THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JACL

Sept. 11-24, 2026

PACIFIC CITIZEN

CELEBRATING 97 Years

Inset is a photo of the Twin Towers prior to 9/11.

PHOTO: PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE CAROL M. HIGHSMITH ARCHIVE, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION



The "Tribute in Light" installation honors the victims of the 9/11 terrorist attacks and represents the Twin Towers in the New York City skyline.

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REMEMBERING 9/11: 25 YEARS

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JACL SLAMS PODCAST

During discussion of White House security, guest favors interning 'all the Chinese Americans we can find.'

By P.C. Staff

The JACL issued a statement on Aug. 28 condemning comments made during a discussion on a podcast featuring multiple guests, during which one asked rhetorically if it was appropriate to "… intern all the Chinese Americans we can find because it kind of seems like we should."

In its statement, JACL in part said, "While JACL strongly supports freedom of speech, invoking the incarceration of Japanese Americans to suggest that another ethnic group could or should face similar treatment is both ignorant and dangerous."

The remarks were made during the Aug. 14 episode of the "Timcast IRL" podcast during a nearly 30-minute-long segment of the two-hour, 10-minute show led by guest host Phil LaBonte that began at the 1:04:28 mark in the program during which he and the panelists — Kevin Smith (not the filmmaker), Chris Karr, Ian Crossland and Carter Banks — began discussing an Aug. 13 news story from the Daily Caller website headlined "CCP Intelligence Official Buys Building Steps From White House."

It reported that a "senior Chinese Communist Party (CCP) intelligence official" named Philip Qiu, aka Qiu Feili, had, with Family Foundation, purchased the White House-adjacent building on July 26. The article quoted "multiple intelligence experts" who believed that the purchase posed … " an urgent national security threat."

It was during that discussion, which ranged from U.S. immigration policy in general to whether noncitizens in the U.S. could buy firearms or should be able to purchase real estate, the rise of "birth tourism" and more when Crossland asked rhetorically, "Do you think we should intern the all the Chinese Americans we can find because it kind of seems like we should."

It was then that the topic of the World War II mass incarceration of ethnic Japanese, the majority of whom were U.S. citizens, was broached. In the conversation, Crossland added: "I know I don't want to implicate all Chinese Americans because that's horrific. That's — I know plenty of Chinese people, Chinese Americans. I don't want them interned if there was some conflict between the Chinese. But how can you tell? How can you tell who's who? How can you tell where their allegiances are, and how do you know if their allegiances will or won't flip if the tide of war starts to change?"

Chinese American members of the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus on Aug. 26 also issued a condemnation of the comments. Those individuals included CAPAC Chair Rep. Grace Meng (D-N.Y.); Rep. Ted Lieu (D-Calif.), vice chair of the House Democratic Caucus; and Rep. Judy Chu (D-Calif.), CAPAC chair emerita.

"As Chinese American Members of Congress, we are appalled by recent comments made on a pro-Trump podcast while discussing a hypothetical war with China. The panel made deeply disturbing statements, arguing that 'it seems like we should' send Chinese Americans to incarceration camps and that it is difficult to 'tell where their allegiances are.'"

Regarding the idea of incarcerating Chinese Americans, LaBonte at one point during the podcast said, "I think that even entertaining those arguments is a bad, a bad strategy because if you entertain an argument, you're, you're implicitly saying, 'Well, that's a reasonable perspective.'" When Crossland posited that "maybe there would have been a Japanese uprising in California" if the U.S. government had not forcibly removed and incarcerated Japanese Americans from the West Coast, LaBonte answered, "Probably not."

Also in condemnation of the statements in favor of the possibility of incarcerating Chinese Americans, JACL stated: "The U.S. government has formally acknowledged the incarceration of Japanese Americans as a grave injustice, a chapter in our nation's history that will forever symbolize what can happen when fear and prejudice are allowed to overcome our commitment to constitutional rights and our shared humanity."

JACL added that it stood with CAPAC's denunciation of the comments made during the podcast. The entirety of JACL's statement may be read here *(https://jacl.org/statements/jacl-condemns-statements-made-on-podcast-about-possible-chinese-american-incarceration)*.



Tim Pool *(upper left)* is the namesake of the "Timcast IRL" podcast. Participating in the Aug. 14 episode were *(clockwise, second from top left)* Ian Crossland, Phil LaBonte, Chris Karr, Kevin Smith and Carter Banks.

JACL on the 25th Anniversary of 9/11

By JACL National

Today, JACL remembers the tragedy of Sept. 11, 2001. Twenty-five years later, we remember not only the lives lost, but also the courage of our first responders and the strength of a nation that came together to support one another, grieve together and rise together.

Today, we honor all those who lost their lives, those who answered the call to serve and everyone whose life was forever changed by the events of 9/11. ■

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Harry Honda dedicated 61 years to promoting the ***Pacific Citizen***, providing thoughtful coverage of JACL chapter activities, national news and events and issues of general interest to Japanese American and Asian American readers. The fund was launched with a generous donation from author and activist Grant Ujifusa, whose intent was to support the ***Pacific Citizen*** in hiring outside contributing writers. This support helps expand and strengthen coverage from across the country for our national readership.



Editor Emeritus Harry Honda as drawn by Pete Hironaka

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

By Lilly Simmering, JACL Executive Director

This year, our nation marks 25 years since the tragic events of Sept. 11, 2001, which took the lives of thousands of innocent people and changed our country forever.

On Sept. 11, 2001, I was a second-year law student in Orange County, Calif. I had grown accustomed to watching NBC's "Today" show each morning to catch up on the day's news. That morning was no different.

I remember walking back into my living room and seeing the first tower on fire. I still distinctly remember struggling to put on my backpack when the second plane struck the second tower. For more than a minute, my mind could not comprehend that what I was watching was not a Hollywood movie, but a tragedy unfolding in real time.

My best friend was working in Washington, D.C. After learning that the Pentagon had been hit, I could not reach her. I began calling other friends in the area and eventually reached one who described mayhem: smoke in the sky, mass confusion and our nation's capital effectively shut down.

Later that night, I sat on the beach and noticed how eerily quiet the skies had become. There were no airplanes lined up to land at Los Angeles International Airport or John Wayne Airport. For a moment, the world was literally still.

When I moved to Washington, D.C., in 2005, the memories of 9/11 had not faded for those who had experienced it there. On my first day at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, just across the Potomac from the Pentagon, I was handed an emergency survival bag containing protein bars, water, a foil blanket, first-aid supplies and other essentials. It was there in case another emergency forced me to walk the roughly 25 miles home to Fairfax, Va.

The anxiety remained palpable. Even an unattended bag on the Metro could cause an entire train car to become silent as passengers exchanged worried looks and quietly considered whom they would call first if something happened.

Twenty-five years later, my children know Sept. 11 much differently. All born years afterward, they understand 9/11 as I understood the Revolutionary War growing up: a defining event in our nation's history, but one they know through books, stories and the memories of parents and elders who lived through it.

Among those elders was the late Norman Mineta, who, as U.S. secretary of transportation on Sept. 11, made the difficult decision to ground all air traffic as our government responded to an unprecedented attack on American soil.

As we remember 9/11, we remember the thousands of lives lost, the bravery of first responders, the courage of those aboard the planes and inside the World Trade Center and Pentagon and the families who continue to mourn loved ones who never came home.

But remembrance also requires us to confront what followed. In the fear and uncertainty after Sept. 11, Muslim, Sikh, Arab and South Asian communities became targets of suspicion, discrimination and hate. As Japanese Americans, we understand the danger of allowing fear to determine how we see and treat our neighbors.

So, we remember.

We remember so that tragedy teaches us compassion rather than hate. We remember the extraordinary resilience of the human spirit. And we remember how, in our darkest moments, people reached for one another.

Twenty-five years later, perhaps that remains one of Sept. 11's most enduring lessons: No matter how much the world changes, we will always need one another. We will always need community.

Lilly Simmering is executive director of the JACL. She is based in the organization's Los Angeles office.



IN OUR WORDS



WE ARE THE JACL'S YOUTH MOVEMENT, AND WE'RE READY TO GET TO WORK

By Hannah Yoshinaga and Treyton Ito Littlejohn

(EDITOR'S NOTE: *This commentary marks the first installment of "In Our Words," a new column spotlighting young adult voices within the JACL.)*

We're at a pivotal point in the JACL's history. As America's oldest AAPI civil rights organization approaches its centenary, it faces unprecedented financial headwinds, shrinking membership and an identity crisis amid a shifting political climate.

The question of how to bring the next generation into the fold is about survival; carrying the JACL's legacy forward and keeping the organization well-resourced enough to do so will not happen without more youth quickly becoming more active.

This year's recent National Convention revealed how clear that is to many within the JACL's ranks. As we work toward a thriving, robust civil rights infrastructure for the next 100 years, strategizing solutions for today's all-time-low youth engagement demands not just a simple one-time fix, but an entirely new vision.

So, what will drive young adults to join and become deeply involved in an organization like the JACL? It starts with two things: restoring and emboldening the high-caliber advocacy that earned the JACL its name in the first place and developing internal systems that provide youth with actionable pathways to execute.

Renewing the JACL's Civil Rights and Social Justice Mandate

A defining question of the week at convention was: "Who does the JACL serve, and how does it plan to do that?"

That's not an easy question to answer, especially as the organization's policy arm undergoes a full reimagination and reconstruction. Generational and regional divides also make it difficult to formulate a central advocacy vision.

Thoughtful consideration of who the JACL works for and how it can pursue a more assertive posture is necessary to remain relevant in the modern civil rights landscape, one defined by the denigration of diversity, equity and inclusion; attacks on immigrant communities; and the stripping of key protections and government resources for organizations operating in this space.

Facing all of this, the JACL must ask itself whether it's doing enough to deserve the title of a leading civil rights organization, and how it can do more to support its members as they stand with the communities affected.

Rooting advocacy in the history and lived experience of the Japanese American community will always be important, but the organization has a responsibility to do more.

By expanding its purview beyond that scope, it can make a substantive difference for those who need it most and attract new members, allies and advocates into its tent.

Youth feel strongly that it's time to carry a renewed spirit of collaboration into the 21st century.

