



# Japanese American Citizens League Mile Hi Chapter Notes

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## President's Message



Thank you to everyone who came out to our quarterly social event at Sushi Hai last month. We had a great turn out and I hope you all enjoyed your time together.

I would also like to thank everyone for supporting me over the last two years during my presidency. It has been a remarkable journey for me and I am grateful for having been given the opportunity to serve all of you through this role. My two-year term ends in April 2011 and, after much consideration, I have decided not to run for another term. I want to express my sincere appreciation for everyone's faith in my abilities and continued support and guidance during the duration of my position. I have greatly enjoyed the numerous opportunities to interact with our community and engage in various local and national JACL functions. Although I will not be leading the Mile Hi JACL, I am looking forward to staying involved on the board and assisting the future leadership as our chapter continues to grow and develop.

I hope that all of you will also continue your involvement and assist us in identifying the future direction of our chapter. Firstly, please send in nominations for potential board members and officers over the next few weeks and participate in our election process in December. Secondly, please share your feedback on the efforts of the Mile Hi JACL by partaking in our community assessment which will be sent out to our constituents over the following weeks. This assessment will help us better understand what we are doing well, what needs to be improved, and how we can better serve our community.

Thank you again for each of your contributions towards the success of our chapter.

Sincerely,  
Suzy Shimasaki  
Mile Hi JACL President

## Congressional Gold Medal Bill signing ceremony at White House

*President Barack Obama and his guests applaud after signing S.1055, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II, in the Oval Office, October 5, 2010. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)*

This afternoon the President signed legislation to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team, and US Army Military Intelligence Service in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II.



The 100<sup>th</sup> Infantry Battalion, which was later incorporated into the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, was made up of predominantly Nisei (second generation Americans of Japanese ancestry) members of the Hawaii Provisional Infantry Battalion. The 442nd became the most decorated unit in United States military history for its size and length of service. Combined, the 100th Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team received 7 Presidential Unit Citations, 21 Medals of Honor, 29 Distinguished Service Crosses, 560 Silver Stars, 4,000 Bronze Stars, 22 Legion of Merit Medals, 15 Soldier's

Medal, and over 4,000 Purple Hearts. From the government, the President was joined by Secretary Eric Shinseki of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Senator Daniel Inouye -- himself a member of the 442nd -- and several other Members of Congress.



*President Barack Obama talks with his guests before signing S.1055, a bill to grant the Congressional Gold Medal, collectively, to the 100th Infantry Battalion and the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, in recognition of their dedicated service during World War II, in the Oval Office, October 5, 2010. (Official White House Photo by Pete Souza)*

The stories of the other veterans who attended the signing give a glimpse into this awe-inspiring chapter of America's history:

**Osamu "Sam" Fujikawa** was born in Alameda, California on August 23, 1925. On May 10, 1942, a few months after Pearl Harbor was bombed, Executive Order 9066 was enacted and Fujikawa and his family, along with 25,000 more Japanese Americans who lived on the US West Coast, were transported to one of the 10 internment camps scattered across the country. First, Fujikawa and his family were housed in a stable at Tanforan Race Track in San Bruno, CA and then relocated to Topaz, Utah where they were held behind barbed wire. Fujikawa was drafted into the Army from Topaz and trained at Camp Shelby, MS. Sent overseas with the 171st Infantry Battalion, Fujikawa was one of the replacements for the original 100th Infantry Battalion. When the war ended, he was among the returning Nisei or second-generation Japanese American soldiers of the 100th Infantry Battalion and 442nd Regimental Combat Team to parade down Constitution Avenue in Washington, D.C. for President Harry S. Truman's historic homecoming welcome. Fujikawa went to work for Hughes Aircraft and in 1952, moved back to California. He was with Hughes 37 years. Fujikawa remains an active member of the 100th/442nd Veterans Association and the Go For Broke National Education Center. He lives in Los Angeles.

