



PACIFIC CITIZEN

JACL's Awards Luncheon was held at the Paris Hotel & Casino during the recent National Convention.

PHOTO: DARRELL MIHO

CELEBRATING
97
Years



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MASASHI GOTO MONUMENT REDEDICATED

Three Utah JACL chapters participate in the memorial ceremony.

By Floyd Mori

It was a beautiful day in the mountains to celebrate and remember a courageous Japanese aviator with a big dream. Three Utah chapters of the JACL — Mount Olympus, Salt Lake City and Wasatch Front North — participated recently in the rededication ceremony of a monument for Masashi Goto in the Uinta Mountains of Utah, where Goto died after his

plane crashed in a thunderstorm on July 4, 1929.

Goto was born in Oita, Kyushu, Japan, on March 12, 1896. He then moved to Los Angeles, where he built a plane with the help of his friend, Takeo Watanabe. Goto was the first Japanese citizen to obtain a pilot's license in the United States.

As a pilot, Goto wanted to become one of the first aviators to fly around the world. With a planned flight

map, he started out from Los Angeles and made a stop in Salt Lake City, where he was greeted by the area's Japanese community. He then left Salt Lake City on July 4, 1929, to resume his journey. But Goto encountered a severe thunderstorm and crashed in the Uinta Mountains of Utah.

A memorial was placed near the crash site, and over the years, it was rededicated. But after being vandalized, an upgrade was spearheaded by the Utah State Historical Preservation Office, and storyboards were added to tell Goto's life story.

The most-recent rededication program was held at the memorial site on July 20. Participating in the program were leaders from within the community and the state of Utah. A welcome address was given by Daniel Jauregui, district ranger of the Uinta Wasatch Cache National Forest. Bishop Steve Swasey of the



The Masashi Goto monument in the Uinta Mountains of Utah

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF FLOYD MORI

Dai Ichi Ward of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints offered a prayer.

Speakers at the program included Sophia DiCaro, executive director of the Office of Planning and Budget of the Utah Governor's Office; Larry Grant, local JACL leader; Christopher Merritt, state historic preservation officer; Floyd Mori, former national executive director of the JACL; and Yuki Zaitzu, vice consul of the Consulate of Japan in Denver.

Special appreciation to Metra Barton of the JACL Salt Lake City chapter and others who worked hard to make the event a success. ■

PILOT MASASHI GOTO (IN FLIGHT GEAR) STANDS WITH SUPPORTERS AT THE SALT LAKE CITY AIRPORT, 1929. Photo courtesy of the Utah Historical Society



A photo courtesy of the Utah historical society of aviator Masashi Goto in 1929

Honouliuli Hosts Inaugural Public Tour

WAIPAHU, HAWAII — The Honouliuli National Historic Site recently welcomed visitors as part of its inaugural public tour, marking a significant milestone for the park.

For the first time and in partnership with Hawaii's Plantation Village, the public can visit the Honouliuli National Historic Site through limited guided tours as the park marks 80 years since the American concentration camp closed in 1946.

Tours are part of a series of special events taking place through September, developed with community partners to commemorate the site.



Participants of the inaugural public tour at the Honouliuli National Historic Site on July 18.

PHOTO: HNHS

"This inaugural public tour is a significant milestone for the park and is a result of the hard work of many people and partners," said Superintendent Christine Ogura in an

official statement. "A big mahalo for your continued support and for being part of celebrating this wonderful park milestone and achievement together!"

Honouliuli National Historic Site is the location of what was once the largest and longest-run prisoner of war camp and incarceration site in the Hawaiian Islands during World War II.

At its peak, it held 4,000 prisoner of war of Japanese, Korean, Okinawan, Italian and Filipino descent, as well as 400 American civilians, primarily of Japanese descent with some Europeans.

Public tour reservations are open on a first-come, first-serve basis. Spots are limited. The tour can range from 1-1.5 miles.

For more information, visit <https://www.nps.gov/honolindex.htm>.

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



Editor Emeritus Harry Honda as drawn by Pete Hironaka



REFLECTIONS

BIRTHRIGHT CITIZENSHIP IS NOT A WARTIME EXCEPTION

By Larry Oda, Past JACL National President

I was born behind barbed wire to parents the United States classified as “enemy aliens” during World War II. Yet, because of the Constitution’s assurance of birthright citizenship, I was born an American citizen.

That fact is a lesson in American law and character — one that should matter now as President Trump attempts through a new Executive Order to evade last month’s Supreme Court ruling upholding birthright citizenship.

The new Executive Order purports to bar the children of “alien enemies” from acquiring birthright citizenship.

It is wrong on multiple levels. It misapplies a wartime concept for lands seized by foreign armies. More fundamentally, it again would strip children of their right to citizenship based on their parents’ actions — exactly what the Supreme Court rejected.

Since the War of 1812, and through two world wars, children born in the United States to parents classified as alien enemies have been recognized as American citizens. I know this history personally because I was born at the Crystal City WWII Department of Justice Family Internment Camp in Texas, alongside many other children of German, Italian and Japanese descent. Their parents had been swept up in a period of

wartime hysteria and the deliberate imprisonment of Japanese community leaders. They had done nothing against the United States.

Yet, even in that dark period, the United States recognized something fundamental: the circumstances or ancestry of a child’s parents did not determine the child’s citizenship. Because we were born on American soil, we were afforded the right to belong. And we exercised that right.

Many of the children with whom I grew up in camp went on to make significant contributions to this country. We served in the military. We built successful careers and businesses. We became educators, community leaders, civil rights advocates and public servants. We demonstrated, in countless ways, that citizenship is not merely a legal status — it is an opportunity to participate fully in the American experiment.

I have tried to do my part as well. I am a veteran. During the Vietnam War, I served in the U.S. Navy aboard the aircraft carrier USS Ranger, working in the Integrated Operational Intelligence Center with top-secret security clearance. After the war, I returned to college and

earned a master’s degree and enjoyed a career in public service. I have also had the privilege of serving four terms as president of the Japanese American Citizens League, the nation’s oldest and largest Asian American civil rights organization.

I share this history because it demonstrates something essential about America: Children should not inherit the political status, fears or accusations directed at their parents.

The current Executive Order is part of a years-long effort to retreat from that principle. It invokes the language of wartime “alien enemies” in a time of peace and attempts to impose a restriction on citizenship that, historically, only applied when an enemy captured and took control of land during a war.

The lessons of Japanese American incarceration should make us especially wary when our government once again suggests that the children of immigrants should be treated as less American because of who their parents are. We have seen where that thinking can lead.

I have confidence that the courts will continue to uphold the constitutional principle of birthright

citizenship and reject efforts to circumvent those protections through executive action.

But courts cannot be the only line of defense. The American people must draw the line as well.

We must reject the notion that citizenship can be conditioned on ancestry, the nationality of one’s parents, or the government’s judgment about whether a family belongs here. We must remember that the strength of American citizenship comes precisely from the fact that it is not inherited from one’s parents’ nationality or withheld because of their circumstances.

As the Supreme Court concluded, “Citizenship, then and now, was the right to have rights — to freely participate in our political community. The Framers of the Fourteenth Amendment extended that promise to ‘every free-born person in this land.’” That promise extended to me. No president has the power to decide that children born in America today belong any less than I did.

Larry Oda is a past four-time national president of the JACL. He resides in Northern California.



LEGAL-EASE: AN ATTORNEY’S PERSPECTIVE

REGAIN YOUR YOUTHFUL GLOW!

By Judd Matsunaga, Esq.

A lifetime ago, in the 1960s, my family would visit relatives on a regular basis. I can still remember on one visit, my 4-year-old younger brother (now a respected doctor), called Uncle Tom “Grandpa.” Uncle Tom, a Nisei and World War II veteran, clearly insulted and upset with the remark, answered back, “I’m not your grandpa.”

Sixty-plus years later, I’m starting to understand why my uncle responded so gruffly to a little kid. He didn’t want to grow old or look old before his time.

If you want to look as young as possible for as long as possible, read on. This information comes

from a Special Health Report from Harvard Medical School, Skin Care and Repair.