The JACL has already taken a first step in that direction with R-1 *(tinyurl.com/bdht82t3)*, which outlines how the organization will assist immigrant communities targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement. While we're enthusiastic about the resolution's passage, we see this as only the beginning of a larger opportunity for the JACL to build a political home that prioritizes action, mutual aid and a bolder, more inclusive social justice agenda that reflects the growing diversity of its membership.

The JACL's storied roots and standing within the AAPI space put it in a strong position to cultivate that home, engaging advocates of every generation, young and old. Doing so would allow the JACL to not only react to political outcomes but also shape them and offer its membership the resources and opportunities to contribute more meaningfully.

Making Room for New Generations to Lead

Once this mandate is restored, we believe structural change can and should follow.

The JACL needs systems that offer new voices, whether from the 18-25 youth group or beyond, genuine paths to responsibility and ownership.

Put simply, one of the JACL's top priorities must be identifying, training and empowering the next class of stewards. This is true at the national level, where there are limited long-term entry points for youth, and at the chapter level, where many young members face the reality of being few and far between or lack the resources and support to do more.

Young people will look instead to other Nikkei or AAPI organizations that make it easier to plug in, and the JACL will lose valuable talent. On the flip side, more established roads to leadership at all levels give aspiring changemakers reasons to build their future inside our organization.

But that effort shouldn't be pushed forth by youth alone.

Thank You for Your JACL Membership!

We're grateful to have some of the most engaged and committed members around! Because of your loyal support, we have more premium membership upgrades and generous additional gifts than ever. We're also appreciative for those who renew year after year (some for 50 years or more!) and for our increase in new members. Your dedication is essential to our ongoing mission for social justice, education, and community! Thank you! - *JACL Membership Department*

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'REPARATIONS IMPOSSIBLE? WHY WE SHOULD CARE AND HOW WE CAN BE ALLIES'

The National Convention panel focused on Black reparations.



Participating in the panel were *(from left)* Carol Kawase, Don Tamaki, Masumi Hayashi-Smith and Peggy Nagae.

PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA

By Gil Asakawa, P.C. Contributor

A crowded panel during the recent JACL National Convention at the Paris Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas covered the issue of reparations for African Americans through the historical lens of the Japanese American community.

Moderated by newly elected vp for public affairs Carole Kawase, who was still NCWNP vice governor during the panel on July 31, the discussion invited audience interaction and responses from panelists attorney Donald Tamaki of Minami Tamaki and Peggy Nagae and Masumi Hayashi-Smith, co-chairs of Tsuru for Solidarity Black Reparations and Solidarity Campaign.

The session wasn't a "sermon from the mount" about reparations, but rather a primer for where the effort currently stands, with printed information for attendees to take with them, including 'zines to explain the topic for younger readers.

Tamaki, whose "almost retired" law partner Dale Minami was the lead attorney that overturned the incarceration case of Fred Korematsu and who was on the *Korematsu v. United States* team, is still very much active in the civil rights field.

In 2021, he was appointed by California Gov. Gavin Newsom to serve on the nine-member California Reparations Task Force that produced the groundbreaking Final Report comprehensively documenting the cumulative impact of slavery, Jim Crow oppression and decades of segregation.

In response to a question from the audience about how the African American community saw the Japanese American support, Tamaki noted, "First of all, as far as advocates for Black reparations, they welcome the support of Japanese Americans.

"When I was asked by the governor to participate in the task force, my first reaction is, 'Who, me?' You know, I mean, far be it for me to tell Black Americans what's good for them, and so I was very reluctant," Tamaki recounted. "Ultimately, you know, I agreed to be on this, and you'd be surprised how much it is appreciated that this group, JACL, was in support of reparations. When you look at the numbers, Black Californians constitute 6 percent of the population, 14 percent nationwide. It ain't going to happen without us and without coalitions of non-Black people who recognize that this involves everybody, and once you deal with Black reparations, it's a rising tide that lifts all boats. So, it's for the country. It preserves democracy."

Tamaki noted that one thing that helped Japanese American redress was the bipartisan support for the effort. "One thing that happened during redress, and it seemed improbable at the time, was that you had some Republican conservatives joining in seeking redress. The question is, how do you broaden the coalition in support of reparations to include more than folks like us and our usual or customary norms?"

Kawase agreed on the need for broad support.

"Yeah, great question," she said. "I do know that when Tsuru for Solidarity went into the offices of senators and asked for them to support HR 40, we did go into the offices of Republican senators as well. So, we're not counting these people out just you know by party lines."

Nagae, a former trial attorney herself as well as assistant dean of the University of Oregon Law School and a consultant, has served on JACL's National Redress Committee, the Civil Liberties Public Education Fund Board and was president of NAPABA. She was lead counsel for Minoru Yasui when his WWII Supreme Court case was reopened in 1983 and his conviction subsequently overturned. She also spearheaded Yasui's nomination for a Presidential Medal of Freedom, awarded posthumously in 2015. Because of Nagae's efforts as co-chair honoring Mitsuye Endo's successful WWII challenge of Executive Order 9066, Endo was posthumously awarded a Presidential Citizens Medal in 2025.

Tsuru for Solidarity was laser-focused on its educational mission.

Nagae spoke on the rise of 'zines in the media culture and how they can carry a message to different (younger) audiences than traditional communication platforms. She pointed to 'zines in front of her and told the audience to take copies with them. "'Zines historically were created by dissident, underrepresented and marginalized groups, and especially during the 1920s and '30s Harlem Renaissance, they were little packaged, easily published or like a roadmap. You can go on our website and make a copy, print out a copy, fold it, come to our table, learn how to fold it and cut it and put it together. So, that's what we're doing at our table. We have the larger toolkit conversations. We have the 'zines, all for your use and edification as you go forward."

Masumi Hayashi-Smith, a queer biracial facilitator, writer and musician originally from Coast Salish land in Tacoma, Wash., added additional information about Tsuru's campaign, showing a QR code for people to learn more about Tsuru's Reparations program. She also urged everyone to look close to home as well as at national campaigns.

"Find out about your own local reparations efforts. There are things happening on the ground, and it's inspiring," Hayashi-Smith said. "Like I think that sometimes national reparations is an overwhelming idea, but on the micro level, things are happening everywhere, so you know that's a great source of hope to see what's happening hyperlocally."

Kawase promised that JACL will review any lawsuit or legislation about reparations that comes before her. "I will review a lawsuit. I will see what the connections are for between the AAPI community and whatever is happening on the Hill because it's so confusing and so fast and furious that we really need instantaneous response or reviews."

Nagae noted that Kawase and JACL have been important promoters of Black reparations. "I thank you from the bottom of my heart what you contribute to JACL. I want to put a plug in for Carol because she is the person that does this monthly report. She is the person that put the resolution through so that our committee could be in action."

Kawase closed the session by nothing that the word "reparation" carries an important meaning within it. "I always like to talk about the word 'repair,' which is where reparation comes from," she said. "If we think about it, we're talking about the work of repair, and the UN has a very really useful way of talking about reparations, where it isn't just about money; it's about so many other things." ■

Given that 74 percent of the JACL's membership falls in the 50-plus age range *(https://tinyurl.com/4aa4wxej)*, we urge JACL leadership to consider the wealth of knowledge and relationships stored within its chapters. The organization should activate its elders no less than its youth, incentivizing mentorship, leadership training and intergenerational learning opportunities as a pillar of its strategic plan.

Our message is simple. We're here, poised to help execute the JACL's strategic priorities and carry its legacy into 2027 and beyond.

We Need to Work Together

The priorities above matter for fostering youth engagement, but they're widely shared across the JACL, too.

Discussions across the 2026 National Convention made clear that members of all ages are strongly aligned, both on the issues facing the organization and on the desire to share responsibility for tackling them. Splitting into camps by age will only slow us down as we work to restore financial stability, expand membership and grow our impact on the national stage.

This is best embodied by the Japanese principle of *Zentai Saiteki*, which emphasizes fixing the whole system as a connected unit rather than focusing on any single part. Working across generations is what is needed to transform the JACL into the powerhouse we know it can be.

The Next Steps

The response to the youth movement at the National Convention was overwhelmingly positive. Now, it's on us to show that trust is well placed and put it into action.

An engaged and mobilized cohort of young adults is critical to the JACL's own future and just as necessary for the entire AAPI civil rights ecosystem in the U.S. Thus, the call to action has never been louder.

To youth: It's time to come together and get to work.

To the rest of the organization: We're ready to step up and take an active role, putting advocacy back at the center of the JACL's mission and establishing the frameworks this moment requires. We have a vivid picture of the future we all want to create, and we hope you'll stand shoulder to shoulder with us to get there.

Hannah Yoshinaga is a member of the JACL's Eastern District Youth Board and New York chapter. Treyton Ito Littlejohn is a member of the Pacific Southwest District Youth Board and Greater Los Angeles chapter.

Include the JACL in your Legacy Plan

Legacy planning is about thinking ahead and deciding how your property and assets will be passed on to your loved ones after you're gone.

Much like estate planning, it focuses on making sure your wealth and belongings are transferred smoothly and according to your wishes.

Please contact Steve Okamoto for more information on how you can help support the good work of the JACL.

sokamoto@jacl.org or (415) 921-5225 ext. 140

SIXTY-THREE YEARS LATER, JACL STILL MARCHES ON

JACL joins thousands at the Lincoln Memorial as part of National Action Network's March on Washington, themed 'Defend the Vote.'

By Matthew Marumoto, JACL Daniel K. Inouye Fellow



Members of various AAPI organizations hold signs in front of the Lincoln Memorial. Pictured *(front row, from left)* are Lou Igasaki, Paul Igasaki, Paul Uyehara, Katie Masano Hill, Martha Watanabe and Ben de Guzman and *(back row, from left)* Nancy Choy, Deeana Jang, Matt Marumoto, John Yang and Marita Etcubanez.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF MATT MARUMOTO

On Aug. 28, I stood with fellow JACL members and friends from Asian Americans Advancing Justice and APIAVote in front of the Lincoln Memorial, carrying signs that read "Our Voice, Our Vote, Our Future."

