

BOB SHIMABUKURO, FORMER *P.C.*, INT'L EXAMINER STAFFER, DEAD AT 75

Journalist, activist also authored redress book titled 'Born in Seattle.'

By P.C. Staff

Robert Sadamu Shimabukuro, known to readers of the newspapers *Pacific Citizen* and *International Examiner* as Bob Shimabukuro, died March 29 of natural causes. He was 75.

According to his widow, Alice Ito, Shimabukuro was born in Maui, Hawaii. He attended Portland, Ore.'s Reed College, where he earned a philosophy degree.

In addition to his editorial stints, Shimabukuro's written-word output also included the book "Born in Seattle: The Campaign for Japanese American Redress," a project of the Seattle JACL Chapter.

Ito said the chapter specifically chose Shimabukuro to write the book for a few reasons. In addition to his journalism experience, he served as president of the Portland

JACL Chapter during the time of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians hearings in the early 1980s and assisted in preparing former incarcerated to speak publicly about their experiences, which for many proved to be a cathartic experience after decades of repression.

In 1996, the Seattle Chapter recognized Shimabukuro for his activism and community service with its Don Kazama Human Rights award.

Shimabukuro's daughter, Mira Shimabukuro, told the *Pacific Citizen* that her father's community activism extended beyond the Japanese American community, noting that he also started the Asian Pacific AIDS Council (APAC) in Seattle to "both raise awareness and provide culturally relevant community education" about AIDS. "He worked for and ran APAC for many years," she said.

Mira Shimabukuro, who teaches at the University of Washington,

Bothell, and authored the book "Relocating Authority: Japanese Americans Writing to Redress Mass Incarceration (Nikkei in the Americas)," noted that her father's interest in APAC stemmed from losing one of his brothers, Sam Shimabukuro, to AIDS in 1988.

In addition to his writing skills, Bob Shimabukuro also was a carpenter and woodworker, which came in handy when Seattle's Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience had its first commemorative exhibition about Executive Order 9066. Mira Shimabukuro said he was part of the team that built a replica of the type of barrack that housed Japanese Americans in the 10 War Relocation Authority centers during WWII.

She also noted that around the time her father began to step away from his activities with APAC, her brother, Zenwa Shimabukuro, from her father's second marriage to Ito, was born and he focused on being a caregiver for him "when he was a

young guy."

J.K. Yamamoto, who worked at *Pacific Citizen* early in his journalism career, served with Shimabukuro at the paper. For a time while he was there, Karen Seriguchi was editor, Shimabukuro was the assistant editor and Yamamoto was the editorial assistant.

Yamamoto recalled that the 1980s was a period of high turnover at the *Pacific Citizen*. According to the paper's digital archive, Shimabukuro's name first appeared in the newspaper's masthead in the Jan. 18, 1985 issue.

Prior to that, Harry Honda, who had served as the newspaper's editor after the departure of Larry and Guyo Tajiri in October 1952 (at which time the newspaper moved to Los Angeles from Salt Lake City), was compelled to step away from the editorial operation in the early 1980s, and he became the general manager.

Honda was succeeded as editor by Peter Imamura in



Bob Shimabukuro

PHOTO: ALICE ITO

Shimabukuro also authored a redress book.

