THE NATIONAL NEWSPAPER OF THE JACL

Oct. 17-30, 2025

PACIFIC CITIZEN



CELEBRATING 96 Years

A ceremonial podium in front of the second memorial wall, containing a unified timeline of Native American and Japanese American history on the site.

PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER

The inaugural Snow Country Pilgrimage features a dedication of the Fort Lincoln Snow Country Prison Memorial.

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SITTING BULL WOULD HAVE BEEN A RENUNCIANT

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GFBNEC Hosts an Evening of Aloha in L.A.

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Second Miss O.C. JA Queens Event Takes Place.

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HELP PROTECT THE P.C.

By Gil Asakawa,
Interim P.C. Editorial Board Chair

Greetings to the members, family and friends of JACL. I'm the new *Pacific Citizen* Editorial Board chair. I've been in this role several times in the past, but this time, I'm serving as interim board chair to fill in while we search for a permanent replacement for John Saito Jr., who was the excellent *P.C.* Editorial Board chair before me.

Besides being the Editorial Board chair, I've been writing for the *P.C.* since 2001, and as interim, my goal is to help protect the *P.C.* and raise up its "brand" profile, both within the JACL membership and across the country's JA community and the "mainstream" media audience.

The *P.C.* has that power and potential — it always has. As the stalwart companion of the JACL since the organization's start almost a century ago, the *P.C.* has reported on JACL's work and the achievements we've accomplished, as well as the tragedies and injustices that we've faced as a community.

That's why I've taken on this interim role. It's so important to the country, the community and our JACL family that the *Pacific Citizen* is healthy and able to continue its mission.

Today, I'm writing to urge JACLers to support the *P.C.'s* annual Spring Campaign. JACL is facing a dire budget shortfall, and the *P.C.* has been affected with cuts. Our staff is small but mighty — two editors, a business manager and a production/archivist staffer, as well as a list of freelancers who are funded by grants. Thank goodness for the donors who keep our grants going!

The Spring Campaign has always been one of the *P.C.*'s primary revenue sources alongside advertising and sponsorship. It's how you can show that you appreciate what we do. And, in 2026, the donations will be even more necessary to help the *P.C.* maintain the staffing for designing the newspaper, improving the archives and digital presentation (social media and website need to be prioritized).

The *Pacific Citizen* historically has been the most successful program of the entire JACL at raising revenue and maintaining its mission, and that's because of YOUR support.

Please help us continue and even improve our important work and keep JACL's mission front and center in your minds and hearts, but also inform the entire country to JACL's part in fighting for our communities and social justice at a time when the U.S. is so divided. Helping the *P.C.* is helping JACL bridge that divide and keeping us all together.

Thanks in advance for all your support! ■

TEN YEARS LATER: KEIRO PLANS NEW FACILITY

Announcement for new board-and-care home made at Keiro no Hi.

By Ellen Endo,
P.C. Contributor

Amid a lighthearted carnival atmosphere featuring games, food and entertainment, when Keiro no Hi (Respect for the Aged Day) unfolded for the eighth year on Sept. 13, Keiro President and CEO Beverly Ito announced that the nonprofit organization is building a new board-and-care home in Torrance, Calif.

Asked about lessons learned in the years since the facility changed ownership, Ito stated that Keiro conducted two community-wide surveys to assess the community's needs and also began to focus on memory care.

"What we realized was that people want to age in place for as long as possible near their friends and family or in their homes," Ito said.

It has been 10 years since the sale of Keiro's flagship Boyle Heights senior care facility to a for-profit company sparked controversy within the Japanese American community.

Recognizing the challenges of a burgeoning senior population, Ito emphasized that the possibility of becoming a caregiver to aging parents, siblings or a spouse is a reality. She pointed to the educational aspects of Keiro's work, grant program, quality of life programs, family conferences and basically learning to be better caregivers.



Keiro President and CEO Beverly Ito at the Sept. 13 Keiro no Hi event

PHOTO: ELLEN ENDO

"We think that this board-and-care vision is important because it offers a more homelike environment for them, while still retaining our values as Japanese … that culture and respect for the elderly," Ito added.

The event drew more than 500 attendees to the grounds of Nishi Hongwanji Buddhist Temple in Little Tokyo-adjacent Los Angeles and also signaled a generational shift as a growing number of baby boomers joined the ranks of senior citizenship. The Motown sounds provided a fitting musical backdrop for this Keiro no Hi as the oldest among the boomer cohort redefines its generation.

Performers included the Asian Persuasion band, Hidesomi Bando, Ukeleles of Little Tokyo, Orange County Friendship Choir, Nishi Hongwanji Childhood Development Center, magician Bill Yamane, L.A. Taiko Ichiza and Michael Murata. Brian Kito and Korey Kito of Fugetsudo provided a demonstration of traditional *wagashi*, or mochi-making.

Presenting sponsor was the Kawaguchi-Kihara Memorial Foundation. F.E.G. Investment Advisors, Troutman Pepper Locke and US Bank were bronze sponsors. ■

HOW TO REACH US

Email: **pc@pacificcitizen.org**
Online: ***www.pacificcitizen.org***
Tel: **(213) 620-1767**
Mail: **123 Ellison S. Onizuka St., Suite 206 Los Angeles, CA 90012**

STAFF

Executive Editor Allison Haramoto
Business Manager Susan Yokoyama
Senior Editor George Johnston
Production Artist Marie Samonte
Production/Archives Cindy Siu

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REFLECTIONS

WE HAVE TO SPEAK OUT NOW

By Kenji Kuramitsu

I last wrote to you in January 2024, as Gaza lay under a genocidal siege sponsored by our tax dollars. A welcome reprieve of a ceasefire has just been declared, but I must tell you: The situation in Palestine feels worse than it has ever been, both in the devastated strip and the occupied West Bank. My Sansei father recently spent two weeks with me there, as I reported, collaborated with educators and offered mental health training and psychoeducational groups.

Life here has become harsher since our last visit. Gaza has been annihilated. Meanwhile, the thinning archipelagoes of Palestinian life in occupied Jerusalem and the West Bank have become more brutal and humiliating places.

One single power, insisting on Jewish supremacy, rules from the river to the sea, operating a merciless regime of border crossings, prisons and checkpoints, outposts and settlements — all euphemisms, in the end, for racism, violence and death.

We witnessed legion scenes of heartbreak and oppression. In Umm el-Kher, we confronted bloodshed conjured by settler hands and my funds. Settler youths screamed toward the barbed wire encircling the village, children wielded as weapons — "human shields," my friend grimly joked.

At Bethlehem University and the Wi'am Center, brilliant and tenacious young people confided that their lives have narrowed since Oct. 7 amid collective punishment: random beatings and detentions, shuttered markets, the tightening of the noose. Impossible decisions loom: Do we stay or try to get out? In group, women laugh, weep and rage, recounting the loss of hope for future generations.

My dad becomes my safe place at the end of each day, making an Orphic descent — leaving his own home out of love for me. Each night, we comforted one another and sparred and grieved and tried to put into words the oceanic perversity around us.

Our talks, lying in beds next to one another, and the daily journals I pen, helped to trap the shock of death into a grammatical register — etching the trauma, mercifully, in the lowercase. One evening, I asked about his uncle in Tule Lake: Can you imagine if the world had raised its voice against what happened to us back then? Don't we have to speak out for others now?

