

PACIFIC CITIZEN



A folded crane with the words "End Racism" and "Stop Asian Hate" on display during the S.F. DOR observance event
PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA

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2026 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE

JACL Chapters From Across the Nation Observe the 84th Anniversary of the Signing of Executive Order 9066.

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NVN Exhibit Holds Official Opening in S.F.

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JACL Staff Layoffs Come Amidst Financial Woes.



LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY'S PERSPECTIVE

TRUMP'S BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

On July 4, 2025, President Donald Trump signed the "Big Beautiful Bill" into law. The massive tax and spending bill cuts more than \$1 trillion in Medicaid (California's Medi-Cal) and other federally funded health care programs over the next 10 years. The Big Beautiful Bill is going to hurt millions of older Americans who have paid into the system their entire lives (*source: www.usatoday.com, July 3, 2025*).

"Cutting Medicaid, Medicare, the Affordable Care Act and SNAP is morally indefensible under any circumstance, but this bill is particularly cruel, cutting these programs by well over \$1 trillion and taking health coverage from 17 million people.

"These cuts rob older adults and other people struggling to make

ends meet to make the billionaires even richer, setting a dangerous precedent that Congress will use these basic needs programs as a piggy bank," said Justice in Aging Executive Director Kevin Prindiville (*source: www.justiceinaging.org*).

Prindiville continued, "These cuts are so much more than the shocking numbers; they tear the very fabric of our communities and break the promise that people in America can depend on this assistance as they age.

For decades, lawmakers and advocates have worked together to strengthen Medicaid, Medicare and SNAP and help ensure people who cannot afford health care and food can access it.

This bill rolls back that progress, endangering the lives of today's older adults and ripping away the foundation for the

next generations to be able to age with dignity."

According to the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, 70 percent of Americans age 65-plus will need long-term care during their lifetime.

Long-term care refers to the assistance people receive with activities of daily living (ADLs) due to illness, injury or cognitive impairment.

These include bathing, dressing, eating, transferring and toileting. So, if you're one of the 70 percent that need LTC (and you don't have long-term insurance, you can expect to pay \$100,000-\$250,000 per year (out of pocket!!!) for private room care.

DON'T BE MISINFORMED. Medicare and private health insurance will not pay for long-term care. Will Medicaid or Medi-Cal be there when you may need it? Maybe, but probably not.

Here's my understanding of what is happening behind the scenes.

The government, already running a \$1.8 trillion deficit in fiscal year 2024, knows it can't afford to pay LTC for the 76.4 million baby boomers in America.

So, the government is gradually shifting the financial burden of long-term care off the public sector,

i.e., the government, and onto the private sector.

In other words, the government wants to "privatize" the cost of long-term care by gradually eliminating Medicaid and Medi-Cal. In the not-too-distant future, workers will be forced to buy long-term care insurance — and it has already started.

In 2022, Washington was the first state to legislate long-term care insurance, called the WA Cares Fund. Most Washington residents weren't aware of the legislation.

Many were left scrambling to find private long-term care policies that would allow them to opt out of the state plan.

Unless workers have private long-term care insurance, they were forced to pay the payroll tax of \$0.58 per \$100 on income for the state plan that isn't very good.

The lifetime maximum benefit is \$36,500 (adjusted annually for inflation). Benefit recipients must need assistance with three or more activities of daily living (ADLs), while private individual LTC insurance typically requires only two.

Several state legislatures are already considering mandating long-term care insurance.

Those states are Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Illinois, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania and Utah. California has proposed a similar, but more flexible insurance program and has created a task force to recommend options for establishing its own state long-term care insurance program.

In California, the task force appears to be recommending a more flexible program than the WA Cares Fund. For example, assistance required with two ADLs needed for qualification (not three as with the WA Cares Fund plan), possibility of both employer and employee contributions and payroll tax up to 2 percent with no income cap. Legislative action would need to be taken before any program could be established.

One day (perhaps soon), the government will no longer pay for LTC. So, now is the time to shop for LTC insurance to secure your future and protect your loved ones so that you don't have to "scramble around" looking into LTC insurance when the time comes.

Also, if you are already in poor health when you apply for long-term care insurance, the costs will

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Director of Finance and CFO Tom Fernandez (far left) makes a point during the Feb. 14-15 JACL National Board meeting in San Francisco, as interim ED Saki Mori, JACL National Board President Larry Oda and VP General Operations Ryan Yoshikawa listen. PHOTO: GIL ASAKAWA



JACL STAFF CUTS, LATEST BUDGET WOES REVEALED

Feb. 14-15 National Board meeting puts bad news on the front burner.

By P.C. Staff

There were a pair of interrelated results from the Feb. 14-15 JACL National Board meeting, held in person at JACL's San Francisco headquarters and conducted mostly in executive session, with one being the latest news of the state of the organization's finances, the other having to do with its staff.

With regard to finances, it was revealed at the meeting that JACL this year faces a deficit of about \$1 million, due to the organization experiencing "significant losses tied to shrinking revenue and increasing labor costs." JACL's labor costs make up almost 60 percent of its expenses.

Discussed but dismissed as a way to save money was the possibility of canceling this summer's National Convention, which will see the election of a new national board president and other officers, as well as voting on various resolutions. With some \$200,000 already spent, however, there are no plans to cancel it.

Pausing publication of *Pacific Citizen* was also discussed as a means to save money, but it, too, was dismissed, due in part to the potential negative impact such a move could have with regard to maintaining JACL's nonprofit status with the IRS.

JACL appears prepared, however, to potentially pause the 2027 JACL/OCA Leadership Summit in Wash-

ington, D.C., the next Kakehashi trip and its Youth Programs. Also expected to be impacted are the organization's social justice activities.

Regarding staff, the meeting's decision to cut three JACL staff positions was revealed Feb. 18, effective that day, on the JACL's website (tinyurl.com/2upwmu3f), minus those persons' names and titles.

JACL stated: "On Feb. 15, the JACL National Board made the decision to implement an emergency expenditure reduction plan, which includes the layoff of three of our staff. This decision was made based on updated financial projections and an evaluation of National JACL programs. These actions were taken after deep consultation and reflect the challenging landscape for membership-based nonprofits alongside rising personnel and program costs. This decision was necessary based on our fiduciary duty as stewards of JACL."

In an email to *Pacific Citizen*, JACL National President Larry Oda stated: "Reducing headcount is never pleasant. The board agonized over the decision, but given our financial and contractual constraints, our options were limited.

"We've been nursing a significant deficit for over a year, and it has grown. Our membership revenue is dropping, and our new revenues have not kept up to demand. We

recognize the reason why we're in this predicament and are taking the necessary steps to balance our budget," Oda continued. "We still have work to do."

