

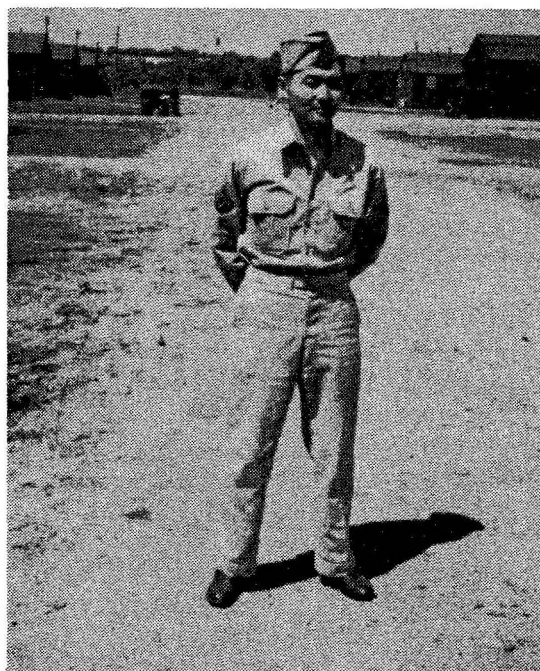
# FOOTPRINTS

*Impressions from where we were to where we will be*

The Newsletter For The Japanese American Historical Society Of San Diego

SUMMER Issue 2000

Volume 9 Number 2



Cpl. Toshio Abe at Camp Savage, Minn., in 1943

## TOSHIO ABE: A Merrill's Marauder

By Al Zdon

(Rewritten by permission of Minnesota American Legion and Auxiliary Legionnaire)

Toshio Abe grew up in San Diego, went to local schools and attended California colleges. His family was fairly well-to-do as his dad, Tokunosuke Abe, owned a fleet of fishing boats. Life looked good for Tosh Abe.

In 1940, though, when he was 21 years old, his father died. Abe quit school and went home to take care of his mother. A few months later, he was drafted into the Army.

Then, Dec. 7, 1941. Pearl Harbor.

In April, 1942, his mother, his brother and his brother's wife, along with about 2,000 other San Diegans, were evacuated and taken, first to the Santa Anita Assembly Center and then, in August, to Poston, Ariz.

Abe faced the strange dilemma of so many Japanese Americans during WWII. His country had put his family behind barbed wire encampments in the interest of national security. At the same time, his country expected him to fight a war.

Then, for Tosh, it was on to Camp Savage, Minn.

### Language Proficiency is Modest

Toshio William "Bill" Abe's parents had emigrated from Japan and the family spoke Japanese around the house. Still, Abe's proficiency with the language was modest and part of his training at Camp Savage was to beef up his Japanese language skills.

If he had stayed in college at UCLA, he probably would have been deferred from the draft in 1940 but because he went home to take care of his mother, he received his "greetings" from Uncle Sam.

"I claimed a hardship but that didn't work," Abe said in his Bloomington, Minn., home. "On April 2, 1941, I was in the Army."

He and other Japanese Americans were sent to a medical unit.

"We approached them and said we'd like to get into combat units but they told us we were adapted by nature to do medical work. That was a lot of baloney. It was segregation."

When war was declared Dec. 8, 1941, Abe and the rest of the Army's Seventh Division took up defensive positions along the California coast expecting a Japanese attack at any time. Abe was at Morro Bay near San Luis Obispo.

see Toshio Abe page 2

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Toshio Abe standing by Bronze Plaque at Camp Savage - 1993

"The most exciting thing that happened was that a Japanese sub sank a ship out in the bay. We went out and rescued about 25 guys and brought them into the local Army hospital."

Meanwhile, the Army was pondering what to do with the Japanese American soldiers. Some were sent to language school at The Presidio of San Francisco. Abe and his group were sent by train to Camp Wolters, Tex.

#### Crushing Rocks

"We hauled garbage and we used sledge hammers to crush rocks for parking lots. Some were lucky enough to get clerical jobs."

Abe said one nice change was that Texans didn't treat the Japanese Americans with the same prejudice as he had experienced in California.

"The people in town treated us well, but it was when we got back to camp that we had a hard time," Abe said. "The noncoms picked on us but that was more or less what we expected."

Many of the Japanese American soldiers' families had been taken from their homes and sent to internment camps. Abe said most of his friends took the news philosophically.

"Our attitude was that it was happening and there wasn't much we could do about it," he said. "It didn't affect our job in the service. We wanted to prove to America that we were just as much Americans as anybody else

"But we didn't get bitter. Even the people who

went to the camps didn't get bitter and it doesn't prevail today. It may be a Japanese cultural philosophy of 'it can't be helped.'"

#### Rumors Are Flying

There were a lot of rumors in camp that the Nisei would be sent to intelligence schools. In mid-1942, Abe got his orders to report to Camp Savage.

A former CCC camp, the rustic cluster of building southwest of the Twin Cities eventually hosted thousands of Japanese American soldiers before the school was shifted to Fort Snelling.

The Army had pondered where to locate the school. One reason it was situated in Minnesota was because Gov. Harold Stassen welcomed the school to the state.

"The test they used was to ask the questions: 'What would happen at a given location if 175 Japanese Americans in uniform suddenly hit the downtown area, what would the reaction be?' The Twin Cities had the least negatives.

"To this day, I can't believe the reception we got. It was very cordial. People didn't stand and stare at us at all. It was like night and day from where I came from."

Abe does remember that the temperatures were a little extreme for the Japanese American student, most of whom were from California or Hawaii.

"When the temperature hit 35 below, I raised my hands to heaven and said 'I'll never spend another winter here.' And now, I've lived here more than 50 years."

#### In Like Flynn

Abe found himself at the lowest rung of the school, along with most of the Japanese Americans who had been sent there.

"My mom tried to teach me reading and writing Japanese, but, you know, when your mom's teaching you things, you don't always pay too much attention. They were so desperate for linguists, we used to say all you needed was have black hair, slant eyes and be bow-legged and you were in like Flynn."

Abe graduated from the first class at Camp Savage but when the rest of his group got orders, mainly to places in the Pacific, Alaska or Asia, Abe was left behind. He waited for orders but no orders were forthcoming.

#### Still A Suspect

After a few months, Abe finally asked those in charge, "What's the problem?"

"They told me I still was suspect," Abe said.

It turned out that his father's fishing fleet had been under military intelligence scrutiny for years because it mainly employed Japanese nationals. The suspicion level was heightened because his father also was a photography enthusiast.

In addition, when his family was interned, federal agents went through the home and turned up a

*See Toshio Abe page 15*

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**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**June 24, 2000 - JACL Kids Culture Day**  
Buddhist Temple of S.D. 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.  
Information Janis Tani (619) 482-1048  
(pre-registration required)

**July 9, 2000 - JACL Picnic**  
Crown Point Shores Mission Bay - 11 a.m. to Dusk

**July 15, 2000 - 10th Poston Reunion Meeting**  
Buddhist Temple of S.D. 9:00 a.m.

**July 30, 2000 - Obon Service**  
Buddhist Temple of S.D. - 10:00 a.m.  
Obon Service at Mt. Hope - 8 a.m.  
Hatsubon Service - 9:00 a.m.

**August 4, 2000 - S.D. Japanese Christian Church 70th Anniversary Dinner**  
1st Assembly of God Church - Service  
(for information call SDJCC)

**August 5, 2000 - Obon Odori**  
Buddhist Temple of S.D. - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

**September 3, 2000 - Ocean View UCC Bazaar**  
Ocean View UCC - 11:00a.m.

**October 21, 2000 - Annual JAHSSD Meeting**  
Buddhist Temple of S.D. 11:00 a.m.  
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**IN GRATITUDE**

The membership and the Board of Directors of the JAHSSD would like to gratefully acknowledge the following memorial donations to your historical society.