Being here makes you wonder what it would have been like if Nikkei had never left camp. Yes, the analogy stumbles: Nikkei are immigrants, not natives — racial and settler violence diverge — the very question launders our complicity as citizens of empire.

But the comparison asserts itself again and again with a visceral force: "Just like camp," my dad whispered, sighting the watchtowers seven years ago. Barbed wire suggests barbed wire, which is why every honest cataloguer of this atrocity instinctively limps toward the nearest historical analogue: Jim Crow, Native Reservations, Apartheid, Warsaw Ghetto.

Even forbidden associations present themselves, as during our visit to the Zionist state's Holocaust museum: What does it mean to memorialize one genocide while conducting another? All of these histories are connected. More urgently, as Noura Erakat observes, the imperial violence we inflict abroad always boomerangs back home.

You recall that during the reparations movement, it was concluded that our catastrophe was driven by "race prejudice, war hysteria and a failure of political leadership." Surely, a fourth pillar loomed: apathy.

Just as ordinary people ignored the cries of their Jewish neighbors during the Shoah, they glanced up and returned to their sandwiches as Nikkei were carted off to camp; many of us continue to look away from Palestine.

My father and I returned home, resolving to not avert our gaze. We cannot let the Nakba pass to yet another generation. Whatever our entry point, the Japanese American community has a role to play in furthering Palestinian liberation.

I again plead for our chapters and National JACL to cut ties with discredited Zionist institutions like ADL and AJC. Let us attend cultural exchanges and protective presence trips to the West Bank and engage in long-term community partnerships — like that begun in 2009 by Rev. Michael Yoshii and Wadi Fouqin village.

We can join in civil disobedience, boycott, divest, sanction and strike back — "each from [our] position and with the tools [we] possess" — to reject the genocide that has been committed in our name.

In short, I wish what I wished you before, but harder.

Rev. Kenji Kuramitsu is a university chaplain, clinical social worker and proud member of JACL Chicago.



Kenji Kuramitsu *(center)* is pictured with young adults gathered at Wi'am: the Palestinian Center for Conflict Transformation, with whom he taught in Bethlehem.

PHOTO: COURTESY OF KENJI KURAMITSU



LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

SAFETY FEATURES FOR OLDER DRIVERS

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

According to AARP, the average age that people give up driving is 75. But not everyone who turns 75 is willing to hand over the keys. According to AAA, age doesn't necessarily determine your fitness behind the wheel. Yet, declining reflexes, judgment or vision can signal that it's time to give up your car keys.

Aimee Cox, research associate at the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety, says "older drivers tend to have older model cars that don't have improved technology, which could also put them at greater risk." If your children are telling you that you shouldn't drive anymore, there is something you can do if you want to keep your "independence" — purchase a NEW car with assistive technologies that will keep you safer behind the wheel.

Today's cars have safety systems and features that help you steer, navigate and respond to rapidly changing road conditions. These new cars stand out because they're easy to get in and out of, have seats that support you even on longer trips and offer technology that's intuitive rather than overwhelming. Simply put, when it comes to helping older adults stay independent, technology can be your greatest asset.

Following are some technological features found in many of today's cars and SUVs (from a Harvard Special Report on Aging in Place) that make it safer, easier and more comfortable for senior drivers:

- Power seats adjust to help you get into and out of the car.
- Keyless entry and pushbutton start help you unlock and start your car without fumbling with a key.
- A back-up camera detects oncoming traffic and pedestrians you might not be able to see.
- Blind spot detection notifies you of cars and other obstacles in your way before you change lanes.
- Lane departure warning alerts you if you're drifting into another lane.
- A forward collision system brakes for you if you're approaching another car too quickly.
- Adaptive cruise control automatically keeps your car at a set speed on the highway and brakes or accelerates to accommodate the traffic in front of you.
- A high-contrast instrument panel makes your speed, odometer and other indicators easier to see.

Unfortunately, almost 90 percent of older drivers don't take advantage of these modifications, according to a 2017 study from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety. Yet, these simple adaptations could reduce your risk of being in a crash. In addition to the features that come standard on your vehicle, you can add safety accessories, such as pedal extensions, riser seat cushions and steering wheel covers.

To help you find the vehicle with the safety features you need, AAA has created an online tool called "Smart Features for Older Drivers" *(www.seniordriving.aaa.com)*. It breaks down car accessories by need.

"Too much work," you say. No problem. *US News* has already done the research and published an article called "Best Cars for Older Drivers in 2025" *(July 18, 2025, www.usnews.com/cars-trucks)*.

The following seven vehicles had the highest overall ratings (all 9+ out of 10):

(1) 2025 Toyota Camry (Sedan): $28,700-$45,000 | Overall Score: 9.6/10 "Toyota's most popular sedan features user-friendly technology like wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, along with an updated touch screen for easier operation compared to the previous generation."

(2) 2025 Honda Accord (Sedan): $28,295-$40,450 | Overall Score: 9.3/10 "User-friendly tech includes a clear touch screen and smooth smart phone pairing."

(3) 2025 Genesis GV70 (SUV): $47,985-$75,565 | Overall Score: 9.2/10 "A massive 27-inch-wide touch screen that unifies the gauge cluster and infotainment, all while keeping its comfort, reliability and upscale vibes intact."

(4) 2025 Mazda CX-5 (SUV): $28,770-$40,000 | Overall Score: 9.2/10 "Advanced features like adaptive cruise control make things safer behind the wheel."

(5) 2025 Kia Soul (Compact SUV): $20,490-$25,000 | Overall Score: 9.2/10 "It's ideal for senior drivers. This Kia's compact size simplifies parking, and the tall roofline allows for an expansive cabin and cargo bay."

(6) 2025 Honda Civic (Sedan): $24,250-$45,000 | Overall Score: 9.2/10 "Offers older drivers a mix of thoughtful touches, including a low step in height, clear gauges and a decently comfortable ride."

(7) 2025 Subaru Outback (SUV): $29,010-$48,000 | Overall Score: 9.1/10 "A ride height that's easy to step into and out of, along with supportive seats that reduce fatigue on longer drives."

In conclusion, I've saved the best information for last: According to a 2024 study by AARP, "The No. 1 safety feature with a proven track record of reducing the occurrence and severity of crashes is an automatic emergency braking system that uses a combination of cameras and radar to monitor the road ahead. These systems can prevent about half of all rear-end crashes by triggering alerts and then automatically hitting the brakes when necessary."

Safe travels.

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

GFBNEC TIES PAST TO THE PRESENT

'Evening of Aloha' contrasts today's challenges to Nisei vets' service, success of redress.

By P.C. Staff



GFBNEC President and CEO Mitch Maki



Nisei WWII veterans in attendance included *(from left)* Ed Nakamura, Mary Tamura and Tokuji "Toke" Yoshihashi.

PHOTOS: GEORGE TOSHIO JOHNSTON



GFBNEC Board of Directors Chair George Tanaka *(left)* and GFBNEC Board of Directors Member Rick Shinto

By connecting the success of the Japanese American redress movement to the service and intrepidity of those Nisei who served the United States during World War II, the Go for Broke National Education Center's President and CEO Mitch Maki added a new layer to the tried-and-true format of the organization's gala fundraising dinner and created a compelling case for continuing the legacy of what Japanese Americans fought for more than 80 years ago.