Pacific Citizen has since learned who those terminated staffers are and obtained their permission to publish their names. They are former JACL Regional Director for the Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District Patty Wada; former Youth & Programs Director Cheyenne Cheng; and business manager Price Cobbs.

Among the three, Wada had the longest tenure, going back to 1992. She was the last JACL staffer to hold the regional director title. When she began, the JACL's other regional directors were Karen Yoshitomi (Pacific Northwest), Jimmy Tokeshi (Pacific Southwest), Patricia Tom (Central California) and Bill Yoshino (Midwest).

Cheng had been with JACL since January 2020 when she was a Norman Y. Mineta Fellow. Cobbs, who became a full-time (32 hours per week) employee in November 2024, was originally a part-time temporary employee from September 2021.

Wada was informed of her termination via email; Cheng learned via a telephone call that she was "being let go effective immediately"; and according to Cobbs, he had a "regularly scheduled Zoom check-in meeting with my supervisor. He showed up in the office unexpectedly

and fired me then. I would have appreciated some warning, as well as time to go over my current task and hand off duties in a more organized way."

The three latest terminations are a sign of the long-term financial woes the organization has been facing, with these latest cuts bringing to six the total number of staffers who were let go over the last nine months, including the departure of former Executive Director David Inoue on July 2, 2025 (see "JACL, David Inoue Part Ways," July 4, 2025, *Pacific Citizen*, tinyurl.com/5xvedshj), as well as two others last year prior to that: Tomiko Ismail at JACL National Headquarters in San Francisco, and Eva Ting at the *Pacific Citizen* in Los Angeles (see "Painful Changes to Preserve JACL," June 20, 2025, *Pacific Citizen*, tinyurl.com/yudckz48).

Back to JACL's Feb. 18 statement, it continued: "The JACL National Board expresses its gratitude and appreciation to the staff for their service and dedication to JACL's mission. Their hard work over a combined 40 years of service has advanced the JACL and the community at large."

Those terminations all occurred within the backdrop of JACL's fiscal shortfalls. Regarding the JACL's deficit, in the June 20, 2025, *P.C.* column jointly authored by Inoue and Oda, they wrote: "As we entered

2025, we realized we needed to address a significant and increasingly regular gap in our budget. It appeared we would be ending 2024 with nearly a half-million budget deficit and a similar expectation for 2025" and "Ultimately, the board issued the charge to reduce expenses by \$350,000 per year to shorten the deficit and place our finances on a more stable footing going forward without what was seemingly becoming a built-in deficit to the annual budget."

In attendance at the Feb. 14-15 meeting were Oda, interim Executive Director Saki Mori, Director of Finance and CFO Tom Fernandez, National Youth Representative Claire Inouye, Development VP Gary Nakamura, Treasurer Jonathan Okamoto, General Operations VP Ryan Yoshikawa, Membership VP Dominique Mashburn, interim P.C. Editorial Board Chair Gil Asakawa, legal counsel Ken Massey and district governors Sheldon Arakaki (PND), Nancy Takayama (PSWD), Paul Uehara (ED), Mariko Fujimoto (NCWNP) and Eric Langowski (MD). CCD Gov. Brian Tsukimura was absent.

Attending remotely were P.C. Executive Editor Allison Haramoto, IDC Gov. Kelly Asao, Public Affairs VP Seia Watanabe and National Youth/Student Council Chair Remy Kageyama.

Present in the audience was past NCWNP District Gov. Carol Kawase. ■



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DAY OF REMEMBRANCE 2026

Community members mark Day of Remembrance in San Francisco, Denver

By Gil Asakawa,
P.C. Contributor

Day of Remembrance is marked by Japanese Americans in events across the country around Feb. 19. This year was the 84th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066, and the P.C. was on hand at two events in San Francisco on Feb. 13 and 15 and then in Denver on Feb. 22.

The Bay Area Day of Remembrance Consortium, an organization that serves as an umbrella for 16 organizations including the San Francisco chapter of the JACL, started the weekend with a press conference on Feb. 13 at the KOHO community center in Japantown.

The event included an intimate discussion featuring moderator Jeremy Chan, a civil rights attorney, and panelists Chizu Omori, who fought for redress and then with sister Emiko made the award-winning 1999 film "Rabbit in the Moon" that focused on the Tule Lake resisters and criticized JACL's role in the World War II incarceration of people of Japanese ancestry; Steve Okamoto, JACL legacy planning officer and vp of the Tanforan Memorial Project; Ruth Sasaki, editor of the Topaz Stories Project; and Grace Shimizu, whose father was kidnapped from Peru and who fights for Latin Japanese recognition and reparations.

The speakers were passionate and made clear-eyed connections between the JA wartime experience and the division and turmoil in the U.S. today.

Emiko Omori was in the audience and spoke up first when the question was asked of how Japanese Americans should apply the often-used phrases *gaman* ("endurance with

dignity") and *shikata ga nai* ("it cannot be helped"), which were used to guide the incarcerated during WWII, to the victims of mass arrests, incarceration and deportation today.

"It sounds like our grandparents or my grandparents," Emiko Omori said. "Those words have been used to keep us quiet about what we need and what we endured, and that just makes me think those overused euphemisms just have to go."

The Japanese prisoners had had a reputation as meek and nonconfrontational, she noted, but "I don't know why we got stuck with those characterizations because there were plenty of people in the camp who objected to what was going on and fought for their rights."

"Even to the point where, you know, the government just labeled them all disloyal and deported or punished people in a lot of different ways," she said.

"It's our traditional values," added Okamoto. He lightened the mood of the audience by noting, "I actually use (those terms) today, like if I'm stuck in traffic, it's the only way that I can keep my sanity and my blood pressure under control. Those terms are kind of like survival responses. That's what our grandparents and parents used to survive."

Today though, Okamoto said, just accepting the situation isn't enough. "I feel that as a survivor, I have an obligation to tell my story and inform the public that these things have happened and will continue to happen in our country unless we protest, and you know, the least you can do is vote, and then from there, get out in the streets."

"Asian Americans are kind of

Candlelighting participants representing the 10 WRA incarceration camps at the S.F. Day of Remembrance event

PHOTOS: GRACE MORIZAWA



S.F. DOR honoree Flora Ninomiya (center)



JACL Legacy Planning Officer Steve Okamoto with Interim Executive Director Saki Mori

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA

known as nonparticipants, in many political activities," Okamoto continued. "But I feel that politics is everybody's business. . . . And you should also certainly get out there and choose your leaders, which is to say, vote, elections and such because these things matter."

San Francisco DOR Event

The Feb. 15 Day of Remembrance event, which drew a large crowd to the Japanese Cultural Community Center of Northern California, was a full program titled "Neighbors, Not Enemies: Stronger Together, Carrying the Light for Justice."