**Ichiro "Cheri" and Mitzi Takehara (Footprints)**  
in memory of Mrs. Ei Takehara  
**Don and Carol Estes** in memory of Mrs. Miyako Tomita  
**Don and Carol Estes** in memory of Miss Hazel Ito  
**Don and Carol Estes** in memory of Mr. Frank E. Matsumoto

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

In case you missed it, following **Elaine Hibi Bowers** resigning as president, I have been asked to serve as interim president to complete the remainder of her term. I would like to personally thank Elaine for her true dedication and deep concern for our organization. The intensity and energy which she gave to the **JAHSSD** is now being directed to her personal and family needs. In time, it is hoped that she will seriously consider returning to our board so that we can continue to fulfill our goals and commitment to you.

As interim president, I have represented the **JAHSSD** at the May 29 community Memorial Day service presenting a wreath at Mt. Hope Cemetery and attended the San Diego City Council meeting May 30 to accept on behalf of the board and community a proclamation honoring the May 31 premiere screening of our video, "*Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans and World War II*," at the San Diego Public Library. The board and I thank all of you who responded so quickly and so generously to the project committee's urgent request to help finance the over-run on this project. The goal has been met, *domo arigato*.

As an Ad Hoc committee, our organization is actively supporting the June 1-3, 2000, 10th **Poston III Reunion**, remembering that our original concept and creation came from the overwhelming response to our 1991 **Poston III Reunion**.

**Jeanne Marumoto Elyea**  
President

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**IN MEMORIAM**

The JAHSSD notes with great sadness the passing of San Diegans and former residents of our community. We extend our heartfelt condolences to their families and friends.

Fusako Tsumagari **HIGASHIOKA** -February 11, 2000  
Richard H. **COURTENAYE** - March 4, 2000  
Nobuko T. **NAKAMURA** - March 8, 2000  
Miyako **TOMITA** - April 11, 2000  
Hazel **ITO** -April 13, 2000  
Frank E. **MATSUMOTO** - April 29, 2000  
Shigenori **TSURUDOME** - April 30, 2000  
Chitose (Chet) **NAKANO** - May 2, 2000  
Agnes Masaye **KISHI** - May 2000  
Bessie Wada **DOIGUCHI** - May 18, 2000  
Glenn **HORIUCHI** - June 3, 2000

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## **"Democracy Premiere" a Roaring Success**

Over 300 members and friends of the JAHSSD gathered May 31st at the downtown San Diego Public Library for the premiere screening of the video, **Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans in World War II**.

A standing room only audience was welcomed by **Joyce Nabeta Teague**, chairwoman for the evening. After a brief welcome Joyce introduced special guests, **Diane Matsuda**, Program Director for the **California Civil Liberties Public Education Program**, who had flown in from Sacramento to be with us and **Amy Rouillard**, local Program Officer for the **California Council for the Humanities**, who represented one of our funding partners for the evening's reception. Another of our funding partners was represented by **Vernon Yoshioka**, Executive Director of the **San Diego Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League**.

Following a welcome by **Mrs. Helga Moore**, Deputy Director of the **San Diego Public Library** who graciously hosted our premiere presentation, the screening took place.

Because of the interest in the program a second showing immediately followed to allow those who were unable to be seated at the first presentation to have an opportunity to view the video.

At the conclusion of the second screening, approximately a hundred people reconvened in the auditorium to take part in a lively question and answer session. For the next fifty minutes, a panel moderated by **Debra Kodama**, one of the video's co-producers, and consisting of Professors **Susan Hasegawa**, and **Don Estes**, and interneers, **Ruth Takahashi Voorhies** and **Ben Segawa** fielded questions from the audience.

A number of questions came from local high school students who had been especially invited to the premiere. At the conclusion of the program, a Nisei who had been interned reported hearing one of the students say to the group he was with, "Gee, I never knew the Japanese had been locked up."

Which is, of course, what our video and society are all about - education.

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## **We Could Never Have Done It Without YOU!!!**

by

**Don Estes** - Executive Director

**Susan Hasegawa** - Project Manager

Words alone cannot express our deep gratitude and appreciation to each and every one of you who were able to assist us in completing the video, **Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans and World War II**. The public viewing on May 31st at the downtown San Diego Public Library was a great success because of the dedication and hard work of a great many people.

Because of your help, our production team had the resources necessary to produce a high-quality video which relates the story of relocation and resettlement from the San Diego perspective. For over a year and a half, our production team spent literally thousands of hours completing video and the accompanying teacher curriculum materials.

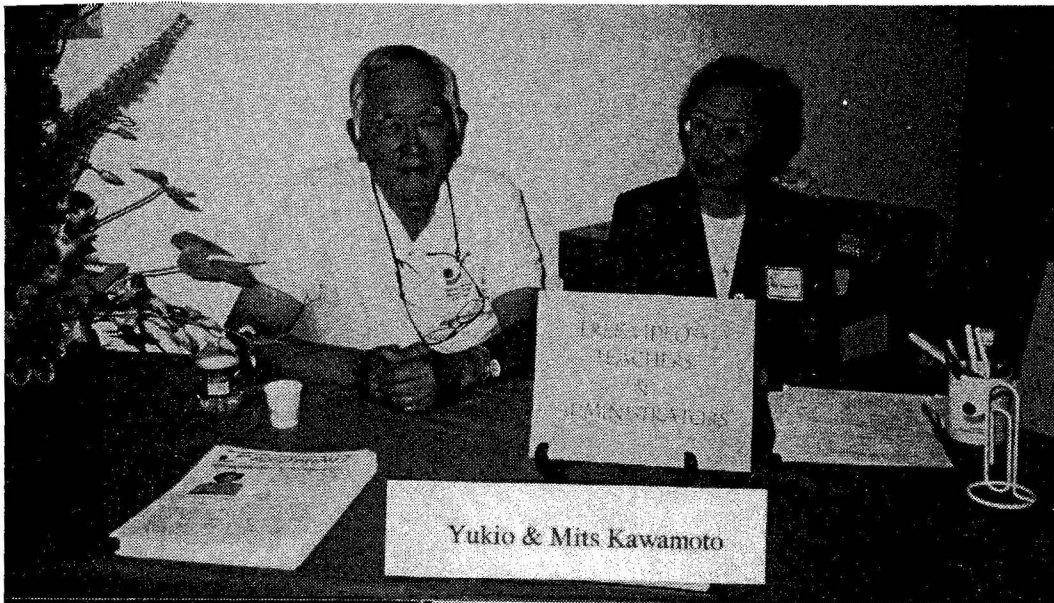
When we realized that we were going to experience a budget shortfall, we reluctantly turned to the community for support and you responded magnificently, without question or hesitation. Within a scant three weeks, we had reached the goal that we set.

Your generosity allowed us to provide for an extra day of shooting in our schedule, add to and improve the quality of the video's graphics, upgrade the sound and music tracks and expand the motion picture archival footage we utilized. Just to provide a reference point, our use of the archival footage ran ten dollars a second.

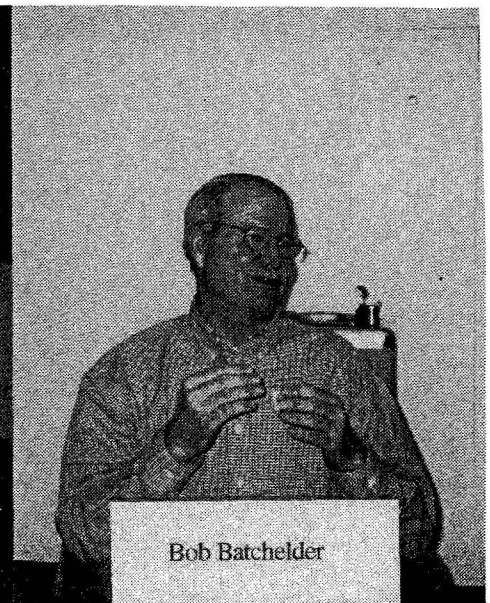
While we were relieved to know that we could finish the project as we had originally envisioned it, we also knew that our team, now more than ever, had incurred a major obligation to our community to turn out a top quality production. We believe we have met that expectation and we hope you will agree with us. We are now well on our way to bringing the Nikkei story; our story, to the history classrooms of San Diego County. None, of this however, would have been possible without you and your support.

From all the members of our team, *Korewa goteinei ni osoreimasu*. We are indeed, much obliged to you for your generosity.





