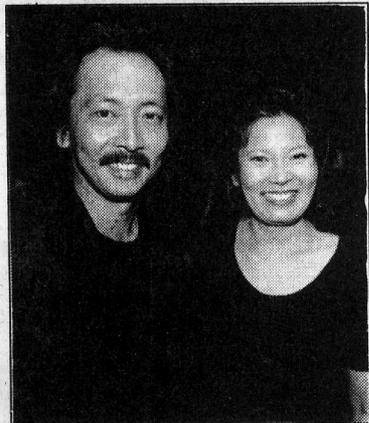


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(Above) Jazz artist Keiko Matsui signs autographs to fans before giving a concert during a Day of Remembrance program in Little Tokyo. (Right) NCCR's Richard Katsuda presents Fighting Spirit Awards to, from left, Bruce Iwasaki, Gerald Sato and Linda Kawabe Consolo. (Left) Actors Lane Nishikawa and Jude Narita performed on Saturday.

Photos by MARIO G. REYES/Rafu Shimpō



NCCR Honors Three in Redress Struggle

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Gerald Sato, Linda Kawabe Consolo and Bruce Iwasaki receive the Fighting Spirit Award for their contributions to the redress movement.

By TAKESHI NAKAYAMA

RAFU ASSOCIATE EDITOR

The National Coalition for Redress and Reparations (NCCR) honored three individuals for their contributions to the redress campaign at NCCR's annual Day of Remembrance fundraising program Saturday night in Little Tokyo.

The DOR program, which commemorated the 55th anniversary of the issuance of Executive Order by President Franklin Roosevelt that authorized placing Japanese Americans in camps during World War II, honored Gerald Sato, Linda Kawabe Consolo and Bruce Iwasaki with the Fighting Spirit Award.

The three were recognized for their roles in winning redress for the World War II-era children of "voluntary" evacuees who were originally turned down by the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Redress Administration (ORA).

Richard Katsuda, NCCR president, who introduced the three honorees, said their efforts "led to a major victory that opened up redress eligibility to potentially several thousand people. That says a lot about how their fighting spirit vested our community and the overall fight for justice."

Sato, a civil rights and employment law attorney from Ventura County, represented Consolo in her successful lawsuit against the U.S. government after she was denied reparations by the ORA.

Iwasaki, a Los Angeles attorney, wrote the NCCR *amicus curiae* ("friend of the court") brief supporting the argument that, according to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, Consolo was eligible for redress because she was deprived of liberty as a result of the evacuation.

Their victory in *Consolo v. U.S. Government*, according to NCCR, made 900 previously denied individuals eligible for redress and resulted in another 5,000 people potentially eligible for redress.

In accepting the award, Consolo, a Utah-born school teacher who was denied redress initially and filed a lawsuit, said, "I did it for what I believe in. The real fighters are my cousin Jerry (Sato), Bruce (Iwasaki), Richard (Katsuda), Kay Ochi and the NCCR committee."

Sato, who said it was "tremendously humbling" to receive the Fighting Spirit Award, read a letter from Emiko Kaneko of Reno, Nev., for whom he filed a lawsuit on behalf of her late husband, Sotaro Kaneko.

"I filed the suit because I love justice. Justice, in my case, means the United States government should accept responsibility for its discrimination against my husband and the other railroad workers (who were fired after Pearl Harbor) ... Justice means redress now," Mrs. Kaneko's letter concluded.

Sato, whose arguments won the *Consolo* case in the Federal Court of Claims and the

Federal Court of Appeals, noted that "NCCR has always inspired me to continue working on the issue of redress and the grievance cases. It's always been NCCR that's put the issue of redress at the top of its agenda."

Iwasaki, a lawyer with the prestigious law firm of O'Melveny & Myers, said he was "deeply grateful" at receiving the recognition, but quickly added, "Nothing I did on the redress lawsuit would have been possible without NCCR and the victory could not have been achieved without the support of the united Japanese American community."

For Iwasaki, getting involved in the redress movement was "an opportunity to use some of my training on behalf of NCCR."

Like many Sansei, Iwasaki said, he once had "a dim understanding" of the full impact of the camp experience. "It wasn't until after law school I understood the legal issues. Not only was it a historical and human outrage, but I understood the Constitution had been damaged by this episode."

State Sen. Tom Hayden presented NCCR with a Senate resolution recognizing its campaign for justice and reparations. Accepting the resolution were Katsuda and Miya Iwataki of NCCR.