While a gracefully aging face is a beautiful thing, there are changes that occur with age that we might like to slow down.

Do you know that pollution affects your skin? Your skin is an important line of defense against pollutants. Exposure to pollution is linked to free radicals and oxidative stress: Free radicals are unstable molecules that can damage your body’s cells and DNA. Pollution is full of these molecules, which lead to a process called oxidative stress (i.e., aging).

You might say, “Pollution is everywhere, there’s no way to completely avoid it.” True. The good

news is that you can defend your skin from pollution. The following are six simple steps to protect your skin from everyday pollution that I found on www.uclahealth.org titled, “Simple Steps to Protect Your Skin From Everyday Pollution,” dated April 2, 2025.

1. Cleanse your skin every night. A cleanser washes pollutants off your skin, so it’s essential. Nighttime is your skin’s prime time to repair itself, so always cleanse your face before hitting the pillow. Look for a gentle, nonabrasive and alcohol-free face wash formula. If you have sensitive skin, steer clear of cleansers with fragrances or dyes.

2. Use a leave-on product with antioxidants. Antioxidants fight the oxidative stress that pollution causes, and you can find them in a variety of lotions, creams and serums. After cleaning, apply a skincare product that contains antioxidants, such as:

- Green tea extract
- Niacinamide (vitamin B-3)
- Resveratrol, found in grapes
- Vitamins A, C and E

3. Strengthen your skin barrier. If your skin is dry, flaky, red or sensitive, you likely have a damaged skin barrier — and you’re more susceptible to pollution’s effects. You can help repair your skin barrier with a moisturizer. Apply a fragrance-free, dye-free lotion or cream after bathing, when skin is still damp. Consider using a product with ceramides; they help boost skin barrier function.

4. Use sunscreen daily. It combats the effects of pollution, too. Research shows that the sun’s UV rays magnify oxidative stress, so sunscreen can help prevent some of this damage.

5. Eat a skin-protective diet. Antioxidants are helpful as skincare products, but defending your skin from within is also important. Eat plenty of antioxidant-rich foods each day, including fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, legumes and whole grains. Studies show that following a plant-based, antioxidant-rich diet lowers oxidative stress in your body. Consider increasing your intake of omega-3 fats to help repair your skin barrier.

6. Lower your exposure to pollution. It’s not always possible, but you can minimize your exposure if you:

- Avoid indoor pollutants: Air fresheners and harsh cleaning chemicals.
- Use plain water, vinegar and baking soda for cleaning.
- Clean your air at home.

In conclusion, the American Lung Assn. says that indoor air can be more polluted than outside. Change furnace filters regularly and consider using a high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) purifier. Finally, know your local pollution levels: Check air pollution forecasts daily.

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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INCREDIBLE INSPIRATIONS

JACL fetes Calvin Kobayashi and the Washington, D.C., chapter at its Awards Luncheon.

By Allison Haramoto,
P.C. Executive Editor

Dedicated service. Numerous contributions. Leadership. Superior involvement. Individual and chapter excellence. These are just a few of the many terms that describe this year's JACL award winners — Calvin Kobayashi and the Washington, D.C., chapter — who were feted during the organization's Awards Luncheon at the Paris Hotel & Casino on July 31.

Kobayashi was recognized with the JACLer of the Biennium Award, one of the organization's highest honors, and the Washington, D.C., chapter was awarded the George Inagaki Chapter Citizenship Award for exemplifying all-around excellence.

The luncheon, which took place during JACL's National Convention, began with welcome acknowledgments by emcees Robbie Yoshikawa and Sebastian Carbajal.

"Today is one of the highlights of our convention as we pause to recognize the incredible individuals and chapters whose leadership, service and commitment continue to strengthen the Japanese American Citizens League and our communities across the country," said Carbajal.

Yoshikawa then took a few moments to acknowledge distinguished guests and organizations whose support helped make convention possible, including State Farm, Comcast, AARP, Verizon, US Bank, Caesars Entertainment, National JACL Credit Union and the Japanese Embassy.

Representing AARP was Scott Tanaka, a former co-president of the D.C. chapter, who praised JACL's commitment to communities nationwide.

"There is such a strong national and local chapter structure in JACL," he said. "We'd (AARP) love to continue partnering with you, and I want to congratulate today's chapter honorees. Your mission is important, and so I want to thank you for all the work that you do, both at the national and local level and for your continued partnership."

Carbajal then welcomed Pacific Southwest District Gov. Nancy Takayama to the stage to announce the 2024-2026 JACLer of the Biennium Award winner, which recognizes an "individual whose outstanding leadership, service and dedication have made a significant impact on JACL during the past two years.

This honor celebrates someone whose commitment exemplifies our organization's mission and values."

Takayama first gave a brief history on the award, which is presented in memory of Randolph M. Sakada, a former JACL national president from 1950-52, to honor his service. The award was then presented to the New Mexico chapter's Calvin Kobayashi.

As president of his chapter, Kobayashi was instrumental in bringing the Japanese Cultural Center of New Mexico to life, in addition to his years of service to JACL, working to strengthen the organization and preserve and celebrate its history and Japanese American culture.

Unfortunately, Kobayashi was unable to attend the luncheon; the New Mexico chapter's Helen Crane accepted the award on his behalf.

Carbajal then welcomed to the stage EDC Gov. Paul Uyehara to present the George Inagaki Chapter Citizenship Award, which "recognizes the collective efforts of a chapter whose work has demonstrated outstanding citizenship, community leadership and commitment to advancing the mission of JACL."

The award was established by the Venice-West L.A. chapter in 1968 to honor Inagaki, one of JACL's founding leaders and a former national president. Uyehara triumphantly announced this year's honoree as the Washington, D.C., chapter.

Over the past two years, the chapter has, said Uyehara, "Distinguished itself through impactful educational programming, advocacy and community-building. Whether welcoming new members, engaging young professionals, commemorating our shared history or serving as a bridge between the local community and JACL's national advocacy efforts, the D.C. chapter has shown what it means to be an active, engaged and forward-thinking chapter."

Recently, the chapter was recognized with the Albert B. Corey Award for its graphic educational novel "But Where Are You REALLY From? Teaching the Next Generation About Japanese American History" (see July 17-Aug. 6, 2026, issue of the *Pacific Citizen*).

Accepting the George Inagaki Chapter Citizenship Award was D.C. chapter co-presidents Aileen Ma and John Tobe.

Tobe acknowledged Uyehara, as well as the JACL national board and those before them, whose leadership paved the way for the chapter to be recognized. He also thanked JACL's generous sponsors and its members, who are the core of the organization's mission. "As the nation's oldest civil rights organization, we have a responsibility to lead and fight for what is right. We are fighting on behalf of all to safeguard democracy . . . and to do that we must tap into our shared strength and



Members of the Washington, D.C., chapter with their JACL George Inagaki Chapter Citizenship Award along with (from left) JACL Executive Director Lilly Simmering, National President Larry Oda and (far right) EDC Gov. Paul Uyehara.

PHOTOS: DARRELL MIHO



PSW Gov. Nancy Takayama (left) and EDC Gov. Paul Uyehara (right) with (from near left) New Mexico chapter's Helen Crane, who accepted Calvin Kobayashi's award, and Washington, D.C., chapter's Aileen Ma and John Tobe.

resiliency to reinvigorate JACL," he said. "Let's continue working together to ensure that JACL's legacy continues and its impact grows. Let's continue to work together and keep up the fight."

In a statement to the *Pacific Citizen*, Ma shared, "This award belongs to our entire chapter and would not be possible without our incredible members, volunteers and partners. Being recognized for our citizenship work feels especially meaningful right now, as who gets to belong and who gets to speak up is being questioned in our country. As the D.C. chapter celebrates our 80th anniversary, we are thankful for this recognition and look forward to the work ahead."

Concurred Tobe, "We are very grateful for

this honor and will continue to do our best to live up to the ideals and goals of this award."

And in a statement to the *P.C.* following the luncheon, Uyehara said, "The D.C. chapter is a powerhouse that does everything well — recruiting and serving its large membership, building leadership, advocating and providing valued input at the district and national levels. They deserved the recognition, and I loved being able to present the award to them."