Sixty-three years ago, JACL members stood on the same ground carrying signs demanding civil rights, a higher minimum wage and first-class citizenship for all.

Thousands gathered on the National Mall for the 2026 March on Washington, and the crowd kept growing through the heat into the afternoon. At the original march in 1963, JACL was the only Asian American organization to formally join, standing in solidarity with the African American community to fight discrimination and segregation. In 2026, we came back to defend the right to vote and stand in solidarity.

The "March on Washington 2026: Defend the Vote" was convened by the National Action Network, led by Rev. Al Sharpton, and the Drum Major Institute, led by Martin Luther King III and Arndrea Waters King.

The morning program that preceded the march offered an opportunity to hear from speakers representing faith groups, advocacy organizations, trade unions and several members of Congress, including Congressman Mark Takano of California, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont.

A common theme among the speakers was that the march continued what originally started in 1963, carrying the work forward rather than just commemorating the occasion.

Nearly every speaker discussed the decision in *Louisiana v. Callais* that was handed down in late April. The decision severely weakened Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 (VRA), making it much harder to challenge district maps that may discriminate on the basis of race.

Janai Nelson, president and director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund, who argued the case for Black voters in Louisiana before the Supreme Court, told the crowd that the high court "adopted a vision that silences Black voices and suppresses Black votes."

Breaking with the norm of redistricting only after the census, 10 states have drawn new voting maps through legislation or litigation in the lead-up to the 2026 midterm election.

Following the decision in *Callais*, both Louisiana and Alabama eliminated one of two majority-Black districts, while Tennessee eliminated its only majority-Black district.

The gutting of Section 2 of the VRA was one of the sharpest rollbacks of voting protections in decades.

Takano, representing California's 39th district, reminded the crowd that the late Congressman John Lewis stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial 63 years ago when he was 23 years old to demand that America live up to its promise. Just two years later in 1965, Lewis was badly beaten on the Edmund Pettus Bridge while making the same demand.

"He knew what awaited him on the other side of that bridge. Yet, he crossed it anyway because America was worth fighting for," Takano said.

Two years after the original march, a member of JACL also went to Selma. Todd Endo, born less than a month after the attack on Pearl Harbor, spent his first three years of life in the Rohwer Incarceration Camp. In March of 1965, following the beating and death of Rev. James Reeb, with whom Endo had worked in Washington, Endo joined the civil rights demonstrations in Selma, Ala.

The next month, Endo wrote in the *Pacific Citizen,* "Both as Americans, who sought to work to bring the American ideal and the American reality closer together, and as Japanese, who have a stake in this minority struggle, we should be lining up actively alongside the Negro against the 'keep America white' bigots" *(see April 16, 1965, Pacific Citizen, https://tinyurl.com/2xnx7uur).*

Solidarity between the Japanese American

» See MARCHES on page 12

REFLECTIONS

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS OF REMEMBRANCE

By Eric Ngo



Pictured *(from left)* are SELANOCO-OC JACL board members Erin Hitomi, Reilly Chang and Jamie Morishima with JACL of Monterey Peninsula board member Eric Ngo.
PHOTO: COURTESY OF ERIC NGO

At the beginning of August, the Monterey Abalone Festival brought all walks of life to the Monterey JACL hall. The wonderful members of the SELANOCO Orange County chapter visited us. They gave me a chance to learn more about how their chapter serves its community differently while sharing the same larger purpose.

Every JACL chapter has its own character. In Monterey, our chapter has a historic hall that serves as a headquarters and gathering place for community events. Because we have many longtime and older members, a lot of our work centers on maintaining those relationships, preserving the Japanese American footprint in Monterey and creating opportunities for different generations to come together.

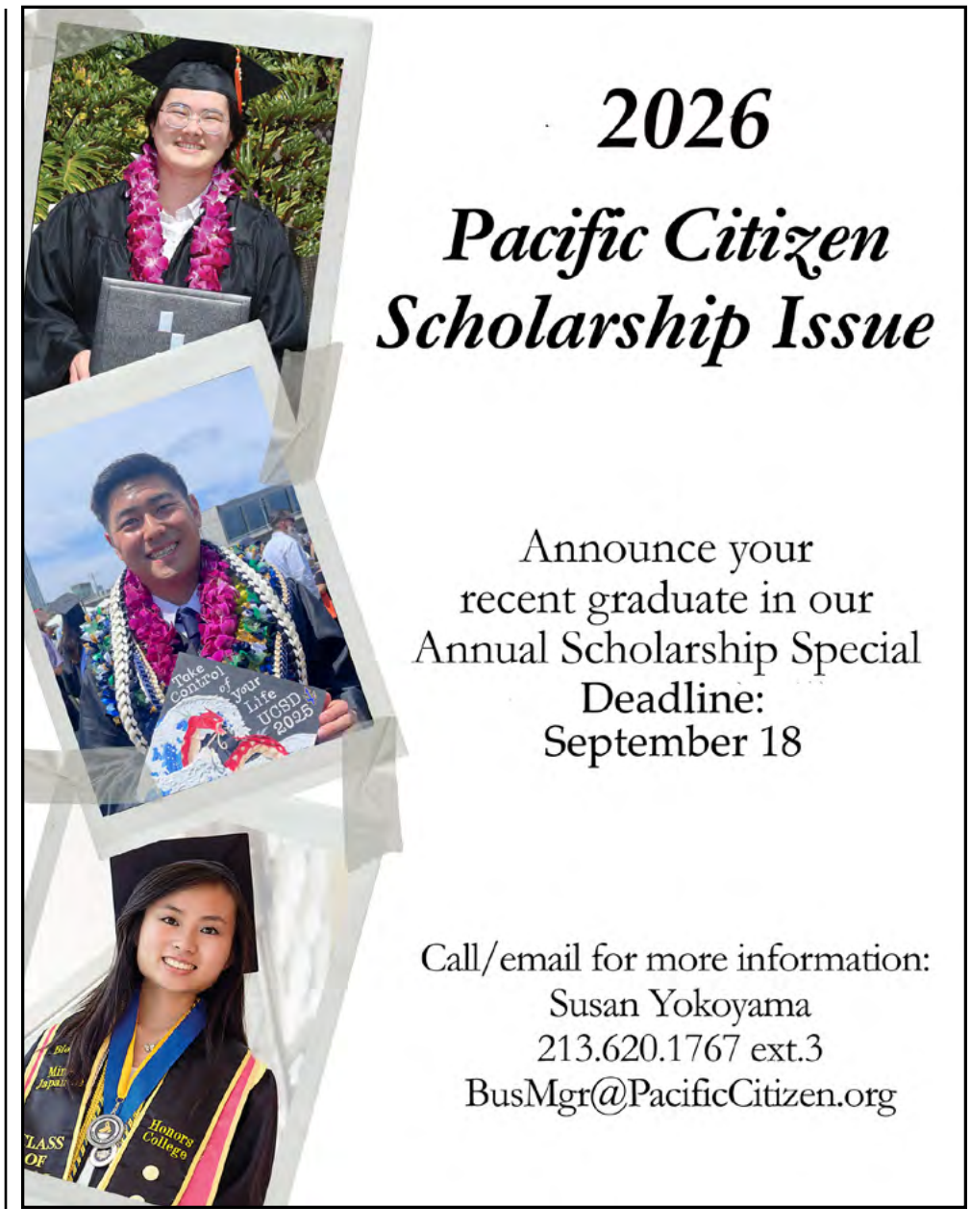
The SELANOCO Orange County chapter has a unique dynamic. From my experience with the delightful board members, I saw a chapter that is strongly connected with a large number of younger people. Their involvement showed me how JACL can also provide a space for younger generations to build friendships, develop leadership skills and become more involved in the community through advocacy and heritage.

Even though our chapters may have different demographics and ways of engaging members, the purpose behind the work is very similar. Both communities are creating places where people can connect, learn from one another, celebrate culture and keep those connections strong for future generations.

While fortunate to reside near a coastal scenery, I was able to do a special little "Tour de Big Sur" for our visiting JACL members. It was a spontaneous, unforgettable experience to strengthen ties between our communities.

All in all, my experiences with both the Monterey chapter and SELANOCO OC chapter helped me appreciate that there is no single way to build a strong JACL community.

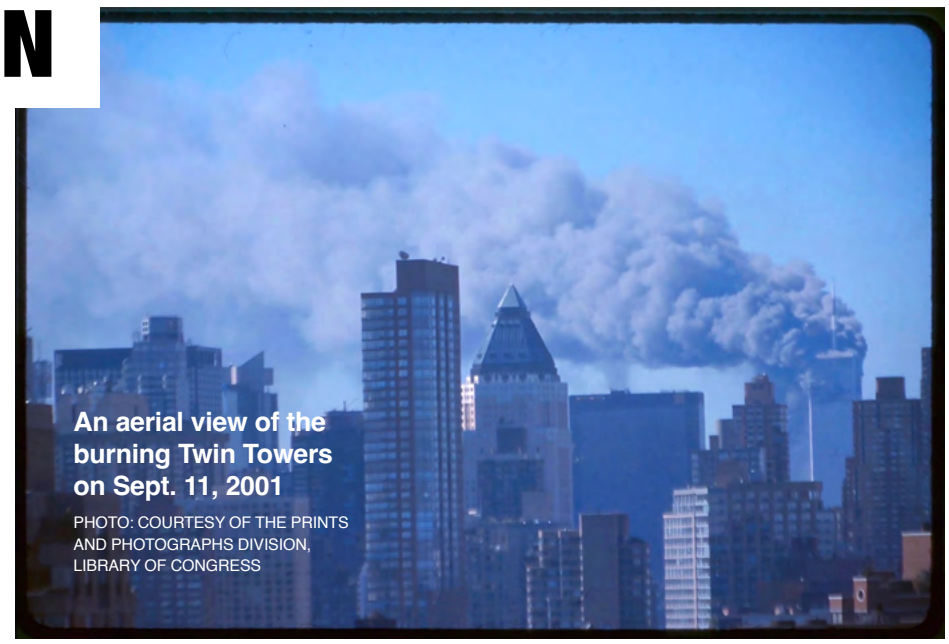
Eric Ngo is a board member of the JACL of Monterey Peninsula chapter.