Yukio & Mits Kawamoto



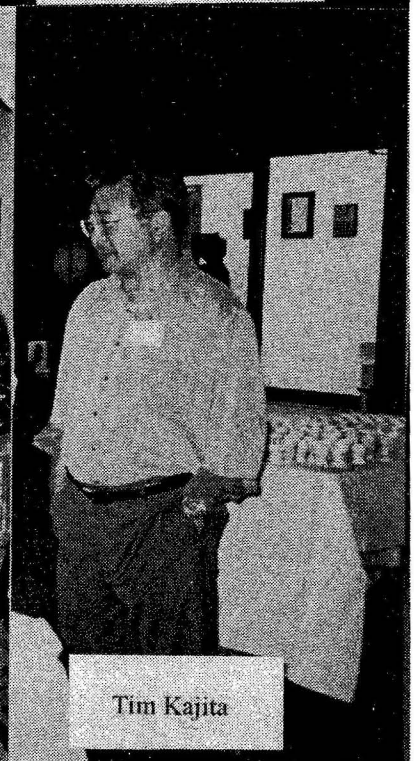
Bob Batchelder



Rev. Tesshu Aoyama  
Buddhist Temple of S.D.



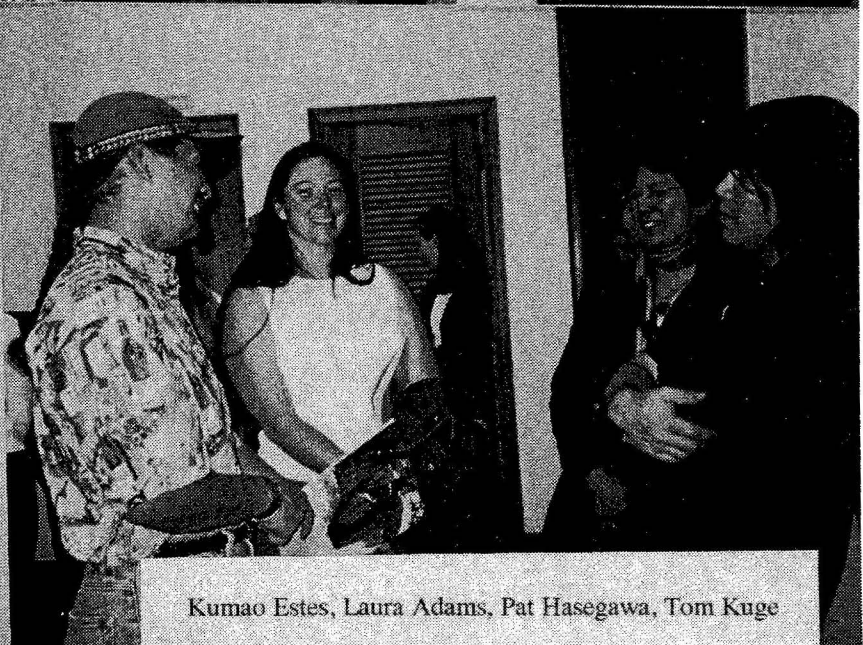
Miyo Hill, Tom Yanagihara



Tim Kajita



Bert & Jean Kuge



Kumao Estes, Laura Adams, Pat Hasegawa, Tom Kuge

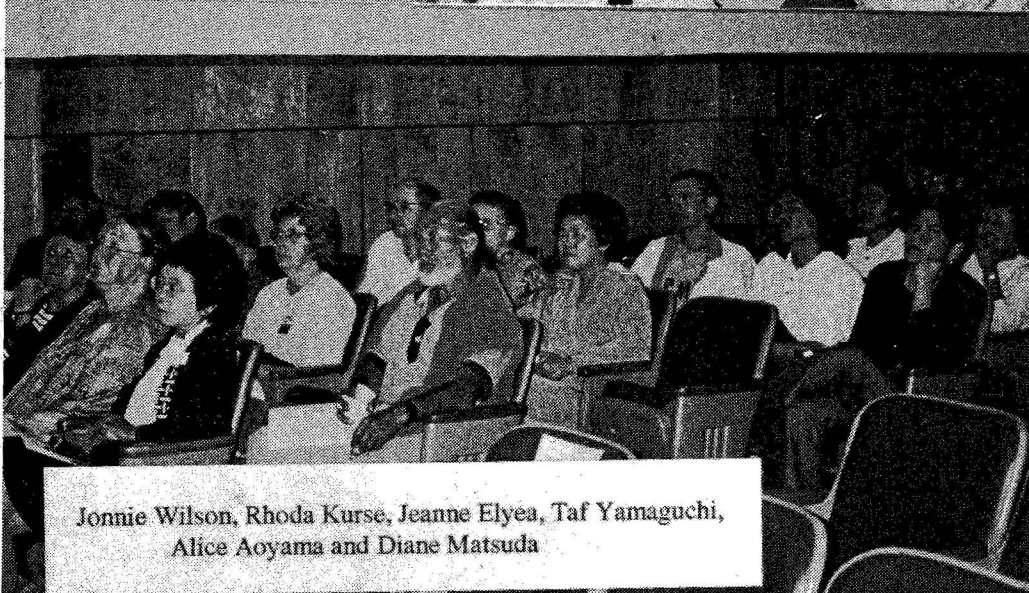




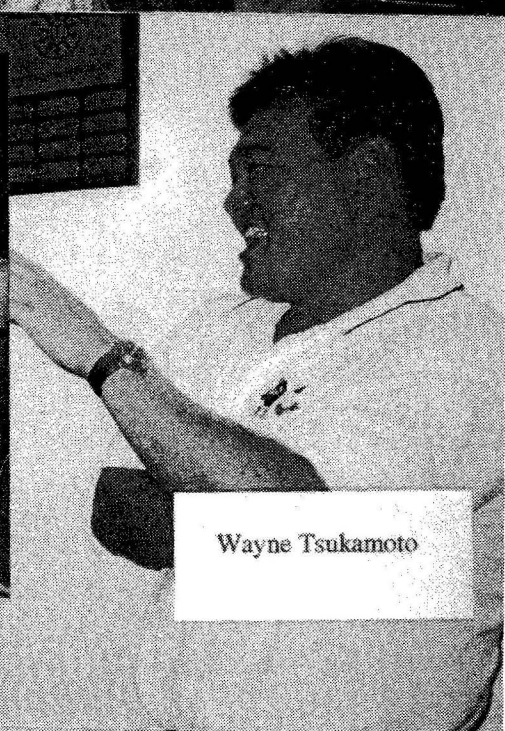
Nancy Martinez & Karen Kawasaki



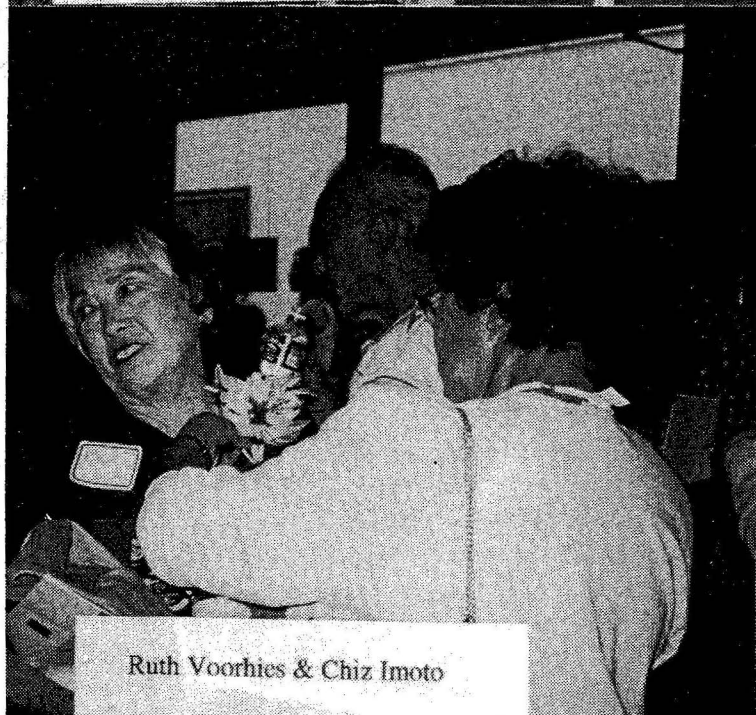
Helga Moore Deputy Director  
San Diego Public Library