Before announcing the conclusion of the luncheon, Yoshikawa thanked the chair of the Awards and Recognitions Committee, David Kawamoto, and its members, Cecilia Shimizu Arao, Amy Danford, Maki Jackson, Simon Kutz, Janice McCormick, Travis Nishi, Suzanne Regan and Vinicius Taguchi. ■



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JACL Chapter Awards Luncheon emcees Robbie Yoshikawa (left) and Sebastian Carbajal



'Preserving Incarceration Sites — Fifty Years of Healing'

The National Convention plenary session covered how preserving JA incarceration sites brought on 50 years of healing.

By Gil Asakawa,
P.C. Editorial Board Co-Chair

Ever since the first organized pilgrimages to the Japanese American concentration camps began throughout the U.S. with the 1969 visits to Manzanar and Tule Lake, the 10 War Relocation Authority sites have been preserved to various extents, including some receiving National Historical Landmark, Memorial or Site designations, becoming under the protection of the National Park Service.

The 2026 JACL National Convention's plenary session on July 31 at the Paris Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas that kicked off a full day of panels and presentations, "Preserving Incarceration Sites — Fifty Years of Healing (1976-2026)," offered an historical overview of how the camps have been preserved for posterity.

The panelists included moderator Katie Masano Hill, JACL's Norman Y. Mineta Policy Fellow; Naomi Kawamura, executive director of Densho; Dan Sakura, principal of Sakura Conservation Strategies; and Ana Tanaka, a member of the Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee.

Hill kicked off the discussion by asking Sakura, who advises clients including the Tule Lake Committee, the Minidoka Government Planning Committee, the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium and also the Asian Pacific Islanders and American Historic Preservation or APIAHP, which has a four-day forum coming up in Denver in September, for a historical overview.

Sakura acknowledged that he hasn't witnessed the past 50 years of JA site preservation and noted that he grew up in Lexington, Mass., "and it really inspired in me the love of history and also instilled in me the significance of what I call commemorative energy."

He said community efforts that have rallied to provide "all of the hard work from California from Manzanar until Amache (in Colorado, the most recent National Park site), is something to be celebrated."

Sakura also noted that in 1976 when Manzanar was the first camp listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it was a milestone that opened the doors for other camps, as well as the Bicentennial of the United States.

"And it was an incredible moment for our nation," he remembered. "Unfortunately, this year, the 250th, there really has not been that pride and willingness to admit it was wrong." So, the revocation of Executive Order 9066 was a critical step forward toward redress, but today, some of the camp preservation efforts and official acknowledgement that the incarceration was wrong are facing an anti-DEI backlash from the administration.

Sakura emphasized the importance of the JA descendants and local community's role in preserving and protecting incarceration sites, even in the face of national challenges.

"The four-legged chair for successful camp preservation includes Japanese American community leaders and includes the local community," he said. "We've been incredibly fortunate to have the National Park Service as a partner and then bipartisan congressional support. And so, a four-legged chair is better than a three-legged stool."

He explained the timeline that led to the National Park Service recommending that Manzanar be designated as a national park, then the legislation that passed in 1992 to authorize the Manzanar National Historic Site.

Then, he recalled his involvement in Arkansas' two sites, Jerome and Rohwer. "I was working at the Interior Department, and this nomination package came through, and I was like, 'Wait a minute, this is pretty cool. Preserving a Japanese American site!' I kept that in mind going forward when I was later serving in the White House. In 2000, I was working at the Council on Environmental Quality in the White House, and we were working on putting together a budget initiative. And we were like, 'Well, how do we put together something meaningful?'"

And so, we were able to move funding for the Manzanar Visitor Center above the line and into the president's budget request. We were incredibly fortunate to have support from bipartisan leaders in California, and this actually planted the seeds for the Japanese American Confinement Sites grant program."

He continued to outline the work being conducted at Bainbridge Island and Minidoka, as well as current efforts at confinement sites beyond the concentration camps.

However, Sakura warned, "We do face a very significant threat with regard to the Section 106 National Historic Preservation Act regulations that affect all historic properties. With the threats to the archives, the closures, and we are looking at permitting reform."

Kawamura then introduced herself and outlined her passion. "I'm the executive director at Densho, and I also am a scholar of cultural memory. My Ph.D. research looked at how memory travels in Japanese American and Japanese Canadian communities, what it does in those communities, the collective identities that are formed and shaped by wartime incarceration history, and that continues to inform my work within."

Densho serves an important role in this community effort because, as Kawamura pointed out, history isn't just preserved in a place or its buildings and artifacts. It's kept in peoples' memories, and those memories can be preserved and handed on to future generations digitally, with technology capturing the stories that might otherwise be lost in the past.

"For many years, memories of the wartime incarcerations were preserved primarily in families or through community," she said. "But then, many different projects started to arise to document that history, including Densho, so our founding Executive Director Tom Ikeda is the child of Minidoka internees, and he helped to found the organization



Participating in the plenary session at the JACL National Convention were (from left) Ana Tanaka, Naomi Kawamura, Dan Sakura and moderator Katie Masano Hill.

in 1996 because there were many other children of former internees who started to recognize their parents were aging, that their stories were not being recorded or documented, and that their experiences might become lost to time. So, they recognized also that it might be difficult for everyone to go to the actual sites themselves. It might actually be difficult for everyone to go to the National Archives, or go to JANM, or go to any of these sort of museums that we have in our community, and so making these materials and stories accessible online was already the sort of foundational philosophy of our organization.

"We want to ensure that future generations can have access to and know and learn about this particular past," Kawamura continued. "We now have over 1,200 oral histories. Our Oral History Program is still active. Earlier this week, I met with two former internees at our Densho office as potential narrators, and so this is still very much an active part of the work that we do. We do this to ensure that this history isn't lost or forgotten, but also to promote equity and justice today."

"As an organization of archivists and historians, we think of the physical historic sites like Minidoka, Amache, that Dan spoke to as some of the most important primary sources to this history that we have. These sites show us where events unfolded, and they preserve physical evidence that no document can fully capture."

"So, this morning," she continued, "I thought I might talk about the complementary work of preservation, what I think of as like memory work, not just of the physical sites themselves, but understanding how do places become part of collective memory. What is the work of

memory? What does that entail? And so, the preservation of the past requires more than preserving the sites because places do not remember, people do, communities do, and then institutions help communities and people to remember."

The final panelist, Ana Tanaka, shared a story about her flight from Seattle to Las Vegas. "I ended up talking to this man about I'd say my age, and he was from Florida, and he asked why I was coming to Vegas," she recalled. "I mentioned this convention and this panel, and he mentioned how he hadn't learned about the Japanese American incarceration until his 20s, which honestly is more than I would expect from someone from Florida."

"But we got into a whole conversation," she continued, "Which led to him talking about the blatant racism that he has recently experienced as a Mexican and Jamaican man from Oran, El Salvador, and how he has recently been going through a lot, and so we ended up talking for the entire plane ride."

"But my point is that there's no part of history that exists in a vacuum, and there is an inherent connection between his experiences and my own, and also between Japanese American families being forced out of their homes and into barracks. And an interaction that he had with a random man recently, who told him that he looked like he was ready to be picked up by ICE and that he should go back to his country."

"They're not the same thing, but there are parallels between those two," Tanaka concluded. "And so, Japanese American incarceration history is an essential chapter of American history because it represents the entire book. It's an iteration of a pattern that has been the basis of our country. I think Japanese American history is not just the incarceration; it goes beyond that. There's redress. There's rebuilding. There's resettlement. There's everything that came after and before, and so that also means that it includes us and it includes tomorrow. And tomorrow it will include today."

The audience left the plenary session moved and hopefully, inspired.



Densho's Naomi Kawamura



Sakura Conservation Strategies' Dan Sakura



Minidoka Pilgrimage Planning Committee's Ana Tanaka



JACL Norman Y. Mineta Policy Fellow Katie Masano Hill

ARAKAKI SANGUINE YET GUARDED

The newly elected JACL president stays mum on specifics for the new biennium.