MOURNING TOWERS FALLEN

Three individuals who were at Ground Zero reflect on how 9/11 changed them forever.

By George Toshio Johnston, P.C. Senior Editor



An aerial view of the burning Twin Towers on Sept. 11, 2001

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

When Minoru Yamasaki "humbly" accepted recognition as the 1961-62 Nisei of the Biennium on July 30, 1962, at the Japanese American Citizens League's 17th National Convention *(see Aug. 3, 1962, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/3yz6mntm)*, held in his hometown of Seattle, it was thanks to his already stellar reputation as a world-class architect.

Whether someone as visionary as Yamasaki had already been daydreaming of a future project, perhaps a skyscraper that would surpass the height of the Empire State Building, maybe with an equally tall twin right next to it, is anyone's guess.

If so, however, the timing would have been fortuitous for him. In December 1963, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey revealed an architectural plan for what would become Yamasaki's magnum opus: the World Trade Center, boasting the world's two tallest buildings. A little more than a decade later, the World Trade Center and its 110-story Twin Towers would open on April 3, 1973, fitting for the city so nice they named it twice.

Although he lived to see the Twin Towers rise and join the Empire State Building and the Statue of Liberty as the visual shorthand for New York City in ad campaigns, movies, TV shows, magazine covers and personal photo albums, not to mention the international symbol for America as the world's premier economic powerhouse, Yamasaki died Feb. 6, 1986, at 73 and was thus spared the heartbreak, tragedy and trauma of seeing his brainchild fall in flames 15 years later.

That would not, however, be the case for Bobby Ideishi, Scott Ito and Ron Uba, all of whom were there on Sept. 11, 2001, on the morning the towers fell to experience and bear witness to the events that would contort America's actions and policies, domestic and foreign, to this very day.



Military personnel and firefighters unfurl a large American flag from the roof of the Pentagon during the Sept. 12, 2001, visit of President George W. Bush in the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attack the day prior.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS DIVISION, LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

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Twenty-five years ago, on 9/11, as that day in the first year of the new millennium would forever become known, was not only when the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center collapsed in fire, smoke, ash and dust after the North Tower 1 was deliberately crashed into by American Airlines Flight 11, followed by South Tower 2 getting smashed into by United Airlines Flight 175.

It was also the morning when two other jet airliners were also hijacked by al-Qaeda terrorists from Saudi Arabia. American Airlines Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, killing all aboard and some in the building that houses the brain trust of the U.S. Armed Forces. United Airlines Flight 93 crashed in a field near Shanksville, Pa., after passengers fought the terrorists, killing all aboard the Boeing 757.

Unlike those two tragedies, however, the WTC attacks took place in Manhattan, the nerve center for America's news media industrial complex. Within minutes of the first airliner hitting one of Yamasaki's towers, every TV network went live with images of the first burning skyscraper, not just to the shocked eyes of Americans coast-to-coast but around the world.

The first impact was shocking and tragic but not without precedent. In 1945, an Army Air Forces B-25 accidentally hit the Empire State Building. This was not that. It was only after the second jet hit the second tower on live broadcast television when the reality of what was happening registered.

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Bobby Ideishi, who was raised in the Venice-Culver area of Los Angeles, remembers how beautiful the weather was on Sept. 10 after arriving in New York City to attend a seminar on customs and import and export laws at Pace University's World Trade Institute, which was housed in the North Tower. He had been tasked with becoming the import-export compliance officer for Kingston Technology. "I was going every other month on behalf of my company," Ideishi told the *Pacific Citizen*. "I had been attending for a little over a year." He was scheduled to attend on Sept. 11 and 12.



The focal points of the 9/11 Memorial & Museum are two pools that sit in the footprints of the former North and South Towers. The names of the 2,983 people who were killed in the 2001 and 1993 terrorist attacks are inscribed on bronze parapets edging the memorial pools.

PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA

One of the reasons Ideishi remembers how great the weather was on Sept. 10 is because most of the times he had been to the Twin Towers before, the tops of the skyscrapers were enveloped in clouds. He nevertheless remembers how magnificent, majestic and tall the towers were when looking up from the plaza.

Although Ron Uba, who was living in New Jersey and working for the Census Bureau in New York City at the time, can corroborate Ideishi's recollection of how gorgeous the weather was on Sept. 10, he also remembers there was a heavy rainstorm that night because he had dinner with friends Ken Moritsugu, Jeff Yang and Scott Ito. "The rain was so bad, I got home late. Jeff got home late. Scott got home late. … We all showed up at the World Trade Center kind of late. I think that saved us," Uba recalled.

At the turn of the century, Ito was working for Asian Americans for Equality, "a nonprofit community development organization that builds affordable housing and provides social services to the lower East Side-Chinatown area of New York City," he told the *Pacific Citizen*. His first stint was from 1992-96; his second was 2000-03. At the time of 9/11, he was also a volunteer for the city council campaign of Margaret Chin.

In the aftermath of the attacks, Ito had a thought. "I was really worried for Muslim Americans in the United States." He was "very concerned that more hate crimes and possibly



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Eyewitness Accounts Highlight Horror of Terrorist Attacks

By MARTHA NAKAGAWA
Assistant Editor

If Ron Uba had kept his normal work schedule at the U.S. Census Bureau on Sept. 11, he would have been caught in the chaos of the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center. His office is just six blocks away from the two towers.

But a twist of fate had him making an 8 a.m. marketing presentation to Fortune 500 executives and media personnel at New York University a few miles away.

Around 8:30 a.m. Uba received a call on his cell phone from one of his co-workers. "Oh, my god. Oh, my god," repeated his colleague and Uba was told to look towards the direction of his office. As he did, he witnessed the second plane hit the south tower. Uba, whose office shares a building with the CIA, FBI, INS and Voice of America, knew then that this was a terrorist attack.

The blue sky suddenly turned black as if it were a solar eclipse, and Uba could see the chemical fire was so intense the metal from the two towers was "peeling off" and "dissolving."

"I was just stunned," said Uba, over and over.

After everyone's initial shock, conference attendees held a moment of silence, and Uba cut short his presentation. By then, cell phones went dead with the exception of those who subscribed to a national plan.

Then came the dust. Uba said the entire area became enveloped in what felt like acid dust. "My eyes were just burning," said Uba. "There was just tons and tons of ash."

Normally, it takes Uba at most an hour to get home to his place in New Jersey across the river. That day, it took him eight. On the way, he saw people handing out water, bulldozers going through the streets, emergency crews carrying body bags, and a huge convergence of doctors, emergency workers and construction workers.

"I'd never seen so many ambulances in my whole life," said Uba.

Later Uba would find out that several co-workers had been on the hijacked planes, including his supervisor.

Uba, a Pan American Nikkei Association (PANA) member who has also been active in the New York JACL chapter in the past, spoke to the *Pacific Citizen* two days after the attack. At that time, he was still getting his news via radio since all TV reception in his area was down. He also added that the electricity had been turned off for fear of an explosion, the water had been turned off for fear of contamination, and dead bodies were being sent to Giant Stadium in New Jersey to prevent an epidemic.

The day the terrorists attacked New York had also been election day, and Scott Ito was in the Chinatown area, working on the political campaign of Margaret Chin. (Chinatown is next to the Wall Street area where the World Trade Center towers were located).

Ito was passing out flyers when he heard a thunderous boom. "It was the loudest noise I ever heard," said Ito. "I can't even explain it."

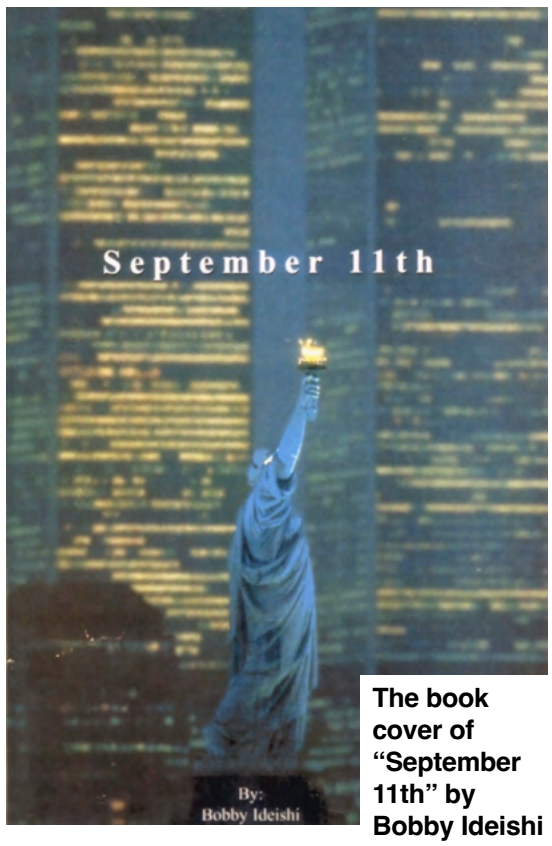
When Ito looked up at the World Trade Center building, he saw what he thought was silver confetti falling out of the building. His initial reaction was that this was some sort of political marketing ploy. But then he saw smoke coming out and realized this was something more serious. When the second plane hit, he knew this wasn't an accident, and the group shut down their campaign operations.

Ito described that moment as "confusing" and "scary" because he wasn't sure whether bombs were going to start going off all over the

See EYEWITNESS/page 6

PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS
An explosion of debris falls to the ground seconds after United Airlines flight 175 hits the World Trade Center's south tower on Sept. 11.

