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a newsletter of the Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

Winter 2007

2007 DAY OF REMEMBRANCE TO FOCUS ON

EXECUTIVE POWER

By Kay Ochi

"From 'Military Necessity' to National Security - Challenging the Use of Executive Power from WWII to Iraq" is the theme of the 2007 Day of Remembrance program in Los Angeles. The DOR will take place on Saturday, February 17, 2007 at 2 PM at the Japanese American National Museum.

Sixty-five years ago, on February 19, 1942, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066. He set into motion the events that would have dire effects on the lives of generations of Japanese Americans. The DOR commemorates the signing of EO9066 and provides a forum for discussing how citizens have challenged executive decisions and whether presidents have abused executive power.

The program's emcees are poet and performance artist Traci Kato-Kiriyama and Ken Inouye, the immediate past-president of the National JACL. To discuss the theme will be Frank Emi, leader of the World War II Fair Play Committee/Resistors of Conscience; Helga Aguayo, the wife of Agustin Aguayo, the U.S. soldier who was absent without leave because his conscientious objector status was denied by the military; and Laila Al Marayati, a spokesperson for the Muslim Public Affairs Committee (MPAC).

Other invited speakers are Congressman Xavier Becerra who continues to take leadership in the Japanese Latin American redress issue and Cedrick Shimo, World War II veteran of Company B, 1800th Engineer General Service Battalion.

Filmmaker Tad Nakamura's film "Pilgrimage" will be featured. The 20-minute documentary is a multi-generational dialogue about the importance of the activism in the community.

The event is cosponsored by NCR, the Japanese American Citizens League and the Japanese American National Museum. Admission is free. For more information, contact NCR at (213) 680-3484. Reservations are recommended; please call the National Museum at (213) 625-0414.

NCRR SUPPORTS LT. EHREN WATADA'S STAND AGAINST THE WAR IN IRAQ

By Kathy Masaoka

Lt. Ehren Watada, the first commissioned officer to refuse to go to Iraq, is charged with missing a movement and conduct unbecoming an officer. The NCR 9/11 Committee coordinated the Southern California Speaking Tour for Bob Watada and Rosa Sakanishi who spoke to organizations and campuses in the Los Angeles and Santa Barbara areas and San Diego from October 1 to October 19. While part of the purpose of the tour was to raise funds for their son's legal defense in the upcoming court martial, the Watadas wanted to explain why Ehren considers the war illegal and immoral. Both Bob and his wife, Rosa who is Ehren's stepmother, are very proud of their son's courageous act of conscience and expressed their views to students at Glendale College, Occidental College, Cal States Long Beach, Northridge and Cal Poly



Lt. Ehren Watada, June 6, 2006. Photo by Jeff Paterson/T hankyout.org



Bob and Rosa Watada with attendees at Avenue 50 Studio reception.

resisters Frank Emi and Yosh Kuromiya, Aiko Herzig, Reverend Dickson Yagi and Former 442 Chaplain George Aki, Leland Lebinsky from the Vietnam Veterans Against the War and Maricela Guzman from the Iraqi Veterans Against the War. The AAVVO stood with Bob and Rosa at the program and have been to reactivate the organization to work towards ending the war and supporting veterans. Another highlight for Bob and Rosa was speaking to over 1,000 students at Oxnard High School in several large assemblies. They were also able to visit and talk with students at Central High School and Gage Middle School in Los Angeles. Despite their youth, the middle school students were amazingly clear and asked many questions.

The tour ended with a reception at the Avenue 50 Studio where Bob and Rosa were able to express their thanks to all the groups and individuals who had



Jane Fonda, fourth from right, flanked by Bob and Rosa Watada, with NCR 9/11 Committee members (L-R) Mike Yanagida, Janice Yen, Kathy Masaoka, Suzy Katsuda and June Hibino.

organized the tour. The committee sent them off with gifts (leis made by Kimi Maru and NCR T-shirts) along with the funds that were raised at all the events. Code Pink's program with Jane Fonda raised close to \$5,000. Along with the \$2,400 raised at the San Diego fundraiser and other funds gathered at all the programs including the Whittier Dinner, the total raised was over \$10,000. As a follow up to the tour, the NCR 9/11 Committee screened the film "Ground Truth" and invited Helga Aguayo to speak about her husband, Agustin who is awaiting his court martial in Germany after his request for conscientious objector status was denied. The committee is currently planning a candlelight vigil to demand an immediate end to the war in Iraq and to support war resisters, particularly Lt. Ehren Watada and Agustin Aguayo. Please see page 4 for ways that you can support.

