



Banner

a newsletter of the Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

Winter
2005

2005 Day of Remembrance:

When Loyalty is Questioned...from Tule Lake to Guantanamo

By Kay Ochi

The 2005 Day of Remembrance program will take place on Saturday, Feb. 19, 2005 from 2 to 4 PM at the Japanese American National Museum, 369 East First Street, Los Angeles. The event is sponsored by Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress, the Pacific Southwest District/JACL, and the Japanese American National Museum.

In keeping with the commemoration of President Roosevelt's signing of Executive Order 9066 on Feb. 19, 1942, which authorized the forced removal of 120,000 Japanese Americans from the west coast during World War II, the theme for the DOR is "When Loyalty is Questioned...from Tule Lake to Guantanamo."



Hank Naito

The wartime government's use of "military necessity" as the reason to uproot west coast Japanese American communities, media sensationalism and public sentiment cast suspicion and distrust upon JA's. The continued fear of disloyalty among the JA's and the need to enlist soldiers led to the government's issuance of a loyalty questionnaire, in particular, Questions 27 & 28— will

you serve in the armed forces and will you swear allegiance to the US and forswear allegiance to the Japanese Emperor. The responses to these two critical questions determined the fate of the imprisoned JA's, in particular, the men of military age.

While 1256 Nisei volunteered from the camps, the vast majority did not. Resistance to the government's harsh and unconstitutional treatment of JA's took numerous forms including protests, the Fair Play Committee at Heart Mountain, Resisters of Conscience, No-No Boys, and Renunciants.

Those individuals and families who chose to renounce their citizenship and be shipped to Japan suffered the further hardships of Tule Lake concentration camp and the criticism of their community. Mr. Hank Naito will speak about his family's decision to go to Japan and the effects of that decision on his life including his service in the U.S. Air Force after the war.



Wayne Collins, Jr.

In order to unite family members, Reiko Nimura's family sailed aboard the Swedish ship Gripsholm to Goa, India, and then on to Japan. She recalls debarking in Goa, and being counted head-for-head as white Americans boarded that ship as part of a prisoner-of-war exchange. She will speak about her experiences during the War and during the redress campaign.

Wayne Collins, Jr., has agreed to speak on behalf of his father, Wayne M. Collins, who passed away in 1974. Wayne M. Collins worked for over 22 years to have citizenship restored by the courts to 4,978 former renunciants. His single-handed efforts were significant in proving the coercive and unjust nature of the government's tactics to deport JA's.

The treatment of JA's during World War II has unfortunate DOR, Cont'd on Page 2



Reiko Nimura, front row center.



Salam Al-Marayati

Bruce Iwasaki Receives State Bar's Top Honor

By Suzy Katsuda

Bruce Iwasaki, a longtime NCRR member, was awarded the 2004 Loren Miller Legal Services Award, the State Bar's highest honor, on Oct. 5, 2004. Bruce has worked tirelessly in the poverty law community and since 1997 has been the Executive Director of the Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles. He has improved the legal aid program services, mentored young attorneys and lobbied lawyers in the private sector to provide pro bono work.



(L-R) Chief Justice of California, Ronald M. George, Bonnie Hough of the Administrative Office of the Courts, Bruce Iwasaki, State Bar President Anthony P. Capozzi

Since becoming a lawyer in 1977, Bruce has spent most of his professional career in the field of poverty law, working to provide legal services to the thousands who can't afford them and to eliminate the distinction between democracy and justice. "There need to be institutions, and people working in those institutions, that insure justice," he believes.

Looking back on his career, Bruce modestly declines to take credit for accomplishing anything without the help of other advocates. As his most satisfying cases, though, he cited two:

- * Winning an injunction in 1984 against the Reagan Administration's effort to deny Social Security recipients' disability benefits. Eventually, Iwasaki said, benefits were restored to thousands of people and Congress acted to stop the practice.

- * Winning a 1995 ruling in a health access case that resulted in today's ability-to-pay plan, enabling low-income people to obtain medical services on a free or sliding scale basis.

For the redress effort, Bruce wrote NCRR's amicus brief for the Linda Kawabe Consolo case in 1994 in which Linda Consolo was deprived of liberty as a child of a "voluntary evacuee" born after the parents' displacement. The class action decision won on appeal and approximately 1200 children of voluntary evacuees who were initially denied, won redress under the Civil Liberties Act of 1988.

NCRR Celebrates Its 25th Anniversary This Summer! (1980 - 2005)

"Communities Under Siege: Keeping the Faith" Fourth Break the Fast Event

By Kathy Masaoka

Working with the Muslim Public Affairs Council (MPAC), Higashi Honganji Buddhist Temple, Centenary Methodist Church, Great Leap and Youth for City Arts, the NCCR 9/11 Committee organized this year's Break the Fast in Little Tokyo. For the



Poetry by Dolores Mission Youth, led by Ruben Guevara.

past three years, Senshin Buddhist Temple has hosted this program during the holy month of Ramadan, when Muslims fast from sun up to sundown to strengthen their beliefs and do good acts. The committee wanted to outreach to the Little Tokyo community, work with both the Buddhist and Christian churches and include the Latino community in nearby Boyle Heights. NCCR believes in the continuing need to build support and understanding with the Muslim

community, which has experienced suspicion, detention and attacks on their civil and constitutional rights since September 11, 2001.