With KABC Channel 7 news anchor — and GFBNEC board of directors member — David Ono reprising his role as master of ceremony for the annual Evening of Aloha, held on Sept. 27, the more than 500 in attendance at the Westin Bonaventure Hotel & Suites witnessed the posting of the colors by 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Color Guard, as well as the vocal powers of singers Lauren Kinkade-Wong and Kendyl Sayuri Yokoyama, a returnee from last year's event.

Audience members were also treated to the fiery rap stylings of Kaze Jones, the transcendent tones of June Kuramoto's koto and the grace of Hālau Hula 'Keali'i O Nālani's Staci Kanani Toji and her moving accompaniment to "Aloha 'Oe" during the program's In Memoriam section.

Three Japanese American WWII veterans were also present to bask in the gratitude of the audience: 102-year-old Tokuji "Toke" Yoshihashi, representing the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team; 100-year-old Edward Nakamura, representing the Military Intelligence Service; and 101-year-old Mary Tamura, representing the U.S. Armed Forces Cadet Nurse Corps.

Notable in his absence was 442nd vet Yosh Nakamura, who celebrated his 100th birthday in June. Ono remarked, "We extend our deepest thanks to Yosh for his service during and after the war and wish him the very best in his recovery."

From the stage, GFBNEC Board of Directors Chair George Tanaka told the audience how he was "superexcited at the opportunity" to continue working for the organization's "future growth and opportunity."

Tanaka was followed by an In Memoriam video of veterans who had died between this and the 2024 Evening of Aloha. Listed in the video were Gerald "Jerry" Gustafson, Norman Hashisaka, Kayo Hayakawa, Tsuneishi Hayao, Shigeo Iwamasa, Tadashi Marushige, Masao Motooka, Sam Sakamoto, Lawrence Yatsu and Seiji Zakimi.

Rick Shinto, GFBNEC board of directors member, noted how he and many in the audience "grew up with our fathers and uncles who came from WWII and never spoke of what they did," and how important it was to "break that silence" and "remember their stories."

Shinto then introduced a video that recognized still-living Nisei WWII veterans. A year-in-review video from the GFBNEC Media Production Team followed to update the audience on the organization's activities since 2024's EoA. Also adding to the update was Melanie Ramirez, Los Angeles chair of GFBNEC's Torchbearer program.

Maki, who co-authored the 1999 book "Achieving the Impossible Dream: How Japanese Americans Obtained Redress," drove the most-compelling aspect of the show. Using his talent for showmanship and as a public speaker, as well as his knowledge of both the Japanese American redress campaign and of the service of the 442nd and MIS, he deftly made the case that the exemplary military record of Japanese Americans — despite many having had their rights as U.S. citizens denied — who served on the battlefields of Europe and North Africa, as well as those who served in military intelligence throughout the Pacific Theater, played an outsize role in making redress a reality.

GFBNEC Board of Directors Member Jeff Maloney and GFBNEC's National Torchbearer Chair Kendra Motoyasu also made a pitch to the audience to continue to help support the organization.

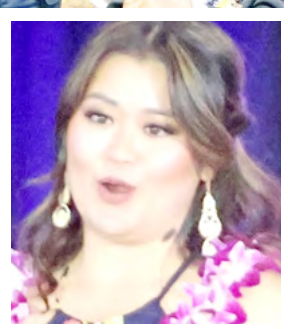
Credited for the dinner were Roy's Restaurants founder and longtime GFBNEC supporter Roy Yamaguchi, the Westin Bonaventure's chef Andreas Nieto and for dessert, King's Hawaiian Bakery & Restaurant pastry chef Heather Campbell.

Event sponsors included US Bank MUFG (Ruby Sponsor); MUFG, Bill and Christy Seki, Dennis and Lorraine Kimura, the Shinto Family Foundation and the Sugimoto Family Foundation (Emerald Sponsors); and Central Pacific Bank, King's Hawaiian, Nikki Kodama and family, Yoshio C. Nakamura family, Pacific Bridges Companies and in memory of Kazuo and Mary Yamane — Joyce Yamane and Stephen Waite (Platinum Sponsors). *(A complete list of sponsors and auction donors may be viewed at tinyurl.com/27ekv8m8.)* ■



Pictured *(from left)* are Ed Nakamura, U.S. Rep. Mark Nakano and Tokuji Yoshihashi.





GFBNEC Board of Directors Member Jeff Maloney and GFBNEC National Torch Bearer Chair Kendra Motoyasu

AMERICAN HOLIDAY TRAVEL

2026 TOUR SCHEDULE

HOKKAIDO SNOW FESTIVALS TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Feb 2-13
Lake Akan, Sounkyo, Sapporo, Otaru, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Tokyo.
Hyobaku Ice Festival, Asahikawa Snow Festival, Sapporo Snow Festival, Hyoto Winter Festival.

JAPAN SOUTHERN CHARMS HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Mar 9-20
Fukuoka, Hagi, Suo-Oshima, Hiroshima, Matsuyama, Takamatsu, Shodo Island, Okayama, Kurashiki, Himeji, Osaka.

GREAT TRAINS-SEDONA HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida). . . . . Mar 15-20
Sedona Tour, Grand Canyon Railway to Grand Canyon South Rim, Flagstaff, Montezuma Castle National Park, Verde Canyon Railway to 2 National Parks.

JAPAN SPRING COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Apr 13-25
Tokyo, Shimoda, Commodore Perry sites, Shizuoka, Mt Fuji, Lake Kawaguchi, Matsumoto, Tsumago/Nagome, Gero Onsen, Toba, Nagoya.

NEW YORK CITY HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Apr 23-28
New York City Tour, Statue of Liberty, Ferry Cruise of New York Harbor, 9/11 Memorial & Museum, 2 Broadway Shows.

MT RUSHMORE-YELLOWSTONE HOLIDAY TOUR (Carol Hida) . . . . . Jun 17-25
Rapid City, Mt Rushmore, Crazy Horse Memorial, Billings, Little Big Horn National Monument, Cody, Yellowstone National Park, Jackson, Grand Tetons National Park, Salt Lake City.

GRANDPARENTS-GRANDCHILDREN JAPAN TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Jun 21-Jul 1
Tokyo, Hakone, Atami, Hiroshima, Kyoto. Craftmaking hands-on experiences.

ALASKA HOLIDAY CRUISE (Carol Hida) . . . . . Jul 18-25
Vancouver, Sail Inside Passage, Juneau, Skagway, Cruise Glacier Bay, Ketchikan – "Salmon Capital", Vancouver.

PANA CONVENTION (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Sep
Sao Paulo-Brazil.

JAPAN AUTUMN COUNTRYSIDE HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida) . . . . . Oct 5-18
Hokkaido-Tohoku. Kushiro, Lake Akan, Sounkyo, Asahikawa, Sapporo, Otaru, Noboribetsu, Lake Toya, Hakodate, Aomori, Lake Towada, Morioka, Naruto Onsen, Matsushima, Mito, Tokyo.

AUSTRALIA-NEW ZEALAND HOLIDAY TOUR (Ernest Hida). . . . . Oct 26-Nov 11
Sydney, Cairns, Melbourne, Queenstown, Rotorua, Auckland.

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.