**Grant Ichikawa** was born and raised in Suisun Valley, California. He graduated from the University of California in Berkeley in May 1941. Following Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, Grant and his family were incarcerated in a concentration camp. In November 1942 he volunteered from the Camp to enroll in the 6-month US Army Military Intelligence Service (MIS) Language School. Following graduation, he was sent to Brisbane, Australia and assigned to the Allied Translations and Interpretation Service (ATIS). He participated in the Philippine liberation. Immediately following Emperor Hirohito's announcement of Japan's surrender, Lt. Ichikawa talked 250 armed Japanese soldiers to surrender their weapons. There were 3,000 Japanese Americans who served in the Asia Pacific War in every combat unit as front line interrogators/translators, in the rear echelon as translators, as communications interceptors and in the Special Forces to operate behind enemy lines. Subsequent to his honorable discharge and return to civilian life, he was recalled to active duty during the Korean War to serve in the MIS. Following his discharge for the second time, he was assigned to the US Consulate General in Surabaya and the US Embassy in Jakarta, Indonesia. In April 1975 he served in Saigon and was among the last to leave aboard a helicopter from the Embassy rooftop.

**Jimmie Kanaya, Veteran** was born and raised in Clackamas, Oregon. He volunteered for the Army in April 1941. He volunteered to form the 442nd Regimental Combat Team as a cadre First Sergeant of the Medical Detachment and received a battlefield commission in Italy, September 1944 from General Mark Clark. Kanaya was captured in France while assisting the 100th Battalion evacuating casualties in the Voges mountains and taken to a German Prisoner of War Camp, Oflag 64 in Shubin, Poland. He hiked 400 miles from Poland to Hammelberg, Germany in the winter of 1945 to escape. In July of 1946 Kanaya received a regular Army commission. Mr. Kanaya also served in Japan and Korea in the Military Intelligence Service, the occupational forces in Japan and Germany and served as a military adviser in Vietnam. He retired from military after over 33 years of service. Mr. Kanaya currently lives in Gig Harbor, Washington.

**Yeiichi "Kelly" Kuwayama** was a member of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team in the Army Medical Unit. He is credited with saving the life of Daniel Inouye, also a member of the 442nd Combat Regiment. Mr. Kuwayama retired from the US Army as a public affairs specialist.

**S. Floyd Mori** was born in Murray, Utah, just south of Salt Lake City. His parents were immigrants to the United States from Kagoshima, Japan. After graduation from Jordan High School, he joined the U.S. Army Reserves and spent six months on active duty at Fort Ord, California. He served several years in the Reserves before being discharged. Mori attended the University of Southern California and Santa Monica City College. He attended Brigham Young University where he received a Bachelor's degree and a Masters degree majoring in Economics, Asian Studies, and Political Science. Mori was elected to the California State Assembly in March 1975 and served for six years in that capacity as one of the first two Japanese Americans to serve in the Assembly. Mori is currently the National Executive Director of the JAACL. He is on the Executive Council of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights (LCCR) and was chair of the National Coalition of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA) for two years.

**Terry Shima** was born in Hawaii. He was drafted into the US Army on October 12, 1944 and trained at Camp Blanding, Florida, as a replacement for the 442nd RCT. He arrived in Italy on VE Day, 1945, and joined the 442nd at the Garda Airport in northern Italy and was assigned to its Public Relations Office. When the 442nd returned as a unit to the USA in June 1946, Shima returned with the unit to handle public relations in New York City, Washington, DC, and Honolulu. New York City gave the 442nd RCT an unprecedented huge welcome, the 442nd marched down Constitution Avenue and was reviewed by President Harry Truman at the Ellipse, and they received another huge welcome in Honolulu for the deactivation of colors. Shima attended Georgetown University School of Foreign Service and Graduate School and served in the US Foreign Service. He is Executive Director of the Japanese American Veterans Association (JAVA).

**Christine Sato-Yamazaki** was born in San Leandro, California, and is the granddaughter of 442nd RCT veteran, Dave Kawagoye. She is the Chairperson for the National Veterans Network, which is a coalition of 22 Japanese American veteran and civic organizations nationwide established to serve the interests of Japanese American WWII and subsequent war veterans. She worked to support the passage of S.1055 to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the 100th Battalion, 442 and Military Intelligence Service. Moving forward, she and the National Veterans Network will work with U.S. Congress and U.S. Mint to plan the gold medal award presentation and celebratory events. Prior to this role, she served as the President and CEO of the Go For Broke National Education since 1997. Through her leadership, she introduced innovative education programs used in classrooms throughout California, Hawaii, as well as schools in Maryland and Virginia. She also founded the Hanashi Oral History Program which holds the nation's largest collection of visual Japanese American World War II veteran oral histories. Approximately 700 of these oral histories are available in a digital library located on the organization's website, many are used in the organization's teacher-training program and all of the nearly 1,100 that have now been captured serve as valuable resources in countless other ways. Christine earned her bachelor's degree in business administration from the University of California at Riverside and currently resides in Torrance, CA.