The theme of "Communities Under Siege: Keeping the Faith" and the interfaith panel provided an opportunity to hear the views of Buddhists, Christians, Jews, Native Americans, Catholics and Muslims on the war, civil rights and other issues in their own communities. People gathered at the top of the temple steps to hear Moses Mora offer the Chumash Welcome Song and about 300 people proceeded into the temple to offer incense (oshoko) while the Buddhist ministers chanted. Reverend Noriaki Ito explained the chanting and Edina Lekovic of MPAC shared the purpose of Ramadan. Moderators Lekovic and Kei Nagao (NCCR 9/11) posed questions to the panel which included Reverend Ito, Moses Mora, Reverend Mark Nakagawa of Centenary, Father Michael



Rabbi Naomi Levy was a panel member.

Kennedy of the Dolores Mission, Rabbi Naomi Levy of Nashuva and Imam Saadiq Saafir of Masjid Ibaadillah (Los Angeles mosque). The Muslim "call to prayer" ended the interfaith discussion and signaled the time to "break the fast" with water, juice and dried fruits.

The intercultural potluck at Centenary gave participants a chance to talk and eat together while enjoying the performance of Chikara taiko, poetry by the Dolores Mission Youth, a Sufi whirling dance by the Avaz Dance Company and a performance piece by Great Leap. The program began with a prayer by Reverend Nakagawa and ended with words "salaam,



Interactive performance led by Nobuko Miyamoto of Great Leap.

The Last Redress Court Case?

By John Ota

Last December 8, in what may be the last redress court case, a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit heard arguments in Los Angeles on Robert Murakami's appeal of the government's denial of his redress claim.

Murakami, of Monterey Park, was born in Chicago on August 23, 1945, just a month after authorities had lifted the individual exclusion on his father. Murakami argued that he was eligible for redress because, by the time the government lifted his father's exclusion order, it was too late for the family to return to Los Angeles before his birth. Therefore, Murakami claimed he was deprived of liberty by being excluded from his parents' home as a result of government action when he was born.

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 states that any Japanese American who was deprived of liberty as a result of government action related to the internment is eligible for compensation. However, the Department of Justice rejected Murakami's claim, saying that once the father's exclusion order was lifted, he was no longer "excluded by law" and therefore not eligible.

"I was encouraged by some of the judges' comments, but given the conservative nature of this appeals court, I think it will still be an uphill battle," said Murakami's attorney, John Ota of Minami, Lew & Tamaki in San Francisco. A decision by the appeals court is expected in two to three months.

heiwā, paz, Shalom aleichem" from the Sacred Moon Song, words of wishes and hopes from the participants and finally words of appreciation from Salam Al-Marayati, Executive Director of MPAC. Al-Marayati, who thanked the Japanese American community for its friendship and activism in the fight for civil rights, concluded his thanks by saying, "we stand on your shoulders."

**Want more details?
More photos?
Check out NCCR online at
www.ncrr-la.org**

DOR, Cont'd from Page 1

similarities to the treatment of Arabs, Muslims, and South Asians after the events of Sept. 11, 2001. Speaking on behalf of the South Asian Network is Mr. Hamid Khan. Mr. Salam Al-Marayati will speak on behalf of the Muslim Public Affairs Council and will share his recent encounter with racial profiling by the government.

Other highlights of the DOR program include a video-tribute to Congressman Robert Matsui who passed away on Jan. 1, and a performance of "9-0-Double 6" by Kyle Toyama, rap artist featured on Dave Iwataki's "Project J" CD.

A reception will follow the program. The event is free to the public. Seating is limited, so audience is encouraged to arrive early. For more information, call (213) 680-3484.

Campaign for Justice Gears Up for 2005

By Richard Katsuda

Campaign for Justice (CFJ) is still seeking to complete the mission of redress for Japanese Latin Americans (JLAs) and Japanese Americans who were denied redress during implementation of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (CLA).

Grace Shimizu and Robin Toma of CFJ met with Congressman Xavier Becerra in order to plan for activities to bolster support for HR 779, the Wartime Parity and Justice Act of 2003, which Becerra reintroduced in Congress.

HR 779 would:

- * achieve redress equity for JLAs. Although JLAs received acknowledgement by the Department of Justice of the injustice done to them during WWII, their measure of redress was \$5K per person as compared to \$20K for Japanese Americans;

- * secure redress for certain Japanese Americans who were denied redress, including those born in camp after June 30, 1946, and those born outside of camp after January 20, 1945;

- * call for \$45 million for public education in order to fulfill the educational mandate of the CLA (only \$5 million

of \$50 million originally intended by Congress for education was actually appropriated).