For more information and reservations, please contact:

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A Reunion Fit for Queens

The second Miss Orange County JA Queens event focuses on O.C. JA history.

By Patti Hirahara, P.C. Contributor



First Miss Orange County JA Queens and Representatives from Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670. Pictured *(back row, from left)* are VFW Post 3670 Commander James Nakamura; First President of the Ladies of VFW Post 3670 Keiko Sadakane; 1969 VFW Queen Gwen Okumura Martino; Deputy Consul General Naoko Kamitani; 1961 VFW Queen Dianne Kubota Hamano; Charter VFW Youth Group Member Linda Honda; Orange County Sports Assn. President and OCNCC Representative Marsha Hamamoto; and reunion MC and reigning Miss Orange County JA Queen Casey Kuramoto. Front Row *(from left)* are 1970 VFW Queen Gail Konishi Shibayama; 1960 VFW Queen Doris Reiko Fujino Pultz; First 1958 VFW Queen Mary Murai Nakayama; Three-Time Post Commander of VFW Post 3670 Norio Uyematsu; and 1962 VFW Queen Carol Nishizu Matsuoka.

PHOTOS: BY RON INATOMI

At the end of World War II, Japanese families returned to Orange County from their incarceration at the Poston War Relocation Center in Arizona and worked to revive their resettlement efforts to bring the JA community back to what it was before their forced removal.

With Japanese American veterans not welcomed into groups like the VFW or American Legion at that time, a group of JA veterans in Orange County decided to create the Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670, which was mustered on Nov. 2, 1957, to allow its VFW Post members to be recognized for their service in fighting in a foreign war.

The following year, the Post decided to sponsor its first "Miss Orange County Queen" to represent Orange County in the Nisei Week Japanese Festival in 1958; Mary Murai was chosen as the Post's inaugural queen.

It was Murai's father who suggested that she take the opportunity since she was a farmer's daughter. "I never wore any makeup, so I was given a makeup kit to use, and I had to borrow all my clothes for the competition since I did not have any fancy dresses or hats to wear," Mary Murai Nakayama said.

This was the beginning of how 57 queens have represented Orange County at Nisei Week under the sponsorships of the Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670 (1958-70), the Suburban Optimist Club of Buena Park (1974-82) and the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council (1989-2025).

On Sept. 20, the second Miss Orange County Japanese American Queens reunion was held at Tabi-Ji Japanese restaurant in Orange, Calif.; the first reunion was held in 2023. I had the honor of coordinating the second reunion.

During an earlier in-person meeting with Congresswoman Young Kim (R-Calif.) at her Anaheim Hills office, Norio Uyematsu and I shared information about the upcoming queen's reunion, and Congresswoman Kim was very happy to honor each of the 25 queens that would be present with a recognition certificate from California's 40th District.

This year's reunion theme was "Orange County's JA Legacy and Our History — Our Role in Preserving OC's JA History," which featured a special tribute to the Miss Orange County JA Queens of the Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670.

Six Post queens were in attendance at the luncheon: Mary Murai Nakayama (1958), Doris Reiko Fujino Pultz (1960), Dianne Kubota Hamano (1961), Carol Nishizu Matsuoka (1962), Gwen Okumura Martino (1969) and Gail Konishi Shibayama (1970).

In addition, representing VFW Post 3670 were Commander James Nakamura; Keiko Sadakane, first president of the Ladies of VFW Post 3670 group; Linda Honda, charter VFW Youth Group member; and Norio Uyematsu, three-time Post Commander of VFW Post 3670 and the last surviving member of the VFW Queens Committee.

Having six of the 13 queens who started it all in attendance gave the younger queens an insight on how their years were so much different than the queen's responsibilities today.

Casey Kuramoto, the current Miss Orange County JA Queen, was the emcee for the reunion. "It was the first time for me to emcee an event, and this was a wonderful opportunity for me in hopes to emcee other events in the future," she said.

Also in attendance at the luncheon were Deputy Consul General Naoko Kamitani, who made her first visit to Orange County for the event, along with Consul Aya Ishii. In addition, Kamitani gave a welcome greeting to the queens on behalf of the Consulate-General of Japan in Los Angeles.

District Director Abigail Fachtmann then presented recognition certificates from Congresswoman Kim to each of the queens.

During the luncheon, each of the queens was asked to share a favorite photo from their year, and it was a wonderful opportunity to hear each queen on why their photo meant so much to them.

I also presented a brief historical perspective on the history of the Orange County JA pioneers and some of the area's renowned Japanese landmarks.

Special guests included Orange County Sports Assn. President Marsha Hamamoto, who also represented OCNCC; Kimiko Fujita, past president of OCJAA; and JK Yamamoto of the *Rafu Shimpo*.

The Second Miss Orange County JA Queens Reunion was sponsored by the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council, the Orange County Queens Council and the Kazuo Masuda Memorial VFW Post 3670. Luncheon sponsor was the Orange County Sports Assn.

It is hoped that more of the remaining 55 Miss Orange County JA Queens will join in a future reunion to share their memories and continue the JA legacy. ■



MC Casey Kuramoto, 2025 Miss Orange County JA Queen



Miss Orange County JA Queens with individual recognition certificates from Congresswoman Young Kim (CA-40). Pictured *(back row, from left)* are 2025 Queen Casey Kuramoto, 2015 Queen Sarah Hutter, 2022 Queen Kristine Yada, 2012 Queen Emily Folick Koko, 2019 Queen Kara Ito, 2023 Queen Kaitlyn Emiko Chu, 2005 Queen Michelle Ito Hatsushi and 2007 Queen Christine Kimoto Tanaka. Middle Row *(from left)* are 1979 Queen Karen Karasawa Eto, 1977 Queen Karen Takeguma Woo, 1989 Queen Sandra Fukushima Ninomiya, 1990 Queen Denise Higuchi Bjorn, 2008 Queen Marissa Ishii Yamashita, 2014 Queen Dominique Mashburn, 2018 Queen Alice Amano and 2024 Queen Caitlyn Sasaki. Front Row *(from left)* are 1976 Queen Joanne Ono Castillo, 1974 Queen Patti Hirahara, 1961 Queen Dianne Kubota Hamano, 1960 Queen Doris Reiko Fujino Pultz, 1962 Queen Carol Nishizu Matsuoka, 1969 Queen Gwen Okumura Martino and 1970 Queen Gail Konishi Shibayama with Abigail Fachtmann *(standing),* district director of Congresswoman Young Kim's (CA-40) Office. Not pictured is 1998 Queen Nicole Inouye.

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SITTING BULL WOULD HAVE BEEN A RENUNCIANT

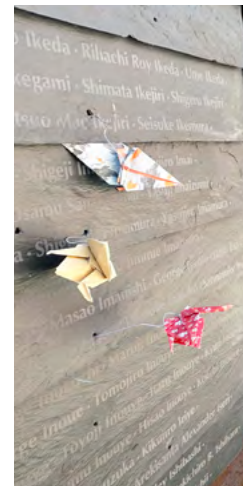
The inaugural Snow Country Pilgrimage features the dedication of the Fort Lincoln Snow Country Prison Memorial, culminating a 25-yearlong effort led by JA community organizers to build relationships with Native leaders.



The Snow Country Prison Japanese American Memorial was dedicated during the Snow Country Pilgrimage.