By George Toshio Johnston,
P.C. Senior Editor

Following his election as JACL National Board president on Aug. 1 at the JACL's 2026 National Convention, Sheldon Arakaki spoke with the *Pacific Citizen* to discuss his vision for the organization during his new biennial term.

A JACLER for more than 20 years, the Seattle-born, Hawaii-raised Yonsei, who returned to live and work near the place of his birth as an adult, ascended to JACL's top leadership position as the storied organization faces several long-running challenges — membership decline, financial pressures, JACL's *raison d'être*, staffing issues, competition from other community organizations for a person's time and commitment — as it approaches not only its 2029 centennial but also a 2027 with no National Convention and a 2028 with plans for a virtual-only confab (see aforementioned financial pressures).

Following is a conversation between *Pacific Citizen* Senior Editor George Toshio Johnston and Arakaki, edited for conciseness and clarity.

THE PACIFIC CITIZEN: You've been a JACL member for, according to your speech at the Candidates' Forum at the JACL National Convention, 22 years, and you've received the Ruby Pin. Congratulations for that. That also means you've seen how the organization has evolved and changed since going back to about 2004.

SHELDON ARAKAKI: I think I joined December of 2003.

THE P.C.: That would include Larry Oda's first back-to-back terms from 2006-10 and several different executive directors and national presidents. With that perspective and seeing how the organization has had to deal with fiscal belt tightening in the past few years, not to mention declining membership, when and where do you think JACL, in quotes, "lost its way" and how will a Sheldon Arakaki administration set the stage for a return to growth and relevance for JACL?

ARAKAKI: Reading the P.C. archives, I can see the financial issues have been there for decades (see 'Reality of JACL's Dire Financial Situation Hits Personnel,' June 6, 2003, *Pacific Citizen*, tinyurl.com/Sen2u7ue). Before I joined in December of 2003, apparently there was some gala in L.A. with Rep. Bob Matsui and [Sen.] Dan Inouye and I think maybe Norm Mineta in the fall of 2003 to raise money for the JACL because it was having financial issues (see 'Reflections on 9/11 as Honorees Gather for JACL Gala Dinner Tribute,' Sept. 19, 2003, *Pacific Citizen*, tinyurl.com/rfwhvsn7).

The 1994 convention, one of the big issues apparently was JACL's financial condition. There were a couple board meetings in December of '94, and they took a vote to reduce the budget and align the expenses with expected revenues, which resulted in a bunch of headcount reduction (see 'President Explains

Board Decision to Downsize Staff,' Jan. 6, 1995, *Pacific Citizen*, tinyurl.com/3ns9p89m). If you think about the '92-'94 period, this is just four years after redress, so we should be on a total high and everything, but you could see we're even struggling back then. . . . It's nothing new.

So, the question is, how do we really slow things down and reposition the organization — and maybe even reposition it isn't even the right term for it. The world has changed. The community has changed a lot, and I think it's about adapting and recognizing it. Let's just say there's more choices out there. We're more distant from the World War II generation. I'm a Yonsei, right? We're just much further away from this than our immigrant history. So, it's about adapting to a different time, different demographics. I think for me, it's about adapting. What I had campaigned on is a focus and return back to policy. Focusing on policy work and then advocacy. Education. We're an advocacy organization.

THE P.C.: In your Candidates' Forum speech, you said: 'As far as my basic platform, three things: policy focus, advocacy and education, and connecting people and communities.' I'm quoting Sheldon Arakaki there. So, how does this tie into the Sheldon Arakaki era and helping JACL grow and put it back in the forefront, if that's possible? Is there a path forward, getting back to my initial question?

ARAKAKI: This is what I try to get to. So, you have to have an actual focus and a direction first, right? Because this is how you're going to attract people or get people involved. For me, it's about member engagement. What do you do with the existing members? So, if we're saying we're going to focus on policy, you know, we have to actually have a program built around policy work, the advocacy that goes with it and, of course, education, and then making an effort to build a community.

THE P.C.: Let's switch gears a little bit, getting more into your cabinet. What is your timeline for filling any remaining vacancies, such as vp of general operations?

ARAKAKI: I am hoping in the next 30, maybe 60 days.

THE P.C.: How does your vision for JACL align with Executive Director Lily Simmering's vision (see 'Simmering Presents Priorities,' Aug. 14, 2026, tinyurl.com/bdfzd4ku), for JACL, especially in the next couple of years?

ARAKAKI: I think we're pretty much aligned. We really seem to speak the same language. We both talk in terms of key performance indicators. We should be publishing them. I've asked for the last few years about a public policy platform because you can build around a policy platform.

THE P.C.: With the decision at the National Convention that there will be no convention in 2027, what about the possibility, then, of a bidistrict or tridistrict conference instead?



Larry Oda (left) in one of his last acts as JACL national president, presents Sheldon Arakaki with the JACL's Ruby Pin, the organization's highest honor for service.

PHOTO: DARRELL MIHO

ARAKAKI: I think at least one governor has brought it up. There's been some light discussion on that. There are other things that have been brought up. Apparently, Omaha is having a big birthday party next summer. There's also been some thoughts on if we want to focus on policy, we should have some sort of policy forum gathering, maybe in '27. I think that's more of a TBD right now because in all these ideas, you have to pay for it.

THE P.C.: The past few conventions, and I think probably including this latest one, have been moneylosers as opposed to moneymakers. Should National Conventions strive to be moneymakers?

ARAKAKI: Oh, my God! Break-even minimum, moneymakers, yes.

THE P.C.: Back to your basic platform, you said three things: policy, focus, advocacy and education, and then you also added connecting people and community. The one word I didn't hear was membership, and it's been on the decline, according to your predecessor, for 25 years. Why didn't you mention membership growth as a priority for you in your basic platform? And what will happen during the Sheldon Arakaki biennium that will help JACL grow its membership base. What are the broad strokes of what you'd like to do?

ARAKAKI: Well, first of all, membership hasn't been declining for 25 years. It's been declining for decades, right? Going back to the P.C. archive, there was a story about 'We have 30,000 members, and we're declining,' and it showed a year-over-year change from 31,000, and by the end of it, was like down to 28,000. So, the question is, are we asking the right question? What I am focusing on, though, is what I've been talking about: What about member engagement? If you want to retain the members, you have to engage them. We have thousands of lapsed memberships. You haven't heard anybody talk about, 'What about all the lapsed members?' . . . We've got thousands of them. There should be more of a concerted effort to bring them back in. What I'm hoping for again is by having more of a direction on the policy work and the advocacy work and the education work, we can bring back some of the lapsed members. Lapsed members are the low-hanging fruit. You have an issue about the chapters really not engaging their members. So, this is where I think you're going to have to go back to what can National do to help the chapters to engage their members, or what do

the chapters want from National to engage the members? And this is where, of course, the vp for membership comes into play.

THE P.C.: Tell me if I'm encapsulating this correctly, then, because you said lapsed members are low-hanging fruit. So, is that going to be part of your focus, bringing back lapsed members?

ARAKAKI: I think we should try. We haven't made a concerted effort to try to go after lapsed members.

THE P.C.: What is the value proposition, especially if I'm, say, under 30, to becoming a JACL member?

ARAKAKI: I think that's what we have to formulate a new message around, right? You asked me about how I'm aligned with the executive director. We both talk about service. There are those of us who talk about service to the greater good, to the organization, recruiting around service, and then you talk, and then you'll see this other theme about benefits. What can we give? What can you consume as a member, as far as experiences? I think Lilly and I are in alignment on that. We talk about service. We're looking for members to serve, to contribute, to give back.

THE P.C.: My question had to do with value proposition, like being a Sam's Club member, a Costco member, AAA or Auto Club member or AARP member. I think right now, if you're a JACL member, you can get free admission into the Japanese American National Museum, which is great if you happen to be in Los Angeles County. But for you in Bellevue, Wash., unless you happen to be in L.A., it's basically worthless. So, getting back to the question, what would compel me, especially if I'm under 30 and it costs me \$65 to become a member, what do I get?

ARAKAKI: And that's why I was telling you earlier, we have to come up with a new position, a new message. And that has to be developed. I'm not revealing anything right now. You're not going to hear anything first that I haven't worked throughout the board level. When the board level works things out, and the vp for membership works out and we're all simpatico, then we will do a rollout. You're not going to hear anything first that the board hasn't agreed to as a whole and moves in one direction. That, and then we're in alignment with the executive director on.