The *Pacific Citizen's* Sept. 21, 2001, issue featured Ron Uba's first-hand experience of the 9/11 terrorist attacks. PHOTO: PACIFIC CITIZEN ARCHIVES



The book cover of "September 11th" by Bobby Ideishi



Robert "Bobby" Ideishi

PHOTO: COURTESY OF BOBBY IDEISHI

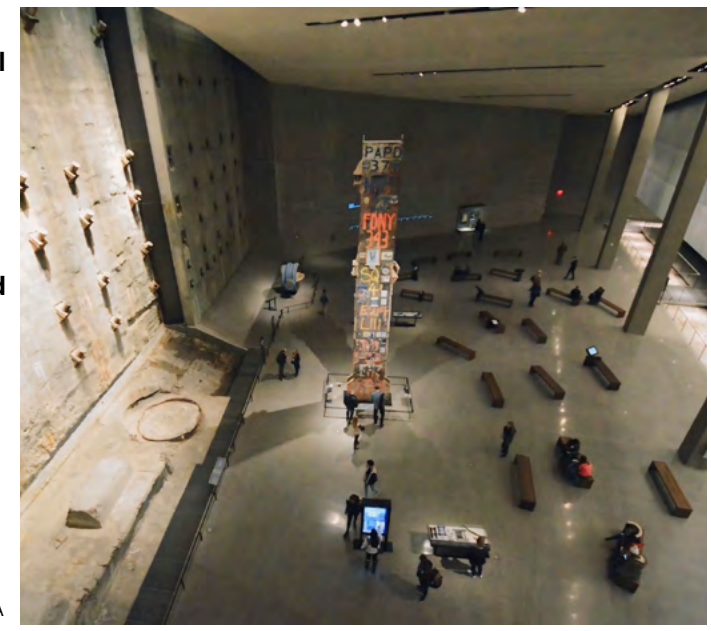
opening detention centers could be a reality again." In that, he was not alone.

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At the time of 9/11, Norman Mineta was serving as secretary of transportation, the sole Democrat among Republicans in the cabinet of President George W. Bush. What would likely be unheard of today: Bush's explicit announcement and decision to not succumb to the knee-jerk reaction of many to round up and incarcerate Muslims and those of Arab descent living in the U.S., citizen or not.

Dianne Fukami, who with Debra Nakatomi produced the documentary "An American Story: Norman Mineta and His Legacy" *(see May 10, 2019, Pacific Citizen, tinyurl.com/mupj7vxv)*, told the *Pacific Citizen*, "I think that Norm represented much of what we were thinking in terms of making sure that he had influence over then-President Bush, and the fact that Muslims and Arab Americans were not incarcerated, as many in the country had wanted to do from the outset."

Fukami described what was related in the documentary. "Shortly after President Bush had nominated Norm to the cabinet, they spent a weekend up at Camp David together with their wives. And after dinner and friendly chat was over, the two men stayed late into the night just talking. And Norm was able to explain, at the president's request, what it was like to be Japanese American, what it was like to spend much of his youth in the Heart Mountain concentration camp, and those stories really stuck with President Bush."



Inside the 9/11 Memorial & Museum is an original trident from the North Tower, one of only two that remained intact. It is located next to the slurry wall, which was built underneath the North and South Towers.

PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA

Although that showed Mineta's indirect influence regarding the White House tempering itself against calls for mass roundups and incarceration of Arab Americans or Muslims in this country, there nevertheless was a spike in anti-Arab, anti-Muslim hate incidents, even against those who were neither but merely perceived as belonging to one or both of those groups.

Mineta would, however, as transportation secretary, make deliberate decisions that had immediate effect, such as grounding all commercial air travel. He would later help with the creation of an entity still with us: the Transportation Security Administration, which is part of another 9/11 legacy: the Department of Homeland Security.

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Just as there was a precedent in 1945 of an airplane hitting a New York skyscraper, there was also a precedent of a terror attack on the World Trade Center.

It happened less than a decade before 9/11, on Feb. 26, 1993, when a bomb hidden inside a van detonated in the basement garage of the WTC's North Tower. That attack killed six people and injured more than 1,000. Although the damage was extensive, the attack fell far short of the terrorists' goal to have the North Tower collapse into the South Tower, taking out both and killing multitudes. That goal would have to wait and be executed — successfully — by a different group of terrorists.

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In 2026, Ideishi, Ito and Uba each, of course, have memories of that day. Each also has a perspective on what happened, how what happened affected them and how they have dealt with that day two-and-a-half decades later.

"I still have chronic respiratory issues as a result because I was stuck there with all that dust and debris, and the air was toxic. I know that for a fact," said Uba. He also has severe arthritis in his left leg from when he fell a couple of times trying to return home in New Jersey by boat. "I'm enjoying being alive every day, knowing that I could do something and make a difference in my little way, working with other people."

Uba carries the burden of a double-dose of survivor's guilt. At that time, he was working on a program designed to help small businesses. He was originally supposed to join his Census colleagues, Marion Britton and Waleska Martinez, on a business trip to San Francisco.

"At the last minute, I got switched," Uba recalled. "They said, 'You're going to be doing this conference in New York City. We're heading to San Francisco. Sorry, Ron, we can't take you this time.'" As Uba was at the WTC for the Sept. 11 conference, Britton and Martinez were aboard a nonstop jet headed for the West Coast, United Flight 93.

As it turned out, Uba was in Tower 1 when it was struck by American Airlines Flight 11. When Tower 1 was struck and he tried to evacuate, the exit was blocked. He was, however, able to exit by going underground to Tower 2 and leave via ground level.

Later, Uba and the rest of the world would learn about flight attendant Betty Ong, who was on that flight. She knew it had been hijacked and relayed valuable information in a cellphone call with an American Airlines reservations agent, describing in real-time what was happening inside the aircraft. It would be Ong's final conversation.

When Uba came out of Tower 2, it was, he recalled, at the same time that "the second plane (United Airlines Flight 175) came out and did a hairpin turn and crashed, and so I could see the belly of the plane. I could actually see the plane right above my head, maybe about 100 feet, because it came down low, and then it swooped up and did like a nosedive.

"After it went back up, it did like a whirring jet straight up, and then it came a hairpin turn, crashed right into the building I just came out of, and the debris started raining down on me. I just remember, I was supposed to come earlier, but they delayed the conference for an hour and a half, and I think that's what saved me because otherwise I would have been in that building."

Not only was Uba physically and psychologically affected by that day, he was also affected politically. "I used to be very, very hardcore Democrat. Since then, I switched from being Democrat to independent because I'm a skeptic of both parties," he said. "I've been more critical about the way I look at things, and as a result, I'm being more careful than to passionately jump into something without taking a step back to think about well, 'Why am I doing this?'"

Uba is also thoughtful about more recent things he has seen. "This past summer, I saw the way ICE agents were just arresting people, dragging people off their scooters for Uber deliveries and for Grubhub, and it's sad. You know, it's like the discrimination is still there, and so I know that I have to support JACL."

When the first plane hit Tower 1, Ito was volunteering at a polling place nearby. "When the first plane hit, I think most people thought it was a plane accident. I remember just hearing I think every police car and fire engine start heading toward lower Manhattan — you knew that something was wrong." In the moment, he said people were worried that bombs had been placed in the building.

In the aftermath, Ito said, "I just remember working nonstop during this time for about a year and half." He would later move back to his hometown of Pasadena, Calif., after getting married in 2003. "I was newly



Ron Uba



Scott Ito



Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta is pictured at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles in 2019.

PHOTO: PACIFIC CITIZEN ARCHIVES

married and just starting a family right at that time. … Since that time, I now have two daughters in college."

Whether he may have had some level of post-traumatic stress disorder, Ito said that he did not immediately have time to process what he had witnessed and "probably repressed a lot of what I had seen (similar to our JA ancestors from the internment camps)." In 2016, his family and he visited the 9/11 memorial and that prompted "strong emotions and conversations with his children."

Today, Ito puts Sept. 11, 2001, into the context of Sept. 11, 2026, when ICE agents can arrest and detain anyone at any time who fits a certain profile, citizen or not. "I hope that as Japanese Americans, we can continue to advocate for those that went through the same atrocities that our families went through."

Ideishi experienced a harrowing escape from the North Tower, where his class was taking place. The first jet's impact shook the building. "When the building started to creak, we thought it was a bomb at first, and we thought another bomb was going to go off," he recalled. A couple of other thoughts would occur to him later. One was that he was "very, very fortunate to be in the North Tower, the first tower, because that was the one that took the longest to collapse."

Another thought: "When the building got struck, we didn't know where to run, and there were three stairwells. There was a maintenance worker that was guiding us into the one stairwell that was still lit," Ideishi remembered. "The other stairwells had no lights. They were just consumed with smoke. This stairwell had smoke, but it was lit up, and that's where he directed us."

To this day, neither Ideishi nor anyone who was in his group knows that man's name. "He saved a lot of people, and I hope he survived himself, that he didn't stay up there too long."

After returning home to the Los Angeles area — via bus, thanks to the grounding of all commercial flights — Ideishi remembers his state of mind. "I was a little numb. I wasn't sure how to deal with my family. I wanted to not look weak and not look like I had fallen apart because I actually hadn't. But I was a little vulnerable at that time. I couldn't sleep. I would stay up to the wee hours of the night or just sleep for an hour or two, wake up, and turn on the news because I wanted to hear everything that was being reported about what happened that day and why and who."

Some mutual friends suggested bringing everyone's families to a timeshare in Palm Desert. Again, he couldn't sleep, so he went to the living room and turned on the TV news. He remembers being triggered by the Nov. 12 reports that American Airlines Flight 587 from New York to the Dominican Republic had crashed. All aboard were killed, along with five on the ground.

"I wanted to yell at the TV, but I didn't want to do it, you know, where everybody could hear me," Ideishi said. Instead, he walked out to his car, rolled down the windows and started driving. "I was screaming, really letting it all out. There were hardly any cars on the freeway, but I was just screaming, and then I said, 'That's enough.'

"And I went back to the house, walked in the front door, sat myself down in front of the TV to watch the news again and, honestly, I felt fine. I felt it was weird, but I felt fine."

That may be why he is committed to sharing his experiences of that day, something Ideishi has done several times since 9/11. "I've resigned myself to the fact that I was one of the fortunate ones, and it'll always be part of my life. I don't dwell on it, but I am not uncomfortable speaking about it to other people."

Something Ideishi admits to nowadays, however, is being uncomfortable in a crowd. "I don't like being in huge crowds where that might be targeted for something, and I always make up some excuse."

On the anniversary of 9/11, Ideishi allows how it does still hit him each time. But a couple of other things can trigger those memories. On Sept. 10, in the WTC Plaza, the country act Rascal Flatts played at lunchtime. "When they're on TV for some reason, oh, that brings me back. That brings me back."

Another musical trigger is "Take It Easy" by the Eagles. "On my bus ride home, we actually went through Winslow, Ariz.