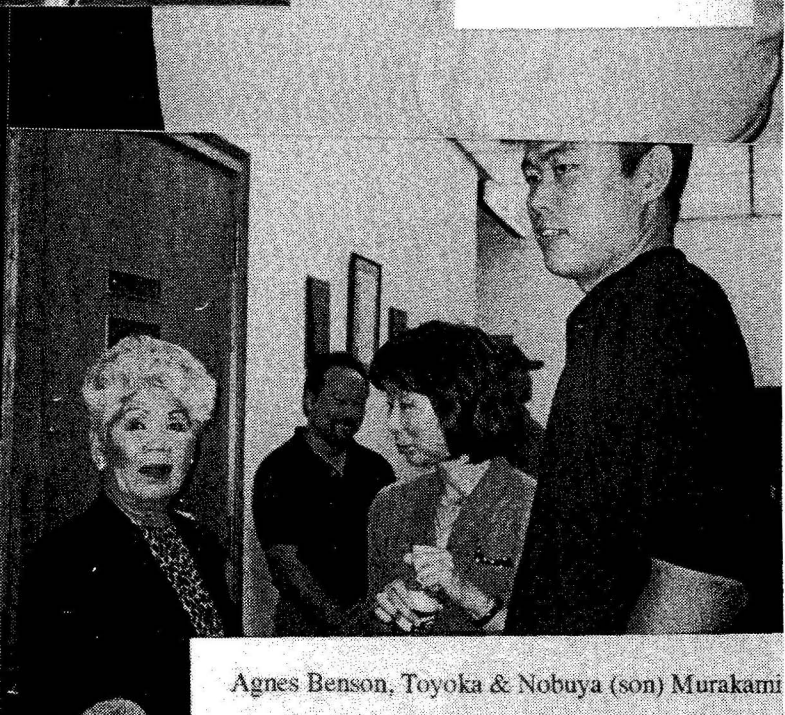
Jonnie Wilson, Rhoda Kurse, Jeanne Elyea, Taf Yamaguchi,  
Alice Aoyama and Diane Matsuda



Wayne Tsukamoto

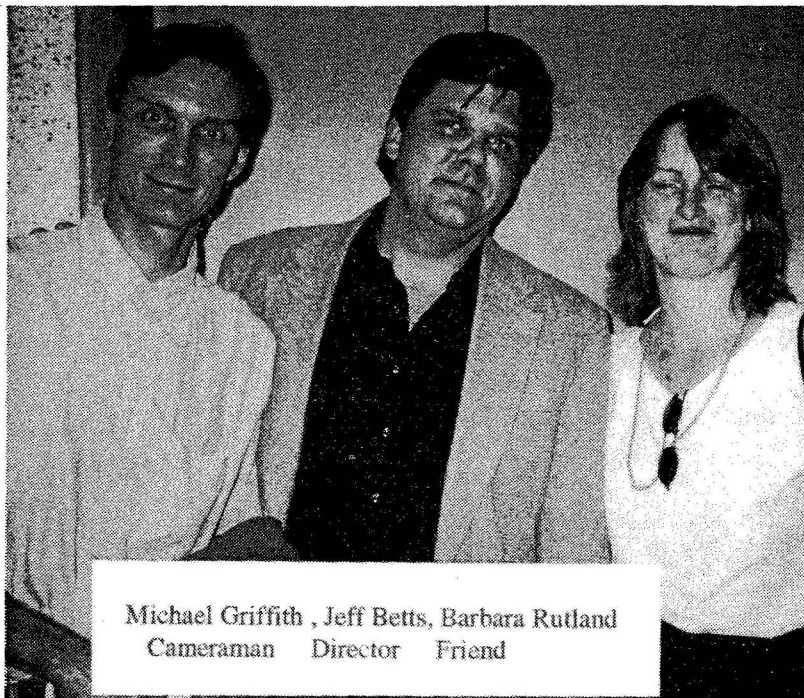


Ruth Voorhies & Chiz Imoto

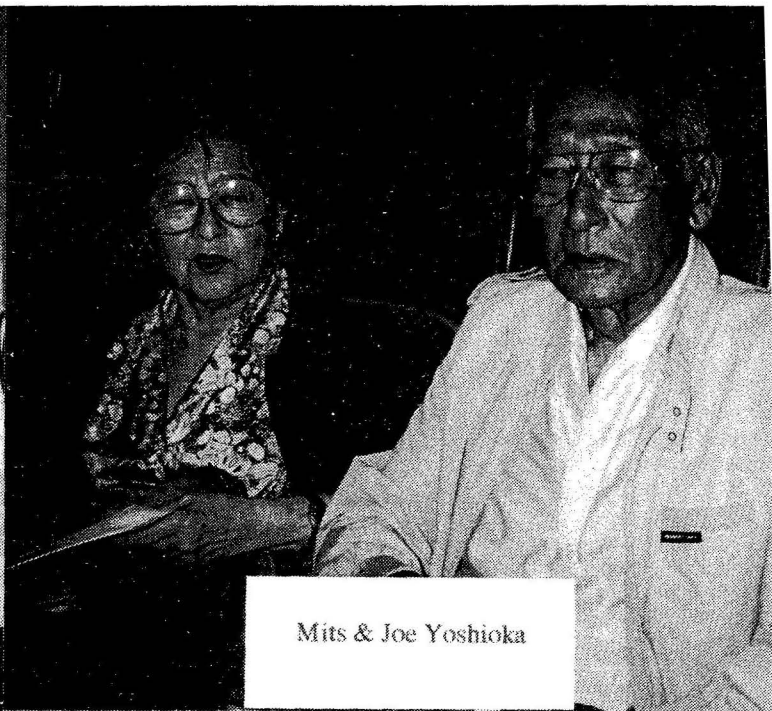


Agnes Benson, Toyoka & Nobuya (son) Murakami





Michael Griffith , Jeff Betts, Barbara Rutland  
Cameraman Director Friend



Mits & Joe Yoshioka



Karen Kawasaki & Leng Loh  
Curriculum Coordinator Co-Producer



Panel members for question and answer session



Joyce Teague with resolution from City of San Diego



Jeanne Elyea with proclamation from county board



# THANK YOU!!!

JAHSSD gratefully acknowledges the following individuals whose generous donations ensured the completion of *DEMOCRACY UNDER PRESSURE*:

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El Camino Memorial Park  
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Ruth & Steven Fujimoto  
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Umeko Kawamoto

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Roy Kusumoto  
Shizue Maruyama  
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Glen Masumoto  
Jodi Masumoto  
Taro Matsui  
Frank Matsumoto  
Ken & Akiko Matsumoto  
Kiyoko Matsumoto  
Yoshio Matsumoto  
Ray K. & Theresa Mayeda  
Chieko L. Moriyama  
Hatsune Mukai  
Fred & Ritsu Nabeta  
Gray S. & Fumiko Nakamoto  
Hiomi & Marie Nakamura  
Pauline & Isamu Nakamura  
Yoshie Nakashima  
Dr. Tommy & Kazuko Nakayama  
Susan & Richard Namba  
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Ken Nishi  
Charles & Jane Ogino  
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Shigeru & June Oto  
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K. J. & Yoshiko Takashima  
Theresa & Wayne Takasugi  
John & Kiyo Takemoto  
Jane Takeshita  
Hiroshi & Emiko Takusagawa  
Mitsue Tanaka  
Tyler & Peggy Tanaka  
Ikuko Taniguchi  
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Bill & Joyce Teague  
Mrs. George Terusaki  
Mitsuo Tomita  
Masaru Tsuida  
Sue Tsushime  
Motoo & Angie Tsuneyoshi  
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Shigenori & Peggy Tsurudome  
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Helen C. Umekubo  
Kenneth & Sierra Uyeda  
Matotsugu K. & Masako A. Uyeji  
Saburo S. Uyeji  
William R. & Cora L. Vetter  
Ruth Voorhies  
Frank & Jean Wada  
Takeko Wakiji  
(in memory of Akira Shima)  
Arnold Watanabe  
Shizu Watanabe  
Duncan & Yukiko Woo  
Yukie Yagade  
Chiye Yagi  
Elizabeth & Joe Yamada  
Mitsuye L. & Wayne N. Yamamoto  
Mrs. Florence Yamashita  
Shig & June Yamashita  
Tom & Sumi Yanagihara  
Joe & Mitsuko Yoshioka

## ***The Oni Made 'Em Do It?***

By Joyce Teague

Well, not exactly. It was "**Democracy**" that drew an overflow crowd at the premiere showing of the long-awaited videotaped documentary on May 31.

