) 921-5225, ext. 33.

Thank you to our members, donors and partners, and we look forward to the success of the Centennial Education Fund with you this year! ■



Celebrating Community Spirit in 2024

By Ashley Bucher,
JACL Membership Manager

Happy New Year, JACLers! I hope you had a joyful and restful holiday season. Here at JACL, we closed out the year with our most successful *Otoshidama* campaign yet! (*Otoshidama* is the tradition of presenting children with a monetary gift in the form of a special envelope that bears the new year's zodiac sign. We took inspiration from this tradition for our holiday gift membership campaign!)

Together with you and our chapters, we gifted 187 people memberships, well exceeding our goal of 100. Over one-third of those memberships were Student/Youth, and we also received four life memberships thanks to a very supportive family. I actually ran out of gift package materials because I did not expect so many folks to participate. We would not have been nearly as successful without your help, so a sincere thank you to those who took part!

Special thanks to those who also contributed testimonials as part of our campaign promotion. One of my favorites from Robbie Yoshikawa (AKA Kyori the Okapi, He/Him/His, SELA-NOCO chapter) on what it means to be a JACL member: "It means that I'm a part of history. This group has been a staple in our community, and I'm proud of the work that they do."

As I reflect on our campaign and look forward to the year ahead, I'm reminded of our members' generosity and loyalty. Like Phillip Ozaki (JACL development director) remarked before, we truly have some of the most giving and devoted members around.

While it's true that JACL membership declines each year — in part due to folks aging — more and more members are upgrading to premium and life membership levels. Just this past year, 62 members upgraded to premium memberships, and 14 upgraded to life.

Our renewal rates also continue to be the highest around, with 77 percent renewing in 2023!



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

Promoting Physical Health in 2024

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

New Year's resolutions have been around for thousands of years. However, despite the best of intentions, New Year's resolutions generally don't work. In other words, intentions are not enough. We have to follow through with solid goals, behaviors and action plans. So, how can we improve our chances of succeeding? Well, according to board-certified geriatrician Dr. Leslie Kernisan, we have to start by distinguishing "outcome goals" from "behavioral goals." Outcome goals are oriented toward results. Outcome goals, sometimes called "destination goals," are about what we want to happen, not how we'll get there.

On the other hand, "behavioral goals" are more concrete. For example, with the outcome goal of staying physically healthy, the "behavioral goal" might be to exercise regularly, eat healthy, get enough sleep, etc. It's often the case that our resolutions

fail because they take the form of an outcome goal rather than a behavioral goal, i.e., the path. If your focus is on the destination, but not the path of how to get there, resolutions fail.

To help you keep your New Year's resolution to stay physically healthy this coming year, here are Dr. Kernisan's "short list" of six important behavior goals to promote physical health while aging.

1. Exercise regularly — Exercise helps older adults maintain their strength and mobility, plus it improves just about every physical health outcome you can imagine. Research suggests that strength training is especially beneficial. Without strength training, muscles weaken as we age, which can lead to anything from falls to difficulties with daily activities.

Exercise also tends to improve mood, which has positive effects on the rest of the body. If you are already walking regularly, the next step is to try to incorporate all four different

types of exercise that benefit older adults: strength, endurance, balance and flexibility.

2. Don't smoke — Why: Smoking tobacco is bad for just about every aspect of physical health.

Fortunately, even after an older adult has developed smoking-related health problems, quitting smoking will reduce symptoms and one's chance of a premature death. Many people need to try quitting a few times, so don't let a past failure to quit stop you from trying again.

3. Get enough sleep — Studies have found that chronic sleep deprivation is linked to increased cardiovascular disease, increased levels of inflammatory blood markers and decreased immune function. Being sleep-deprived also causes fatigue, which can make it hard to be physically active.

Aging does cause sleep to become lighter and more fragmented and may cause people to need a little less sleep than when they were younger. That said, chronic sleep difficulties or often waking up feeling tired is not normal in aging. Older adults often suffer from true sleep problems that can be treated once they are properly evaluated.

4. Avoid chronic stress — Feeling chronically stressed has been linked to physical health problems such as cardiovascular disease, insulin

resistance and decreased immune function. Research suggests that this may be because stress can accelerate "cellular aging" and also may promote inflammatory markers in the body.

To reduce chronic stress, it's best to combine general approaches (such as improving sleep, exercising, meditation, relaxation strategies, etc.) with approaches that can help you cope with your specific source of stress.

5. Maintain a healthy weight — Obesity is a major risk factor for disability in late life. It has also been linked to health problems such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes and glucose intolerance, certain types of cancer and sleep-related breathing disorders.