Pomona, Santa Barbara City College, Chapman University and UCLA. They met with religious leaders in the Interfaith Communities United for Peace and Justice, spoke before a rally at the Federal Building and were interviewed by the Los Angeles Times, KPFF, NBC and various Asian media.

Close to 200 people welcomed the Watadas to Little Tokyo at a reception sponsored by NCR and the Asian American Vietnam Veterans Organization (AAVVO) at the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center. Others who spoke were World War II draft



NCR 9/11 Committee member June Hibino speaks at Avenue 50 Studio reception as the Watadas look on.

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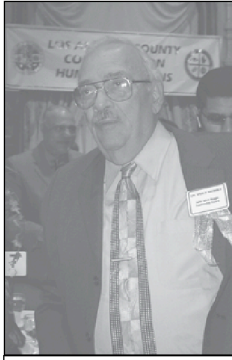
NCR remembers Rei Osaki
Education Committee Update
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and More...



**DR. MAHER HATHOUT WINS
LA HUMAN RELATIONS
COMMISSION'S AWARD**

By Suzy Katsuda

Dr. Maher Hathout was honored with the LA County Human Relations Commission John Allen Buggs Award on October 5th at the Biltmore Hotel. The event occurred after a contentious battle over whether Dr. Hathout was a moderating force for good human relations, which the John Allen Buggs Award recognizes. Rabbi Leonard Beerman, Rabbi Steve Jacobs, Rev. George Regas, Rev. Ed Bacon, Rev. Dr. Gwynne Guibord, and Fr. Ernesto Medina were among his supporters. NCRRC joined community leaders, including the Progressive Jewish Alliance in support of the nomination.



Dr. Maher Hathout at John Allen Buggs Award Luncheon.

At the awards luncheon, Dr. Hathout, the first Muslim to receive this award, received several standing ovations for his rich, decades-long track record in building coalitions and forging dialogues among diverse segments of the County's religious and ethnic communities. Last year, NCRRC was awarded the John Anson Ford Human Relations Award by the County Board of Supervisor's First District (under Gloria Molina) for its broad civil rights work.

*Read these stories and
other news at
www.ncrr-la.org!*

*Rei Osaki will be
Sorely Missed*

By Suzy Katsuda



Act of 1988, which gave an apology and monetary compensation to Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII. She was an enthusiastic participant in our monthly meetings with her astute observations, unique outlook, and wry sense of humor.

Rei was one of the first women graduates of the University of Idaho Law School. She had a profound appreciation of the Constitution and the hope for justice, equality and the improvement of the condition of peoples' lives through action. She was also a member of the Manzanar Committee, the Democratic Club, Pasadena JAACL, the Unitarian Neighborhood Church, Mother's Club, YWCA, and the Society of Friends (Quakers). She enjoyed painting with watercolors later in life after the passing of her husband, Harry, a goldsmith worker and artist who taught at USC.

We will miss Rei's sense of community, fulfillment, pride and reverence in serving others. She was always positive and hopeful, gracious and kind. She challenged us to work to achieve the results that we wanted and to take risks. Rei Osaki will be sorely missed.



**Campaign for Justice
Renews Efforts in 2007**

By Richard Katsuda

Campaign for Justice (CFJ), in which NCRRC is a founding member, has been fighting for redress for Japanese Latin Americans (JLAs) since 1996. In 1998, CFJ negotiated a settlement with the Department of Justice in *Mochizuki v. United States*, the class-action lawsuit filed on behalf of JLAs. The result was bittersweet for JLAs and CFJ, as JLAs were accorded only \$5,000 reparations compared to the \$20,000 that Japanese Americans received.

Since that time, CFJ has worked with Congressman Xavier Becerra (D-Los Angeles), who introduced the Wartime Parity and Justice Act in 2001. This bill sought equity in redress for JLAs and redress for Japanese Americans who had been denied redress based on technicalities in the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. Becerra reintroduced the bill in 2003 and 2005, but the bill never gained enough momentum for passage.