The San Diego Public Library unveiling prompted a double debut of what was initially titled "**The Day The Devil Wept.**"

Comments heard as those in attendance emerged from the showing were very positive ranging from "a nice job" to "very well done." Overall, the video was very well received.

Now, what the heck happened to *The Devil*?

Almost right up the the final deadline, we shouted, mark your calendars! Tell your friends: JAHSSD's documentary, "**The Day The Devil Wept,**" is about to hit the screens! A few months ago, we made a last-minute appeal for donations to help us complete the production. Help "**The Devil,**" we cried, and dozens of you generously responded with generous checks.

Then our postcards invitations were sent out in late April. A thousand were printed up. Hundreds of flyers were disseminated by JAHSSD and the San Diego Public Library. Publicity packets went out to various media in May. And all of this suddenly referred to a documentary called, "**Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans and World War II.**"

Well, what on earth had happened to "**The Devil?**"

### ***The Devil Is Born***

Early 1999. The REgenerations oral history team tosses around ideas on how to use the internment and resettlement stories told by community members for local history lessons. The decision: a videotaped documentary.

A new generation of young San Diegans could learn about the internment and its lessons as told by San Diegans who were just kids themselves as World War II broke out. History will come alive to young minds mostly interested in their world, the here and the now.

Our difficult task? How to make a kid think about what it must have been like to be uprooted from home, school, friends and bound for an unknown destiny, perhaps never to return home. Accomplish that and we would succeed in conveying the social and emotional upheaval that was the internment experience.

From there, it would be a short step to discussing the socio-political reasons behind internment and another short step to the ultimate lesson -- no group is immune to abuses of its constitutional rights.

Hells Bells! *The Devil* or Trevor Time?

In San Diego, in a pinch, the bells toll and they call it Trevor Time. For the committee, we call it Estes Time. When it came time to seek funding for the

proposed documentary, we needed to nail down specifics, like what to call the project. A couple of dozen ideas came and went. *Pieces of a Dream, A Dream Broken, A thousand Paths Home: A Japanese American Journey, East of Paradise -- West of Parker, The Nikkei Diaspora* and others.

Prof. Don Estes suggested a name based on a Japanese saying: *Oni no me nimo namio*, or "tears in the eyes of the Devil." Some acts, Don explained, are so regrettable that they will cause even the Devil to weep. The team majority liked the idea and we liked Don's suggested title, ***The Day The Devil Wept.*** The Devil's Team was born.

### ***The Devil Lives!***

We knew grants to educate Californians about internment were available through the **California Civil Liberties Public Education Program (CCLPEP)** because the REgenerations oral history project was funded this way.

Leng Loh and Debra Kodama, team members with the most production experience, put together a list of resources needed to produce a professional quality documentary and approximate costs. Leng estimated an \$80,000 budget! We put our heads together and clarified our goals in writing for the complicated application process. We garnered support for the proposal from both the San Diego Public Library and several Nikkei organizations, wrote up our proposal and mailed it off with fingers crossed.

A year ago last May, we received notice we had been awarded a grant for \$30,000 less than we requested. With a commitment to the project and determination to find additional funding, we embarked on the project.

One year, many, many hours of hard work, a like-minded dedication by the production team and the result? A documentary just short of 30 minutes, scripted, filmed, edited, reviewed and completed in early May as "**The Day The Devil Wept.**"

### ***Down With The Devil***

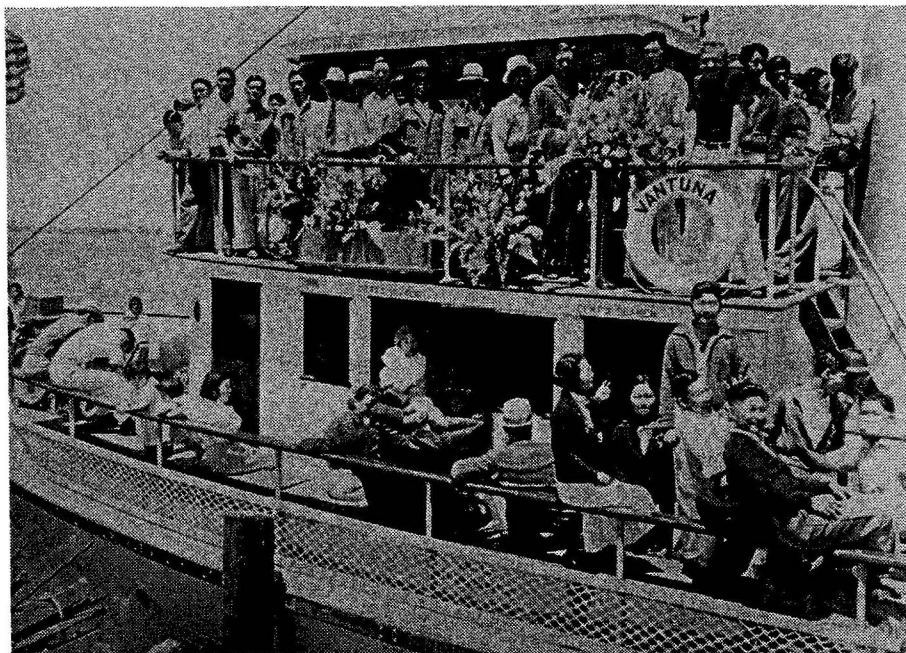
In the final editing stages, Director Jeff Betts, Debbie and Leng decided the catchy original title was more burden than blessing. With so many changes and much editing, there was nothing thematic to tie the "**Devil**" phrase to the material onscreen.

Teachers searching for the video might have problems connecting "**The Devil**" title to World War II, Japanese Americans or constitutional issues. There was fear the tape might be mistaken for a video about the occult.

So, "**The Devil**" was jettisoned and renamed "**Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans and World War II.**"

The name change may have confused some supporters, especially those who so generously donated the funds that allowed the committee to complete the documentary under its former title.

Dare I say, the *oni* made us do it?



*The maiden voyage of the Vantuna one of the world's largest tuna clippers in 1937, with local Nikkei community as guests.*

### A Moment in Time: Classic Photographs From the JAHSSD Archive by Don Estes

When she was launched in April, 1936, the *San Diego Union* reported that she was the largest tuna clipper in the world. Everything about the *Vantuna* seemed larger than life 102 feet in length, 300 tons in weight with a then unheard of cruising range of 6,000 miles. She had been built by the San Diego Marine Construction Company at a cost of 80,000 depression era dollars and was truly a symbol of America's modern fishing technology.

The *Vantuna* was the pride of the fleet of local tuna boats that had been built for **Tokunosuke Abe's** Southern Commercial Company. After her launching in April, the entire fishing community had been invited to visit the new boat and take a tour of the bay. Just before the clipper cast off, some unknown photographer took the shot accompanying this article.

With the help of **Mr. Toshio Abe** of Bloomington, Minnesota, we've been able to identify some of the people shown in the photograph on the main deck.

The young woman settling on the rail is Tosh's cousin, **Mitsue Aizumi**, who would later marry **Bert Tanaka**. Bert, a member of the 100th Infantry Battalion would go on to win the Silver Star Medal and a battlefield commission in Italy. Next to Mitsue and facing the camera is **Anna Morikawa** who was active in the Japanese Congregational Church and who

graduated from San Diego State in 1937-38. Anna's brother **George**, smiling in the dark sweater, is setting on the rail at the right. George graduated from Cal Tech in 1939 but like many Nikkei college graduates of this period was unable find a job in California. Later, George went to Illinois Tech and received his masters degree and later his Ph.D.