Older adults need to be especially careful about not losing too much lean body mass during intentional weight loss. Do keep in mind that unintentional weight loss is a major red flag when it comes to the health of older adults and should always be brought to the attention of health professionals.

6. Eat a "healthy diet" — A healthy diet is one that doesn't provoke negative health effects, such as being prone to take on extra weight, developing insulin resistance, developing atherosclerosis or having uncomfortable symptoms in the belly or bowels. Frail older people

often need extra calories and protein, since malnutrition becomes more common as people age.

Research also suggests that eating enough protein is important if you are working on strength training. In general, research suggests that a diet high in vegetables and fiber and low in ultraprocessed foods and added sugars — such as the Mediterranean diet — is a good choice for many.

In conclusion, your New Year's resolution could be anything, e.g., family, friends, spiritual well-being, etc. What's your outcome goal? One way we can clarify our outcome goal is by thinking deeply about what we really value. So, we have to first understand what we value and then start to make a plan to get there, i.e., behavior goals. And remember, we don't arrive at our destination overnight. Change takes time — be patient with yourself.

Judd Matsunaga is the founding attorney of Elder Law Services of California, a law firm that specializes in Medi-Cal Planning, Estate Planning and Probate. He can be contacted at (310) 348-2995 or judd@elderlawcalifornia.com. The opinions expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect the view of the Pacific Citizen or constitute legal or tax advice and should not be treated as such.



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JACL Announces 2024 National SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

SAN FRANCISCO — The Japanese American Citizens League has announced that the 2024 National Scholarship and Awards Program is now underway. The JACL annually offers approximately 30 college scholarships for students who are incoming college freshmen, undergraduates and graduates, as well as those specializing in law and the creative/performing arts. There are also financial aid scholarships for those demonstrating a need for financial assistance.

Scholarship Program guidelines, instructions and applications have been posted on the JACL website (www.jacl.org) and can be accessed by clicking the “Youth” tab on the menu bar.

Following previous years, the application forms for the scholarship program will be completely online. Freshman applications must be submitted directly by the applicant to National JACL through the online form no later than March 1 at 11:59 p.m. Hawaiian Standard Time.

These freshman applications will then be disseminated to their respective chapters for review. Chapters will have one month to evaluate their applications and forward the



names of the most outstanding applicants to National JACL. It is these applications that shall be forwarded to the National Freshman Scholarship Committee for final selection.

Applications for the nonfreshman scholarship categories (undergraduate, graduate, law, creative/performing arts and financial aid) are also to be sent directly by the applicant to National JACL through the online form no later than April 1 at 11:59 p.m. Hawaiian Standard Time.

All those applying to the National JACL Scholarship Program must be a youth/student or individual member of the JACL; a couple/family membership held by a parent does NOT meet this requirement. Applicants must be enrolled in school in fall 2024 in order to be eligible for a scholarship. If a student has received two National Scholarship awards previously, they are no longer eligible to apply, as the limit is two national awards per person.

For more information on the National JACL Scholarship Program, contact Scholarship Program Manager Matthew Weisbly at scholarships@jacl.org.

‘Memory and the Nation: Day of Remembrance 2024’

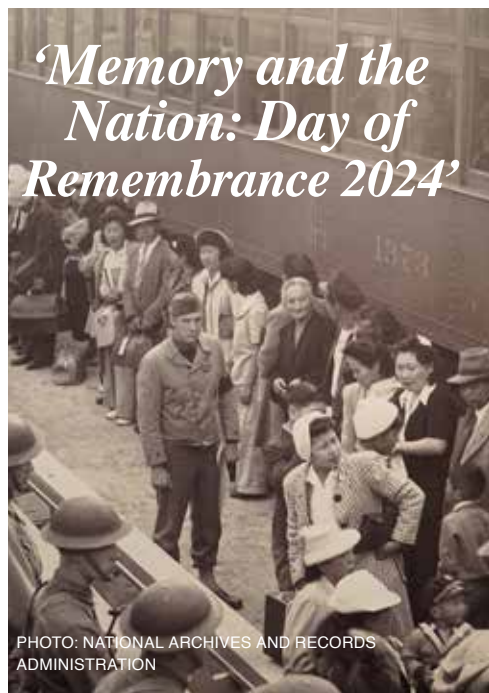


PHOTO: NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

Smithsonian to hold 2024 DOR with FDR Presidential Library on Feb. 19.

This President’s Day, Feb. 19, marks the 82nd anniversary of the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin D. Roosevelt,

which led to the wrongful incarceration of 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II.