A view of the memorial drum circle



The memorial wall contains all 1,901 names of those incarcerated at Fort Lincoln, carved into reclaimed roof tiles that originally adorned the prison buildings.

PHOTOS: ROB BUSCHER

By Rob Buscher, P.C. Contributor

'Sitting Bull would have been a renunciant." These words have echoed in my mind for weeks since hearing them during the Snow Country Prison Pilgrimage in Bismarck, N.D., during the weekend of Sept. 5-6. Recounted by United Tribes Technical College archivist Dennis Neumann, the quote was attributed to David M. Gipp, the late former UTTC college president who was a member of the same Hunkpapa Lakota tribe that Sitting Bull once led.

Of course, Sitting Bull was a resister in his own way, an influential spiritual leader of "free Indians" who defied the federal government's orders to move onto the reservation. He was a freedom fighter who refused to give up his community's ancestral lands, continuing the fight even when victory seemed impossible. This was a man who said, "If we must die, we die defending our rights." When he finally did surrender to spare his people from starvation, Sitting Bull was the last man of his tribe to surrender his rifle.

Sitting Bull spent his final months of life held captive at the nearby Standing Rock Reservation, where he was then murdered by agents of the federal government for daring to resist the erasure of his culture and destruction of his people.

It is this honored ancestor that our own Nisei resisters were compared to and which gives a framework to understand the powerful expressions of solidarity and empathy symbolized by the newly completed Fort Lincoln Snow Country Prison Memorial.

Led by Dr. Satsuki Ina, whose father, Itaru, was detained there during World War II, this memorial is the culmination of a 25-year effort by Japanese American community organizers to build relationships with the Native leaders of the tribal college.

Built on land gifted to Japanese Americans by the United Tribes, the memorial was designed by MASS (Model of Architecture Serving Society) Design Group, an international design collective with members in 20 countries that incorporates social justice into its architectural practice.

Set inside the courtyard of a former prison building turned into college classrooms, the memorial features two curved walls constructed from recycled roof tiles that covered the prison during WWII.

One wall features a timeline of the indigenous peoples of North Dakota and also incorporates the history of Japanese American incarceration in the region. Opposite is a longer wall with the names of all 1,901 inmates of Japanese heritage.

Layered with symbolic meaning and sacred images referencing both Japanese and Native cultures, the memorial's core design team included Jeffrey Yasuo Mansfield, a mixed-race Yonsei, and Joseph Kunkel, a member of the Northern Cheyenne Nation.

Traveling to attend the memorial dedication during the inaugural Snow Country Pilgrimage, this was my first time in the state of North Dakota. Almost exactly 20 years ago in July 2005, I drove through South Dakota as part of a cross-country road trip after graduating high school — from Connecticut to California and back.

It was a coming-of-age trip of self-discovery as I explored regions of the country that were previously unknown to me before moving abroad for college. Of the middle states I traversed, South Dakota left the most memorable impact as I watched the great plains disappear into the rolling foothills of the Rocky Mountains midway through the state.

That was the first time I visited a reservation, and at the age of 17, I realized how little I knew about Tribal Nations in the U.S. These topics were largely excluded from U.S. public school curriculum by design, to keep us ignorant to the ongoing cultural genocide and erasure of Indigenous histories. By limiting our knowledge of tribal communities, the government further legitimizes our nation's claim to their territories as a settler-colonial state.

Over the two decades since then, I have traveled the far corners of this country and come to know Native American communities in the context of pilgrimage to other confinement sites located on their ancestral lands.

In each region, the relationships are slightly different between Japanese Americans and Native communities, but they are generally positive. In some cases, there is direct collaboration, perhaps epitomized by the Amache Alliance Youth Ambassadors Program, which brings together young Japanese Americans with Cheyenne and Arapaho youth at both the former WRA camp and site of the Sand Creek Massacre during its annual pilgrimage.

Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation also has a longstanding relationship to the Apsáalooke, commonly known as the Crow Nation, including one member of their its staff who is a recognized member of the tribe. Poston Community Alliance even has a small section in the Colorado River Indian Tribes Museum in Parker, Ariz.

What excited me most about this trip was the prospect of engaging with members of the United Tribes of North Dakota and learning more about their histories. Participants were able to do so because the Snow Country Pilgrimage was deliberately planned to coincide with UTTC's 55th annual International Powwow — one of the largest in the country with an estimated annual attendance of around 30,000 people from more than 100 tribes.

The Bismarck-Mandan metro area straddles either side of the Missouri River on the unceded lands of the Mandan people who since time and memorial have been the caretakers of this region. These lands were some of the last strongholds of the Plains Indians as they were displaced gradually northward and westward over decades of conflict with the joint colonizing forces of U.S. militarism and American capitalism.

The U.S. Army first established a presence in the Bismarck region in 1863, when it was first used as a forward operating position for the U.S. Cavalry. In 1872, the first Fort



Memorial committee members during the blanket ceremony at the dedication

PHOTOS: KIYOSHI INA



Dr. Leander McDonald speaks at the dedication ceremony.

The Snow Country Pilgrimage coincided with UTCC's 55th annual International Powwow, one of the largest in the country.





PHOTO: COURTESY OF UTTC

The entrance to Fort Lincoln then and now



PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER

Lincoln was built about eight miles to the west of its current site, on the opposite bank of the Missouri River.

Stationed at the original Fort Lincoln was Gen. George Custer, who deployed from the site on his way to the Battle of Little Bighorn when his military occupation forces were decisively defeated by the Sioux and Cheyenne Nations.

The "Last Stand" narrative that paints Gen. Custer as a martyr to progress is written through the lens of settler-colonial propaganda and seeks to absolve him of the violent campaigns of suppression against Native peoples simply for existing on their ancestral lands.

Sitting Bull did not personally fight in the battle, but it was won under his spiritual guidance. It would be his last great victory, and one that gave hope to the Indigenous peoples across the country.

In this setting that reverberates with the ghosts of Indigenous genocide, the federal government enacted a second period of forced migration and detention when it converted Fort Lincoln into an alien isolation center in the early months of WWII. The prison was first used to hold some 1,100 Issei men arrested under the Alien Enemies Act of 1798, who were detained at the site while awaiting their loyalty hearings.

Later in the war, 750 mostly Nisei renunciants were transferred from Tule Lake. Some were deported to Japan, and others were transferred to detention sites administered by the Department of Justice, such as Crystal City in Texas.

Among descendants of the incarcerees formerly held at this site, it has become colloquially known as the Snow Country Prison — so named by Itaru Ina in a haiku poem he wrote in late 1945. The untitled poem reads, "The war has ended / but I'm still in / the snow country prison."

Yet, as much suffering took place in these territories, the United Tribes have transformed the former site of trauma into something positive, having successfully recovered a portion of their land with the establishment of the United Tribes Technical College in 1969. As the late former college president David M. Gipp jokingly said, "The Indians have finally taken Fort Lincoln."

In visiting the college and interacting with the students and faculty, what stuck out to me was the profound sense of empathy shared by the Native communities. This sentiment was both immediate and universally felt by all with whom who we interacted.

Whether current college students in their late teens to early 20s or tribal elders in their post-retirement years, everyone we met welcomed us as friends and relatives. They understood implicitly the impact of generational trauma related to our shared histories of displacement, confinement and forced assimilation.