Standing next to Anna is **Toshio Abe** and directly in front of Toshio is **Joe Sakamoto**. Standing to Toshio's left and just behind George Morikawa with his head turned is **George Asakawa** who was also a 1939 honor graduate of Cal Tech. Like George Morikawa, he too was unable to find work in California commensurate with his education and eventually found a job in New York City with a Japanese company and later settled in Yellow Spring, Ohio. The last

person on the far right next to the rail and slightly out of focus is believed to be **Take Taniguchi**, whose father, **Takezo**, founded a fishing supply company that still serves San Diego fishermen.

Upon seeing this same photograph one of our other interview subjects mentioned that alcoholic drinks were flowing freely that same day. He further stated that some of the young men climbed to the crows nest for a better view of the days festivities. While the view was great, the rocking of the boat caused the young men to become ill and they punctuated the day by throwing up on some of those on the deck.

On July 16, 1936, less than twenty-four hours after the ship left San Diego on her maiden voyage, she capsized off Ensenada, Baja California. None of the fifteen men aboard the *Vantuna* (twelve of whom were Japanese) were injured. With the timely assistance of the Mexican Coast Guard, they all made it safely to shore.

Unable to right the disabled clipper in Todos Santos Bay, the *Vantuna* was towed upside down back to San Diego. As the *Union* reported, *Resembling a huge red whale -- except for a rudder and propeller instead of a tail t--he Vantuna came into port yesterday upside down and stern first.*

It seems that the *Vantuna* was one of those unlucky ships. Refitted and sent back to sea, she later burned and sank off Costa Rica.



## CHANKO-NABE

By Joyce Nabeta Teague

I'm a big believer in the adage, "One man's trash is another man's treasure." That's why we always donate our still-usable household items to AmVets or another charity instead of throwing them away. And like a lot of my friends, I love yard sales, thrift stores, junky used furniture shops and church rummage fund-raisers.

It's satisfying to chance upon an item of real value or beauty or usefulness for a mere fraction of its original sales price. But sometimes the fun is finding a kitschy, if totally useless, item that you bring home because it reminds you of something you had as a kid. Or maybe it's something silly that just puts a smile on your face, justifying the handful of quarters spent. Most times, frankly, what's exciting about thrift shopping is just the thrill of the hunt.

Some purchases are totally indefensible and we would be better off leaving them in the store for another bargain hunter to discover!

Like the time I bought a scuffed gray case full of hundreds of some family's fading slides of vacations, picnics and birthday parties. The people in the slides were tall and Nordic and obviously fond of camping and fishing. I told myself I'd turn the whole thing into a funky art piece some day...but in truth, I was so inexplicably saddened that some stranger's captured memories were sitting on a shelf at Goodwill that I felt compelled to bring them home with me. It was as if bringing them back into a home was the respectful thing to do. These impulses are not good if your house is already bulging at the seams with your own memorabilia.

But, recently, I've been looking specifically for cast-off Japanese-made or other Asian goods. I've found *happi*, *geta*, *furoshiki*, cookery, crockery, cookbooks, scrolls, odd artwork, lacquer trays and everything else from contemporary ceramic mugs to delicate porcelain teacups. These potentially valuable items which I acquired for a few dollars were apparently things another person no longer wanted. Each item has an untold history which I can never know. But I seek them out nonetheless.

The truth is, I really have no use for them myself! Anyone who has been to our place knows it's already thrift shop chic to the max! Still, I'm interested in collecting more and more. I even feel justified in indulging this junk *aficionado's* passion.

Why?

Well, last year at the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, we decided to see if the "one man's trash" adage could be used to raise money for the temple scholarship fund. We asked temple members specifically for any Japanese or Asian items they no longer had a use for so we might offer them for resale at our *Obon Odori* festivities in August.

People responded enthusiastically. They brought in new and used *yukata* suitable for wearing at the *Obon Odori*. Dishware, art work and things like *suribashi* were added to our stock. We even got permission to preview the temple rummage sale items for anything in good condition which fit our "Asian" criteria.

We figured most Nikkei households might have these types of items sitting in boxes high up in cupboards or out in the garage. Tastes and needs change and we all certainly have limitations to how much we can use or display. So we thought we'd make an opportunity for people not only to clean out their closets, but to make sure that these sometimes specialized items might find another appreciative owner. We hoped that there might be an equal number of people who love Japanese things, appreciate a bargain, or simply want to support the scholarship fund. I even came up with a corny but catchy name for our modest enterprise -- *Obon Again Shop*.

A few days before the *Obon Odori*, a hard-working crew of helpers set up tables in the Sangha Hall and cleaned and artfully displayed teacups, dish sets, knickknacks, books and folding fans. We ironed dozens of *kimono* and *happi* and hung them on racks. Everything was priced to go.

To our delight, trash, indeed, turned out to be treasure! We sold three-quarters of the items and, in so doing, added several hundred dollars towards the college scholarship for temple youth. Because the idea proved successful, we are again calling for donations of unwanted "treasures" and planning to reopen the *Obon Again Shop*. The transformation of trash to treasure will happen again late this summer.

So THAT'S how I can justify my time in second-hand stores these days. I can indulge my love of bargain-hunting, then donate my bargains to *Obon Again* for resale!

Any *Footprints* readers who have "Asian-flavored" items they would like to donate to a good cause, please bring your items to the Buddhist Temple of San Diego, 2929 Market St., by July 30. Mark the items "Obon Again" and leave your name and address so I can send you a thank you and receipt for your tax-deductible donation.

Then, plan to be at the temple the evening of Aug. 5 for *Obon Odori*. It doesn't matter what your religious affiliation is: dancing once a year in appreciation of loved ones who made it possible for you to enjoy this life is deeply grounded in Japanese culture, so make an appearance and "shake a leg." And then pop into our resale shop to see if what others consider trash is really a treasure awaiting your discovery!

## Caught Doing Something Nice

Through the efforts of our active and concerned members and friends, we continue to build one of the most solid local history societies in this area. Without the ongoing help of each and every one of you, the carrying out of our mission to preserve the local Nikkei experience and to educate the larger community would be impossible. Thank you all so much for what you continue to do in our support.

Helping with the preparation of the Spring 2000 issue of the *Footprints* was our ace folding and sealing team headed by our co-editors **Naomi and Mich Himaka**. The remainder of the team consisted of, **Don and Carol Estes, Susan Hasegawa, and Mits and Yukio Kawamoto**. **Elaine Hibi Bowers** labeled and prepared the issue for mailing. With the help of many hands the job is made lighter.

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the monetary donation made by **Elaine and Charles Bowers** for the publication fund of the *Footprints*.

Our thanks to those involved in giving presentations on the local Nikkei community for Asian-Pacific Heritage month 2000. **Don Estes and Ben Segawa** spoke to over a hundred employees at the Veterans Hospital in La Jolla and presented a sneak preview of our new video, **Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans and World War II**. **Leng Loh**, one of the co-producers of the video, gave it a field test at the **Mount Carmel High School U.S. History class** of **Karen Kawasaki**. We appreciate the insights and comments of the **Mount Carmel** students. **Ben Segawa** presented a program for the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service and Border Patrol employees at the Tijuana Port of Entry.

We were blessed with an abundance of skilled and talented volunteer help at the May 31st premiere reception for our new video **Democracy Under Pressure**. Working the refreshment tables were, **Carol and Matthew Estes, Susan Moribe, Grace Segawa, Toyoka Murakami and her son, Nobuya**. Manning our tables out front was our membership chairman, **Yukio Kawamoto**, and our always hard working President, **Jeanne Marumoto Elyea**. Passing out programs were, **Bill Teague, Glenn Nogoro, Nancy Martinez and Jeanne Inouye**. Filling in wherever their talents and skills were required were, **Keiko Negoro, Miyo Hill, Tim and Junko Kajita, Aki Tomiyama, Wayne Tsukamoto, and June Yamamoto**. Our heartfelt thanks go out to you all.

The beautiful centerpiece and the corsages seen at the reception were courtesy of **Naomi and Mich Himaka of Kei Dan Floral Design**.

We also wish to recognize and express our deep

appreciation to the membership and board of the **San Diego Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens League**, who partially underwrote the expenses of our premiere.

And finally, keeping the whole show going and on time were our master organizers and ringmasters **Joyce and Jamie Teague**. Ladies, you were absolutely great! Thank you so very much.

