

Equality Advocate Todd Endo Dead at 83

Incarcerated as a child, he participated in the 1963 March on Washington and '65 Alabama marches.

By P.C. Staff

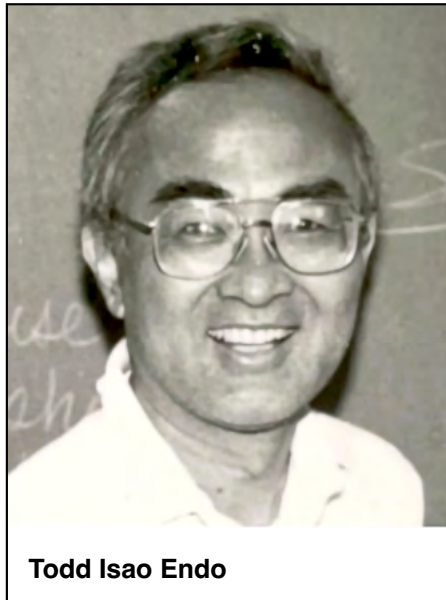
Todd Isao Endo, whose participation as an American of Japanese ancestry in a pair of the Civil Rights Movement's milestone events — 1963's March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom and one of the three 1965 Selma to Montgomery marches in Alabama for voting rights — would loom large throughout a life dedicated to achievement, purpose and expansion of equal rights under the law for all, died Aug. 23 at the Goodwin House retirement community near Arlington, Va. He was 83.

Born to Alice Yuriko Sumida Endo and Frank Aiji Endo in Los Angeles on Dec. 30, 1941 — about three weeks after Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor and America's entry into World War II — Endo's pull toward ensuring and extending civil rights was presaged by the injustice his family and he had experienced.

Along with some 125,000 other ethnic Japanese — U.S. citizens and Japanese nationals barred from becoming naturalized U.S. citizens alike — the Endo family was forcibly removed and incarcerated at one of the 10 War Relocation Authority Centers. In their case, it was the camp at Rohwer, Ark.

When the government began releasing some incarcerated Japanese Americans to areas outside the Western Exclusion Zone, the Endos initially moved to Ohio in 1944 with help from the American Friends Service Committee before resettling in Maryland.

In 1962, as a senior at Oberlin College, Endo attended the JACL National Convention in Seattle and won the oratorical contest



Todd Isao Endo

(see *Pacific Citizen*, Aug. 3, 1962, tinyurl.com/ca56vmp5).

The next year, after graduating from Oberlin — he would later earn a master's degree and Ph.D. in education from Stanford and Harvard — Endo joined the JACL contingent that in August 1963 (see *Pacific Citizen*, Sept. 6, 1963, tinyurl.com/bte6jm6x) participated in the March on Washington, where he heard the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream Speech."

On Aug. 15, 1964, Endo and Paula Tsukamoto married. In the March 26, 1965, issue of the *Pacific Citizen* (see tinyurl.com/2vyrdhms), Endo wrote of how he had been moved to join the Montgomery to Selma march, from March 15-17, after learning of the ultimately fatal assault on Rev. James Reeb, a Unitarian Universalist minister whom he had met briefly.

Fifty years later, Endo's return to Alabama's Edmund Pettus Bridge was the cover story of the March 20, 2015, issue of the *Pacific Citizen* (see tinyurl.com/4jhun6za).

During the 50 years between Endo's visits to Alabama, he

helped lead the Model Urban Cooperative High School in Maryland's Prince George's County. He would also find employment with the Department of Education, the RAND Corp., the Arlington, Va., public schools, the Fairfax County, Va., public schools (as director of curriculum and instruction) and as a consultant for the National Institute of Education.

Endo's sister, Marsha Endo Johnson, related how, in 1991, her brother had "accepted a USAID-funded job as education adviser in Cairo, Egypt. After one year in Cairo, he returned to Arlington and became involved in community-building efforts" and how Todd and Paula "helped found the Urban Alternative, a community nonprofit in the Arlington Mill neighborhood in South Arlington, Va."

Endo also continued to stay "highly involved in the Columbia Pike revitalization efforts, the Arlington Mill Community Center, Aspire (formerly Greenbrier Learning Center), affordable housing projects, the Arlington Community Foundation and many other causes," Johnson said.

Endo was predeceased by his parents, Alice Yuriko Sumida Endo and Frank Aiji Endo; sister, Cheryl Johnston; and nephew, Greg Johnson. He is survived by his wife, Paula; sons, Scott (Angie) Endo and Erik (Jen) Endo; sister, Marsha Johnson; and six grandchildren.

