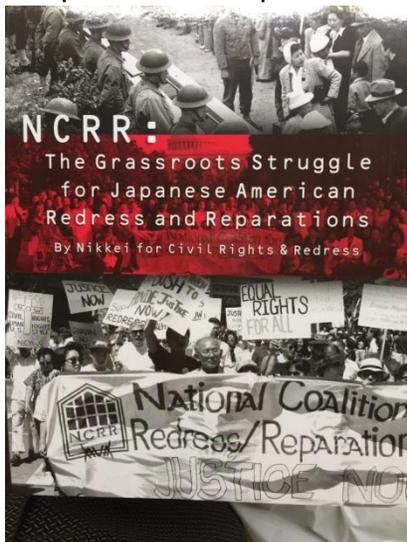


“The Grassroots Redress Movement: A Conversation with Activists Then and Now”
at the Tateuchi Democracy Forum
October 20, 2019

Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress (NCRR), the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) and the Little Tokyo Historical Society (LTHS) are pleased to sponsor “The Grassroots Redress Movement: A Conversation with Activists Then and Now” in celebration of the second printing of ***NCRR: The Grassroots Struggle for Japanese American Redress and Reparations***. The 391-page book, first published by UCLA’s Asian American Studies Center Press in 2018, is the first comprehensive exploration of NCRR’s roots, history, and continuing impact over four decades. Based on first-hand accounts, it is a rich portrait of voices and narratives that illustrate how a popular, egalitarian, grassroots campaign for social justice blossomed into a powerful voice for ordinary people that continues today.



Jim Matsuoka, founding member of NCRR, will open the program with his perspective as a former incarcerated who lived through the incarceration and its aftermath in the '50s to the '70s, before Japanese Americans were able to finally break through the pain and trauma of a beaten-down community and begin to find their voice to speak out for redress for what the government had done to them.

Miya Iwataki, former legislative chair of NCRR, will talk about the significance of the historic 1981 hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC). NCRR did outreach in the Japanese American community to seek former incarcerated to testify about their experiences during and after the WWII incarceration. Miya will describe how NCRR prepared testifiers and made sure the hearings were accessible to a broad spectrum of the community. She will also discuss the vital relationship NCRR had with then-Congressman Mervyn Dymally, working with his office to develop redress legislation and to coordinate much of the logistics of a large lobbying delegation NCRR organized in 1987.

Guy Aoki felt it was important to join NCRR as part of the grassroots redress movement. In 1987, some 60 Japanese Americans and others from Southern California joined about 80 delegates from the Bay Area and other parts of the country to converge at Washington, DC, to lobby for redress legislation. Guy will describe his experiences as one of the organizers of that 1987 NCRR lobbying delegation. He will relate the strong impact the delegation experience had on him and other delegates.



David Monkawa will talk about how art and artists play a significant role in grassroots movements. He created many dramatic posters for the annual Day of Remembrance (DOR) programs, which commemorate the signing of Executive Order 9066 in 1942 and explore how to apply lessons from the incarceration to what's happening in today's world. David will discuss what he was trying to convey in his posters and what he hoped the community would draw from them.

Richard Katsuda, NCRR co-chair, will moderate the first part of the program and will also talk about how NCRR first learned of Japanese Americans being denied redress. In the '90s, NCRR mounted a new redress campaign to fight for such groups as the Japanese Latin Americans, railroad workers and miners, and former incarcerated born after January 20, 1945.

A short clip from "Tales of Clamor" will be shown at the program, highlighting the CWRIC hearings and the Japanese American community's breaking of silence. "Tales of Clamor" premiered at the JACCC's Aratani Theatre earlier this year and was created by traci kato kiriyama and Kennedy Kabasares of PULL Project. traci is a long time partner of NCRR and "could never say 'no' to any requests from NCRR" for her help in curating performances for the DOR programs. This video along with the events and redress history shared by the first panel will lay a foundation for a discussion with activists on the second panel who will show how NCRR's principles and belief in the

power of grassroots organizing is still relevant in activism and what new principles may be emerging through the current work.

Moderated by NCCR co-chair, Kathy Masaoka, the panel will include June Hibino who helped to build ties with the Muslim Community through the NCCR's 9/11 Committee which organized the first "Break the Fast" or Iftars, based on the NCCR principle of "supporting others who are suffering from unjust actions taken by the United States government." She was also active in NCCR's support of Lt. Ehren Watada, who refused to deploy during the Iraq war, calling it an unjust war. As an activist artist, Tony Osumi worked with NCCR in a youth committee called Seigi on Little Tokyo issues (support for New Otani workers) and is currently involved with Nikkei Progressives as well as his own programs with youth. Tony will share what he has learned working with NCCR, and how these principles and values continue to influence his activism.

Finally, Kristin Fukushima, the Little Tokyo Community Council (LTCC) Managing Director and Sean Miura, co-curator of the Tuesday Night Cafe, will talk about how they



have been impacted by NCCR's work, how and why Nikkei Progressives formed and why they felt it was important to continue the connection to NCCR's history and legacy. Both are Little Tokyo activists and can talk about how they see the influence of this grassroots struggle for redress in their own work - Kristin through her organizing around #MyFSN (a community control campaign focused on the block of First Street North) and other preservation campaigns and Sean through the long running (over 20 years)

spoken word and arts program at Union Center for the Arts which brings Asian Pacific Islander youth to Little Tokyo. All the panelists will engage in a conversation about the challenges and benefits that come with working in intergenerational groups and in Nikkei Progressives with the goal of uncovering new insights about grassroots organizing today.

NCCR: The Grassroots Struggle for Japanese American Redress and

Reparations is richly illustrated with photographs from NCCR's history and there is a section with color photos of 19 NCCR and DOR posters. Members of the Editorial Team include NCCR officers Richard Katsuda, Suzy Katsuda, Kathy Masaoka, Kay Ochi, and Janice Iwanaga Yen; graphic design by Qris Yamashita. NCCR is indebted to Dr. Lane Hirabayashi, emeritus professor, UCLA, for serving on the Editorial Team and encouraging NCCR on its multi-year quest to tell its story. In the book's Conclusion, Lane writes, "NCCR represents an ongoing, lasting legacy of the Asian American Movement... Their stories richly illustrate the personal transformation engendered when people take their history, destiny, and representations into their own hands. ... Japanese

American history continues to be deeply relevant to understanding various dimensions of contemporary struggles for social justice.” More information about the book can be obtained on www.ncrr-la.org Email ncrrla@yahoo.com

The program and book signing will take place on Sunday, October 20, from 2 – 4 pm at the Tateuchi Democracy Forum; 300 North Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA. Light refreshments will be served.