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Rafur

Workshop to *Pro Bono* Lawyers Being Offered

The National Coalition for Redress/Reparations (NCRR) and the Japanese American Bar Assn. (JABA) have joined to offer a workshop on Saturday, July 26, to provide lawyers interested in *pro bono* work to assist Japanese Americans who were stripped of their rights during World War II but are still denied redress because they do not meet the eligibility guidelines.

The Civil Liberties Act of 1988 (CLA88), which passed after decades of struggle by individuals, legislators and community organizations, granted redress to Japanese Americans who were unconstitutionally incarcerated by the federal government during World War II.

The *pro bono* contributions of lawyers is crucial in this last year of redress payments because the Office of Redress Administration will close its doors on August 10, 1998.

The training workshop will be conducted by civil rights attorney Gerald Sato, who argued successfully at the U.S. Federal Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit to win the landmark Ishida/Consolo case.

Sato is also currently appealing the *Kaneko v. U.S.* case, a lawsuit brought against the U.S. government by Emily Kaneko. She is a widow of a Union Pacific Railroad worker who, along with other Japanese American railroad workers, was fired from his job at the start of World War II.

The workshop will focus on actual case files as Sato demonstrates what is involved in talking with the claimant, reviewing documents, determining the course of action and the administrative steps required to file such cases against the government.

In addition, the claims process will be broken down so that if there are attorneys who feel compelled by the claimant's stories but are reluctant to singlehandedly take on a case, they can form teams where each lawyer can take on areas under their expertise.

"I'm confident that any lawyer can do this," said Sato. "My main goal is to convince (interested lawyers) that 'You can do it!'"

The workshop will be followed by presentations by potential claimants who, due to various circumstances, do not meet the strict guidelines as set by CLA88 and enforced by ORA.

Among those seeking redress are: 1) Japanese American railroad and mine workers who were fired from their jobs in 1942; 2) Japanese nationals who were in the U.S. legally on visas and were incarcerated but now are declared ineligible because of their permanent residency requirement of the CLA88; 3) Japanese Latin Americans who were abducted from their homes in Central and South America to be incarcerated in U.S. internment camps and used in prisoner-of-war exchanges; 4) Japanese Americans born after the CLA88's cut-off birthdate for eligibility of January 20, 1945 (Ishida/Consolo).

The workshop will take place at 10 a.m. at the Little Tokyo Towers, 455 E. Third St., in Little Tokyo. NCRR has established a Redress Fund to offer modest stipends to lawyers who offer their services to claimants.

For more information, call Janice Yen of NCRR at (213) 680-3484 or Derrick Li of JABA at (213) 894-4454.