» See ARAKAKI on page 8



NCWNP: Representing NCWNP are (*seated, from left*) Debbie Eto, Carol Kawase, Mariko Fujimoto, Larry Oda and Sharon Uyeda and (*standing, middle row, from left*) Arly La Mica, Pam Dally-La Mica, Robbin Kawabata, Nikki Hikari, Janice Luszcak, Lily Kawafuchi, Pam Yoshida, Emily Murase, Miko Sawamura, Michelle Huey, Krista Keplinger, Tiffany Ikeda, Steve Okamoto, Debbi Endow Hatanaka, Tara Umemoto and Steve Sue and (*standing, back row, from left*) Eric Hayashi, Kathy Delmendo, Michael Saito, Anthony Ismail, Aaron Kang, Nick Hori, Mark Kobayashi, Yusuke Teruya (adviser for Community and Political Affairs at the Consulate of Japan), Kenji Tachibana and Gavin Tachibana.

PHOTOS: GEORGE T. JOHNSTON

CCDC: Tiffany Ikeda with her parents, CCDC's Deborah and Dale Ikeda PHOTO: COURTESY OF DEBORAH IKEDA



JACL DISTRICTS IN LAS VEGAS

All seven JACL national districts — Central California District Council, Eastern District Council, Intermountain District Council, Midwest District Council, Northern California-Western Nevada-Pacific District Council, Pacific Northwest District Council and Pacific Southwest District Council — were represented at the organization's annual National Convention at the Paris Hotel & Casino in Las Vegas from July 29-Aug. 2. Chapter members, board members and governors participated in various district meetings throughout convention. The *Pacific Citizen's* George Johnston was on hand to capture group photos that brought everyone together to celebrate JACL's achievements as a national organization.

Representing CCDC, Deborah Ikeda received the Ruby Pin from JACL National President Larry Oda. PHOTO: DARRELL MIHO



PSW: Representing PSW are (*seated, from left*) Carol Kawamoto, Nancy Takayama, May Wood and Maleeya Mickelson and (*standing, from left*) Braeton Buckley, Dominique Mashburn, Izuru Hayama, David Kawamoto, Ken Inouye, Seia Watanabe, Ryan Yoshikawa, Robbie Yoshikawa, Sebastian Carbajal, Michelle Komatsu, Patricia Hashimoto, Logan Ueno, Ryan Ueda, Helen Crane, Kristen Fujitaki and Delwayne Arakaki.



EDC: Representing EDC are (*from left*) Ron Uba, Kim Hirose, John Tobe, Aileen Ma, Lauren Iwamiya, Paul Uyehara, Maya Takase-Kay, George Hirose, Simon Kutz and Stefanie Pierce.



MDC: Representing MDC are (*seated, from left*) Zara Espinoza and Don Hayashi and (*standing, from left*) Steve Mitori, Vinicius Taguchi, Gary Nakamura, Romare Onishi, Ron Kuramoto, Eric Langowski, Sam Uno, Ben Nishimura, Kai Uno and Eli Nishimura.



IDC/PNW: Representing IDC and PNW are (*seated, from left*) Karl Endo, Rob Sonoda and Eileen Yamada-Lamphere and (*standing, from left*) Alex Tokita, Austin Joyce, Candace Flowers, Ethan Hirabayashi, Alex Hirai, Sheldon Arakaki, Dylan Mori, Lora Haga and Robert Hirai.

Include the JACL in your Legacy Plan

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

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

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

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



ARAKAKI » continued from page 6

THE P.C.: But you are the national president, and that carries a lot of weight. I was just wondering if you had any particular, specific thing that you could mention. But it sounds like you don't want to reveal at this time.

ARAKAKI: Exactly. But what's important here is you have a board president who recognizes that we need one. That's the important thing. You cannot change things or fix things unless there's recognition that it needs to be changed or it needs to be fixed. We have known that the value proposition has needed change for years. This is not new either, right? But you would need board leadership to also recognize it, too, to drive the conversation. This is what I said



Sheldon Arakaki addresses the audience at the 2026 National JACL Convention's Sayonara Gala, one of his first duties after being elected the organization's national president. PHOTO: DARRELL MIHO

on the campaign trail. The board president has to drive the conversation. I have to drive the conversation on a strategic plan, on the direction, get the board to agree on what the North Star is, etc., etc.

THE P.C.: What are your thoughts regarding JACL becoming more than just the Japanese American Citizens League, emphasis on Japanese American, and more pan-AANHPI, such that JACL becomes just letters like AARP. Any thoughts?

ARAKAKI: Why would you think we already haven't gone down that path?

THE P.C.: We're still Japanese American Citizens League.

ARAKAKI: That's how we present ourselves.

THE P.C.: But if you look at the membership, it's still primarily Japanese American.

ARAKAKI: It's still primarily, but you have had other Asian Americans involved.

THE P.C.: So, what you're saying is, even though it hasn't been formally done, it's already happening.

ARAKAKI: It's been maybe slowly happening. Maybe it doesn't get as much attention, but it's already happening. I don't think we become like OCA – Asian Pacific American Advocates. A big part of our community history is around what happened in 1942. I think what you would have are

people who are non-JAs would get involved because of overall work on various different issues over time, but because of that story and the reparations work, because we are the only group that has actually been able to do that.

THE P.C.: That's a good segue to my next question. We have a couple of rare convergences ahead. One is the 40th anniversary of redress in 2028 because that was Aug. 10th, 1988, and then in 2029, JACL's Centennial. What do you intend to do to take advantage of both of these occurrences that are coming up from a purely marketing point of view?

ARAKAKI: We can't reveal marketing plans, right? We need the whole agreement first on what the plan is. But yes, you have a board president who recognizes all of it that. It's out there, and we have to figure out how to take advantage of it, right, whether it's in the membership, whether it's membership engagement, how do we take advantage of this? How do we use this as part of our asks in the campaign, doing letters and everything, right? It's a recognition that it's all out there, and we can add more on it.

THE P.C.: You're the president of the Japanese American Citizens League. If you had, and maybe you're keeping this close to the vest, did you have any kinds of —

ARAKAKI: I'm not revealing anything in this until you get everybody bought-in this and in alignment with the executive director. I've already had conversations about this with

some people about, 'What do you want to focus on?' 'What do we want to emphasize?' 'What sort of reflection direction do you want to take?' But there has to be more of a formal conversation, and proposals have to be put together. I can't give you anything specific. Although, again, as one governor speaking to other governors, I did say to other governors, 'Your chapters, your district should already be planning at the local level.' But yes, you're right. The National level, we should be doing, we should be focusing on, too. And I agree with you about the marketing.

THE P.C.: What is the role and the future of the *Pacific Citizen* under a Sheldon Arakaki administration?

ARAKAKI: Oh, my God, it's our media platform, right? One of the things that's defined in the constitution and bylaws is it's our public relations vehicle. How many times did I reference the archives to you in this conversation? It's our history, man. This is what's capturing JACL's history. You are writing about JACL history.

THE P.C.: But we're also there to report news for our membership, and sometimes those two missions can bump heads.

ARAKAKI: Yes, yes.

THE P.C.: So, the future and the role of *Pacific Citizen* under the Sheldon Arakaki administration will continue in some way, shape or form.

ARAKAKI: Some way, shape or form, right. We have to get our news. ■

The Japanese American Experience

New Video Series and Website Available Now!



Visit and Explore Now at JAExperience.org



Or you can scan the QR Code to visit!

Our History, American History

The Japanese American Experience is JACL's acclaimed curriculum guide with a summary of the history of Japanese Americans, a chronology of important dates, a resource list, learning activities, and more, now available in an online format! We're also excited to bring our new video series alongside the website launch! Check them out today!

JANM SET TO REOPEN ON JAN. 23

Among the numerous improvements, the renovated Pavilion includes new galleries, improved exhibit spaces and a publicly accessible Hirasaki National Resource Center.