"Whenever I hear that song … that makes me remember the bus ride and everything that happened that day."

To see the Pacific Citizen's Sept. 21, 2001, coverage of 9/11, visit tinyurl.com/3843y4pv.

To view "Norman Mineta and His Legacy: An American Story," visit flysanjose.com/history/norman-y-mineta. The interview with President Bush begins at the 47:33 mark.

To read a detailed report of Ideishi's experiences on Sept. 11, 2001, published in the Rafu Shimpo, visit tinyurl.com/mr4yud8d.



Architect Minoru Yamasaki (pictured in 1959) designed the World Trade Center's Twin Towers, which were completed in 1973.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE SEATTLE MUNICIPAL ARCHIVES



PACIFIC CITIZEN

VOL. 55 No 5 FRIDAY, AUGUST 3, 1962 10 CENTS A COPY

Newsletter:

Minoru Yamasaki humbly accepts 1961-62 'Nisei of Biennium' honors

Minoru Yamasaki was featured on the cover of the *Pacific Citizen's* Aug. 3, 1962, issue.

PHOTO: PACIFIC CITIZEN ARCHIVES

RESTORING A LEGACY

Sacramento JACL completes the Nisei War Memorial Community Center restoration.

By Sacramento JACL

In November 2024, the Sacramento JACL chapter made a commitment: to take on a Capitol Project to restore the Nisei War Memorial Community Center at 1515 4th St. in Sacramento.

For the Japanese American community there, the building represents far more than bricks and mortar. It is a place rooted in the history, resilience and determination of Japanese Americans who returned home after World War II and faced continued prejudice and discrimination.

A Legacy Born From Adversity

When Japanese American WWII veterans returned home, many were not welcomed into local Veterans of Foreign Wars Posts because of lingering racism and prejudice. Determined to establish a place where they could gather and support one another, these veterans formed their own organization, VFW Post 8985.

Initially, the veterans held their meetings at the Sacramento Buddhist Church. Eventually, they set their sights on purchasing a hall of their own. When the veterans did not have sufficient funds to purchase a building, the Sacramento JACL stepped forward and purchased the property with them.

The building soon became an important gathering place for VFW Post 8985, Boy Scout Troop 250, the Ladies Auxiliary and numerous other community organizations. For generations, it served as a home for meetings, celebrations, activities and community connections.

A Building in Need of Help

In October 2024, Sacramento JACL learned that the building's roof had been leaking for more than 20 years. The roof was only one of the many problems facing the aging facility. It became clear that significant work was needed to preserve this important piece of Sacramento's Japanese American history.

Sacramento JACL accepted the challenge.

Fundraising began in March 2025, with the sale of plaques for a Memorial Plaque Wall serving as the first major fundraising effort. The community responded enthusiastically, and orders came in quickly. By June 2025, Sacramento JACL had raised enough money to begin repairs to the roof.

Once the roof was addressed, attention turned to the floors, ceilings, lighting and HVAC system. As the scope of the project became clearer and fundraising began to slow, Sacramento JACL began exploring

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2026 TOUR SCHEDULE.

CHRISTMAS MARKET CANADA HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Dec 1-7
Vancouver City Tour, Grouse Mountain Skyride, Shipyards Christmas Market, Ferry to Victoria Island, Butchart Gardens, High Tea at Fairmont Empress Hotel, Victoria Christmas Market & Fair, Van Dusen Festival of Lights.

2027 TOUR SCHEDULE (Preview)

FANTASTIC FLORIDA & KEYS HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Mar 11-18
Miami, Ft Lauderdale, Everglades National Park, Homestead, Key West, Marathon Key, Hemingway Home.
JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Apr 4-15
Tokyo, Niigata, Sado Island, Kanazawa, Amanohashidate, Tottori, Kyoto.
JAPAN HOLIDAY CRUISE . . . . **Rescheduled to 2028** . . . . . Apr 8–25
Tokyo, Yokohama, Amaezaki, Osaka, Kochi, Fukuoka, Sokcho(S.Korea), Kanazawa, Sakata, Aomori, Otaru, Hakodate, Yokohama. Holland America Cruise.
NATIONAL PARKS & CANYONS HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Apr 25-30
Las Vegas, Hoover Dam, Mob Museum, Grand Canyon West & Skywalk, Mesquite, Bryce Canyon, St. George, Zion National Park.
TULIP FESTIVAL & GREAT LAKES HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . May 6-14
Chicago, Grand Rapids, Holland Tulip Festival, Mackinac Island, Green Bay, Milwaukee.
KOREA HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . May 11-24
Seoul, Bullet Train to Busan, Jeju Island, Jeonju, Nami Island, DMZ, few K-Drama sites.
GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Jun 20-30
Tokyo, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experience.
HOKKAIDO SUMMER HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . July 11-23
Furano Asahikawa, Wakkanai, Rishiri Island, Sapporo, Noboribetsu, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.
DANUBE RIVER CRUISE (Carol Hida). . . . . Aug 22-Sep 4
Budapest, Bratislava, Vienna, Weissenkirchen, Linz, Passau, Vilshofen, Prague. AmaWaterways Cruise Line.
JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE TOUR TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Oct 14-27
Kyushu, Shikoku.
OKINAWA HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Nov 12-22
Okinawa, Ishigaki Island, Iriomote Island, Taketomi Island.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL
312 E. 1st Street, Suite 240 * Los Angeles, CA 90012
Tel: (213)625-2232 * Email: americanholiday@att.net
Ernest or Carol Hida

grants and other sources of financial assistance.

Sacramento JACL VP Debbie Eto reached out to then-Pacific Northwest District Gov. Sheldon Arakaki, now the newly elected president of JACL. He suggested applying for a grant from the Japanese American Community Foundation. While noting that the maximum award was $50,000 — and joking that no one ever received the full amount — he encouraged Sacramento JACL to apply anyway.

The chapter did.

In November 2025, Sacramento JACL received the news it had hoped for: The organization had been awarded the entire $50,000 grant.



PHOTOS: COURTESY OF SACRAMENTO JACL

California Assemblyman Al Muratsuchi stands in front of the Memorial Wall.

A Community Comes Together

The grant provided critical support for the restoration. The funds helped Sacramento JACL repair and restore two bathrooms, replace four broken fire doors and have new window coverings made for the facility.

The restoration became a true community effort. Sacramento City Councilmember Phil Pluckebaum, whose district includes the building, recognized the importance of preserving the historic facility and assisted with valuable contacts and support. Bill Burg of Preservation Sacramento also provided assistance and guidance.

Together, community members, organizations, supporters and volunteers demonstrated what can happen when people come together to protect an important part of their shared history.

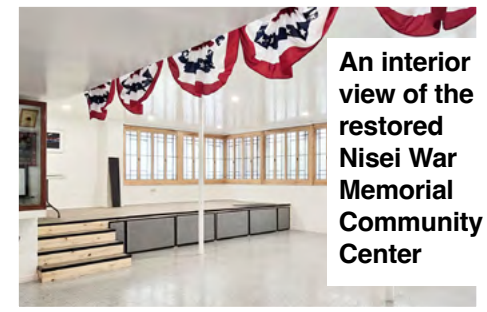
A New Chapter

On Aug. 23, Sacramento JACL hosted an "In Gratitude" special event at the Nisei War Memorial Community Center to honor the many individuals whose time, dedication, kindness and commitment continue to make a meaningful difference in the Japanese American and greater Sacramento communities.

Recognized at the event by Sacramento JACL were Thaya Craig, Geno Endo, Allyn Green, Esther Hokama, Peter Kassel, Tiffany Kelly, Paul Kitagaki Jr., Charles Kobayashi, Kent Nakashima, Joyce Ng, Susan Nonaka, Russell Okubo, Lester Ouchida, Priscilla Ouchida, Dave Sakauye, Kaori Sakauye, Glenn Sapaden, Eddy Shimizu, Genevieve Shiroma, Keiji Takagi, Christine Umeda and Hach Yasumura.



Sacramento JACL honored individuals making a meaningful difference in the Japanese American and greater Sacramento communities at the Nisei War Memorial Community Center on Aug. 23.



An interior view of the restored Nisei War Memorial Community Center

For many attendees, it was the first opportunity to see the building after the extensive repairs and improvements.

The reaction was overwhelming.

Comments ranged from *"breathtaking"* and *"beautiful"* to *"I can't believe it's the same building."*

Those words reflected not only the physical transformation of the building, but also the pride of a community that had come together to preserve a place with such deep historical significance.

The Nisei War Memorial Community Center stands as a testament to the perseverance of the Japanese American veterans who created VFW Post 8985, the vision of the Sacramento JACL and the generosity of a community committed to preserving its history for future generations.

Sacramento JACL extends its deepest gratitude to the Japanese American Community Foundation for its extraordinary generosity and support. The $50,000 grant made an important difference in bringing this historic building back to life.

The restoration is more than a renovation. It is a commitment to remember the past, honor those who came before us and ensure that the Nisei War Memorial Community Center continues to serve the Sacramento community for generations to come. ■



"The blood that has soaked the sands of a beach is all of one color. America stands unique in the world; the only country not founded on race, but on a way and an ideal." **- 1945 Ronald Reagan**

The United States is a nation built by immigrants who were guided by hope. For generations, people crossed oceans in search of opportunity, leaving behind everything familiar to pursue a better life. That journey has never been easy—our Issei ancestors knew this well. Arriving nearly a century after America's founding, they came with faith in the American Dream and the promise of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Despite relentless efforts to exclude, disenfranchise, and push them out, the Issei held fast to their belief in America and inspired the Nisei to do the same.

The JACL was created by the Nisei to demonstrate that Americans come from every ethnicity, belief, and culture. Although the 14th Amendment guaranteed their citizenship, our community knows too well that rights on paper are not always rights in practice. Racism, economic greed, and political failure led to the forced removal and incarceration of over 125,000 people of Japanese ancestry, stripping them of the very rights that were supposed to protect them.