CFJ is now pleased to work with Senator Daniel K. Inouye (D-Hawaii) and Representative Becerra, who have recently reintroduced the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Latin Americans of Japanese Descent Act of 2007. This bill would convene a commission that would investigate what happened to JLAs during World War II. The commission would be much like the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians (CWRIC), which held hearings in 1981 and subsequently recommended redress and reparations for Japanese Americans. CWRIC's recommendations were pivotal in setting Congress on course to pass what ultimately became the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. The bill would expedite the formation and hearings of the commission in order to complete the process in timely fashion and render recommendations on redress for JLAs.

**It's Time to Renew Your NCRRC Membership!
Not a Member? Join Now!**

NCRRC Membership Levels (tax deductible)

- \$30 One year
- \$15 Students and low-income one year
- \$500 Lifetime membership

Please make checks payable to NCRRC. Send check and form to:
NCRRC
231 E. Third Street, G104
Los Angeles, CA 90013

Name _____

Street Address _____

City _____

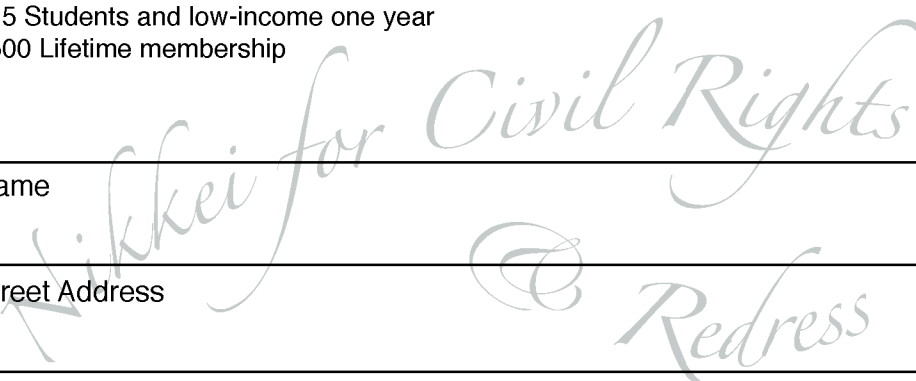
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Justice for Kurt Isobe

By Richard Katsuda

On September 16, 2006, NCRR cosponsored a fundraiser in support of Kurt Isobe, a nineteen-year-old who was arrested on May 25, 2005, at a Garden Grove rally protesting the anti-immigrant practices of the Minuteman Project. Police charged that Kurt had hurled a soda can at them. Witnesses at the scene declared Kurt's innocence, but he was jailed. The Orange County District Attorney tried him for assaulting two police officers.



Kurt Isobe, far right, performs with his band at the fundraiser.

It became clear that the District Attorney's case was very flimsy as witnesses came forward to testify resolutely to Kurt's innocence. Trial observers believed that law enforcement was determined to make an example of Kurt. With the current turbulent climate about "protecting our borders" and "illegal immigrants," the Minuteman Project has drawn much attention with its aggressive actions. Observers in support of Kurt felt that law enforcement officials wanted to discourage others from protesting against the Minuteman Project and other anti-immigrant groups.

Kurt's trial ended in June with a hung jury. Because most of the jurors had voted for his acquittal and he was found not guilty of two of the charges, NCRR's hope was that Kurt would not have to endure another trial. The District Attorney, however, decided to retry Kurt. The Court offered Kurt a plea bargain, but Kurt refused



Kurt Isobe speaks at the fundraiser held at the Union Center Courtyard.

to plead guilty to crimes he had not committed.

When NCRR learned about Kurt's case, we wrote a letter in his behalf, urging the District Attorney not to retry him. However, it appeared that the retrial would go on, and NCRR joined with Yellow Brotherhood to organize the September 15th fundraiser. As we prepared for the event, the two organizations and individuals like Ken Inouye of the JACL sought to help Kurt and his family to persuade the District Attorney not to pursue the retrial. Through these efforts, Kurt and his family were able to announce at the fundraiser that the District Attorney had indeed decided not to proceed with the retrial. The fundraiser was a joyous event, as Kurt's supporters were able to celebrate the announcement as well as provide moral and financial support to Kurt and his family.