By JANM

LOS ANGELES — The Japanese American National Museum announced on Aug. 21 that the museum will reopen its newly renovated Pavilion on Jan. 23, 2027, after being closed since Jan. 6, 2025.

The transformed Pavilion includes new first-floor galleries for the all-new core exhibition “In the Future We Call Now: Realities of Racism, Forging Democracy”; improved special exhibition galleries on the second floor with the inaugural exhibition “Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Miné Okubo”; a new and publicly accessible Hirasaki National Resource Center featuring art and design from the permanent collection, the interactive StoryFiles of George Takei and others and archival viewing areas; the Kosasa Education Center with two new classrooms; an improved visitor entry experience; and an upgraded HVAC system to preserve JANM’s significant collection of more than 160,000 artifacts.

“JANM’s reopening launches us into a new era, one that brings American stories to life and reflects the full richness of our shared history. We look forward to welcoming visitors from around the world to a Pavilion transformed by powerful storytelling, immersive installations and new technology that connects the stories of the Japanese American community to the urgent issues facing all of us today,” said Ann Burroughs, JANM president and CEO. “These new spaces and experiences will deepen our ability to fulfill our mission, share our extraordinary collection, serve as a beacon for civil rights and activate memory and the arts to shape a more just and hopeful future, one that inspires, educates and connects generations to come.”

New Main Entrance and Renovated Public Galleries

JANM contracted design firm Ralph Appelbaum Associates and consulting architects HOK for the renovation of its Pavilion. JANM’s main entry will change with a sweeping curved glass facade. Visitors will

enter into the spacious and light-filled Aratani Central Hall. Instead of heading upstairs, visitors will be able to experience JANM’s new core exhibition immediately from the new lobby into 9,200 square feet of gallery space on the first floor.

JANM’s New Core Exhibition

JANM’s new core exhibition, “In the Future We Call Now: Realities of Racism, Forging Democracy,” will reimagine how it tells the stories of Japanese Americans by drawing on today’s technological advances and national discussion around race and democracy; include familiar elements to carry the World War II incarceration stories forward; and highlight new stories that explore the choices that the Japanese American community made in the face of adversity as they fought toward an ever-shifting vision of the future.

New Special Exhibition Galleries and ‘Pictures of Belonging’

JANM’s second-floor galleries (previously the site of the original core exhibition “Common Ground: The Heart of Community”) have

been reconfigured to provide 5,500 square feet of contiguous galleries that will allow the museum to present larger special exhibitions.

The inaugural exhibition, “Pictures of Belonging: Miki Hayakawa, Hisako Hibi and Miné Okubo” will open on Jan. 23. Future exhibitions will include “Ben Sakoguchi: Postcards From Camp” (2027); “I Am an American: Nisei Soldier Experience” from the National Museum of the United States Army (2027); “A Generative Legacy of Care,” featuring new research on JANM’s extensive collection of WWII art (2029); and “Invocation of Beauty: The Life and Photography of Soichi Sunami” (2029). Other upcoming hybrid programs include “Glenn Kaino: I Am Yoko” and “Eating Together: Food in Japanese America.”

Organized by JANM, the acclaimed nationally touring exhibition “Pictures of Belonging” reveals a broader picture of the American experience through artworks and life stories of Hayakawa, Hibi and

Okubo, three trailblazing Japanese American women from the pre-WWII generation.

The New Hirasaki National Resource Center

The Hirasaki National Resource Center has been relocated to the second floor. Open to the public, the HNRC serves family historians, students, researchers, writers and other museum visitors with access to reference books, films and certain government records.

In addition to a study area and private archival viewing room, the new HNRC is a welcoming, public space that will showcase mid-century modern art and design by Ruth Asawa, S. Neil Fujita, Isamu Noguchi and others.

Interactive StoryFiles

The HNRC and nearby spaces will include four new interactive StoryFiles of June Aochi Berk, Takashi Hoshizaki, Mary Murakami

» See JANM on page 12



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

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

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

Even as America grows more diverse, the threat of racial injustice and bigotry persists. Today, many communities face renewed or newly emboldened attacks, echoing the same rhetoric and fears that once targeted

Japanese Americans. During WWII, JACL accepted the unjust conditions imposed on our community when Japanese Americans had their citizenship revoked. In the 84 years since, we have continued to reckon with that history while standing firmly for the protection of birthright citizenship. We refuse to allow anyone in this country to be denied their constitutional rights again. This commitment is why JACL invests in policy fellows who educate national partners, monitor harmful proposals, and advocate for legislation that upholds justice and equality for all.

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

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

Sincerely,
Ariel Imamoto
JACL Membership Manager

*Campaign ends September 7, 2026

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

A NATIONAL GUIDE TO NOTABLE COMMUNITY EVENTS

CALENDAR

NATIONAL

Ireicho Tour to Former Confinement Sites & Other Places

National Stops:

Oct. 10-11: St. Paul, MN

Info: Visit <https://www.janm.org/exhibits/ireicho/venues>.

NCWNP

Midori Kai Arts & Crafts Boutique
Sunnyvale, CA

Sept. 12; 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Lakeside Office Plaza

1279-1299 Oakmead Pkwy.

Price: Free

This event's 30th anniversary will feature 80 vendors showcasing Asian hand-crafted goods, food and entertainment. Proceeds benefit the nonprofit professional women's organization. A donation drawing will also be held, plus a silent auction.

Info: Contact Phyllis Osaki at (925) 596-1770 or email midorikaiboutique@gmail.com.

'I Am an American' Exhibit
San Francisco, CA

Thru Sept. 13

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 of their bravery and sacrifice.

Info: Visit nvnvets.org/exhibit.

'House Meeting(s): Opening the Door for Redress in San Jose' Exhibit
San Jose, CA

Thru September

JAMSJ

535 N. Fifth St.

Price: Museum Admission

This exhibit brings together multiple stories from a San Jose perspective to focus on the people and efforts that supported the redress movement across the community.

Info: Visit www.janm.org/OnTheGo.

Buddhist Church of Stockton Festival & Bazaar
Stockton, CA

Sept. 19; 11 a.m.-7 p.m.

Buddhist Church of Stockton

2820 Shimizu Dr.

Price: Free

This family-friendly event will feature cultural programs, food and drinks, live music and demonstrations, all-day exhibits and much more!

Info: Visit buddhistchurchofstockton.org.

Honouliuli: A History Awakened
Honolulu, HI

Sept. 27; 4-6 p.m.

Hawaii Theatre Center

1130 Bethel St.

Price: Ticket Prices Vary.

This unique immersive theatrical experience will bring the history of the Honouliuli Internment Camp to life through dance, music and poetry. Performers include Kenny Endo and Jake Shimabukuro.

Info: For tickets, visit <https://hawaii-theatre.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/#/instances/a0FUI00000C9h-JIMAJ>.

PSW

Never Forget Gala: Justice, Action, Community, Legacy
San Diego, CA

Sept. 12; 5 p.m. Welcome Reception;

6:30 p.m. Dinner & Program

San Diego Mission Valley Marriott

8757 Rio San Diego Dr.

Price: \$200 General Admission; \$150 JACL Members/Seniors; \$75 Children Under 12

Join the San Diego JACL as it honors Rachel Maddow and Michael Yarvitz of "Rachel Maddow Presents: Burn Order"; Wendy Gillespie, producer of the Broadway musical "Allegiance"; Teresa Stivers Liong, CEO of Walden Family Services; and Maggie Tokuda-Hall, president/founder of Authors Against Banned Books.

Info: For tickets, visit www.jacلسandiego.org or email sandiegojaci@gmail.com.

Oishii! Japanese Food & Sake Festival
San Diego, CA

Oct. 4; 10 a.m.-5 p.m.

Japanese Friendship Garden & Museum

2125 Park Blvd.

Price: \$35 JFGM Member; \$50 General Admission

Bring your appetite, discover new favorites and enjoy an unforgettable afternoon of delicious food and sake while strolling through the garden's peaceful paths and scenic landscapes.

Info: Visit www.niwa.org.