The event was emceed by KPIX news anchor Ryan Yamamoto and opened with a taped video message from Sen. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii). The first part of the afternoon focused on a panel moderated by Kenji Taguma, editor-in-chief of the *Nichi Bei News*, with panelists San Francisco City Attorney David Chiu; Satsuki Ina, co-founder of Tsuru for Solidarity; and Grace Shimizu of the Campaign for Justice: Redress Now for Japanese Latin Americans.

The program also included an update on Palestine by Rev. Michael Yoshii from the organization Friends of Wadi Foquin. Then, the Dr. Clifford I. Uyeda Peace and Humanitarian Award was given to Flora Ninomiya, a longtime member of the Contra Costa JACL chapter, who was forcibly incarcerated at Amache during WWII.

Ninomiya is still active in community organizing and once was a

weekly speaker at the Rosie the Riveter WWII Home Front National Historical Park, where she advocated successfully for its speaker series to include the topic of wartime incarceration of Japanese Americans. Ina was the 2025 Uyeda Award honoree.

The afternoon closed with a powerful ceremony with leaders from various communities lighting candles representing all of the 10 War Relocation Authority concentration camps, as well as three candles symbolizing DOJ Camps.

Okamoto lit a candle for Amache, and JACL Interim Executive Director Saki Mori lit the candle for Manzanar.

Before the program, Ina was interviewed by a TV news crew and shared some thoughts about the importance of Day of Remembrance.

"The theme is neighbors, not enemies," she noted. "I think what has happened is the criminalization of immigrants is so resonant for us in terms of our grandparents and also the legislation that's been reactivated. So, today's Day of Remembrance is to remember that the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 was invoked and cleared the way for the removal of American citizens. . . . These are crazy times, scary times."

Ina continued, "And I think about the Immigration Customs Enforcement officers that have been trained to dehumanize the people that they've been tasked to capture. . . . I think a lot of it has got to be the numbers that they're required to meet that makes them like that. 'Doesn't matter. They look different. Let's just round them up.'"



Satsuki Ina is interviewed by NBC Bay Area.

Colorado DOR Observance

Mile High JACL has sponsored the annual DOR for two decades, starting out with intimate discussions at the Tri-State Denver Buddhist Temple (the first guest speaker was Satsuki Ina, who spoke about her 1999 first film "Children of the Camps"), then held at the University of Denver, and since 2014, the History Colorado Center.

The featured speaker this year for the 155 audience members assembled was Mike Ishii, co-founder with Ina of Tsuru for Solidarity, who spoke about the history of his family's incarceration and the work of Tsuru for Solidarity by showing photos of the organization's work, beginning with protests in Texas against family separation and the incarceration of refugees and undocumented immigrants.

The program ended with a reading by Brandon Shimoda, an assistant professor of English at Colorado College in Colorado Springs.

Shimoda wrote the powerful poem the day before the event as a tribute to his aunt, who had been incarcerated and is now suffering from dementia in a memory care center.



Mile High JACL President Dylan Mori (left) and Tsuru for Solidarity's Mike Ishii

Tsuru for Solidarity's Mike Ishii

PHOTOS: GIL ASAKAWA



Poet Brandon Shimoda recites his poetry at the Mile High event.



The Government Made Them Neighbors, Their Connection Made Them Family

The shared memories of the Gila River Indian Community and Japanese Americans

By Matthew Marumoto,
JACL Daniel K. Inouye Fellow

Just south of the Phoenix metropolitan area, approximately 372,000 acres of land are home to the Keli Akimel O'otham, or the Gila River People. In this vast expanse of the Sonoran Desert, there lie large piles of broken ceramic shards in dry irrigation ditches, abandoned ponds and the foundations of more than 1,000 buildings, all seemingly forgotten.

Contrary to their initial appearance, these remnants and their associated memories are remembered and protected by the Gila River Indian Community. Scattered across the land are traces left behind by the more than 13,000 Japanese Americans who were incarcerated at the Gila River War Relocation Center from July 1942-November 1945, a camp that was only constructed after the U.S. government strong-armed the Gila River Indian Community into accepting it. What was built on Gila River land was, in the eyes of many, an incarceration camp inside of an incarceration camp.

The "Gila River Connections: A Celebration of Shared History" was held on Feb. 19 at the Huhugam Cultural Center on the Gila River Indian Community land. Incarceration survivors, their descendants, Gila River elders, tribal government officials and members of the wider Arizona Asian American community all gathered to commemorate the Day of Remembrance and explore

their connections further.

Koji Lau-Ozawa, an assistant professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, discussed his work at Gila River and described how the land remembers the presence of Japanese Americans at the site.

Drone mapping and archaeological surveys of the site revealed the remains of 400-plus features that were constructed by incarcerated Japanese Americans. Most commonly, the features are what remains of gardens and decorative ponds that were just outside many of the barracks.

Lau-Ozawa also worked to analyze the piles of discarded ceramics, which are largely composed of serving dishes used in the mess hall, but also included decorative porcelain that could be traced back to California and Japan.

These findings demonstrate a stark contrast between what the government had built, a prison to contain people, and what Japanese Americans built and brought with them while incarcerated, things to remind them that they were still human.

The land carries fragments of memories from the incarceration, and so do the people who still call Gila River home. Community elders of the Gila River recall that they initially thought Japanese Americans were wealthy. As Japanese Americans arrived at Gila River, the War Relocation Authority would begin massive infrastructure projects on the land. These projects would bring running water, electricity and a

medical facility to the reservation for the first time.

Despite the government advising members of the Gila River Indian Community not to interact with the Japanese Americans, it was only a matter of time before children began making friends, and Gila River residents would sell clothing and food through the barbed-wire fence.

Community elders further recalled that as Japanese Americans were released from Gila River, Gila River community members began to move into the barracks. However, this was only the case for the barracks in the worst condition.

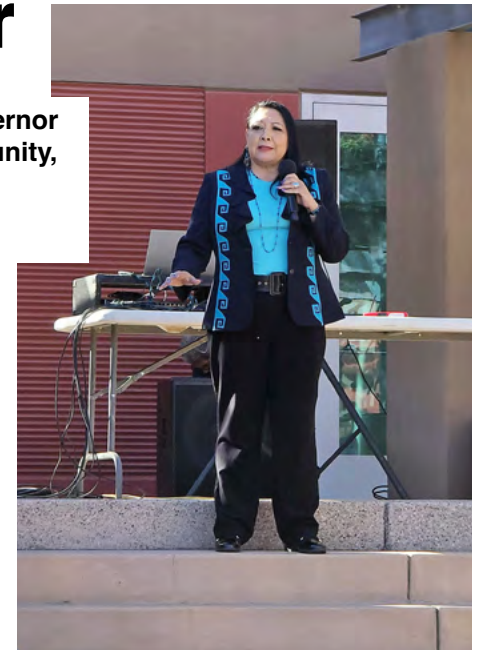
The "best" barracks were removed from the site and sold when the camp began to close. This situation would often place a Gila River family on one side of the barracks and a soon-to-be-released Japanese American family on the other. When the Gila River War Relocation Center closed, the WRA would remove all barracks and the infrastructure that provided electricity and running water to the site. Just as the federal government had done in the late 1800s when it diverted the water of the Gila River from the very people it was named for, the Gila River Indian Community was left to survive on its own.