This commemorative event will feature a panel discussion with William Harris, director of the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum; Perrin Ireland, artist and biologist and great-granddaughter of President Franklin D. Roosevelt; Dr. Madeline Hsu, professor of History and director of the Center for Global Mitigation Studies at the University of Maryland; and moderator David Inoue, executive director of the JACL.

This event is a partnership between the Smithsonian’s National Museum of American History, the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Center, the Franklin D. Roosevelt Presidential Library and the JACL.

The Day of Remembrance program will take place at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History, Warner Bros. Theater, 1 Center from 1-2:30 p.m. EST. The cost is free, but tickets are required.

Please see the following link for program information and reservations:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/memory-and-the-nation-day-of-remembrance-2024-tickets-794529809047?aff=eivtefrnd>.

LETTER » continued from page 2

Such linguistic choices matter. The JACL, more than perhaps any other institution, taught me to appreciate the force of language to shape our social reality. Our “The Power of Words” educational campaign has particularly influenced my understanding of euphemism as “strategic misrepresentation” with real-world consequences: Were Japanese Americans housed in pleasant “relocation centers” or bitter “concentration camps?” Such misuse of language to blur political reality is resonant with the Israeli practice of hasbara — seeking to explain away actions “whether or not they are justified” by relying upon deception to exert narrative control.

I was struck by the power of hasbara when I read a column JACL’s executive director wrote in this publication more than a year ago in which he invoked the Israeli occupation in a bizarre reference to the Wakasa Monument and recounted participating in a free trip to Israel hosted by the American Jewish Committee. Mr. Inoue described the experience as one designed to “communicate the 70-year-old nation of Israel’s profoundly democratic character,” characterizing the settler colonial dynamic as a “conflict” in which “neither side is blameless.”

I was struck by these reflections in part because my own takeaways from visiting the region were so different. I first visited the West Bank in the months following 2018’s Great March of Return, when Israel murdered and maimed thousands of Palestinian children and adults engaged in a peaceful protest involving their slowly walking towards the Gazan border fence. I will never forget the glances of recognition and nods of understanding when, week after week, those I met asked to hear the stories of my tattoos (barbed wire and paper cranes, tableaux of Nikkei history). Neither can I forget the jolt when my father opened the blinds of our hotel room one morning in Bethlehem, where we had arrived under cover of the previous evening’s darkness, glimpsing the guard towers looming outside our window. “Just like camp!” he gasped. Later that day, we wandered through a Muslim cemetery filled with bottles of dark urine that, our guide explained with palpable pain, had been cast down amidst the headstones from spiteful soldiers within the watchtowers. “Just like camp.” If James Wakasa’s story is to be invoked at all in this context, it should be to lament the ease with which “the civilized” feel empowered

to enact the desecration of graves — or the unsettling confidence with which the representatives of “democracy” pull the trigger on those who dare to walk “too close to the fence.”

Japanese American solidarity with Palestine can help us to create a future in which all peoples live safe from persecution and violence. Anti-Zionism is a principled political position and an essential element of dreaming this future into being.

To this end, JACL can join voices of conscience throughout the world by calling for a permanent ceasefire and advocating for an end to American financial sponsorship of the Zionist entity. While armed struggle is a legitimate form of resistance to occupation, and the Gazans who take up arms should be viewed as the spiritual siblings of all throughout history who refused to die confined in ghettos, plantations and concentration camps, JACL leaders can also extend wider explicit support to all of Palestinian civil society. A primary organ of this resistance is the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, a call to employ nonviolent, economic pressure to end the Israeli occupation. JACL can follow the lead of our peers in the Association for Asian American Studies, who in 2013 led the first professional academic association to endorse BDS.

JACL members, and especially leaders, should reconsider invitations to attend hasbara AJC excursions to an apartheid state; aware of the propagandizing power of words, JACL should cease using words like “our friends” and “partnership” to refer to any avowedly Zionist organization. JACL can belatedly heed the call of the 2020 #DropTheADL campaign, a movement endorsed by many organizational peers to condemn the ADL’s crude conflation of support for BDS with animus towards Jewish people; the ADL’s scandalous history of espionage towards activists who, alongside Herzl, understand Israel to be “something colonial” disqualifies this group as a reliable partner for coalitional civil rights work.

A letter boasting 300-plus signatures and 100-plus comments of public testimony from JACL and Nikkei leaders has been circulating online since late last year encouraging this organization to stand fully with the cause of Palestinian freedom.