Speaking to this, the current college president Dr. Leander McDonald reflected on the many direct parallels in his remarks given at the opening ceremony of the memorial.

"There's been centuries of U.S. policy that forcibly removed Indigenous nations from their ancestral lands, especially the Land Removal Act of 1830," McDonald said. "Many were confined to reservations, faced massive loss of territory and sovereignty. For Japanese Americans in WWII, Executive Order 9066 led to their uprooting. They were forced to abandon their homes, businesses and communities to live in internment camps. In both cases, U.S. authorities exercised a paternalistic rationale, justifying forced relocation as protective or necessary, despite being rooted in racial and cultural prejudice."

Commenting on the specific conditions of confinement and their lasting impact on both communities, McDonald continued, "For Native Americans, reservations and boarding schools were deemed civilizing or protected, but actually reflected colonial control and assimilation. Boarding schools enforced English language and Christian practices, actively suppressing tribal languages and cultural traditions. This was a deliberate policy of cultural assimilation.

"For Japanese Americans," he further continued, "their removal is framed as a wartime necessity, despite no credible evidence of threat. . . . Both of these experiences were rooted in systemic racism. For Native Americans, generations continue to bear the psychological and cultural wounds of displacement, boarding schools and loss of autonomy. Japanese American survivors and descendants experience lasting trauma, higher range of posttraumatic stress disorder, health issues, shortened lifespans and emotional scars."

Further emphasizing the connections across our communities, the opening ceremony featured drum performances from TaikoArts Midwest and the Sloughfoot Singers. At one point toward the end of the ceremony, the two groups joined together for an ensemble performance that incorporated both taiko and drum circle traditions.

Pilgrims were then invited to pay their respects by affixing origami cranes with the names of formerly incarcerated ancestors onto the memorial wall. Some of the Native participants also placed into the wall's alcove sage smudge sticks, used for spiritual cleansing to remove negative energy and commune with the spirit world.

As pilgrims gave their offerings and prayers, a flute duet was performed by Megan Chao Smith on a Japanese shinobue and Dakota Goodhouse on the traditional Lakota-style flute.

The opening ceremony also featured a poem written by Dr. Denise Lajimodiere, the first Native American poet laureate of North Dakota. Incorporating some of Itaru Ina's words into her verses, the final passage read, "A sunny, early fall day, a healing ceremony was held for Japanese internment survivors, while wiping away the tears, ceremony, smudging, prayers, song, the drums sang out across the field, the buildings that once held prisoners surrounded by barbed wire. Now, survivors are surrounded by a healing song, as each is wrapped in a star blanket, signifying safety, protection, warmth. Something healing is happening in North Dakota."

Satsuki Ina remarked during the memorial ceremony that the creation of this memorial is perhaps the greatest enactment of solidarity that any community has ever shown Japanese Americans.

She commented, "When Dr. McDonald and others from United Tribes invited us to fill this space on land where they were going to memorialize our histories together, I actually cried when that invitation was made, thinking about the loss of land that the Native American people have suffered and yet so generously offering us this moment, this place and the heart of community."

Gifting our community space to erect a permanent memorial is the ultimate testament to the compassionate witness of our wartime incarceration by these Native Americans in North Dakota. Their allyship comes from the shared understanding of cultural genocide and erasure under white supremacist settler-colonialism.

Let us honor their gift by further educating ourselves about the history of Native Americans and acknowledge the role that our own community has played in settler-colonialism. In doing so, we can prove ourselves worthy of their trust and friendship as we fight together for our collective liberation.

To learn more about the Snow Country Prison Memorial, visit: www.uttc.edu/about-uttc/visit-our-campus/snow-country-prison-memorial-at-bismarck/.



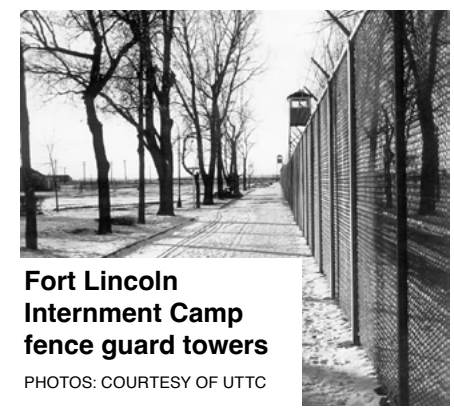
Dr. Satsuki Ina's father, Itaru, was detained during WWII at the Snow Country Prison.



Fort Lincoln Internment Camp Japanese American incarcerees during World War II



An original crane offering left by a pilgrim



Fort Lincoln Internment Camp fence guard towers

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF UTTC



Seattle JACL's Stan Shikuma places his offering on the memorial wall.

PHOTO: ROB BUSCHER



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JACL Conducts Advocacy Training in SLC

The Alien Enemies Act is one of several key policy issues discussed.

By JACL National

Daniel K. Inouye Fellow Matthew Marumoto conducted an Alien Enemies Act presentation and advocacy training at Westminster University in Salt Lake City on Oct. 12.

The training, which was attended by 20 participants, half of whom were JACL members, covered the origins of the AEA, all five invocations of the act, additional discussion of the AEA's usage during World War II, how the AEA is being used today to target immigrant communities and the Neighbors Not Enemies Act, a bill aimed at completely repealing the AEA.

Following the presentation on both historical and current events, the session transitioned into an advocacy training that focused on meetings with elected officials and included mock Capitol Hill meetings.

"Trainings like the one we just conducted in Salt Lake City go hand in hand with the work JACL is doing on Capitol Hill," said Marumoto. "We want to educate individuals on these important policy issues and empower them to voice their concerns to their elected officials at all levels of government.



PHOTO: SHELDON MARUMOTO

JACL Fellow Matthew Marumoto talks with members of the Salt Lake City chapter, including Katherine Marumoto, SLC membership chair *(center)* and Kelly Asao, IDC governor and SLC chapter president *(right).*

"Due to the AEA being weaponized against our own community during WWII, Japanese Americans possess a powerful and unique voice in calling for the complete repeal of the AEA and advocating for the civil rights and liberties of immigrants living in the U.S.," Marumoto continued. "I hope that this presentation and training can serve as a model for future programs to engage our membership on current policy issues and attract new members to join in the fight."

JACL National wishes to thank the JACL Salt Lake City chapter and its board for making this program possible. ■

Minidoka Structures to Undergo Restoration

Three valuable historic structures at the Minidoka National Historic Site are set to undergo stabilization and restoration according to an announcement made by the Minidoka National Historic Site and Friends of Minidoka late last month.

With funding through the Great American Outdoor Act's Legacy Restoration Fund, the National Park Service will be rehabilitating the historic barrack, mess hall and root cellar.

A skilled team from the National Park Service's Historic Preservation Training Center will perform the restoration work. Through the Great American Outdoors Act, HPTC has formed multiple geographically based teams composed of trades specialists to complete historic restoration and preservation projects efficiently across the country.

Stabilizing and restoring the site's historic resources is the first phase of the process. After the restoration, interpretation will be developed to tell the stories of the more than 13,000 Japanese Americans who were unjustly incarcerated at Minidoka during World War II.

These improvements will allow visitors to step inside history, helping them better understand the lived experience of Japanese Americans incarcerated at Minidoka.

In addition to the restoration projects, a new maintenance facility will be constructed at Minidoka that will house a carpentry shop, equipment repair bays, offices and park staff workspaces.

