

# Leading the Way

JACL Hawai'i, Honolulu Chapter



Fall 2003

## JACL honors Fred Korematsu and Dale Minami

Eleen Trang



*Left to right: Dale Minami, JACL Members Richard Turbin and Representative Barbara Marumoto. Seated, Fred Korematsu*

**F**red Korematsu and Dale Minami were the guests of honor at a reception hosted by JACL members Richard Turbin and Rai St. Chu on Sunday, July 13, 2003. The informal gathering allowed both members of JACL and the public to meet and converse with Mr. Korematsu and Mr. Minami.

His wife, Kathryn, and his daughter, Karen, accompanied Mr. Korematsu to Hawai'i and the reception. Mrs. Korematsu provided one of the highlights of the afternoon by speaking to the crowd. In her very touching and emotional speech, she reminded everyone of what

they are working against and urged them to continue with the fight for justice.

In 1944, Mr. Korematsu, along with Min Yasui and Gordon Hirabayashi, challenged Executive Order No. 9066, which called for the internment of Japanese Americans. The Supreme Court upheld the law and Mr. Korematsu's conviction for violating the evacuation orders, which he did not follow to stay with his then-fiancée, Kathryn. Almost forty years later, Mr. Minami led a team of 8 attorneys and successfully overturned the Supreme Court's earlier decisions, thereby ruling Executive Order No. 9066 unconstitutional.



JACL President, Susan Kitsu, Fred Korematsu, JACL Vice President Karen Nakasone, and Dale Minami



Fred Korematsu, JACL Past President, Alan Murakami, and Dale Minami



# President's Message

Susan H. Kitsu



## Upcoming Events:

Japanese American National Museum  
*presents*  
A New Generation Explores U.S.-Japan  
Relations in the 21st Century

Thursday, September 25, 2003  
Program 5:30 – 7:00 pm  
Reception 7:00 – 8:00 pm  
Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki  
Mauna Kea Ballroom  
100 Holomoana Street  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96815  
Cost: Free

To RSVP, contact Rene Tomita, Hawai'i Office  
at 808.946.5417 or [rtomita@janm.org](mailto:rtomita@janm.org)  
See page 6 for more information.

JACL HAWAII'S FALL EVENT:  
Premiere Showing of the documentary:  
The Bruce Yamashita Story

Date: Sunday, October 5, 2003  
Time: 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.  
Place: The University of Hawaii Architecture  
Auditorium; 2410 Campus Road  
Parking: Free—under the Auditorium;  
enter off University Avenue  
Refreshments will be served; sweaters  
advised.

Panel discussion to follow., including Bruce  
Yamashita, Steve Okino (the film maker) and  
Bruce's JACL lawyer, Clayton Ikei.

Contact: Brian Niiya, Education Committee,  
Japanese American Citizens League, Honolulu  
Chapter, 395-2617; or Ken Akinaka, Church &  
Society Commission, Harris United Methodist  
Church, 221-6204

*Aloha!* It has been a busy Summer for our board. As many of you already know, JACL Hawaii will be hosting the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary JACL National Convention at the Waikiki Beach Marriott Resort from August 10-14, 2004, with our gala event taking place at the beautiful Hawaii Convention Center. We are very excited about the convention and hope that many of you will come and enjoy the festivities and events. Many noted speakers will be invited to our convention. Senator Daniel Inouye and former Governor George Ariyoshi are our Honorary Chairs for the convention. Registration information will be sent to all JACL members. If you would like a preview of the information, please visit our website at [jaclhawaii.org](http://jaclhawaii.org). Volunteers are needed to assist during the convention. If you are interested in helping, please contact me via email at [mssu@hgea.org](mailto:mssu@hgea.org), or call our message line at 523-8464, and leave a message for me. I can provide additional information if necessary.

Our Education Committee has been hard at work in planning an upcoming event featuring the showing of a documentary film on Bruce Yamashita. I encourage all of you to attend this event. More information is included in this newsletter.

I recently attended a gala dinner in Los Angeles that honored Secretary Norman Mineta, Senator Daniel Inouye, Representative Michael Honda, and Representative Robert Matsui. A special tribute to the late Patsy Takemoto Mink made the evening complete. It was a magical night for the nearly 900 people who attended. The gala was sponsored by the Los Angeles JACL District and the National JACL. Members of the University of Hawaii attended, including President Dobelle, Chancellor Englert, and members of the University of Hawaii Foundation. I'd like to personally thank the individuals from the University of Hawaii for their support and attendance. Because of them, Hawaii was well represented at this event.