Alan Nishio, a founding member of NCRR, retires after 34 years at Cal State University, Long Beach

By Suzy Katsuda

Alan Nishio, a founding member of NCRR and former Associate Vice President of the Division of Student Services celebrated his retirement on September 22, 2006 at the Point in the Walter Pyramid. At CSULB Alan contributed to the shaping of the campus climate that celebrates student, faculty and staff diversity. His committed leadership led to the mentorship of hundreds of CSULB students and staff and encompassed a strong connection between CSULB and the greater Long Beach community

There is an Alan T. Nishio Educational Equity Excellence Scholarship established to honor outstanding CSULB students who exemplify the educational equity vision and community involvement of its namesake. Contributions can be made by contacting jbellock@csulb.edu or to vbordeu@csulb.edu. Alan plans to work on projects in the Japanese American community.



Alan Nishio, third from left, with NCRR members at retirement celebration.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE TO CONDUCT TEACHER TRAINING WORKSHOPS

By Janice Yen

NCRR's Education Committee had a very active 2006. In the first half of 2006 **Stand Up For Justice**, the Ralph Lazo docudrama produced by Visual Communications and NCRR, was shown at California teachers' workshops and conferences, at Day of Remembrance commemorations, and to a group of teachers attending the Manzanar Pilgrimage. In addition, Patty and Steve Nagano screened the film for professors and students in Tokyo, Japan. Presenters at the meetings used the NCRR-developed prototype curriculum guide to instruct teachers on the use of **Stand Up For Justice** in their classrooms. Using feedback from workshop attendees and curriculum experts, the NCRR Education committee members spent the latter half of 2006 honing the contents of the curriculum guide. Improvements included more activities in the lesson plan, enlargement of the photo cards, and expanded historical content.

With the guide ready to go to print, the committee is gearing up for a hectic 2007. Thanks to grants from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, Henri & Tomoye Takahashi and the Japanese American Community Services, more than 1000 California secondary school teachers will receive a complimentary copy of the **Stand Up For Justice** guide and DVD. The 300 teachers who have already attended screenings and workshops will be sent their copy of **Stand Up For Justice** film/guide in the near future.

NCRR teachers have committed to present the film and guide at the following teacher



Professor Valerie Matsumoto, fourth from left, of UCLA Center X, with Lazo Project members (L-R) Patty Nagano, Steve Nagano, Kay Ochi, Suzy Katsuda, John Esaki, Janice Yen, Kathy Masaoka, and June Hibino.

conferences in March and April 2007: the California Teachers Association, California Council for the Social Studies, and the California Association for Bilingual Education. For the second year in a row UCLA Center X and NCRR will sponsor a teacher-training workshop in Los Angeles. A presentation is also scheduled for the Franklin High School National Center for High School History in Schools meeting. Locally, workshops will be held in the Torrance, Long Beach and Los Angeles Unified School Districts. The film will also screen in Torrance on February 19, 2007 as part of the Torrance Community Services Department "Works in Progress" program.



WHAT YOU CAN DO TO SUPPORT LT. EHREN WATADA

Lt. Ehren Watada faces a possible six years in prison for his principled stand against the war in Iraq. His court martial is scheduled for February 5, 2007 at Fort Lewis, Washington. He is charged with missing a movement and for conduct unbecoming an officer. We are asking that the military allow Lt. Watada to resign and that he not be punished for refusing to fight in an illegal and immoral war.

- 1) Please write the following people and request that they:
 - * Dismiss all charges
 - * Honor Lt. Watada's resignation

Lt. General James Dubik
 Commanding General Fort Lewis
 1 Corps Building 2025 Stop 1
 Fort Lewis, WA 98433
 Phone: 253-967-1110

The Honorable Francis J. Harvey
 Secretary of the U.S. Army
 101 Army Pentagon
 Washington D.C. 20310-0101

The Honorable Robert Gates
 Secretary of Defense
 1000 Defense Pentagon
 Washington D. C. 20301-1000



- 2) Attend the Candlelight Vigil/March/Program on February 3 (see flyer above)
 - 4:00 PM Gather at the Friendship Knot on San Pedro and Second Streets
 - 4:30 PM March through Little Tokyo
 - For more information: (213) 680-4462 (glow sticks only, no candles please)
- 3) Sign the Petition on the Thankyoult.org website
- 4) Join actions on February 5 to show support for Lt. Ehren Watada at the court martial Candlelight Vigil at 6:00 PM in Little Tokyo, corner of Alameda and First Streets

Nikkei for Civil Rights & Redress

231 E. Third Street, G104
 Los Angeles, CA 90013
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 ncrrla@yahoo.com

www.ncrr-la.org

DOR 2007: February 17, 2007

Details Inside!