Special acknowledgement is given to the National Park Service, the National Park Foundation, Minidoka NHS Superintendent and South Idaho Parks' Wade Vagias and the South Idaho Parks staff.

For updates and additional information, visit www.minidoka.org.



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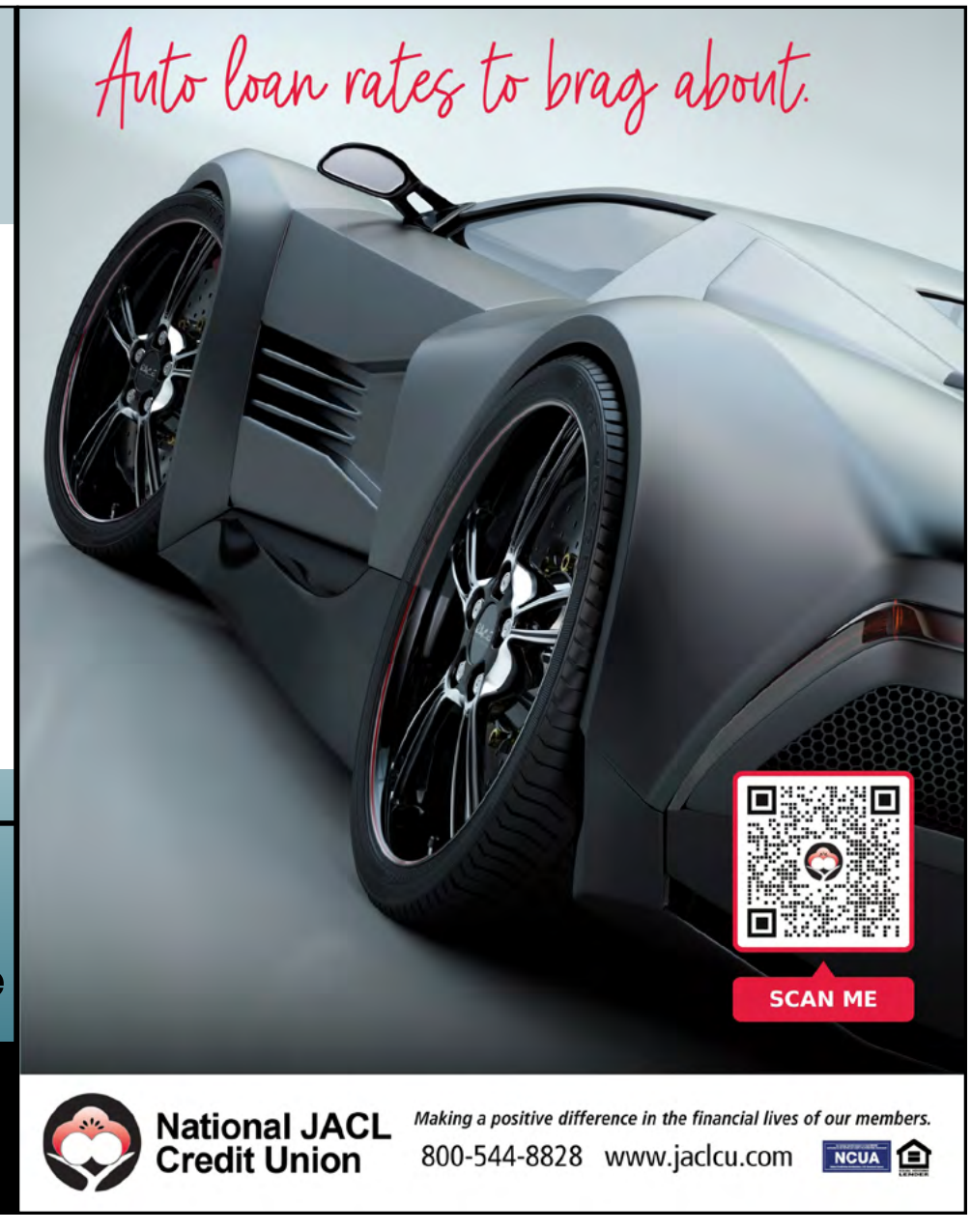
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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NCWNP

'Topaz Stories: Children Behind Barbed Wire' Exhibit
San Jose, CA
Thru Nov. 2
Japanese American Museum at San Jose
535 N. Fifth St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit features 30 stories primarily about children and teens in the Topaz, Utah, incarceration camp.
Info: Visit https://www.jamsj.org.

Watsonville Veterans Day Program
Watsonville, CA
Nov. 11; 10:30 a.m.
Watsonville's Mello Center for the Performing Arts
250 E. Beach St.
This program honors Nisei veterans who bravely served during WWII. The event's featured guest speaker is Tom Graves, author of "Twice Heroes, America's Nisei Veterans of WWII and Korea" and a Watsonville-Santa Cruz JACL member.
Info: Visit watsonvillesantacruzjacl.com.

'Art of Manga'
San Francisco, CA
Thru Jan. 25, 2026
De Young Museum
Golden Gate Park
50 Hagiwara Tea Garden Dr.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit features rarely presented original drawings by major artists that showcases the world of manga from the 1970s to today. There are more than 600 images on display.
Info: Visit https://www.famsf.org/exhibitions/art-of-manga.

PSW

'Ebb and Flow: Community Mental Health Conference'
Los Angeles, CA
Nov. 1; 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Terasaki Budokan
249 S. Los Angeles St.
Price: Free
Participants will learn about mental health topics from an Asian American lens and connect with community through the day's various panels and workshops. This event is sponsored by Little Tokyo Service Center in conjunction with the California Department of Public Health.
Info: Visit https://give.ltsc.org/2025EbbAndFlow.

Osechi Ryori Cooking Workshops: Japanese New Year Foods
Gardena, CA
Nov. 1 and Nov. 15; 10 a.m.-Noon
GVJCI Nisei Veterans Memorial Hall Kitchen
1964 W. 162nd St.
Price: $90 Includes Both Dates
This cooking class will teach participants how to make traditional Japanese New year foods. Learn from sushi chef Mike Inouye on how to prepare a variety of dishes.The classes include all foods and supplies. Classes are limited to eight participants.
Info: Visit jci-gardena.org.

Elemental Funk Concert
Gardena, CA
Nov. 8; 4-9 p.m.
Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural institute Main Hall
1964 W. 162nd St.
Price: $55 Early Bird Until Oct. 24; $65 General Admission
This fundraising event is a masquerade party featuring the sounds of Elemental Funk. The opening performance will feature Yuujou Taiko and Ryukyukoku Matsuri Daiko Los Angeles. Beer, wine and appetizers will be available for purchase. Come and bring your dancing shoes and twist and shout all night!
Info: Visit https://www.jci-gardena.org/elemental-funk-concert.html.

'Cruising J-Town: Behind the Wheel of the Nikkei Community' Exhibit
Pasadena, CA
Thru Nov. 12
ArtCenter College of Design
1111 S. Arroyo Pkwy.
This exhibit chronicles the people and stories behind how Japanese Americans have played vital roles in car scenes throughout the region. Generations of Nikkei have steered their family stories via their relationship to car culture. Presented by JANM on the Go.
Info: Visit https://www.janm.org/exhibits/cruising-j-town.