**Do you have an event or project that you would like to share with our community? Would you like to submit an article for the Mile Hi Chapter Notes? Please help us keep our community informed by submitting events, notices, recognitions, and articles to include in future newsletters. Information can be submitted to Bruce Tawara: [RisingSunDen@msn.com](mailto:RisingSunDen@msn.com)**

## Reception with Dr. Howard K. Koh

On November 7, the Asian Pacific Development Center and the National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association sponsored a community reception for Dr. Howard K. Koh. Dr. Koh serves as the 14th Assistant Secretary for Health for the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), after being nominated by President Barack Obama and confirmed by the US Senate in 2009. As the Assistant Secretary for Health, Dr. Koh oversees the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health, the Commissioned Corps of the US Public Health Service, and the Office of the Surgeon General. He also serves as senior public health advisor to the Secretary.

He also leads an array of interdisciplinary programs relating to disease prevention, health promotion, the reduction of health disparities, women's and minority health, adolescent health, HIV/AIDS, vaccine programs, physical fitness and sports, bioethics, population affairs, blood supply, research integrity and human research protections. In these various roles, he is dedicated to the mission of creating better public health systems for prevention and care so that all people can reach their highest attainable standard of health.

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## JACL/OCA Leadership Conference

The Washington DC Leadership Summit is a joint program organized by the JACL which includes participants from OCA National. This four day conference provides an opportunity for thirty emerging leaders of the JACL and OCA National to learn firsthand about current national public policy issues facing our communities. Each JACL District has the opportunity to send two representatives to this once-in-a-lifetime conference. Anyone interested in attending is strongly encouraged to apply. To learn more about this conference, please visit: <http://jacl.org/leadership/dc-summit.htm>. Information on application deadlines will be sent out soon.



## Jeremy Bloom's Wish of a Lifetime

Have you dreamed about doing something your whole life like going skydiving or taking a trip to another country? Is there something you've always wanted to do but haven't been able to? Jeremy Bloom's Wish of a Lifetime (JBWOL) is dedicated to enriching the lives of senior citizens by granting lifelong wishes.

JBWOL was established by two-time Olympic Skier, former NFL football player and Colorado native Jeremy Bloom in living honor of his grandmother Donna Wheeler. After leaving competitive sports Bloom launched the foundation in order to initiate a cultural change in how our society views elders.

JBWOL was recently featured on ABC World News with Diane Sawyer. ABC followed JBWOL to England to fulfill the wish of Tony Canino. Tony's heartwarming story began when he met Joyce while stationed in England during World War II. Joyce and Tony soon fell in love but the war intervened and Tony was deployed to the Pacific. Tony never got the chance to say goodbye to Joyce before shipping out. They lost contact over the years and both Tony & Joyce eventually married and built lives of their own.

Shortly before Tony's wife passed away, she told him to look for Joyce. With help from the British Government Tony eventually found his first love, but Joyce had passed away just a few months earlier. Tony's wish of a lifetime was to go to England and lay an orchid on Joyce's gravesite. JBWOL paid for Tony's trip to say goodbye to his long lost love and visit Joyce's family.

Connection wishes like Tony's are some of the most compelling wishes JBWOL fulfills and the organization is currently working on reconnecting a mother with her long lost son who lives in Japan. However, JBWOL fulfills all types of wishes both large and small, but they are always enriching and meaningful. In the past, our wish recipients have received a new TV, a makeover, a bike, breakfast at Denny's and even a date with Jeremy Bloom.

JBWOL has a few requirements to qualify for a wish, you must be 65 years or older, be a legal U.S. resident and have not committed a crime. Do you know someone that would benefit from a wish? Submit a wish today to be considered. For more information on JBWOL, visit our website <http://www.seniorwish.org> or call 720-889-2029.