Plans are in the works in the San Francisco Bay Area for an Assembly on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, which will be patterned after the federal Commission on Wartime

Relocation and Internment of Civilians. The Assembly will take place in April of this year and will feature testimonies by Japanese Latin Americans, Japanese Americans representing those denied redress, and various historians, public officials, and others.



Southern California CFJ members at a recent gathering.

NCRR Education Committee Updates

By Janice Yen

On the Road with Stand Up For Justice

2004 was a busy year for the NCRR Education Committee. The film about Ralph Lazo premiered at the Los Angeles Day of Remembrance event in February. Members of the Lazo family attended, as did several of Ralph's friends from the 1940s Manzanar High School days.

Then Stand Up For Justice was exhibited at three film festivals (Visual Communications' Film Fest, the San Diego Asian Film Festival and the Hawaii International Film Festival) and at two screenings directed towards educators and the community. They occurred at the California State Universities at Long Beach and Northridge.

The film was well received at all of the screenings and elicited fond remembrances of Ralph Lazo from those who knew him. Educators who have viewed the film are anxious to promote the use of the video version in secondary schools.



Nancy Takayama, President of San Fernando Valley JACL, with NCRR Member Suzy Katsuda at the Northridge screening.

Teachers Guide

The Education Committee also completed the prototype Stand Up For Justice Curriculum Guide. Despite their busy schedules, the committee members met monthly and then weekly to finish the guide by the July California Civil Liberties Public Education Program due date. In August the film and guide had a test run at Camp Musubi, a program for youngsters to learn about Japanese American culture and history at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. Valuable feedback was obtained from Camp Musubi participants and at a screening for a high school history class at the New Roads School in Santa Monica.

2005 will continue at a lively pace for the committee. Visual Communications has entered the film in several film festivals, and the

committee plans to do community screenings in the San Fernando Valley where Ralph Lazo lived and worked and at other centers where large numbers of Japanese Americans live. The Stand Up for Justice film and Curriculum Guide will continue to be tested in high school history and government classrooms during the spring semester and the final version of the Guide should be ready by fall 2005.

A list of screenings will be posted on the NCRR website as dates become confirmed.



Northridge Mariachis at the "Stand Up for Justice" screening.

Are you an NCRR Member? Join or Renew Now!

NCRR Membership (tax-deductible):

\$30 One-year

\$15 Students and low-income

\$500 Lifetime membership

Please make checks payable to NCRR

Mail to: NCRR

231 E. Third Street G104

Los Angeles, CA 90013

Name

Street Address

City

State ZIP

Support for Ongoing Redress Struggles

Black Reparations

Modeling his bill after the Japanese American bill, Congressman John Conyers introduced HR 40 in 1989 to study the issue of reparations for African Americans; however, this bill has sat in the Judiciary Committee year after year and has never been heard. Today there are over 200 organizations supporting some form of reparations for Blacks. According to Dr. David Horne, a professor at California State University, Northridge and the Executive Director of the California African American Political Institute, the movement is broadening but must involve more of the Black churches and youth to be successful. At a recent meeting with NCRR, Dr. Horne shared that his organization, Reparations United Front, is calling for "respect and dignity" and seeks to unite these groups into one movement.

Mexican Reparations

Unknown to most Americans, more than a million Mexican Americans in the United States were illegally deported to Mexico in the 1930s. Steven Reyes, Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund (MALDEF) attorney, made a presentation to NCRR members at the November general meeting. He recounted the history of racism against Mexican Americans that resulted in the current demand for a study commission and possible reparations for those whose civil and constitutional rights were violated.

A decade before the incarceration of almost 120,000 Japanese Americans in internment camps, 12,668 Los Angeles Mexican Americans were coerced onto trains and transported to Mexico in a campaign coordinated by the INS and local law enforcement agencies. Fueled by racism and the economic hardships of the Depression, Mexican Americans were suddenly "an immigration problem" in California, Michigan and many other states. More than 60% of those that were deported were American citizens and the vast majority of the others were legal United States residents. Like Japanese Americans they lost everything and suffered extreme hardship in Mexico.

After learning about the deportees, California State Senator Joseph L. Dunn conducted a Senate fact-finding hearing in 2003; in 2004 he sponsored bills to 1) create a study commission and 2) to extend the statute of limitations for victims wishing to file claims for damages. Both bills passed the California legislature but, unfortunately, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed both bills. U.S. Representative Hilda Solis is now writing legislation to establish a federal study commission. Attorney Reyes promises to keep NCRR informed as the campaign for Mexican reparations develops.

Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

231 E. Third Street, G104

Los Angeles, CA 90013

(213) 680-3484

www.ncrr-la.org

DOR 2005: Feb. 19, 2005

Details inside!