2026 Poston Pilgrimage 'Celebrating Cultural Art in Camp'
Parker, AZ

Oct. 16-17

Blue Water Resort & Casino

11300 Resort Dr.

Price: Pilgrimage Registration

This year's pilgrimage will feature a visit to the Poston sites, workshops, performances by the Grateful Crane and a presentation by Densho Executive Director Naomi Ostwald Kawamura on "Creativity Under Constraints." A banquet will be held at the Blue Water Resort & Casino.

Info: Visit postonpreservation.org.

'Washoku: Nature and Culture in Japanese Cuisine'
Los Angeles, CA

Thru Oct. 18

Japan House Los Angeles

Ovation Hollywood Complex

6801 Hollywood Blvd.

Price: Free

This exhibit invites visitors to explore the rich culinary heritage at the heart of Japan. It offers an in-depth look at the ingredients, evolution and inspirations behind this UNESCO-recognized cultural tradition.

Info: Visit japanhousela.com.

PNW

'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.

Nobi's Night Out in the '80s
Portland, OR

Sept. 19; 6-9 p.m.

Hoku Events on Madison

1125 S.E. Madison St.

Price: Tickets \$100; \$35 for 35 Years and Under

This 1980s fundraiser will benefit the Japanese American Museum of Oregon in honor of Nobi Masuoka, a beloved community auntie. Only 100 tickets available.

Info: Visit jamo.org for ticket information.

CCDC

The Incredible History of Nikkei Farmers in the San Joaquin Valley
Fresno, CA

Oct. 3; 2-4 p.m.

Fresno Betsuin Buddhist Temple

2690 E. Alluvial Ave.

The Fresno Betsuin is hosting this presentation by the Kansha History Project that documents and celebrates the contributions and accomplishments of Nikkei farmers prior to WWII, a legacy that continues to this day. All are welcome to search for your family record and learn about the scale of Nikkei farming.

Info: RSVP at bit.ly/FresnoKansha.

IDC

2026 National APIAHiP Forum
Denver/Aurora, CO

Sept. 10-13

History Colorado Center

1200 N. Broadway

Price: \$270 General Registration; \$120 Students; \$100 One Day Only

This year's forum will focus on the preservation of Colorado's historical community centers, including Sakura Square, Denver's lost Chinatown, Little Saigon, Amache and more. It will also feature speakers, film screenings and field tours.

Info: Visit <https://apiahip.org/forum-2026>.

MDC

'Reckoning With Redress': A Community Celebration & Project Premiere
Chicago, IL

Sept. 22; 5-8:30 p.m.

Northeastern Illinois University

Alumni Hall, 5500 N St.

Price: Free and Free Parking in Lot F and the Adjacent Garage (PF), Enter From Bryn Mawr Avenue.

Produced by Full Spectrum Features and funded in part by the JACS grant program through the NPS, this is the public launch of "Reckoning With Redress," the third in a trilogy of cinemagic digital history projects on Japanese American history. The evening will include an interactive showcase of the project, a screening of "Enough" and "Reckonings," a live taiko performance and light food and refreshments.

Info: RSVP to <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLStawm13GI-StAFapF8qaDt0JYWOeg611uUf1e-BuYBYFRWaJaYg/viewform>.

'Pokemon Fossil Museum'
Chicago, IL

Thru April 11, 2027

Field Museum

1400 S. DuSable Lake Shore Dr.

Price: Special Event Tickets Required

This one-of-a-kind experience brings together the worlds of Pokemon and paleontology, inviting visitors to compare fossil Pokemon with real-world fossils, including SUE the T.rex.

Info: Visit <https://www.fieldmuseum.org/exhibition/pokemon>.

org/exhibition/pokemon.

EDC

Keiro Kai 2026

Potomac, MD

Sept. 13; Noon-2:30 p.m.

Cabin John Group Picnic Area

7701 Tuckerman Lane

Price: Free for JACL Members; \$15 Nonmembers.

The JACL D.C. chapter invites all to Keiro Kai 2026, an opportunity to honor and show gratitude to community elders. Come enjoy lunch and an afternoon that the entire family can enjoy. Rides from metro will be available.

Info: To purchase tickets, visit <https://www.jacl-dc.org/event-details/jacl-dc-keiro-kai-2026>.

Japanese Celebration Day at Fenway Park Featuring the Red Sox Vs. Cleveland Guardians

Boston, MA

Sept. 22; 6:45 p.m.

Fenway Park

4 Jersey St.

Price: Special Event Ticket Required

Fans who purchase this special event ticket will receive a Japanese Celebration soccer jersey as the team takes on the Cleveland Guardians.

Info: Visit <https://www.mlb.com/redsox/tickets/promotions/cultural-and-identity-celebrations/japanese>.

'The Artistry and Reunion of Two Surimono Albums' Exhibit

Providence, R.I.

Thru Oct. 4

Rhode Island School of Design Museum

20 N. Main St.

Price: Museum Admission

This exhibit explores the stories within two special albums of privately commissioned Japanese woodblock prints that were compiled in Japan in the 1820s-1830s.

Info: Visit <https://risdmuseum.org/exhibitions-events/exhibitions/artistry-and-reunion-two-surimono-albums>.

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In MEMORIAM

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

Abe, James Ichiro, 87, Pearl City, HI, April 19.

Akagi, Judith, 78, Honolulu, HI, April 24.



Akimoto, David Yu, 34, Gardena, CA, May 6.

Arakaki, Harry Koichi, 92, Rosemead, CA, July 18.

Baba, Derek, 71, Honolulu, HI, April 27.

Harada, Masako, 96, Gardena, CA, June 25.

Ishibashi, Ernest Masao, 81, Los Angeles, CA, June 15.

Ishibashi, Roger, 73, Los Angeles, CA, June 15.

Kirihara, Michelle Sachiko, 48, Honolulu, HI, April 19.

Kiyama, Glenn Isao, 92, San Diego, CA, Feb. 13.

Kobayashi, Stanley Masaki, 93, Los Angeles, CA, Jan. 23.



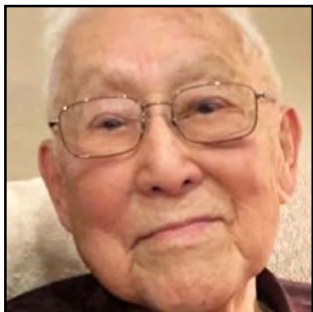
Kobayashi, Marian Sumako, 87, Fremont, CA, April 28.



Kono, Grace Masako Nomura, 99, Torrance, CA, May 24.



Manabe, Hiroko, 92, Blue Bell, PA, May 15.



Matsusaka, Eugene, 99, Tacoma, WA, May 20.



Mishima, Steve, 69, Redondo Beach, CA, June 7.

Morimoto, Martha Miyo, 88, Honolulu, HI, Feb. 18.

Nishimori, Andrea, 78, Santa Maria, CA, May 4.

Niwa, Ujinobu, 99, Brea, CA, April 11.

Ozawa, Hisako, 101, Los Angeles, CA, July 13.

Saito, Fumio, 85, Huntington Station, NY, April 30.

Shishido, Anna, 99, Arleta, CA, June 29.

Takahashi, Patsy Joyce, 85, Perry, Mich., June 22.



Tsukiji, Lori Ann, 70, Sacramento, CA, May 22.

Yates, Ikuko Ando, 87, Sulphur Springs, TX, March 24.

Yokoi, Fred, 96, West Sacramento, CA, March 22.

Yayoi Kusama Dies

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama, (see Dec. 15, 2017, *Pacific Citizen*, tinyurl.com/3t5d8xuul), who splashed her signature polka dots on paintings, sculptures and museum installations around the world, has died, her studio said. She was 97.

Kusama died Aug. 14 at a hospital in Tokyo, Yayoi Kusama Studio said, without specifying the cause of death.

"She continued to paint until her final days, never setting aside her brush, and continued exploration of forever love and eternal soul," the studio's statement said. "We will carry forward Kusama's wishes and, through art, continue to bring hope and strength for the future to people around the world."

Kusama, one of Japan's most-respected contemporary artists, was widely exhibited around the world, including the Museum of Modern Art, the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York and the Museum Ludwig in Germany.