## Nihongo-o Naraimashyou! (Let's Learn Japanese!)

### Words of the Month:

Winter: Fuyu (fu-yu)

Snow: Yuki (yu-ki)

November: Jyuichigatsu (jyu-i-chi-ga-tsu)

Pencil: Enpitsu (e-n-pi-tsu)

Child: Kodomo (ko-do-mo)

Baseball: Yakyuu (ya-kyu-u)

If you're interested in practicing Japanese, join the free Kaiwa (Conversation) Club of Japan America Society of Colorado at Buzz Café (1229 E 6th Ave.) every Wednesday from 6:30 pm - 8:00 pm.

## Japanese American Resource Center of Colorado

The Japanese-American Resource Center of Colorado (JARCC) opened a new exhibit commemorating the 150th anniversary of Japan's first Embassy (ambassadorial mission) to the United States.

In 1853, Commodore Matthew Perry sailed his Black ships into Edo (present day Tokyo) Harbor, ending more than 200 years of self imposed isolation by Japan, forcing open trade and the subsequent ratification of a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the United States. In February of 1860, a delegation of 77 Samurai embarked on this historic journey to Washington to ratify the Treaty. The Embassy returned to Japan in November of that same year after visiting schools, factories, the Smithsonian, the US Naval shipyards, the Philadelphia Mint and the White House for a reception with President James Buchanan and Senator Abraham Lincoln.

The exhibit at JARCC includes artifacts concerning the delegation as well as memorabilia from local descendants of Norimasa Muragaki, Lord of Awaji, who served as Deputy Ambassador of this historic mission. Photographs as well as the translated diary of Muragaki will be on display concerning the 77 Samurai who circumnavigated the globe on their nine-month long journey. The delegation returned to Japan with fascinating insights into Western culture drawn from their experiences among US leaders and politicians as well as with the masses who thronged to get a glimpse of the first Japanese Embassy to the West.

JARCC is open each month on the second Saturday from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The next Open House date at JARCC will be November 13th. In addition on the second Saturday in November, JARCC will be showing the film *Black Rain, White Light* (on the bombing of Hiroshima) starting at 2:30 PM, with discussion afterward. The JARCC facility is located on the second floor at Sakura Square, 19th and Lawrence St., near downtown Denver. For further information, contact Marge Taniwaki, JARCC Board member, at [margetaniwaki@aol.com](mailto:margetaniwaki@aol.com).

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## Gorden Aoyagi

Gorden Aoyagi is a gentleman that I had the pleasure of working with as a high school student and I wanted to acknowledge his accomplishments as a former citizen of the Denver Japanese Community. Gorden graduated from Manual HS in 1963. Gorden went on to attend Colorado College and received Bachelor of Arts in 1967. Gorden served in the US Army in Fort Carson, Fort Benning, and Fort Holabird. He completed military service as a Captain in Military Intelligence in Vietnam.

Gorden has contributed over 30 years of local government service. Among his various assignments he worked in Denver with Denver Urban Renewal Authority, he received Master of Arts in Public Administration from University of Colorado, he worked for City of Boulder and RTD as urban planner, he became the RTD manager for Northern Operations – Boulder and Longmont, proceeded to serve as General Manager for Westport (CT) Transit District and then Salem (OR) Transit District. Gorden then progressed to Montgomery County (MC), MD to be Division Chief of Public Transit. He then advanced to Senior Assistant Chief Administrative Officer (Deputy CAO) in the Office of County Executive. Gorden was appointed Fire Administrator for Fire and Rescue Department and then transitioned to MC Homeland Security Director. Retired in 2008 and currently working as a consultant – Director of Homeland Security and Public Policy, Justice and Security Strategies, Inc. – Rockville, MD.