After the federal government had taken everything that it had built, except for the concrete foundations upon which the barracks once sat, the Gila River Indian Community made use of what the incarcerated had left behind.

Abandoned furniture and cookware

Regina Antone, lieutenant governor of the Gila River Indian Community, delivers closing remarks.

PHOTOS: MATT MARUMOTO



that still bore the names of their original Japanese American owners found new homes within the Gila River Indian Community. Trees originally planted by incarcerated Japanese Americans were removed and planted closer to the homes of the Gila River people. However, it would not be long until Japanese Americans would return to the Gila River Indian Community.

While incarcerated at Gila River, Masaji "Mas" Inoshita volunteered to serve as a translator in the Military Intelligence Service. When Inoshita returned to Arizona, he became involved with the local American Legion post. Every Veterans Day, he would post the colors at the Ira Hayes Memorial Park and host meals at his home for members of the Gila River Indian Community and Japanese Americans.

Inoshita dedicated the rest of his life to maintaining the Gila River Monument and educating others on what had occurred on the land. He is remembered fondly as being a bridge between the Gila River and Japanese American communities.

Yolanda Hart Stevens, an artist, community activist and resident of the Gila River Indian Community, recalled that traditional songs sung by the community detail journeys through the land, and common waypoints to help guide the way, a sort of map through song.

Just as in the songs, the Gila River

Indian Community and the Japanese American community can point to shared points of interest in each of their journeys: the sacred land of the Gila River Community, the betrayal by the federal government, the struggle to survive in the face of impossible circumstances and the desire for connection between the communities.

This shared song of collective trauma and resilience will forever bind the two communities as one. Stevens also explained that what both communities have suffered and celebrated on Gila River land has made them family forever.

As a testament to this connection, leaders of the local Japanese American community and the Gila River Indian Community publicly discussed a proposed formal partnership, the Rivers Community Alliance, intended to preserve the site, share the multicultural history of Gila River, honor the legacies of those who lived at Gila River and continue intergenerational storytelling. Our shared song is far from over. What will we write together? ■

A taiko performance led by Ken Koshio (center) and Bon dance led by Marilyn Tang (front, center right) at the Huhugam Cultural Center



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JACL's Matthew Weisbly was the committee chair for Day of Remembrance Los Angeles.

The "Camp Roll Call" at the Los Angeles Day of Remembrance event on Feb. 21, held at the Nishi Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin in Little Tokyo.

PHOTOS: RICHARD WATANABE



Fourth-grade student Lucas Morita wrote a PSA about the WWII incarceration experience.

'The Power of Action: Silence Today, Injustice Tomorrow'

The Los Angeles community gathers for Day of Remembrance 2026 and urges action against modern injustices.

By P.C. Staff

Community members, activists, World War II incarceration survivors and their descendants gathered in Los Angeles' Little Tokyo for the 2026 Los Angeles Day of Remembrance observance at Nishi Hongwanji Los Angeles Betsuin on Feb. 21.

This year's theme, "The Power of Action: Silence Today, Injustice Tomorrow," served as a poignant reminder that the lessons of the past must be actively applied to the present.

The program began with a welcome introduction by Matthew Weisbly, education programs manager at JACL National and committee chair for Day of Remembrance Los Angeles, who recognized indigenous peoples and acknowledged "... the intergenerational trauma that all indigenous peoples have faced. We are grateful that we can be present on these ancestral lands."

Weisbly went on to share the mission of the day's program, which was to "teach the incarceration story and the experiences of those who came before us to a new generation while also using our community's unique history to highlight ongoing injustices plaguing our nation today."

Drawing stark parallels between the historic injustices of Executive Order 9066 and the contemporary struggles of marginalized groups, Weisbly noted the ongoing threats of historical erasure and the current use of detention centers for immigrant and refugee communities.

"Our community knows all too well a time when others did not speak up or stand up to support us," he told the packed audience. "And because of that, it is why we have made a commitment as a community to support all those in need. ... So, let us remember that not only today, but every day. We have a voice. We have an opportunity to stop injustice, hatred, violence. ... Let us take action today, so that we prevent that injustice tomorrow."

The traditional "Camp Roll Call" followed, recited by Elizabeth Morikawa and Lisa Akiyama Robinson. Local Boy Scouts, carrying banners displaying the names of the War Relocation Authority concentration camps, Department of Justice camps and citizen isolation centers, as well as banners representing the 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the Military Intelligence Service, were accompanied by a WWII camp survivor:

- Amache, Colo. (7,318 prisoners)
- Gila River, Ariz. (13,348)
- Heart Mountain, Wyo. (10,767)
- Jerome, Ark. (8,497)
- Manzanar, Calif. (10,046)
- Minidoka, Idaho (9,397)
- Poston, Ariz. (17,814)
- Rohwer, Ark. (8,475)
- Topaz, Utah (8,130)
- Tule Lake, Calif. (18,789)
- 100th Infantry Battalion, the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and Military Intelligence Service; Department of Justice Camp at Crystal City, Texas; Tuna Canyon Detention Station, Los Angeles; and the other Department of Justice Camps and Citizen Isolation Centers (5,500).

The program then held an "In Memoriam" tribute for Japanese American community leaders and friends who passed away since 2025's L.A. DOR event and paid special tribute to Day of Remembrance committee member and community organizer Andie Kimura, who was remembered for her fierce advocacy for sustainability, livable wages and social equity in Little Tokyo.

Next up, Jenny Chomori introduced event special guest Lucas Morita, a fourth-grade student and recipient of the Manzanar Committee Sue Kunitomi Embrey Student Award, who wrote a public service announcement as a third-grader about Japan's bombing of Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941, and the bleak realities of life behind barbed wire for those of Japanese ancestry who were forcibly incarcerated as a result of EO 9066 and the divisive loyalty questionnaires forced upon them.

"Let me remind you, these people had done nothing wrong. Babies, young kids, old grandmas and everyone in between were considered the enemy by the U.S. government," Morita pointed out.

"Locking up innocent U.S. citizens was a mistake. We can ignore this dark time in our history, or we can learn from it," he declared to the

audience. "Only then can we do better and get stronger in the future. Do not let history repeat itself."

