Wayne Mortimer Collins and Tetsujiro "Tex" Nakamura receive Fighting Spirit awards for work with renunciants.

By NAO GUNJI
Rafu Staff Writer

Despite heavy rain over the President’s Day weekend, hundreds gathered at the Japanese American National Museum Saturday, to commemorate the Day of Remembrance, the signing of Executive Order 9066 by President Franklin Roosevelt in 1942.

Hosted by Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress, Japanese American Citizens League - Pacific Southwest District, and the museum, “2005 Day of Remembrance—When Loyalty is Questioned...From Tule Lake to Guantanamo” featured several guest speakers, including members of the Muslim/Arab American community, to compare past and present racial profiling to prevent such injustices from being repeated.

The program started with a tribute to the late Congressman Robert T. Matsui by Congresswoman Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.). Matsui played a key role in the passing of the redress bill in 1988, which entitled former internees to $20,000 compensation and won a formal apology from the federal government. He was interned at Tule Lake as an infant.

“...In so many different ways, Bob Matsui was a hero to many,” Becerra remembered. “I considered him as someone I could turn to, not only for advice, but for the truth.”

Following the tribute, Kathy Masaoka made a Day of Remembrance statement representing Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress.

“What does loyalty mean today? If you are American of Muslim faith, does that mean that you have to ask your mother, sisters, and daughters not to cover their heads? Does that mean that you avoid air travel so you wouldn’t make people uncomfortable? Does that mean that you have to preface every statement with a denunciation of terrorism in order to assure others that you are model American?” she asked the audience.

Masaoka defended those who answered “no, no” to Questions 27 and 28, the so-called loyalty questions, by stating that their answers had nothing to do with their loyalty to the country.

Rafu Staff Writer

Wayne Collins, son of attorney Wayne Mortimer Collins speaks about his father’s work helping wartime renunciants win back their citizenship during the Day of Remembrance program at the Japanese American National Museum Saturday. Also appearing on the panel are, from left, Reiko Nimura and Hank Naito.

Loyalty Redefined on Day of Remembrance

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