I encourage you to read these remarks at <http://tinyurl.com/JACLPalestine> and add your signature at <http://tinyurl.com/JACLletter>. ■

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In MEMORIAM

Anzai, Wayne, 89, Honolulu, HI, Nov. 10, 2023; he was predeceased by his wife, Nora; son, Deric; and daughter, Kelly Metz; he is survived by his children, Scott (Tammy) and Cyd Ota; gc: 5; ggc: 2.

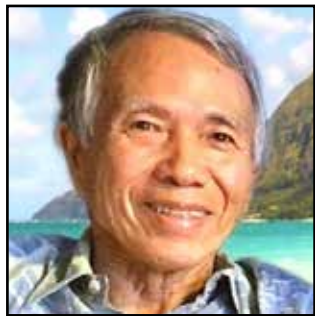
Chikahisa, Henry 'Hank,' 91, Fullerton, CA, Sept. 12, 2023; during WWII, his family and he were incarcerated at the Poston WRA Center in AZ; he was predeceased by his siblings, James Chikahisa, Carl Chikahisa, Ray Chikahisa, Paul Chikahisa and Margie Park; he is survived by his wife, Patti Yamagata Chikahisa; children, David (Patty), Cindy and Carrie (Jeff) Iwasaki; sister, Helen Sakaki; sisters-in-law, Evelyn Chikahisa, Frances Chikahisa and Irene Yamagata-Bermudez; and brother-in-law, Ken (Edna) Yamagata; he is also survived by other relatives.

Daikai, Robert, 74, Sacramento, CA, June 23, 2023; B.A., CSUS; he was predeceased by his sister, Louise; and brother-in-law, Felix; he is survived by his sisters, Frances (Yoshito) and Susan (Danny).



Endo, Devin Hideo, 32, Salt Lake City, UT, Sept. 23, 2023; he was predeceased by his mother, Karren; his father, Mike; and his brother, Keaton; he is survived by his wife, Rachelle; and his siblings.

Fujii, Edwin Tsuruzo, 87, Los Angeles, CA, Oct. 17, 2023; he is survived by his wife, Iris; their children, Ross Fujii and Kristi (Richard) Wagner; his sister, Michiko (Hiro) Nishida; gc: 5.



Hamada, Glenn Kenichi, 73, Kailua, HI, Sept. 30, 2023; he is survived by his wife, Junko; his son, Jimmy; siblings, Lester and Jennie (Rhude); he is also survived by nieces, a grandnephew, a grandniece, aunts and cousins.

Kashiwagi, Yuko, 75, Rockland, NY, Nov. 11, 2023; she is survived by her children, Erika and Michael; and nephews; gc: 2.



Kato, Tokiko Anzai, 96, San Jose, CA, Oct. 26, 2023; she is survived by her children, Crystal (Roger), Susan and Bill (Jeannie); gc: 7; ggc: 9.

Uyekawa, David Tadasu, 78, Torrance, CA, Nov. 28, 2023; he was predeceased by his sister, Naomi Uyekawa Chan; he is survived by his wife, Karen Chomori Uyekawa; daughter, Teiko (Jared) Cappeline; brothers, Gary, Richard and Eddie (Jeannie) Uyekawa; brother-in-law, Sam Chan; sisters-in-law, Janice Tamehiro and Susie (Kenny) Nozawa; gc: 1.

Yada, Seizi Masaichi, 79, Federal Way, WA, Nov. 15, 2023.

TRIBUTE

SADAKO IKEDA



Sadako (Kai) Ikeda of San Jose, Calif., was born on July 16, 1926, in Santa Cruz, Calif., and passed away peacefully on Sept. 9, 2023. She was the second child of Tsumoru and Yaeko Kai, from Hiroshima, Japan. She is survived by husband, Sus Ikeda, son, Ed (Suga), grandsons Kyle, Reid and Marcus; sister, Eva Iwanaga, nephew, Mark, niece, Donna (Brad) Beutter, brother, Butch (Celeese) Kai, and nephews Trevor and Spencer, along with many other relatives. She was predeceased by her eldest sister, Mary Kai.

Sadako attended Santa Cruz High School, and when World War II broke out, her father was taken by the FBI. The family was separated for much of WWII. With President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, the family was incarcerated in both Crystal City, Texas, and Poston, Ariz., Camp 3, Block 316. Poston was one of 10 U.S. incarceration camps of some 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry. After WW II, the family relocated to Reedley, Calif., where Sadako worked on the family farm.

In the early 1950s, Sadako enrolled in sewing school in San Francisco. She met her future husband, Sus, at a picnic, were married a year later and bought a home in Santa Clara, where they lived ever since. Sadako was a bookkeeper for several companies, arranged flowers in her cousin's floral shop, but spent most of her working life with the Continuing Ed. Dept. at San Jose State University.