Repetitive motifs were her trademark, in various shapes, resembling netting, swirls or worms, but most often dots, dancing proudly on her canvases, or as sparkling balls or dots of light in her installations, in all their vibrant psychedelic glory.

"Polka dots are fabulous," Kusama said in a 2012 interview with the *Associated Press*, appearing in her signature orange bob wig and polka dot attire.

"I want to create a thousand paintings, maybe two thousand paintings, as many as I can draw," she said in her childlike but matter-of-fact tone. "I will keep painting until I die."

Kusama insisted she drew the way she saw the world: covered with spots, part of the hallucinations she said she had from childhood.

News Briefs

Kara Chu Crowned 2026 Nisei Week Queen; Ai Kusayanagi Is First Princess

Representing the Orange County Nikkei Coordinating Council, Kara Kimiko Chu was named this year's Nisei Week Queen. Ai Grace Kusayanagi (Japanese Restaurant Association of America) received the first princess title. Tapped for Nisei Week princess honors were Emily Kaori Gruhn (Pasadena Japanese Cultural Institute), Deena Maiko Umeda (Venice Japanese Community Center & Venice-West Los Angeles Japanese American Citizens League), Meagan Sueko Pham (San Fernando Valley Japanese American Community Center) and Kailah Julianne Tokushige (Gardena Evening Optimist Club), with Jacqueline Fujiko Naito (East San Gabriel Valley Japanese Community Center) winning Miss Tomodachi.

LTSC, 4th & Central Development Pact on Community Benefits Agreement

The Little Tokyo Service Center's years-long opposition to the redevelopment by the owners of Los Angeles Cold Storage into the megadevelopment known as Fourth & Central that detractors asserted would have a negative impact on Little Tokyo appears to have paid off in the form of concessions. The Community Benefits Agreement would, according to an LTSC news release, provide more Extremely Low-Income (ELI) affordable housing than required under the DTLA 2040 Community Plan; create permanent space for community-serving businesses and organizations rooted in Little Tokyo and Skid Row; establish a dedicated community investment fund to support neighborhood priorities over the long term; and create new safeguards and public oversight for alcohol permits and protection of public health, including creation of an Alcohol Advisory Group. LTSC also said the developer agreed to limit the height and density of the buildings.

Declared Insane, Man Who Killed, Dismembered Mother Found Not Guilty

Facing a maximum term of life in confinement, David Hoetzlein, 25, of Camarillo, Calif., will be placed in a maximum-security state mental hospital for treatment after having been found not guilty by reason of insanity for the 2022 slaying and dismemberment of his mother, Tomoko Hoetzlein, 62, and then putting her remains in a dumpster. David Hoetzlein admitted to the killing while in court on Aug. 13.

Hawaii: Five Indicted on Charges Including Bribery, Obstruction of Justice

An Oahu grand jury on July 24 indicted Hawaii Lt. Gov. Sylvia Luke, former Human Services Director Ryan Yamane, former budget analyst for the Senate Committee on Ways and Means Ford Fuchigami, former PUC Chair and Luke campaign treasurer Leo Asuncion Jr. and businessman Toby Solidum on charges including "bribery, campaign finance violations, false statements and obstruction of justice." The five are accused of having used campaign donations and other funds to obtain continued state funding for Solidum's COVID-19 testing operations.

DoJ: Tax Preparer Gets 27-Month-Prison Term For Filing False Returns

U.S. District Judge Sherilyn Peace Garnett on Aug. 6 sentenced Ann Quach, 50, of Thousand Oaks, Calif., to 27 months in federal prison for filing more than 1,700 false tax returns, according to the U.S. Department of Justice. Quach, who on Feb. 18 pleaded guilty to one count of aiding in the preparation of false tax returns and one count of wire fraud, was also ordered by the judge to pay \$6,481,731 in restitution. In other DoJ news, on Aug. 28, Chinese nationals Yang Song, 39, of Corona, Calif., and illegal immigrant Wenhui Huang, 41, of Chino Hills, Calif., were sentenced to federal prison for leading a large-scale scheme to defraud Apple Inc. through the fraudulent "returns" of thousands of counterfeit Apple devices totalling some \$16.2 million in losses.

— P.C. Staff

PLACE A TRIBUTE

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

Tributes honor your loved ones with text and photos and appear in a timely manner at the rate of \$25/column inch.

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Gerald Fukui
President

**JANM » continued
from page 9**

and George Takei, along with the StoryFile of Lawson Ichiro Sakai, previously on view. Using AI technology to draw from hours of real, recorded interviews, StoryFiles provide a realistic, conversational experience of engaging with Japanese American concentration camp survivors and veterans to ensure that the history of Japanese Americans during WWII are preserved for generations to come.

The Kosasa Education Center

The second floor will also include the new Kosasa Education Center that consists of two flexible, 45-seat classrooms that can be combined into one classroom for larger groups or public programs. The classrooms will support JANM's school visit programs that serve more than 14,000 K-12 students every year with curriculum-based lessons on Japanese American history.

Beginning Jan. 23, 2027, JANM will be open Tuesday-Sunday, 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and until 8 p.m. on Fridays. To learn more, visit janm.org.

Minoru Yasui Featured in 'Power of Words'

His legacy is now featured in one of the signature installations at the new Obama Presidential Center Museum.

PORTLAND — Another honor has been bestowed on Oregon-born attorney Minoru Yasui, whose life-long commitment to civil rights, democracy and justice for all earned him the honor of the first Oregonian to receive the Presidential Medal of Freedom and have March 28 designated in perpetuity as Minoru Yasui Day in Oregon.

According to the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project, Yasui's legacy is now featured in "Power of Words," one of the signature storytelling installations at the Obama Presidential Center Museum in Chicago.

Rising 88 feet through all four levels of the museum, "Power of Words" is a monumental digital experience that explores the power of speeches, voices, poetry, music and language to inspire, empower and connect people in the pursuit of social progress.

The featured footage of Yasui comes from a 1986 guest lecture he delivered to students in an Asian American Studies course at the University of California, San Diego — one of the first Asian American

Studies courses in the U.S.

In the footage featured at the Obama Presidential Center, Yasui reflects on the responsibility of every citizen to stand against injustice:

"But this is the UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, founded in liberty, dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. And this was happening in our country. As an American citizen, as a lawyer, I felt that we owed at least the obligation AS A CITIZEN to tell our government THEY ARE WRONG. That is the sacred duty of every citizen, because what is done to the least of us can be done to all of us. I KNEW that we had to protest it."

The archival footage was originally featured in the documentary "Never Give Up! Minoru Yasui and the Fight for Justice." Working in collaboration with the Obama Foundation, MYLP helped connect the foundation with retired Professor Jim Lin of UCSD to obtain permission for the footage and provided the clip featured in the exhibit.

"Min's picture at the top of the Obama Presidential Center's 88-foot

exhibit brings tears of joy," said Peggy Nagae, co-founder of the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project. "It's a powerful recognition that he was an extraordinary person — willing to speak up and act on what is right, regardless of the personal cost. As Min said, 'When you suppress or oppress any group of people, you are really derogating the rights of all people.' Min knew at a deep level that shaking up the status quo was necessary, and he was willing to do just that. He knowingly put his personal liberty and professional career at risk. That's extraordinary."

Born in Hood River, Ore., Yasui is known for his courageous stand on March 28, 1942, against the wartime military curfew imposed under Executive Order 9066 — a defining act of protest against the unconstitutional policies that led to the mass incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans and people of Japanese ancestry



The "Power of Words" installation featuring Yasui at the Obama Presidential Center Museum in Chicago.



Min Yasui in his office circa the 1980s

PHOTOS: COURTESY OF THE MINORU YASUI LEGACY PROJECT

during World War II. Yasui's stand became a defining moment in the pursuit of constitutional rights and equal justice.

Elsewhere in the museum, Yasui is also recognized among the recipients of the Presidential Medal of Freedom awarded during the Obama administration.

Honoring his unwavering commitment to justice, President Barack Obama posthumously awarded Yasui the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015, calling his life "a reminder of the power of one voice echoing for justice."

To learn more about the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project, visit www.minoruyasuilegacy.org. To learn more about the Obama Foundation and Obama Presidential Center, visit www.obama.org.

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