The formal presentation then concluded with a moving spoken-word segment performed by Mia Barnett, Richard Katsuda, Vivian Matsushige, Kyoko Nakamaru, Deena Umeda and Weisbly. The performance explored themes of inherited resilience, the grief of generational trauma and the drive to continue fighting for civil rights in their ancestors' honor.

"Because of our ancestors and all they went through and endured so that we would not have to, we cannot stand idly by while millions are at risk, people not that dissimilar to use, or in some cases, exactly like us. You fought back against the enemy. Lend us your strength, wisdom, power and humility. Let us fight the fight once

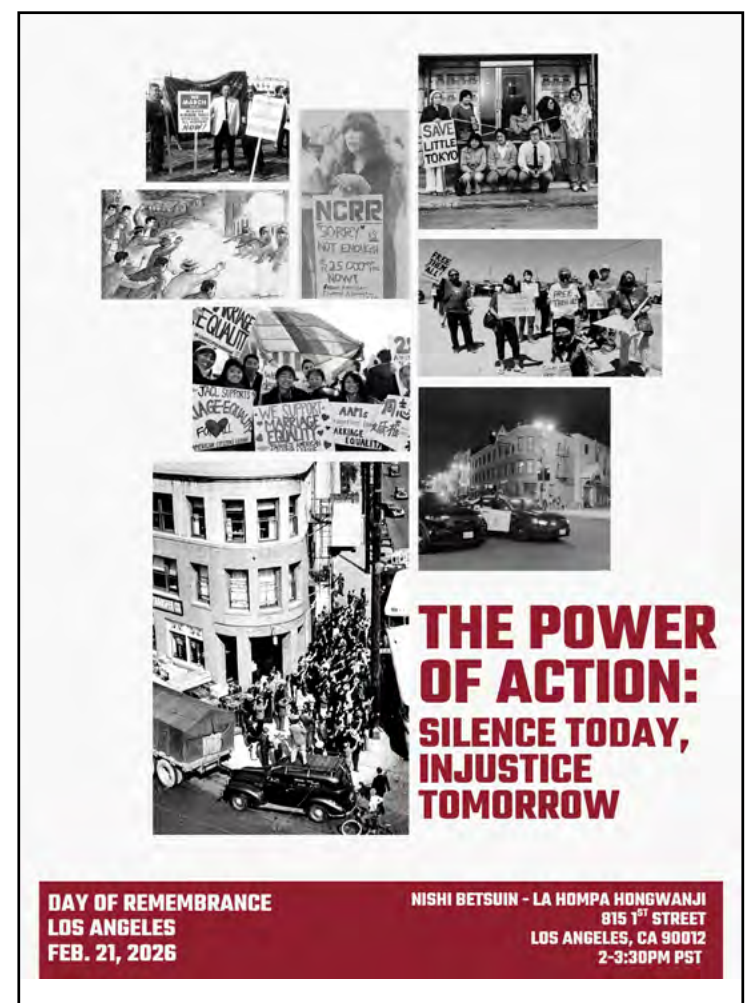
again, hopefully for the last time," the group said.

To close the event, organizers then invited the audience to participate in a community dance before breaking the room into interactive, small-group discussions. Attendees were asked to share stories of the ancestors they brought into the room with them, cementing the event's goal: transforming collective memory into collective action.

The Los Angeles Day of Remembrance was presented by Go For Broke National Education Center, JACL — Pacific Southwest District, Japanese American National Museum, Little Tokyo Service Center, Manzanar Committee, Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress and Nikkei Progressives, OCA — Greater Los Angeles.



A moving spoken-word performance concluded the Los Angeles DOR observance presentation.





Present during the DOR ceremony at the state capitol building are (from left) Sophia Niemann; speaker Jane Gunter, a Tule Lake incarceration survivor; Oakley Sanford; and speaker Lisa Olsen, acting chief of interpretation and education at the Minidoka National Historic Site.



Idaho Gov. Brad Little holds the 2026 Day of Remembrance proclamation presented to Robert Hirai, president of the Boise Valley JACL chapter.

PHOTO: KATIE NIEMANN



Pictured (from left) are Idaho Gov. Brad Little, Oakley Sanford and Sophia Niemann. Niemann is the great-granddaughter of Katherine Chizuru Hirai, a Minidoka internee.

BOISE VALLEY JACL PRESENTS 25TH DOR OBSERVANCE

By JACL Boise Valley Chapter

Idaho Governor Brad Little hosted members of the community and the Boise Valley JACL in his ceremonial office on Feb. 16 to read and sign a proclamation proclaiming Feb. 19, 2026, as a Day of Remembrance.

In attendance were approximately 50 guests, including incarceration survivors, veterans, State senators, Idaho State police, Honorary Consul of Japan and candidates for U.S. Congress.

Speakers for the event included Boise Valley Chapter President Robert Hirai, president of JACL Boise Valley chapter; Lisa Shiosaki Olsen, acting chief of interpretation and education at the Minidoka National Historic Site; Jane Gunter, Tule Lake incarceration survivor; and Sophia Niemann and Oakley Sanford, sixth-grade students at Compass Charter School who presented



Sophia Niemann (left) and Oakley Sanford, sixth-grade students at Compass Charter School in Meridian, Idaho, present their National History Day Project on the Japanese American incarceration experience at Minidoka in Idaho Gov. Brad Little's ceremonial office during the 2026 Day of Remembrance observance ceremony.

PHOTO: ROBERT HIRAI

their National History Day project about the Japanese American incarceration experience at Minidoka. The ceremony concluded with a presentation of a Day of Remembrance proclamation by Gov. Little that acknowledged the forced incarceration, specifically stating that "10,000 of the 120,000 civilians of Japanese descent were imprisoned in an incarceration camp called Minidoka or 'Hunt.'" "Volunteers from Minidoka were part of the units, known as the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the 100th Infantry Battalion

and the Military Intelligence Service during WWII" and "Minidoka had the highest enlistment rate and highest casualty rate of all 10 major incarceration camps in the United States." The proclamation concluded by acknowledging that "Japanese Americans in our communities have continued to contribute to our society and have distinguished themselves in all walks of life."

This year marked the 25th time that the Boise Valley JACL has worked with the Idaho Statehouse to host the Day of Remembrance ceremony. ■

2026 Films of Remembrance

DON'T MISS OUT!

LAST WEEKEND to attend the 2026 premier showcase of films commemorating the forced incarceration of Japanese Americans in American concentration camps during World War II.

Mar. 28

LITTLE TOKYO (LA)
Tateuchi Democracy Forum
11:00 a.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Mar. 29

GARDENA
Japanese Cultural Institute
11:30 a.m. – 7:15 p.m.