I rediscovered Gorden through the Pacific Citizen and thanks to the exposure was able to reconnect. I think that it is important to recognize those in our community that work so diligently to achieve success and add to the creditability and respect of the Japanese community at large.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Mile Hi JACL Meeting**

Thursday, December 2  
7:00 p.m.  
JAC Office  
Sakura Square (2nd Fl)

### **NAAAP Colorado Mixer**

Wed, November 17  
6:00—8:00 PM  
Vita Restaurant  
1575 Boulder St.  
Denver, CO 80211

## OCA/JACL Lunar New Years Celebration—Save the Date!



Welcome the Year of the Rabbit with OCA Colorado and Mile Hi JACL's Lunar New Year Dinner. This annual dinner will be held at The Palace on Saturday, February 5, 2011. The evening will be filled with dining and entertainment. This is a not to be missed event and sells out every year so stay tuned for details to follow on how to purchase your ticket!

## Teachers Education Workshop

### TEACHERS EDUCATION WORKSHOP (DESIGNED FOR 4TH GRADE - 12TH GRADE TEACHERS)

## SAVE THE DATE!

Several times in our nation's history, political leaders have been faced with balancing constitutional rights with issues of national security. Many factors have influenced these decisions including prejudice, public hysteria created by a national emergency, skewed information and data, the media, and the judgments made by our political leaders.

Sponsored by:

Mile Hi Japanese American Citizens League



Sponsored by:

Astan Education Advisory Council  
Japanese American Resource Center of Colorado  
Japanese Association of Colorado  
University of Denver

### The Workshop Will Feature the Following Topics:

- Brief Overview of Our Diversifying Communities
- The Japanese American Experience
- Panel Reflection on the Impact of Internment on Future Generations
- Informing Future Policies
- Classroom Lessons Plans

**Date:** Saturday, February 19, 2011

**Time:** 8:00 am - 4:00 pm

**Location:** Denver, CO

**Registration Cost:** \$20

(Registration includes lunch and curriculum binder.)

For more information, contact the  
Mile Hi Japanese American Citizens League:  
milehiJACL@gmail.com

## 2010 JACL Scholarship Recipient

Ryan is the son of Henry and Kimiko Higaki. Ryan was the recipient of the 2010 JACL scholarship and is now attending Colorado State University. He and his family are grateful for the support of the Japanese Community and it is his wish to convey his appreciation to the Denver Metro Japanese Community and report on his progress. Ryan has demonstrated the graciousness to recognize the community support and I think that it is a trait that we can all admire.

I am attending Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado. I am majoring in Business Administration with a concentration in Computer Information Systems. I am working on a minor in Japanese language. Japanese class is my hardest class. It is also the class I enjoy the most and the class I want to succeed in the most. Additionally, I am doing pretty well academically, receiving an A on my first midterm (in anthropology). College life is really fun and I've been participating in things like capture the flag, sand volleyball, baseball, and basketball.



I would just like to thank the Japanese community and the JACL specifically for all they have done for me. They have not only aided me financially, but emotionally and ethnically as well. It was solely because of the Japanese community's involvement in my life that I chose to minor in Japanese. My ethnic background is a big part of my life and I would like to be even more involved in the Japanese community in the future. My choice in minor is just one example of how the Japanese community has shaped my life. I am humbly in debt to all it has done for me.

Thank you.

Ryan K. Higaki ライアン・楡垣

photo: Tyler Dalby (roommate) and Hillary Owens (best friend).

To the JACL Members:

We would like to express our deepest thanks to the Japanese American Community League for your continuous support of the high school graduates with JACL scholarships. These scholarships are not only important in the financial aspect of assisting parents in paying for the rising cost of college, but they also allow these Japanese high school students to meet one another, learn about their culture, and serve their community in a wonderful way. Not to mention, the chance to meet leaders in the Japanese community by going through the interview process.

We feel this whole experience has been very enlightening for our son. Because of his work in the Japanese community, Ryan has taken an interest in learning more about the Japanese culture up at college. He is currently enrolled in a Japanese language course at CSU and recently decided to pursue a minor in Japanese. In addition, he has expressed an interest in participating in the Japanese Exchange and Teaching Program (JET) in the future.

Your influence has sparked an interest in Ryan to learn more about his Japanese roots. As you know, Ryan was extremely involved in his high school with sports, clubs, school functions and activities, but this experience was a great way for him to learn about and support his Japanese heritage. We would like to thank you for the opportunity you have given on our son, Ryan, and hope you will continue to provide this invaluable experience to other graduates as well.

Sincerely,

Henry & Jacki Higaki