We also want to recognize and thank **Toshio Abe**, a former San Diegan now living in Bloomington, Minnesota, who forwarded us a copy of the state American Legion Newspaper, *The Legionnaire* which included a feature article on the **Tosh, the MIS, and Camp Savage**. We were overjoyed to add the article to our archives which are all too slim on the activities of local men who served in the Pacific Theater of War during World War II.

Thanks also to our long time supporter, **Michi Okuma**, who allowed us to copy a number of her family photos related to life at **Fish Camp** in the 1920 and 30s. We are always very appreciative of thoughtful folks like **Michi**, who share their photographs with us.

**Kimie Kaneyuki** was kind enough to donate a panoramic photograph of the congregation of the **Oceanview United Church of Christ** in the late 1950s to our growing photo archive. Thank you, **Kimi**.

We were all pleased to see **Agnes Benson** at our premiere. We are doubly grateful for the donation she made to support the continuing activities of our society.

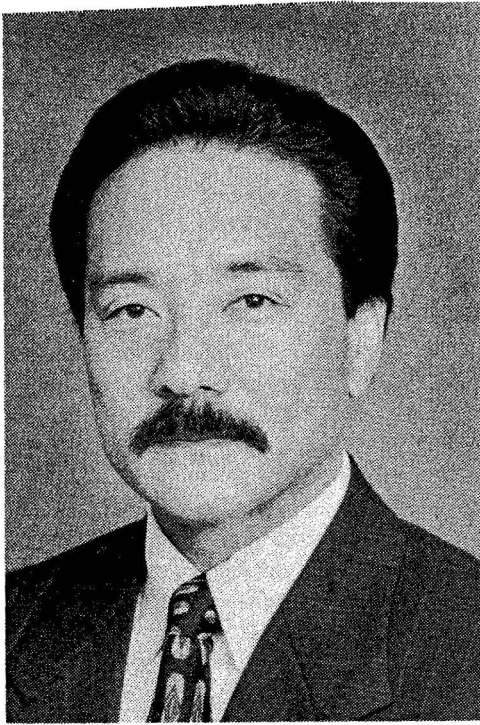
We extend our deep gratitude to **Sumiyo and Frank Kastelic** for their generous contribution to our photo preservation fund.

## Who Ever Said There's No Free Lunch?

Both **Grace Seki and Naomi Kashiwabara** wanted our members to know that by simply writing the **Western Archeological and Conservation Center, National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior** and asking, they will send you without cost a copy of their publication, **Confinement and Ethnicity: An Overview of World War II Japanese Relocation Sites**.

This detailed book, produced by trained anthropologists is probably the finest source on the physical nature of the camps and the current status of the sites yet produced. Included are a number of never before published photos and drawings.

Simply write, **Western Archaeological and Conservation Center, National Park Service, 1415 North Sixth Avenue, Tucson, Arizona 85705**, or call (520) 670 6501 and they will be happy to send it to you at no cost.



### Robert Ito Honored by SDSU Alumni

**Robert Ito.** Class of 1974 was honored by the San Diego State Alumni Association at their 28th Annual Awards of Distinction dinner held May 12, 2000.

The alumni association's prestigious "Monty" award exemplifies a spirit of excellence in service to the community. Speaking at the dinner, university President Stephen L. Weber stated, "The honorees excel in their professional lives and contribute their time and talent to making SDSU a world class university."

Nominated by the College of Health and Human Services Robert's citation as a distinguished alumnus read in part, *Robert P. Ito is chief executive officer of Occupational Training Services, Inc. and the San Diego Community Housing Corporation, both non profit public benefit corporations. OTS was formed for the purpose of providing job training and employment opportunities to economically disadvantaged, unemployed and under-employed persons.... Over the past 20 year OTS has trained and placed 20,000 San Diego workers with 5,000 local employees.*

Robert and his wife Edna are the parents of two sons, Derek, 17 and Bobby, 13. In addition to his other activities, Robert and Edna are members of the JAHSSD and Robert serves as the secretary of the San Diego Chapter of the JACL.

We all congratulate Robert on his well-deserved honor.



### Meet Bill Teague by Yukio Kawamoto

The Buddhist Temple of San Diego reached a historic first on January 1, 2000, when **Bill Teague** was installed as it's first non-Japanese president. Bill is a friendly and dynamic person who is well-qualified to lead the Buddhist Temple into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He is married to **Joyce (Nabeta) Teague**, a regular contributor to the *Footprints* with her column "*Chanko Nabe*." They have one child, **Jamie**, who is a graduate of UC Berkeley. A graduate of San Diego State, Bill is currently employed as an associate publisher in the Professional Publications Division of Harcourt, Inc. Bill has spent most of his life in San Diego after moving here from Van Nuys in 1954 at the age of 5.

Bill became interested in Buddhism while attending San Diego State and became active in the Dharma School at the temple when Jamie enrolled in the nursery class. He joined the temple because he and Joyce felt that it was good place to raise a family. A devoted student of Buddhism, Bill was chairperson of the Buddhist Education Committee of the temple and has conducted Buddhist services at the Marine Corps Recruit Depot and at the Miramar Consolidated Brig. He still continues to conduct semi-monthly services at MCRD. In 1999, Bill held the office of 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President before being elected President for the year 2000.

Congratulations, Bill, and the JAHSSD wishes you well in your term of office.



## Letters

Dear Mrs. Bowers:

I would like to tell you how touched my husband, Ichiro "Cheri" and I were by the preface you wrote, "What Was Her Secret?" about our mother, Ei Takehara. You wrote it from your heart and your words reflected this. You have a long history with the family and had first hand knowledge of their situation. I only knew Grandma for the last 45 years when she enjoyed the fruits of her labor. After I read your work, I felt that what we wrote was almost anticlimactic.

"Cheri" and I want to thank you for your personal interest and sharing of the Family Story with the community. We are enclosing a check which we hope will help continue the work of disseminating news about the people and the efforts of the Japanese American people of San Diego.

In Appreciation,  
"Cheri" and Mitzi Takehara  
1430 W. Talcott Rd.  
Park Ridge, Ill. 60068

*(Editor's Note: A letter in appreciation of their generous contribution will be sent to the Takeharas with thanks on behalf of the board and members. And much thanks again to Mrs. Bowers for her moving article and for forwarding the letter.)*

## We Get Letters

*(This letter was received after the premiere of Democracy Under Pressure.)*

Please express our appreciation to the **Japanese American Historical Society of San Diego** for its poignant recollection of relocation and the reminder of how fragile our freedom and democracy can be. The project group did a wonderful job and are to be congratulated.

We offer the enclosed donation for the society to be able to continue your efforts to chronicle the lives and contributions of San Diego's Japanese American's.

*Sumiyo and Frank Kastelic*

*Sumiyo Hasegawa Kastelic is currently the Director of the University of California, San Diego Medical Center in Hillcrest and the Thornton Hospital in La Jolla. She is the highest ranking Asian American woman in the UC system. Sumiyo is the daughter of the late Toshiaki and Tsurue Hasegawa of San Ysidro. Her husband, Dr. Frank Kastelic is a retired Director of Social Work. (Editor)*

## They're Still Out There!

Who? Well, to describe them, they all have necks of red!

After the **LA Times** ran the article, "21 Asian Americans to Get Medal of Honor for WWII" May 13, the newspaper ran a letter from Frank Barnyak, who called himself a "former USAF (CIC) Special Agent, Counterintelligence" living in North Hollywood. He wrote:

"They did not review all of the recipients of the second-highest citation, the Distinguished Service Cross, but only the Asians, and 19 of the 21 were Japanese Americans of the 100th Infantry Battalion. The 1st Division, made up of many battalions that hit the beaches of Normandy and on into France and Germany, did not even remotely receive this proportion nor any other division or battalion fighting WWII worldwide."

"They stopped issuing the Medal of Honor during the early Civil War, as they were being handed out as political plums. This national disgrace is now upon us once again. The Clinton administration and Clinton's appointed brass have disgraced the highest award that a grateful nation can bestow and used it as a political vote-gathering tool.

"What about all the other DSC recipients who were not Asians?"