10 Unforgettable Films
Filmmaker Panel Discussions
An Exclusive Filmmaker Reception in LA

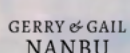
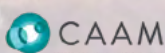
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2026.filmsofremembrance.org

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2026 TOUR SCHEDULE

- 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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Ernest or Carol Hida

CCDC OBSERVES DOR

By Marcia Chung

CCDC and San Joaquin Valley Town Hall held its annual Day of Remembrance on Feb. 17. Participants gathered to hear speakers Tom Ikeda, founding executive director of Densho, and author Daniel James Brown, who expressed how two unlikely people had a commonality to share stories of the World War II Japanese American experience on the West Coast.

Brown remembered traveling through the Central Valley with his dad to visit flower shops they were supplying their flowers to. Many were Japanese Americans, and he couldn't believe that they were rounded up and forcibly incarcerated upon the signing of Executive Order 9066 on Feb. 19, 1942, by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. He decided to tell the JA story in his book "Facing the Mountain: An Inspiring Story of Japanese American Patriots in World War II."

Although many Japanese Americans know about the rescue of the Texas Lost Battalion during WWII, there are so many others who are not aware. Ikeda then told the audience of his father's story as a private soldier in Texas. A woman noticed his button on his uniform was in need of repair. She asked if he was Japanese, and he said yes, not knowing if it



CCDC JACL hosted (from left) Densho Founding Executive Director Tom Ikeda, Fresno State University President Dr. Saul Jimenez Sandoval and author Daniel James Brown at its DOR event.

PHOTO: CCDC JACL

was a good thing. She wept and said that her nephew was in the forest in the Vosges Mountains in northeastern France that was rescued by the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and then hugged Ikeda's dad, saying thank you.

On Feb. 18, Brown and Ikeda once again spoke to a packed house of community supporters as part of a series of world-renown Town House speakers.

BILL » continued from page 3

be higher, and you may not be able to get coverage at all. So, it makes sense to start shopping for LTC insurance now while you are still healthy.

If you can't get private long-term care insurance, you could end up with the state-sponsored long-term care insurance.

That state-sponsored insurance will not be as good as private long-term care insurance. For example, it might only cover facilities that are understaffed, provide minimal care and dark, dingy and smell bad, e.g., a LTC dungeon where people are sent to die.

However, with private LTC insurance, the policyholder can receive care in various places, including their home, a nursing home, an assisted living facility or an adult daycare center.

Suze Orman, a financial adviser, author and podcast host, suggests long-term care insurance as a crucial part of a comprehensive financial plan, particularly for those over 60. However, she warns to buy only what is affordable.

"It makes no sense to buy a policy today that you will have to abandon in a few years because it is too expensive; you will get no benefit if that happens," she said. She says to focus on what is safely achievable: Better to buy a policy that will cover 25 percent-50 percent of future costs than no policy at all.

David Ramsey, financial adviser and radio

personality, says LTC insurance is a vital tool for protecting your savings and ensuring you can afford necessary care without burdening your family.

He says "self-insuring" is worth considering for people with a very high net worth. But he acknowledges that most people cannot afford to pay for long-term care out of pocket without significant financial strain.

Ramsey suggests considering LTC insurance around age 60, but he acknowledges that the need for it may arise earlier or later depending on individual circumstances.

He also recommends a benefit period of three to five years, which aligns with the average length of time people need long-term care.

When purchasing LTC insurance, Ramsey stresses the importance of working with an experienced agent who can help you find the right policy and navigate the complexities of the insurance.

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.



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A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

JACL National Convention
Las Vegas, NV
July 29-Aug. 2
Paris Las Vegas Hotel & Casino
3655 S. Las Vega Blvd.

Join JACL at its 56th National Convention themed "Reigniting Our Purpose and Mission!" where the organization will gather to reinvigorate the spirit of advancing our community forward with renewed action and impact. Events include the Chapter Awards Luncheon, National Council and 2026 National Board Elections, Sayonara Gala, workshops, mixers and much more! Early bird registration ends March 31.
Info: Visit www.jacl.org/2026-national-convention.

Ireicho Tour to Former Confinement Sites & Other Places
National Stops
March 26-30: Seattle, WA
April 8-11: Honolulu, HI
May 1-2: Topaz, UT
May 10-11: San Francisco, CA
July 4-5: Tule Lake, CA
Info: Visit <https://www.janm.org/exhibits/ireicho/venues>.

INTL.

'Return to Paueru Gai: 50 Years of Powell Street Festival' Exhibit
Burnaby, B.C.
Opens March 26
Nikkei National Museum & Cultural Centre, Karasawa Gallery
6688 Southoaks Crescent
This exhibit, curated by Emiko Morita, celebrates the art and activism of the Japanese Canadian community's annual festival through photographs, video and installations. It honors early Japanese settlers and the Japanese Canadian community.
Info: Visit <https://centre.nikkeiplace.org>.

NCWNP

Ohina Matsuri: Celebrating Girls' Day
San Francisco, CA
March 22; 3-5:30 p.m.
Japan Center Malls, Studio Gen, Suite 505
1737 Post St.
Price: Free Tickets Via Eventbrite
Celebrate Girls' Day with arts and crafts, music and dance in the heart of SF Japantown.
Info: Email jamvisioning@gmail.com.

'I Am an American' Exhibit
San Francisco, CA
Thru Aug. 31
MIS Historic Learning Center at the Presidio of San Francisco
220 Halleck St.
Price: \$15; Free for Veterans, Children 12 and Under, NJAHS Members.
This new traveling exhibit tells the storied history of the Nisei soldiers who served during WWII and features artifacts, first-hand accounts and evocative images that reveal how the Nisei soldier's service became a defining testament to courage, sacrifice and belonging.
Info: Visit nvnvets.org/exhibit.

'The Volunteer' Screening
Sacramento, CA
April 18; 1 p.m.
Buddhist Church of Sacramento
2401 Riverside Blvd.
Price: Free
This program features a screening of the documentary "The Volunteer," directed by David Brodie, and tells the story of Vietnam veteran Bruce Nakashima. Following the film will be a Q & A session that will include the film's director.
Info: For questions, contact John Yoshikawa at spyron@aol.com **or call** (916) 320-2111.

'House Meeting(s): Opening the Door for Redress in San Jose'
San Jose, CA
Now Open
Japanese American Museum at San Jose
535 N. Fifth St.
This exhibit looks at the Japanese American redress movement through everyday places and the eyes of everyday people. House meetings were informal gatherings and this space within the home was essential to the movement where trust could be built before conversations moved beyond the home.
Info: Visit www.jamsj.org.