Even as America grows more diverse, the threat of racial injustice and bigotry persists. Today, many communities face renewed or newly emboldened attacks, echoing the same rhetoric and fears that once targeted Japanese Americans. During WWII, JACL accepted the unjust conditions imposed on our community when Japanese Americans had their citizenship revoked. In the 84 years since, we have continued to reckon with that history while standing firmly for the protection of birthright citizenship. We refuse to allow anyone in this country to be denied their constitutional rights again. This commitment is why JACL invests in policy fellows who educate national partners, monitor harmful proposals, and advocate for legislation that upholds justice and equality for all.

Over the last 250 years, America has transformed in countless ways. What keeps the American Dream alive is our Constitution and the enduring human drive for a better life. As our nation continues to evolve—and as JACL approaches its centennial—we are committed to evolving with it. We strive to preserve America's history, uplift its ideals, and ensure that the mistakes of the past are never repeated.

Help us protect the American Dream and defend the rights of all who call this country home. Please consider making a donation today and help us reach our summer fundraising goal of $30,000.

Sincerely,
Ariel Imamoto
JACL Membership Manager

*Campaign ends September 7, 2026

Please send checks to
Attn: JACL Summer Appeal
PO Box 45397
San Francisco, CA 94115-0397

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

Ireicho Tour to Former Confinement Sites & Other Places
National Stop:
Oct. 10-11: St. Paul, MN
Info: Visit https://www.janm.org/exhibits/ireicho/venues.

NCWNP

Buddhist Church of Stockton Festival & Bazaar
Stockton, CA
Sept. 19; 11 a.m.-7 p.m.
Buddhist Church of Stockton
2820 Shimizu Dr.
Price: Free
This family-friendly event will feature cultural programs, food and drinks, live music and demonstrations, all-day exhibits and much more!
Info: Visit buddhistchurchofstockton.org.

Honouliuli: A History Awakened
Honolulu, HI
Sept. 27; 4-6 p.m.
Hawaii Theatre Center
1130 Bethel St.
Price: Ticket Prices Vary.
This unique immersive theatrical experience will bring the history of the Honouliuli Internment Camp to life through dance, music and poetry. Performers include Kenny Endo and Jake Shimabukuro.
Info: For tickets, visit https://hawaiitheatre.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/#/instances/a0FUI00000C9h-JIMAJ.

'Telling New Nikkei Stories': In Conversation With Tamiko Nimura and Jennifer Morita
Sacramento, CA
Oct. 13; 6 p.m.
Buddhist Church of Sacramento
2401 Riverside Blvd.
Price: Free
Two Japanese American writers talk about sharing stories in new ways, with Tamiko Nimura talking about "A Place for What We Lose" and Jennifer Morita discussing "Ghosts of Waikiki."
Info: Register by Oct. 11 to https://forms.gle/1uE9jdroJTDdzBAk9.

'I Am an American: The Nisei Soldier Experience'
Honolulu, HI
Nov. 7-March 13, 2027
The Hawaii State Art Museum
250 S. Hotel St., Second Floor
Price: Free
This traveling exhibit tells the storied history of American soldiers of Japanese ancestry who demonstrated their loyalty through service in the U.S. military during WWII. Visitors will witness firsthand accounts, view historical photos and artifacts and more. This exhibit is presented by the National Veterans Network with the National Museum of the U.S. Army and supported by the Army Historical Foundation.
Info: Visit https://www.capitolmodern.org.

PSW

Moveable Feast: Edmund de Waal & Paul Holdengraber in Conversation
Los Angeles, CA
Sept. 19; 2 p.m.
Japanese American Culture & Community Center
244 S. San Pedro St.
Price: $10 Tickets; Seating Is Limited and RSVP Required
Moveable Feast brings together arts partners and creative voices. This conversation will talk about the Japanese art of kintsugi and how practices of making and writing offer a means of navigating landscapes of memory, memorial and exile.
Info: To RSVP, visit www.jaccc.org.

When You're Smiling: Screenings on the Intergenerational Impact of Incarceration
Los Angeles, CA
Sept. 26; 10 a.m.-4 p.m.
JANM
100 N. Central Ave.
Price: $10 Tickets; $5 Seniors/Students; Free for JANM Members
This daylong film program will examine trauma and the enduring effects of the wartime incarceration. It will feature documentary screenings and a panel discussion led by moderator Wendy Tokuda. This event is sponsored by the George and Sakaye Aratani CARE Award and the UCLA Asian American Studies Center and Keiro.
Info: Visit janm.org/events.

Oishii! Japanese Food & Sake Festival
San Diego, CA
Oct. 4; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum
2125 Park Blvd.
Price: $35 JFGM Member; $50 General Admission
Bring your appetite and enjoy an unforgettable afternoon of delicious food and sake while strolling through the garden's peaceful paths and scenic landscapes.
Info: Visit www.niwa.org.

2026 Poston Pilgrimage 'Celebrating Cultural Art in Camp'
Parker, AZ
Oct. 16-17
Blue Water Resort & Casino
11300 Resort Dr.
Price: Pilgrimage Registration
This year's pilgrimage will feature a visit to the Poston sites, workshops, performances by the Grateful Crane and a presentation by Densho Executive Director Naomi Ostwald Kawamura on "Creativity Under Constraints." A banquet will be held at the Blue Water Resort & Casino.
Info: Visit postonpreservation.org.

'Washoku: Nature and Culture in Japanese Cuisine'
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Oct. 18
Japan House Los Angeles
Ovation Hollywood Complex
6801 Hollywood Blvd.
Price: Free
This exhibit invites visitors to explore the rich culinary heritage at the heart of Japan. It offers an in-depth look at the ingredients, evolution and inspirations behind this UNESCO-recognized cultural tradition.
Info: Visit japanhousela.com.

'Reclaiming the Future: The Legacy of Japanese American Incarceration'
Santa Fe, NM
Thru May 31, 2027
New Mexico Museum of Art
404 Montezuma Ave.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit brings together a multigenerational group of Japanese American artists whose work confronts the forced incarceration of JAs during WWII, including at four camps in New Mexico.
Info: Visit nmartmuseum.org.

PNW

Nobi's Night Out in the '80s
Portland, OR
Sept. 19; 6-9 p.m.
Hoku Events on Madison
1125 S.E. Madison St.
Price: Tickets $100; $35 for 35 Years and Under
This 1980s fundraiser will benefit the Japanese American Museum of Oregon in honor of Nobi Masuoka, a beloved community auntie. Only 100 tickets available.
Info: Visit jamo.org for ticket information.

CCDC

The Incredible History of Nikkei Farmers in the San Joaquin Valley
Fresno, CA
Oct. 3; 2-4 p.m.
Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple
2690 E. Alluvial Ave.
The Fresno Betsuin is hosting this presentation by the Kansha History Project that documents and celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of Nikkei farmers prior to WWII, a legacy that continues to this day. All are welcome to search for your family record and learn about the scale of Nikkei farming.
Info: RSVP at bit.ly/FresnoKansha.

IDC

2026 Japanese Cultural Bazaar!
Colorado Springs, CO
Oct. 24; 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
PPUW Family Success Center
1520 Verde Dr.
Price: Free Admission and Parking
All are welcome at this family-friendly event to explore authentic Japanese goods, connect with local vendors and discover traditional crafts and unique gifts, there is something for everyone at this event!
Info: To register for free, visit https://www.japanamerica.org/event-6746693/Registration.

MDC

'Reckoning With Redress': A Community Celebration & Project Premiere
Chicago, IL
Sept. 22; 5-8:30 p.m.
Northeastern Illinois University Alumni Hall, 5500 N St.
Price: Free and Free Parking in Lot F and the Adjacent Garage (PF), Enter From Bryn Mawr Avenue.
Produced by Full Spectrum Features and funded in part by the JACS grant program through the NPS, this is the public launch of "Reckoning With Redress," the third in a trilogy of cinemagic digital history projects on Japanese American history. The evening will include an interactive showcase of the project, a screening of "Enough" and "Reckonings," a live taiko performance and light food and refreshments.
Info: RSVP to https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfawm13GlStAFapF8qaDt0JYWOeg6I1uUf1eBuYBYFRWaJaYg/viewform.

'Pokemon Fossil Museum'
Chicago, IL
Thru April 11, 2027
Field Museum
1400 S. DuSable Lake Shore Dr.
Price: Special Event Tickets Required
This one-of-a-kind experience brings together the worlds of Pokemon and paleontology, inviting visitors to compare fossil Pokemon with real-world fossils, including SUE the T.rex.
Info: Visit https://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibition/pokemon.

EDC

Japanese Celebration Day at Fenway Park Featuring the Red Sox Vs. Cleveland Guardians
Boston, MA
Sept. 22; 6:45 p.m.
Fenway Park
4 Jersey St.
Price: Special Event Ticket Required
Fans who purchase this special event ticket will receive a Japanese Celebration soccer jersey as the team takes on the Cleveland Guardians.
Info: Visit https://www.mlb.com/redsox/tickets/promotions/cultural-and-identity-celebrations/japanese.

'The Artistry and Reunion of Two Surimono Albums' Exhibit
Providence, R.I.
Thru Oct. 4
Rhode Island School of Design Museum
20 N. Main St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit explores the stories within two special albums of privately commissioned Japanese woodblock prints that were compiled in Japan in the 1820s-1830s.
Info: Visit https://risdmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/exhibitions/artistry-and-reunion-two-surimono-albums.

'Stories on the Planet: Asagi Maeda'
Brockton, MA
Thru Nov. 8
Fuller Craft Museum
455 Oak St.
Price: Admission by Donation
This exhibit features the wearable art of Japanese metalsmith Asagi Maeda, who creates miniature sculptural worlds designed to be worn on the body using materials such as wood, plexiglass, resin, enamel, silver, gold and more.
Info: Visit https://fullercraft.org. ■

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In MEMORIAM

(Note: Boldfaced names in the PDF version of this are active hyperlinks.)

Ando, Helen Hanako, 91, Gardena, CA, Jan 30.



Ando, Tomiko Ito, 95, Westminster, CA, Feb. 4.

Doi, May Fuyuko, 93, Naalehu, HI, Aug. 17.



Hoshiko, Kenneth Sadao, 87, Los Altos, CA, June 12.

Ikeda, Jeanne, 64, Thousand Oaks, CA , July 20.

Lew, James, 73, Santa Monica, CA, Aug. 23.