'A Taste of Tokushima: A One-Night Only Culinary Showcase'
Las Vegas, NV
Nov. 14; 5 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
Kusa Nori
Resorts World Las Vegas
3000 S. Las Vegas Blvd.
Price: $225; Reservations Are Required.
This exceptional dining experience spotlights Tokushima Mitsuboshi Beef, Japan's rarest wagyu, along with Dassai sake and wine from Kenzo Estate. Special dignitaries from Tokushima will also be in attendance at this rare culinary dining opportunity.
Info: For reservations, visit https://www.rwlasvegas.com/dining/kusa-nori.

'Looks Delicious! Exploring Japan's Food Replica Culture'
Los Angeles, CA
Thru Jan. 25, 2026
Japan House Los Angeles Gallery, Level 2
Ovation Hollywood
6801 Hollywood Blvd.
Level 2 and Level 5
Price: Free
This is the first U.S. exhibition dedicated to the extraordinary craft of food replication and features a broad collection of specially commissioned food replicas — notably one for each of Japan's 47 prefectures across an expansive map — highlighting the country's diverse culinary traditions.
Info: Visit japanhousela.com.

PNW

Teaching Japanese American History: The Yasui Family
Portland, OR
Nov. 21; 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
Japanese American Museum of Oregon
411 N.W. Flanders St.
Price: Free
Join the Oregon Historical Society and JAMO to learn strategies for teaching the history of Japanese Americans before, during and after WWII incarceration through the experiences of the Yasui family. Participants of this workshop will tour "The Yasui Family: An American Story" exhibition with Yasui family member Barbara Yasui.
Info: To register, visit https://airtable.com/appEqZXlops1HV1wP/shrqt2f-PRgRaAiTpz.

Frank S. Matsura: Portraits From the Borderland
Portland, OR
Thru Feb. 8, 2026
Japanese American Museum of Oregon
411 N.W. Flanders St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit features photographs from the studio of Washington-based Japanese photographer Frank Sakae Matsura, who created some of the most visually potent and nuanced images of Indigenous peoples from the era.
Info: Visit www.jamo.org/matsura.

MDC

Twin Cities JACL Chrysanthemum Banquet
St. Paul, MN
Nov. 1; 6:15 p.m.
Minnesota Humanities Center
987 Ivy Ave. E.
This year's guest speaker is David Ono, anchor of ABC7 Eyewitness News in Los Angeles. Ono will be showing one of his award-winning documentaries and sharing some stories about his life and work.
Info: Email the Twin Cities JACL chapter for event details.

JACL Chicago 80th Anniversary
Chicago, IL
Dec. 6; 5 p.m. CST
New Furama Restaurant
2828 S. Wentworth Ave.
Price: $75-$150
Join JACL Chicago as it celebrates its 80th anniversary, highlighting the chapter's work in community building, education and advocacy. All proceeds will support the chapter's ongoing work and programs, including the Kansha Project.
Info: For tickets, visit https://www.eventbrite.com/e/jacl-chicago-80th-anniversary-fundraiser-tickets-1781597990549

'Toshiko Takaezu: Worlds Within' Exhibit
Madison, WI
Thru Dec. 23
Chazen Museum of Art
University of Wisconsin
750 University Ave.
This exhibition is the first nationally touring retrospective of Takaezu's work in 20 years. It aims to trace the evolution of her practice and reframe Takaezu as one of the most compelling and innovative American artists of the last century.
Info: Visit https://chazen.wisc.edu/exhibitions/toshiko-takaezu-worlds-within/.

IDC

Onigiri Onegai
Denver, CO
Oct. 25; 10 a.m.-Noon
JASC Office Building
1373 Grant St.
Price: $3 JASC Members; $5 Registration General Public
Japan America Society of Colorado and JETAARM is hosting this event in partnership with Table for Two to provide meals for children around the world.
Info: To register, visit https://www.jascolorado.org/event-calendar#!event/2025/10/25/onigiri-onegai.

Nikkei Treasures Pop-Up Store
Denver, CO
Oct. 23, Nov. 22 and Dec. 6, 13, 20
Sakura Square
1255 19th St.
Price: Free
Nikkei Treasures community thrift store features new and gently used Japanese items, with all proceeds going to the Tri-State/Denver Buddhist Temple and Sakura Foundation.
Info: Email info@sakurafoundation.org.

EDC

'Yoshiko Oishi-Weick: A Retrospective in Ink'
Washington, D.C.
Thru Nov. 28
JICC Gallery, Embassy of Japan
1150 18th St. N.W.
Suite 100
Price: Free
This exhibition spans 45 years of the artist's career, inviting visitors to delve into the world of *sumi-e* and experience reverance for the natural world.
Info: Visit https://www.us.emb-japan.go.jp/jicc/exhibitions.html.

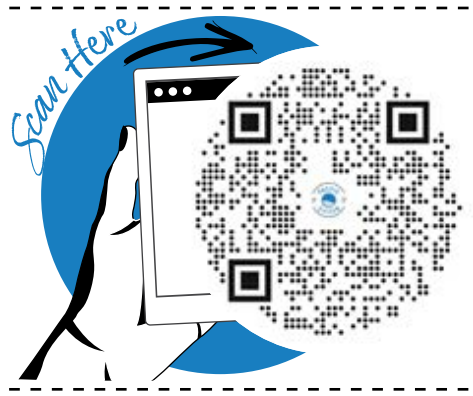
'Unwound'
Towson, MD
Thru Dec. 6 (closed Nov. 26-29)
Towson University
Asian Arts Gallery, Center for the Arts
1 Fine Arts Dr.
Elaine Qiu's awe-inspiring installation of painting, video and sound invites visitors into a multisensory exploration of communal consciousness, connection and healing.
Info: Visit www.towson.edu.

Book Talk: 'Coldwire'
Cambridge, MA
Nov. 4; 7 p.m.
Porter Square Books
1815 Mass Ave.
Price: $23.36
Bestselling author Chloe Gong will talk about her new book where humanity has moved to virtual reality to flee their deteriorating world. Tickets include a copy of the new book.
Info: Visit https://portersquarebooks.com/product/event-ticket-includes-book-chloe-gong-porter-square-books-cambridge-edition. ■

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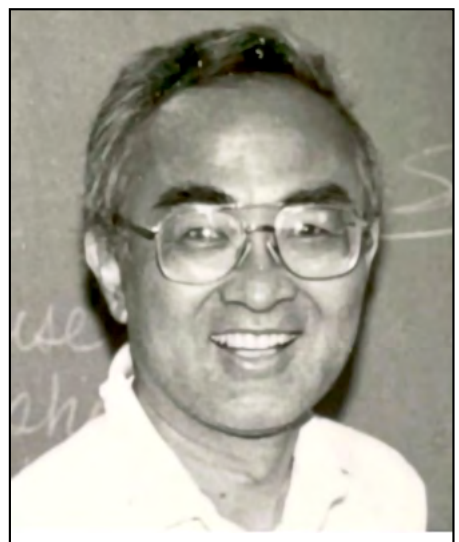
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Equality Advocate Todd Endo Dead at 83

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

By P.C. Staff



Todd Isao Endo

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 *(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/2vyrdbms)*, 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 annouced 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 commiting 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-butchering" 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 Cybertuck 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.

CONTACT:

Editorial@pacificcitizen.org or call (213) 620-1767 ext. 104

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