To which we might ask, what about all the Asians who were awarded the Silver Star instead of the DSC? Should those Silver Stars have been upgraded even higher?

Any special agent, intelligence or otherwise, should know by now that the 100th Battalion/442 RCT was the most decorated military outfit in U. S. history.

And besides, Mr. Barnyak omits one important word in describing the medal. It is the *Congressional* Medal of Honor, not the *Presidential* Medal of Honor.

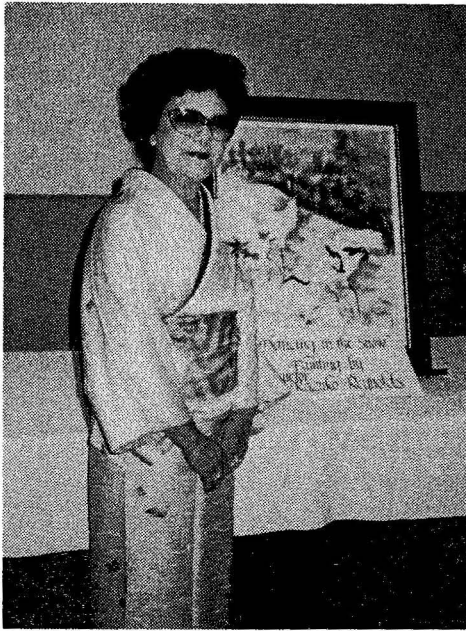
The President only represents Congress and the rest of a "grateful nation," including Mr. Barnyak, in presenting the medals to the deserving.

'Nuff said?

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Mrs. Kazuko Reynolds: Master sumi-e artist

## WASHU

by Hisae Shima Batchelder

Mrs. Kazuko Suzy Reynolds, master of *sumi-e*, the Japanese brush painting art, is observing her 25th year of teaching the artform in San Diego County.

The Japanese form of the art dates back to the 13th century AD when it arrived in Japan with Zen monks from China. Mrs. Reynolds earned her artist name of *Washu* and her teaching credential after 10 years of study at the Nihon Art School in Tokyo. She earned her California teaching credential shortly after her arrival here in 1958.

She has been teaching *sumi-e* to adult education classes in the Community College system here. She presently teaches at the Cesar Chavez Center in San Diego; Mid-City West in Point Loma; and the Japanese American Community Center in Vista.

Mrs. Reynolds has often presented one-woman shows and given demonstrations throughout Southern California.

She has her studio at the Washu Art Gallery in San Diego.

## 33 Receive Culture Awards

The Japan-U. S. Center Women's Forum honored 33 San Diegans at its first annual luncheon for their devotion to promoting Japanese culture and traditional and modern arts in the community.

Seven were honored for teaching their special art form for more than 30 years. Each were honored for their commitment and skills they have shared with

their students in art, buyo, chanoyu, ikebana, minyo, karaoke, kimono, koto and budo.

Those honored included:

Martha Longnecker, Masako Bailey, Chieko Campbell, Mitsuyo Fukuda, Toshiko Hasegawa, Kazuko Reynolds, Wakako Seligman, Mitsuyo Vlastakis and Keiko Yonamine.

Also Shigeko Garcia, Kaneko Bishop, Megumi Inada, Misao Kawasaki, Soshin Saito, Akiko Bourland, Haruko Crawford, Kiyoko Honjo, Rose Itano and Chiyono Koirin.

Also Sumiko Lahey, Sadako Oehler, Rumi Rice, Natsuko Tanaka, Fujiko Azuma, Yoshiko Monji, Michiko Delaney, Masazumi Mizuno and Emiko Tayama.

Also Tomihiro Arashiro, Minobu Miki, Masa Ozaki, Kikuo Uyeji and John Yamamoto.

## IKENOBO IKEBANA in San Diego

Sen'ei Ikenobo, 45th headmaster of the Ikenobo School of Ikebana, presented special *Keiroshosho Awards* for long service to the school to Aiko Owashi and Mariko Sato and the *Junkaroho* grade of *Karoshoku Award* to long-time sensei, Mrs. Sadako Oehler, founder and president of the San Diego Chapter of the Ikenobo School. Congratulations to them.

*Toshio Abe Continued from page 2*

photo of the Oakland Bay Bridge young Abe himself had taken while a student.

"They asked me why I took the pictures," Abe said. "I was flabbergasted. I didn't know what to say. I tried to explain that I was an engineering student and I often photographed structures like that."

About the same time, the Army was steaming open Abe's personal mail.

"I went and told them that if they were going to open my mail, I'd like to see a 'censored' stamp on the envelope.

Rather than just sit and wait orders, Abe took the intelligence course, which had been expanded, over again. He also traveled to Arizona and drove his mother, brother and sister-in-law back to Minnesota where they found a home.

By 1943, the interned Japanese Americans were allowed to leave camp for points away from the West Coast if they had a sponsor.

Finally, Abe got his military orders.

(To be continued in the Fall Issue of *Footprints* when Abe heads overseas to the Pacific Theater.)

## Membership News

by Yukio Kawamoto

A warm welcome to the following new members who recently joined the JAHSSD membership: **John Damrose, Michael Kawamoto and Janet (Fujikawa) Roberts.** A big thank you to **Patricia Asakawa**, who upgraded her membership to life.

We also thank the following members who renewed their membership: **Bruce and Sharon Asakawa, Tim Asamen. Jill (Nakamura) Damrose, Kimie Fukamizu, Elizabeth Hatashita, Toru Hirai, Tetsuzo and Genevieve Hirasaki, Harry and Misako Honda, Chiz Imoto, Umeko Kawamoto, Karen Kawasaki, Glen Masumoto, Ritsu Nabeta, Dr. George and Karen Shinzaki, Fudo Takagi, John and Kiyo Takemoto, Bill and Joyce Teague, Dr. Azusa and Haruko Tsuneyoshi, Chiyeko Yagi and Vernon and Shinobu Yoshioka.**

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### How Did Asian Pacific American Heritage Week Get Started?

*About this time of year, questions on how May became Asian Pacific Heritage Month and the origins of the observance are regularly raised. Several years ago, the Pacific Citizen provided the answer which we re-print here.*

The Congress, under HJR 173, introduced March 5, 1991 by Rep. Frank J. Horton (R-N.Y.) and co-sponsored by some 210 Members of Congress including Reps. Mineta, Matsui and Mink expanded the observance of Asian Pacific Heritage Week for the full month of May. It authorized the President to proclaim the month of May 1991 and 1992, but the date when President Bush signed the resolution is not in the PC Archives.

The APA "Heritage Week," after President Carter signed Proclamation 4650, March 28, 1979, was first observed May 4 - 10, 1979. Two events in U.S. history were cited for Heritage Week to be observed in May: (1) Manjuro Nakahama arrived on May 7, 1841, as the first immigrant from Japan. (2) The golden spike was driven on May 10, 1869, near Ogden Utah, marking the completion of the transcontinental railroad and signifying the contributions of Chinese pioneers who constructed the railroad eastward from Sacramento over the Sierra's.



*Joyce Teague(left), Pres. Jeanne Elyea accepting city resolution from Councilwoman Kehoe*

### May 31st JAHSSD Day in San Diego

As part of the celebration for the premiere of our society's new video, **Democracy Under Pressure: Japanese Americans and World War II**, the **San Diego City Council** and the **San Diego County Board Of Supervisors** declared May 31, 2000, to be **Japanese American Historical Society Day**. Acting separately at their respective meetings, the governing bodies of the city and county honored the efforts of our society to preserve and educate the public about the local Nikkei experience.

The city resolution of recognition was the work of Councilwoman **Christine Kehoe** while the county resolution originated in the office of Supervisor **Greg Cox**.

JAHSSD President **Jeanne Elyea** accepted the printed city resolution from the hands of Councilwoman Kehoe and then addressed the council. After thanking the council for their recognition of our society's efforts, Jeanne took several minutes to explain our mission as an organization and talked briefly about some of our recent accomplishments. Jeanne was thanked by **Mayor Susan Golding** and council members for her presentation.

The county resolution was presented to President Jeanne at the premiere held at the main library by **Nicole Cretelle**, Director of Communications for Supervisor Cox who was unable to attend due to a prior commitment.



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