Masunaga, Janet Sachiko, 70, Chula Vista, CA, Sept 9.



Nomura, Emiko Yamada, 91, Bremen, AL, May 23.



Ochi, Shigeru, 102, Granite Bay, CA, July 21.

Otsuji, Michael Shigeru, 71, San Diego, CA, May 21.

Saiki, Alvin, 86, Pearl City, HI, March 18.

Saito, Amy Ikeda, 97, Hilo, HI, July 22.



Saito, Clara Yoshie, 94, Los Angeles, CA, June 27.

Sakoda, Lester Masamitsu, 72, West Hills, CA, Dec. 26, 2025.

Sasagawa, Yuta, 27, Torrance, CA, Aug. 24.

Tomikawa, Koji Barber, 84, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 14.

Yamada, Robert, 77, South Pasadena, CA, Aug. 8.

Yamagami, Shirlee, 72, Glendale, CA, Aug. 14.

Harold H. Yamagata, 104, Chula Vista, CA, Sept 9. He was predeceased by his wife, Pansy S. (Yasui) Yamagata, 96, on Oct. 4, 2020. ■

News Briefs

President Nominates Acting Navy Secretary Hung Cao to Permanent Role

Months after John Phelan announced his resignation as Navy secretary, President Donald Trump announced via social media that he has nominated acting Navy secretary Hung Cao to take on the role in a permanent capacity. Cao spent 25 years in the Navy before retiring in October 2021. He served with SEAL teams and special forces in Iraq and Afghanistan. A federal law, however, requires that a nominee for a military secretary role must have been retired for a minimum of seven years, meaning he would be ineligible without a congressional waiver.

LAPD Arrests Man in Slashing/Stabbing Attack at Little Tokyo Pizzeria

Two unidentified customers of Prime Pizza, located at 141 S. Central Ave. in Little Tokyo, were taken to the hospital on Sept. 7 after being attacked by a knife-wielding man while dining in the restaurant's outdoor patio area. The Los Angeles Police Department arrested the man on the premises and has asked the public to come forward with any additional information on the incident.

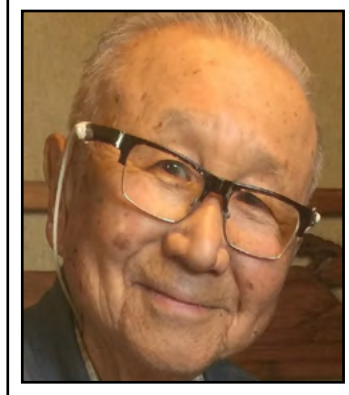
Prosecutors Begin Long-Gestating Racketeering Trial Against Huawei

The *Associated Press* reported that the racketeering conspiracy trial of Huawei Technologies began in Brooklyn on Sept. 9. Federal prosecutors have accused the Chinese company of stealing technology from companies including Cisco Systems and Motorola Solutions, abusing the U.S. financial system and helping Iran snoop on its citizens. The trial could last four months. Because of concerns that the world's biggest supplier of gear for wireless telecom networks is a security risk, Huawei was banned from selling its equipment to U.S. carriers and has also been blacklisted by Canada and Britain. Huawei's lawyers say the charges are a misguided effort to target Chinese people and businesses.

— P.C. Staff

TRIBUTE

WARREN UCHIMOTO



Warren Uchimoto, a longtime resident of Saratoga, Calif., passed away peacefully in early August 2026 at the age of 103. Born in August 1923 in Suisun Valley near Fairfield, Calif., Warren was the son of Zennosuke and Kane Uchimoto, immigrants from Japan. He attended Fairfield Grammar School and Armijo High School before enrolling at the University of California, Berkeley, as a freshman engineering student.

His college years were abruptly disrupted by World War II. Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, the lives of Warren and his family were profoundly affected. In April 1942, under orders from the newly established War Relocation Authority (WRA), Warren and his family were sent first to a temporary assembly center in Turlock, Calif., and then to the internment camp in Gila River, Ariz.

Later that year, opportunities arose for Japanese American college students to resume their education outside the camps. The National Japanese American Student Relocation Council (NJASRC), organized by prominent American educators, leaders of two major religious organizations, and other fair-minded citizens, worked to place students in colleges throughout the Midwest and East Coast.

Warren had considered himself a Methodist since his early Sunday school days. Through his family's friendship with a former American Methodist missionary to Japan and a prominent Presbyterian leader, the NJASRC helped arrange a scholarship for Warren to attend Swarthmore College in Swarthmore, Pa. The Board of Education of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. provided Warren with a tuition scholarship, while Swarthmore College provided his room and board. In January 1943, Warren received permission from the War Relocation Authority to leave the internment camp in Arizona and attend Swarthmore College.

Warren graduated in June 1945 with a Bachelor of Science in engineering degree in mechanical engineering. Following graduation, Warren served for a year and a half in the U.S. Army, primarily in postwar Germany. He later attended the University of Michigan Graduate School of Engineering, where he earned two Master of Science in Engineering degrees: one in engineering mechanics (1951) and the other in control systems engineering (1956).

Warren spent 30 years with the Missile Systems Division of Lockheed Missiles and Space Co. in Sunnyvale, Calif. His work included stability and controllability analyses and flight simulations for fleet ballistic missiles, as well as projects involving the dynamics and control of airborne and submersible vehicles. He retired from Lockheed in 1988 as a senior staff engineer.

In retirement, Warren devoted some of his time to property management and stayed active in his community. He was a regular attendee at lunches and social gatherings at the West Valley JACL Senior Center in West San Jose and frequently joined day trips to museums and other places of interest throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

Family was central to Warren's life. With his sister Laura and several nieces and their families living in the Bay Area, he spent most major holidays surrounded by relatives. In his later years, advancing age, the onset of COVID-19, and his decision to stop driving gradually brought an end to many of these activities.

Warren was predeceased by his older brother, Dan; his sister-in-law, Elsie Uchimoto; his younger sister, Amy Naito; his brother-in-law, Albert Naito; and his former brother-in-law, James Nakanishi. He is survived by his youngest sister; six nieces; two nephews; and their respective families. He is also survived by his four beloved cats, two of whom were adopted as strays.

Throughout his life, Warren remained deeply grateful to Swarthmore College and the Presbyterian Church, whose support during World War II made it possible for him to leave the internment camp in Arizona and continue his education. In recognition of their generosity and the opportunities they had provided, Warren established a charitable remainder annuity trust in 2012, naming Swarthmore College and the Presbyterian Church as beneficiaries.

In lieu of koden, the family requests that donations be made to your favorite charity in memory of Warren Uchimoto.

A memorial service will be announced by the family at a later date.

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.

CONTACT:

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EXHIBITION DEBUTS IN NEW MEXICO

‘Reclaiming the Future: The Legacy of Japanese American Incarceration’ runs thru May 31.

By Aiko Allen



Roger Shimomura’s “American Infamy #3,” 2008, acrylic on canvas, 60 x 96 in. Courtesy of Kathryn Minette and Stan Biderman IMAGE: ©ROGER SHIMOMURA/PHOTO: CARRIE HALEY

Educational outreach continues in New Mexico in the form of New Mexico Living History Readers Theatre productions under the creative directorship of Nikki Nojima Louis (Minidoka camp survivor) to Victor Yamada’s coordination of the Confinement in the Land of Enchantment programs focused on the Department of Justice internment camps in the state. Both Louis and Yamada are members of the New Mexico JACL.

“Reclaiming the Future: The Legacy of Japanese American Incarceration” at the Vladem Contemporary Art Museum in Santa Fe adds to ongoing efforts by bringing together a multigenerational group of artists whose works confront one of the darkest chapters in U.S. history: the forced incarceration of more than 125,000 people of Japanese descent during World War II, including at four DOJ camps in New Mexico. Machiko Harada, a writer and cultural mediator based in Santa Fe, is the curator.

“This exhibition brings together contemporary artists who transform the legacy of Japanese American incarceration into urgent reflections on memory, justice and our shared future,” said Harada. “The show invites us to confront the past as a way of reimagining a more responsible tomorrow.”

From Ruth Asawa’s delicate wire sculptures to Patrick Nagatani’s photographic meditations and new works by contemporary voices, the exhibition examines displacement, resilience and intergenerational memory.

Community collaboration through fundraising is requested to support the catalog. The production goal is $20,000.

To donate online, visit: GIVE NMMOA - MNMF. For more info., contact Angelique Kuenstler at angelique@museumfoundation.org.

MARCHES » continued from page 5

and African American communities during the civil rights movement ran in both directions. Months after the brutality in Selma and under the same Congress that passed the Voting Rights Act, the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 ended the national origin quota system that excluded Asian immigrants from coming to America for decades.

In 1967, JACL submitted an amicus brief in support of Mildred and Richard Loving, a couple challenging Virginia’s ban on interracial marriage. JACL’s counsel, William Marutani, was given leave to argue before the Supreme Court in support of the couple.

The decision in *Loving v. Virginia* ended anti-miscegenation laws that had also prohibited Asian Americans from marrying white people. And in 1988, with significant support from the Congressional Black Caucus, the Japanese American community secured a formal apology for the wartime incarceration and redress under the Civil Liberties Act. These memories and a continued commitment to solidarity are what brought JACL back to march shoulder to shoulder 63 years later.

In 2026, we find ourselves in a consequential political moment. Threats to the right to participate in our democracy are being aimed right at our community and the communities with which we stand in solidarity.

Proof-of-citizenship requirements like those in the yet-to-be-passed SAVE Act create burdens that fall hardest on naturalized citizens. Restrictions on mail-in voting threaten ballot access for millions of Americans. And voter intimidation further discourages people from engaging in elections.

The stakes for the upcoming midterm elections could not be higher. In 1965, Endo wrote, “So, the question is not, ‘What is there for us to do?’ Rather, the question is, ‘Do we care enough to rise from our complacency and comfort?’”

Today, the question is the same. Answering the question starts with checking your voter registration, confirming your polling place and district, making a plan for when and how you will vote in the upcoming election and ensuring your community does the same.

JACL will continue to share resources to help get the AAPI community to the polls. Sixty-three years later, JACL still marches. This November, we vote. ■