A celebration of life is planned to take place in the near future. Suggestions for those wishing to make donations in Endo's memory include Affordable Homes and Communities (tinyurl.com/wj8pyh8w) and Aspire Afterschool Learning (tinyurl.com/ycxsxkcz). ■

News Briefs

Sanae Takaichi Poised to Become Japan's 1st Female Prime Minister

Described as a staunch conservative and China hawk, the 64-year-old former economic security minister and member of Japan's Liberal Democratic Party came to the forefront as the likely successor to Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, also an LDP member. He announced in September that he would step down following his party's defeat in July's parliamentary election, when the ruling coalition failed in its bid to win a majority in the upper house of Japan's National Diet. According to *Associated Press*, Takaichi "supports the imperial family's male-only succession, opposes same-sex marriage and a revision to the civil law allowing separate last names for married couples." It is expected that Takaichi would emulate the economic and security policies of the late Shinzo Abe, who was assassinated in 2022 after serving as Japan's prime minister.

L.A. County D.A.: Ex-USC Grad Student Drugged, Raped Multiple Victims

Sizhe Weng, aka Steven Weng, 30, is being held without bail after being arrested Aug. 28 for allegedly committing eight felony counts of sexual assault between 2021 and 2025, the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office announced at an Oct. 15 news conference. Weng has pleaded not guilty to all charges, including allegedly drugging and raping three women while he was a University of Southern California student. A preliminary hearing has been set for Jan. 14. A Chinese national, Weng reportedly graduated in 2020 from USC's Viterbi Cronin Research Lab with an M.S. in electrical engineering, and in May, he completed his Ph.D. The Los Angeles Police Department is urging other possible victims to contact its Robbery-Homicide Division at (213) 486-6890. ¶ Si Oh Rhew, 71, president of L.A. Fashion District-based C'est Toi Jeans Inc. was sentenced Sept. 29 to eight years and seven months in federal prison for "avoiding the payment of more than \$8 million in customs duties on imported clothing and for running a scheme in which the company laundered money and failed to report on tax returns more than \$17 million derived from cash transactions," according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Meantime, Rhew's son, Lance Rhew, 38, a CTJ corporate officer, was sentenced to 84 months in federal prison, fined \$500,000 and ordered to pay restitution. ¶ Joseph Wong, 33, of Alhambra, Calif., was sentenced to 51 months in federal prison on Oct. 6 by U.S. District Judge R. Gary Klausner, who also ordered him to pay \$7.6 million in restitution. In June, along with Yicheng Zhang, 39, of China, Jose Somarriba, 55, of Los Angeles, Shengsheng He, 39, of La Puente, Calif., and Jingliang Su, 44, of China and Turkey, they and Wong pleaded guilty to their respective roles in "laundering more than \$36.9 million from victims of an international digital asset investment scam conspiracy that was carried out from scam centers in Cambodia," according to the U.S. Department of Justice. This type of crime is known as a "pig-butcher" scam, whereby over time, as trust is gained by the perpetrators via social media and dating apps, victims are drained of their financial assets. ¶ Tae Miyaji Jones, 50, of Huntington Beach, Calif., who on her LinkedIn profile was listed as an accounting manager at Garden Grove, Calif.-based instant ramen company Sanyo Foods Corp. of America, pleaded guilty Oct. 9 to 10 counts of embezzlement. According to news reports, between December 2017 and July 2023, she allegedly misappropriated more than \$2.8 million from her employer. ¶ Autopsy results from the New York City medical examiner showed that Shane Tamura, 27, the former high school football standout who on June 28 killed four people and wounded one in an NYC mass shooting, had "unambiguous diagnostic evidence" of low-stage chronic traumatic encephalopathy. After shooting himself in the chest, a note was discovered on his person that blamed the National Football League for covering up the risks of developing CTE from the game. He also wrote: "Study my brain please."

Parents of Late Krysta Tsukahara Sue Tesla, Cite Cybertruck Design Flaw

Noelle and Carl Tsukahara are suing electric vehicle maker Tesla after their 19-year-old daughter and her 20-year-old friend died because, according to the lawsuit, they could not open the Cybertruck's doors and escape from the vehicle they were passengers in after it crashed and caught fire. According to *AP*, Tesla doors have been at the center of several crash cases because the battery powering the unlocking mechanism can be destroyed in a fire. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is investigating several similar complaints.

— P.C. Staff

PLACE A TRIBUTE

'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 \$25/column inch.

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