



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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“SPEAK OUT” CWRIC Testimonies Revisited Dec. 2 in Little Tokyo

Landmark CWRIC Hearings Reissued by Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress and Visual Communications; Relaunch Set for Tateuchi Democracy Forum

[LOS ANGELES] Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress (NCRR) and Visual Communications (VC), in partnership with the Japanese American National Museum (JANM), will relaunch the 13-part video series “Speak Out for Justice” at a special program to be held on Saturday, December 2, 2017, 2:00 PM at the Tateuchi Democracy Forum at JANM located at 111 N. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

An NCRR and VC co-production, “Speak Out for Justice” presents the historic testimonies of 153 Japanese American former incarcerated, their family members and community members at the 1981 federal hearings held in Los Angeles by the Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC).

The event, “Speak Out Revisited: The CWRIC Hearings and Its Legacy” celebrates the relaunch of the full 13-volume “Speak Out for Justice” series. The event will kick off with a special performance by July Lee of the PULL Project. The main program, hosted and moderated by local novelist and essayist Naomi Hirahara, will include a panel revisiting the impact of testifying before the CWRIC commission including speakers Harry Kawahara, among others; and a talk with longtime NCRR member Jim Matsuoka and VC co-founder Duane Kubo on the challenges of organizing and documenting such an ambitious community endeavor on short notice. A post-event reception with light refreshments will conclude the program.

Throughout the program, select excerpts of testimonies from the tapes will be screened. The actual reissue, as a two-box DVD set complete with study guide and index of testifiers, will be

available for pre-orders for institutions and individuals. A 180-minute “best-of” compilation DVD will be available on the day of the event for sale and pre-order.

“Speak Out Revisited” celebrates the reissuing of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC) hearings. Held in 1981 in select cities across the nation, the CWRIC hearings offered an unprecedented opportunity for Japanese Americans from across the country to speak out for the first time about their incarceration during World War II. Recognizing the historic nature of these hearings, NCCR, then known as the National Coalition for Redress/Reparations, and VC collaborated to videotape the Los Angeles hearings, held Aug. 6-9 in downtown Los Angeles.

Additionally, volunteers from NCCR encouraged people to testify and pressured the commission to provide Japanese translation, a larger hearing room and an extra evening session for working people. VC organized a videography team to document the entire 23 hours of hearings and later created a tape of select testimonies that was used to build support for the redress effort.

“The value of the testimonies, the only known hearings to be preserved on video, cannot be overstated,” said Kathy Masaoka, NCCR Los Angeles Co-Chair. “The opportunity to speak about their suffering and releasing their anger was cathartic to the Japanese American community and provided inspiration to the grassroots movement for redress and reparations.

“We invite all those who helped film, those who testified and/or their family members, and those who attended the hearings to come and share their experiences at this special event.”

NCCR and VC have preserved the original CWRIC commission hearing tapes produced in 1981, and previously made them available on individual VHS and DVD volumes. Through a project, called “Courage of Japanese Americans as They Speak Out for Justice” funded by a grant from the National Park Service – Japanese American Confinement Sites, the NCCR Education Committee completed an updated digitization process of the DVDs, making it easier to access specific testimonies. The compilation DVD of selected testimonies will be available at the December 2 program for \$25. The complete set comprising 23 hours of testimonies (13-disc set) cost \$250 and must be [pre-ordered](#).

In addition to the National Park Service, event support is generously provided by a grant from the Historic Cultural Neighborhood Council.

For more event and pre-ordering information, contact NCCR at: ncrrla@yahoo.org. The program is free, but seating is limited. RSVPs are highly encouraged at janm.org.