

CCDC Marks a Memorable, Rewarding and Event-Filled 2015

Roberta Barton, Governor, Central California District Council

Central California JACL was busy in 2015. Our year kicked off with another successful Day of Remembrance event that featured redress pioneer and icon John Tateishi. His powerful story recounting the roots of redress was especially touching for our Muslim friends in the audience. Many were unaware of the incarceration and redress history. Several individuals approached me afterward to express their appreciation for the JACL's continuing support over the years.

Our future leadership was recognized in the spring at the annual scholarship luncheon. These scholars demonstrate an outstanding commitment to the ideals of JACL and to applying those ideals for the betterment of their communities. It is always an honor and inspiration to witness the amazing accomplishments of our youth.

One of the most memorable activities this year was a special trip to the MIS Museum at the Presidio. The CCDC Board treated our local Nisei veterans to a delicious bento lunch followed by a behind-the-scenes look at the MIS Museum that honors their sacrifices at home and abroad. It seems that every month we unfortunately mourn the passing of many of our courageous veterans, which made this trip an especially poignant occasion.

I attended my first-ever JACL National Convention in 2015. It was quite an eye-opening experience, as I learned how much time, energy and dedication it takes from a huge contingent of chapter, district and national members and staff to execute all the important convention business. I was especially speechless witnessing the passion of our youth leaders. Our future is definitely in GREAT hands!

The year concluded with CCDC sponsoring an exciting exhibit for a new Fresno County Historical Museum at the Big Fresno Fair. The exhibit highlights the contributions of Central California Japanese Americans and lies only steps away from the Fresno Assembly Center Memorial. Through the efforts of volunteer docents, fair goers were educated about wartime incarceration and local Japanese American history. The Museum and our exhibit are permanent additions to be expanded over time.

These are the moments that make me most proud to serve JACL, locally and at the national level. In the Issei and Nisei pioneers who paved the way for my Sansei generation and in the youth poised to carry the torch for generations afterward, I see the

JACL hard at work.

I'm sure that 2016 will be busier than ever. Our CCDC will be well-represented at the Leadership Summit in Washington, D.C., this winter. Our Day of Remembrance will join the national effort to support the Smithsonian exhibit commemorating the 70th anniversary of E.O. 9066 in 2017. District delegates will be out in force at the National Convention this summer with many critical decisions and discussions on the table for their insights and perspectives. We hope to organize another field trip for our Nisei veterans, possibly to one of the national park incarceration sites in California. Of course, we will continue with our annual veteran's observance on Memorial Day.

CCDC will also begin a three-year assignment in 2016 to coordinate nonfreshmen National Scholarships. While this task may seem like quite a daunting responsibility, I truly believe it is one of our most important functions. Not too long ago, I was pleased to welcome a former scholarship recipient as a new chapter board member. Supporting our youth is the first step to growing future potential leadership, even if it takes a number of years for a seedling to grow into JACL service.

In my "sophomore" year as a district governor, I want to thank all of my dedicated (and probably exhausted) fellow district board members for helping me "learn on the job." It is often challenging but always rewarding. Your patience with my inexperience has helped me survive this first leadership year without too many battle scars and given me great encouragement.

I also want to encourage the CCDC membership at large to share their concerns and feedback at any time. It is an honor and a privilege to serve you. Thank you for the opportunity.