2026 Tule Lake Pilgrimage 'Resistance & Solidarity'
Tulelake, CA
July 3-6
Tule Lake Segregation Center
Price: \$700 All-Inclusive Fee
Save the date for the Tule Lake Pilgrimage and reserve your spot now as space is limited. The four-day event includes charter bus transportation, lodging, meals and all activities including tours and a memorial service.
Info: Registration now open. Limited spots. Visit <https://www.tulelake.org> **for further details.**

PSW

Cherry Blossom Festival
San Diego, CA
March 12-15
Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum
2125 Park Blvd.
Price: Presale (Single Day) \$18; Day of \$20; Express Pass \$25
This year's festival promises an exciting lineup of special performances, cultural food and beverages, children's area and numerous local vendors. It's the perfect way to celebrate spring!
Info: Visit <https://www.niwa.org/cb-ftickets>.

Ventura County JACL & USC Day of SCServe Annual Cemetery Cleanup
Oxnard, CA
March 21; 10 a.m.-Noon
Oxnard Cemetery
Corner of Etting Road and Pleasant Valley Road
Price: Free
Join the Ventura County JACL chapter and USC Alumni Day of Service as they co-sponsor this event to garden, cleanup and assist with trash removal from Oxnard Cemetery.
Info: For questions, email VenturaCountyJACL@gmail.com.

2026 Films of Remembrance
Los Angeles and Gardena, CA
March 28: Los Angeles at the Tateuchi Democracy Forum in Little Tokyo;
March 29: Gardena at the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute
This showcase of films commemorates the forced relocation and incarceration of Japanese Americans in American concentration camps during World War II. This event screening is presented by the Nichi Bei Foundation.
Info: Visit filmsofremembrance.org.

Caregiver Conference West
Los Angeles
Los Angeles, CA
April 19; 11:30 a.m.-4 p.m.
Price: Free
"Cultivating a Community of Care" is the theme of this conference that will connect caregivers with resources to strengthen their support network. This is an in-person and live-streamed event. Registration is available on a first-come, first-serve basis.
Info: To register, visit <https://give.keiro.org/event/caregiver-conference-west-los-angeles/e745379>.

PNW

'Minidoka on Our Minds' Exhibit
Portland, OR
Thru June 14
Japanese American Museum of Oregon
411 N.W. Flanders St.
Price: Museum Admission
This exhibit celebrates 25 years of preservation at the site where many Nikkei from Oregon and Washington were incarcerated during WWII. Artwork by survivors, descendants and Japanese American youth explore the park's history and its importance as a site of memory.
Info: Visit <https://jamo.org/minidoka/>.

'The Yasui Family: An American Story' Exhibit
Portland, OR
Thru Sept. 6
The Oregon Historical Society
1200 S.W. Park Ave.
Through photographs, personal journals, documents and objects, this exhibition explores how the Yasui family reflects the complexity of the American story.
Info: Visit ohs.org.

MDC

IFEST-MN
St. Paul, MN
April 10-11
RiverCentre
175 W. Kellogg Blvd.
Price: \$21
The International Festival of Minnesota, now IFEST-MN, is back where foods from many Asian countries will be featured at this event celebrating a community of culture. Metro Transit and buses will provide free transportation on days of the festival.
Info: Visit ifestmn.org.

Minnesota Japanese American Veterans Graveside Decorating
Minneapolis, MN
May 16
Fort Snelling National Cemetery
7601 34th Ave. S.
The Twin Cities JACL invites family and friends to commemorate the service and sacrifice of Minnesota Japanese American Veterans by decorating gravesites at the cemetery. Volunteers are also needed to decorate gravesites of veterans whose family members are not able to attend.
Info: Please RSVP by May 13 to chiratadulas@tcjacl.org.

EDC

Japan in Bloom/Mini Japan Expo
Washington, D.C.

March 18; 5-7:30 p.m. EST
The Trump Kennedy Center
2700 F St.
Price: Free
Join JICC Embassy of Japan for this event featuring cultural and informational booths that highlight the breadth of Japan-U.S. connections across business, culture and community engagement.
Info: For questions, visit jicc@ws.mofa.go.jp.

National Cherry Blossom Festival
Washington, D.C.
March 20-April 12
First Parish Unitarian Universalist of Arlington
Tidal Basin
Price: Some Events Require Tickets; Others Are Free
This family-friendly event celebrates the blooming of Washington, D.C.'s famous cherry trees and includes an opening ceremony, parade, festival and much more.
Info: Visit nationalcherryblossomfestival.org.

Play: 'Chinese Republicans'
New York, NY
Thru April 5
Harold & Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre
Laura Pels Theatre
111 W. 46th St.
Price: Ticket Prices Vary.
Roundabout Theatre Company presents this new satirical drama from Alex Lin, directed by Chay Yew. Four women are forced to grapple with how much they already have and are willing to sacrifice to climb the corporate ladder.
Info: Visit <https://www.roundabout-theatre.org/get-tickets/2025-2026-season/chinese-republicans>.

'The Many Lives of the Nakagin Capsule Tower' Exhibit
New York, NY
Thru July 12
Museum of Modern Art
11 W. 53rd St.
Price: Museum Admission
The exhibit brings together original drawings and models with ephemeral photographs and films to explore how this structure became a hive of creativity.
Info: Visit <http://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5830>. ■

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Doug Urata, Steadfast JACLeR, Dies at 72

Riverside JACL chapter member, JACF trustee had reputation for always being helpful.



Linda Hara and Doug Urata, seen in 2019 when they each received a JACL Sapphire Pin for their service to the organization; Urata (right) from the 2024 Riverside JACL installation.

PACIFIC CITIZEN DIGITAL ARCHIVE

By P.C. Staff

Douglas James Urata of Trabuco Canyon, Calif., whose expertise in financial matters helped with the creation in 2015 of the JA Community Foundation and whose always-ready-to-assist attitude for JACL and other Japanese American community organizations spanned decades, died Feb. 2. He was 72.

According to his widow, Alice Roe, Urata went into hospice care Jan. 30 after having been diagnosed with an aggressive form of a blood cancer. “He didn’t know he had multiple myeloma cancer until Dec. 29,” she said. “He was getting fractures in his back. He never had a fall, he never had an accident.”

One of Urata’s last public appearances was serving as the announcer whose voice was heard over the public address system at the Evening of Aloha fundraiser for the Go For Broke National Education Center in September. That event was one of many that he helped with over the decades, oftentimes as the master of ceremonies with fellow JACLeR Linda Hara acting as co-emcee.

Asked how their long-running partnership began, Hara said, “I honestly don’t know. It was probably somebody’s idea, and we just took it from there,” she told *Pacific Citizen*.

Likening their onstage relationship to something like George Burns and Gracie Allen or Kathy Lee Gifford and Regis Philbin, Hara added, “There was a chemistry. We kind of fed off of each other. We collaborated on the scripts, and so we’d be bouncing ideas off of each other. . . . It was just kind of a natural thing. It was fun.

“He was a great friend, loyal, loyal friend. I don’t think a lot of people realize what large of a void he is leaving.”