Sadako enjoyed growing vegetables, was a proficient baker, kept a neat and tidy home, and worked into the late evenings before sitting down to read the newspaper. She was a good cook and baker, canned her garden tomatoes, and made various Japanese dishes.

She enjoyed trout fishing, played the organ, played bridge, joined a women's golf league, hosted many parties and gatherings, traveled to Yosemite, Japan, Singapore, Bali, Branson, Reno, Maui golf trips; co-chaired and planned numerous Poston Camp 3 & Crystal City Reunions; joined a ladies investment club; enjoyed many arts & crafts including Japanese *bunka*, embroidery; and was a proficient seamstress.

Sadako was a longtime member and volunteer with the San Jose Buddhist Church Betsuin and several affiliate organizations. Private services were held on Nov. 11, 2023.

Community Leader Alan Nishio Dies at Age 78

The esteemed figure was awarded JACL's President's Lifetime Achievement Award in 2023.

By P.C. Staff



Alan Takeshi Nishio, who was awarded the JACL's President's Lifetime Achievement Award at the organization's 2023 National Convention in Los Angeles on July 22 in absentia due to a prolonged battle with leiomyosarcoma, has died. The longtime Japanese American community activist, educator and leader was 78. He died Dec. 27 in Gardena, Calif.

In addition to the National JACL's accolade, Nishio was honored by the Japanese American National Museum, of which he was a charter member, at its annual gala in 2008, and in 2017 the government of Japan presented him with its Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays With Rosette for his decades of work in the Nikkei community and efforts to strengthen U.S.-Japan relations. Also in 2017, the Manzanar Committee awarded Nishio its Sue Kunitomi Embrey Legacy Award.

Several community organizations released statements about Nishio after his death. "Alan just emanated kindness and thoughtfulness," said Densho's Executive Director Naomi Ostwald Kawamura, with Densho's Content Director Brian Niiya adding, "Alan was a trusted friend and mentor to many and also someone who modeled what balancing a mainstream career, activism, family — and in the last years of his life, illness and mortality — could look like."

Visual Communications said, "We honor and carry on Alan's legacy by supporting Asian Pacific American voices and stories that empower communities and challenge perspectives."

The Little Tokyo Service Center said it was "deeply grateful for the invaluable insights, pioneering vision, stabilizing wisdom, smart quips and radiating warmth that Alan brought to our organization." Nishio served on its board of directors for 38 years, from 1984-2022, with 12 of those year years as board president.

"We are devastated by the loss of Alan, a giant in our community. His lifelong dedication to educating future generations about the injustice of the World War II incarceration was evident in his recent visit to the Ireichō with his wife Yvonne, where he shared powerful stories of family history with his grandchildren and, generously, with readers of Discover Nikkei," said JANM President and CEO Ann Burroughs.

Born in 1945 at California's Manzanar War Relocation Authority Center, Nishio would later grow up in the Westside of Los Angeles before attending University of California Berkeley for his bachelor's degree in political science and the University of Southern California for his master's in public administration.

Nishio's community involvement included serving: as chair of the defunct Long Beach Pacifica JACL Chapter (he was a member of the South Bay JACL Chapter at the time of his death); as chair of the Little Tokyo People's Rights Organization (founded in 1973 to fight eviction and displacement of low-income and Issei residents of Little Tokyo); as a founding member and co-chair of NCCR (when it originally stood for National Coalition for Redress and Reparations); on the board of the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center; as a member of the California Japanese American Community Leadership Council; and as an adviser for youth development organization Kizuna.

Nishio was also a founding staff member and director on the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and the associate vp for student services at California State University, Long Beach, where he taught in the Department of Asian and Asian American Studies.

One of the founders and first staff members of the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and assistant director of the Center for Social Action at USC, Nishio was engaged for many years as a mentor to younger community leaders, teaching seminars in Asian American studies and advising the Asian American Student Association at CSU Long Beach, where he served as an administrator from 1972, retiring as associate vp of student services in 2006.

Nishio is survived by his wife, Yvonne Wong Nishio, and daughters Angela Nishio and Mia Lockwood, son-in-law Gregory Lockwood; and grandchildren Evan, Alex, Sara, Ty, Kira and Emi.

A Celebration of Life for Alan Nishio is slated for Feb. 10 from 2-4 p.m. at the Terasaki Budokan, 249 S. Los Angeles St. in Little Tokyo. Reservations, which are required for those who wish to attend in person, can be made by visiting tinyurl.com/yn24yr6c.

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