Urata’s contributions to many JACL and other community events cemented his reputation for being helpful, and his desire to be helpful extended beyond organizations

to the person-to-person level. “If anyone ever needed any help with anything, Doug was always the first person to help,” said Roe. “I’m not the best writer, but he would always write for me. He would also help write for others, anything, anybody. If you needed a ride somewhere, he would drive you there. He would pick up people if they had a JACL or Go For Broke (event). He would pick the people up at the airport and take them to the event. . . . He was just known as that kind of a person. All he wanted to do was improve people’s lives.”

“He just helped everybody,” Urata’s second-oldest sister, Emily Kemper, concurred. “He took after my dad. Anything he could do to help you, he would do it.”

Asked what might have motivated her brother to be so helpful, eldest sister Phyllis Hiura said, “The only thing that I can think of is my dad was always very involved in the community. I think he did a lot of things to please his dad.”

“He was really the best brother a sister could ever ask for,” Hiura added. “He was always kind and generous, and if we had a question about, you know, computer stuff or anything, really, we could call and ask him.”

A graduate of California State University, Chico, with a bachelor’s degree in business with a concentration in finance, Urata was born in San Diego, Calif., the youngest child of Helen and James Urata, who met while incarcerated at the Poston War Relocation Authority Center. James Urata went on to serve in the Army as a linguist in the Military Intelligence Service.

When Doug Urata was 10, his family moved to San Bernardino because James Urata was hired as the original building coordinator for California State University, San Bernardino, where he later became its director of Administrative Affairs. James Urata also joined the Riverside JACL chapter, and later, Doug Urata’s JACL membership was with it, too.

According to his LinkedIn profile, Urata’s professional expertise in finance included working part-time as a marketing assistant for Prudential Financial, serving as an arbitrator for FINRA (Financial Industry Regulatory Authority), a marketing specialist for Pacific Life, COO at Clientell and marketing project manager for Transamerica.

Urata’s most-impactful financial legacy may possibly have been his involvement with the JA Community Foundation, which can trace its roots to the JACL Health Benefits Trust, at which he served as a trustee beginning in 1982. According to JACF CEO Stephen Divizich, the Trust managed a Blue Shield health insurance plan for JACL members across the U.S.

“As the Trust adapted to changes brought by the Affordable Care Act, the Trust needed to form a separate company called JA Health Insurance Services to manage its existing health insurance contracts. As a result of closing the JACL plan, the Trust had a large reserve fund at Blue Shield that needed to be returned to the JA community,” Divizich told the *Pacific Citizen* via email.

“In 2015, the Trustees formed a 501(c)(3) nonprofit called the JA Community Foundation and donated the reserve fund to the new foundation. The foundation began granting in 2016 and has since donated over \$3 million to Japanese American nonprofit organizations. At the time of his pass-

ing, Doug was a current member of all three boards: a Trustee with JACL Health Benefits Trust for 42 years, a founding Board member and chairman of the JA Health Insurance Services, and a founding member and chairman of the JA Community Foundation.”

In addition to his track record with JACL, Urata also served as a trainer with LEAP or Leadership Education for Asian Pacifics. From 1988-92, he helped with the Conquer the Bridge 8K run and in 1996, he served as the co-chair of the annual mayor’s dinner for Los Angeles Asian Pacific American Heritage Month. According to Roe, her late husband also wrote the first curriculum guide to be taught in the high schools for Go For Broke National Education Center when Christine Sato-Yamazaki was in charge of the nonprofit.

The recollections of the many with whom Urata interacted with follow.

J. D. Hokoyama (LEAP president and CEO): “He was a good trainer. . . . He was happy to do things in the background that nobody ever knew. . . . Always very enthusiastic, and he was pretty outspoken. He wasn’t afraid to express his opinion” (see “*Exec Director’s ‘Us,’ ‘Them’ Rhetoric Is Divisive*,” Feb. 7, 2025, *Pacific Citizen*, tinyurl.com/yh2ksesd).

Jon Kaji (City Council, Torrance, Calif.): “Doug was very active in PSWDC JACL during the 1980s into the ’90s. He supported a range of activities including the Conquer the Bridge run. We will miss him.”

Mitch Maki (GFBNEC president and CEO): Doug was a longtime supporter of GFBNEC because he deeply appreciated courage and patriotism that our World War II Japanese American veterans demonstrated. Doug will be sorely missed.”

Gary Mayeda (JACL national president, 2016-18): “Doug was the quintessential volunteer that can do anything you ask of

him. He was a busy guy but when you needed someone to get things done, Doug was your guy. The community lost a very sincere, dedicated and caring scholar. I will miss him dearly.”

Stephen Divizich (JACF CEO): “Doug loved working with the JACL health insurance plan and was a dedicated board member. He would come up from Orange County to the bay area at least five times per year, every year for 43 years to attend meetings, and was on nearly every committee we had. When I joined in 2001 as the trust administrator, I did not have much experience with boards, but I spoke with him regularly, and he was always kind, professional and happy to help. I also relied on him heavily when we started the JA Community Foundation as he had extensive experience with nonprofits. Doug served as an important mentor to me, and our organization has much to show for his dedication.”

Michiko Yoshimura (Riverside JACL chapter president): “We will truly miss Doug. Our active members have diminished so Doug was willing to take up the slack and do the work necessary to keep our chapter functioning.”

Urata’s widow believes that in death, her late husband may still be helpful to others. “If anyone gets a fracture that appears out of nowhere, you might want to get the special blood test that tests for multiple myeloma because that’s the only way you can discover if you have it or not,” Roe told the *Pacific Citizen*. “Get it checked out for cancer.”

Doug Urata was predeceased by his parents. He is survived by his widow, Alice Roe; sisters, Phyllis Hiura and her children, Rodney, Kimberly and Joe; and Emily Kemper and her children, Jennifer and Mark.

A celebration of life is planned for April 25 at the Wintersburg Presbyterian Church in Santa Ana, Calif. ■

Hawaii’s Former Rep. Hanabusa Dies at 74

HONOLULU (AP) — Former U.S. Rep. Colleen Hanabusa, who was the first woman to serve as president of the Hawaii State Senate, has died. She was 74.

Hanabusa died early March 6 after a five-month battle with cancer, said Mike Formby, her friend and former chief of staff in the U.S. House.

In announcing her death, Gov.

Josh Green ordered the U.S. and Hawaii flags to be flown at half-staff.

She “broke barriers” as the first woman president of the state Senate and “spent decades advocating for her community with strength, determination and heart,” Green said. “Her legacy of leadership and public service will continue to inspire generations to come.” ■

PLACE A TRIBUTE

‘In Memoriam’ is a free listing that appears on a limited, space-available basis.

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jacl.org/2026-national-convention



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