Finally, I'd like to thank all the members who chose to renew their membership with JACL Hawaii, and welcome all our new members. I'd like to also thank those individuals and businesses who continue to donate their time and funds to support JACL. I am grateful to all of you for your support. Thank you!

I hope you enjoy this Fall edition of our newsletter and please feel free to contact me if you have any comments or questions.

Mahalo nui loa,  
Susan H. Kitsu  
President

# Affirmative Action and Diversity Is a Compelling Government Interest

Susan H. Kitsu

The United States Supreme Court recently held that the University of Michigan Law School's affirmative action application process is legal. According to the court, race can be used as a factor in making application decisions. This decision upheld a 1978 case called *Bakke*. In that case, the U.S. Supreme Court held that it is a compelling state interest to promote diversity through the use of affirmative action in schools. *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, 438 U.S. 265 (1978). This ruling was praised by both the local and national JACL.

The Supreme Court stated that the Michigan Law School's admissions program is legal because race is one of many factors used when considering an applicant for their law school. JACL joined 27 other Asian Pacific American organizations in submitting an amicus curiae brief, or "friend of the court" brief, in support of the University of Michigan's affirmative action programs.

JACL joins other civil rights organizations in celebrating this victory. JACL will continue to fight for affirmative action programs and ensure that public institutions continue to recruit, accept, and retain a diverse group of individuals.



*Members of JACL Hawaii, Hon. Karl Sakamoto, JACL Board Member, Kalene Sakamoto, and other guests help celebrate OCA's 30th Anniversary.*

## OCA 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration in Hawaii

Susan H. Kitsu

JACL was proud to support the National and Local members of the Organization of Chinese Americans (OCA) at their recent national convention here in Hawaii. JACL board member Kalene Sakamoto was the volunteer coordinator for the event and many board members helped by volunteering throughout the convention. The convention was held at the Sheraton Waikiki where over 1,100 people attended the gala dinner. JACL congratulates OCA on 30 years of supporting civil and human rights for Asian Pacific Americans.

### JACL HAWAII'S FALL EVENT: The Bruce Yamashita Story

Yoshie Tanabe

*Sunday, October 5, 2003 at 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the University of Hawaii Architecture Auditorium*

*Bruce Yamashita, a local boy, in 1989 enrolled in and was "disenrolled from" the United States Marine Corps Officer Candidate School in Quantico, West Virginia. But Bruce did not "roll over." After failing to find anyone who would champion his cause, Bruce turned to the JACL Hawaii Chapter. This Board voted to "go to bat" for Bruce—and won!*

But what happened in the four years (1460 days and 35,040 hours) between his dismissal and his vindication? Truth is, Bruce returned to Hawaii, lived in a tiny apartment, drove a 20-year-old Volkswagon while his contemporaries were partners in law firms, buying homes, starting families. Meanwhile the slow wheels of justice kept moving.

This is the story and the man we want to share with you, with the whole world!

Bruce who lives and works in Washington, D.C. will be at this event. The event will open with a documentary titled "A Most Unlikely Hero" and will be followed by a panel discussion by Steve Okino (the film maker) and Bruce's JACL lawyer, Clayton Ikei. There will be time for questions.

There will be opportunity to buy Bruce's newly published autobiography, "Fighting Tradition," which he will sign.

What shall we learn from this encounter with this "most unlikely hero?" It's the power of perseverance, the tenacity to ask for help, the importance of group support. It is the lesson of democracy—"My country, right or wrong; and when right I will defend her, BUT WHEN WRONG, I will strongly protest to make her right again!"

On September 6th, the new Board of Directors was treated to an orientation by present and former Directors of JACL Honolulu. Among those offering some historical perspective was Lawrence Kumabe (Past President), Bill Kaneko (Past President), Clayton Ikei (Past President), Susan Kitsu (current President), Steve Okino, David Forman and James Dixon. Also on hand to end the day with some words of wisdom, or more appropriately challenge, was University of Hawaii School of Law Professor Chris Iijima (also a JACL Member). The speakers provided a forum for the new directors to learn about the issues that JACL Honolulu had been involved with in the past. The topics ranged from the formation of the JACL to the Honolulu Chapter's role in issues including: redress and reparations, same gender marriage, native Hawaiian issues, etc.

## Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress

*JACL member, Francis Sogi, provided the following information that was taken from a message given for Asian Pacific American Heritage Month.*

The Veteran's History Project of the Library of Congress has given veterans an opportunity to tell, preserve, and pass on their experiences to children and grandchildren for posterity. Sogi asks that all veterans take advantage of this opportunity and participate in the oral history project. He stated that many oral histories have already been recorded, preserved and lodged with the Library of Congress and will be made a part of the historical records that will be used to tell individual's stories to the nation and the world. Mr. Sogi said that his experience in the US Army from 1944 to 1947 is somewhat limited, but after it was recorded and preserved, he said that it served as a link to the stories of others who had much more battle front experience. Mr. Sogi encourages all veterans to participate in the oral history project. For more information and a Biographical Information Form, please visit [www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/forms.html](http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets/forms.html), or you may contact Mr. Sogi at [fsogi@aol.com](mailto:fsogi@aol.com), or 808.735.6994.

## JACL Hawaii President, Susan H. Kitsu Awarded Pacific Business News' FORTY Under 40

Lori K. Amano

The Pacific Business News (PBN) FORTY Under 40 awards honor forty of Hawai'i's brightest business leaders under the age of forty. PBN began this program to recognize the accomplishments and community contributions of Hawai'i's young business leaders. This year, with over 80 nominees, judges from various business schools and colleges in Hawai'i chose JACL Honolulu Chapter President, Susan H. Kitsu, as one of Hawai'i's FORTY Under 40.

The 2003 FORTY Under 40 awards program was held on September 4<sup>th</sup> at the Honolulu Academy of Arts. PBN and Bank of Hawai'i co-sponsored this event. All forty of PBN's awardees were honored with beautiful plaques and editorials in the September 5, 2003, edition of PBN discussing their accomplishments. PBN noted that Susan's "sense of justice stretches far beyond her age." Also published in the September 5<sup>th</sup> edition were all awardees' unnamed baby pictures. Small hints were given to identify each awardee with his or her baby picture. Susan's hint was "future lawyer."

PBN's FORTY Under 40 award is a great honor and accomplishment. We are all very proud of Susan for everything that she has done for our community and for JACL.

# The Third Time's the Charm (On Joining JACL)

Marcia Sakamoto Wong

"...born into," "join the club," "come to the party ..." These phrases are all about the idea of membership, and in some sense, identity. Being "born into" the family, the group, the organization means you have unvolitional membership by birthright. On the other hand, one "joins the club" by choice, and for specific reasons. But if you arrive in full spirit and enthusiasm, you have "come to the party." These phrases each describe three stages in my affiliation with JACL.

In the early 1930's my parents were founding members of the Japanese American Citizens League. It was a time in our country's history when those of Japanese descent found it necessary to continually prove their loyalty to the United States. In some cases America was their nation of birth; in others, their adopted country. Thus the implied hyphen between *Japanese* and *American*: a recognition and acceptance of both cultural history and of current allegiance. The unspoken credo of the JACL encompassed patriotism to this country as well as reverence for ancestral cultural. I was "born into" this JACL in the way infants are born into their family's religion.

Following WWII, as many "born into(s)" do, I became a 'fallen-away' JACL-er and remained so as an adult. I was too busy being 'pure' American; too busy trying to overcome the obvious physical evidences of my ethnicity; too busy assimilating. I wanted to think of myself as just another ordinary American; not realizing that that status doesn't necessarily exclude appreciation of ancestry, especially in this country of immigrants!

Then, in my mid-'50's I "joined the club." Pragmatism having prevailed, I joined ... to obtain medical insurance; not the most idealistic of reasons. In my defense, however, I was mindful of the civil rights mission of JACL. Moreover, I was vaguely aware of the Hawai'i chapter's vital role in redress and other civil rights issues and I did support those aims. But God forbid I should ever become an active participant. I just wasn't a joiner! Still, I was now an official dues-paying member.

Nevertheless, it took me awhile to "come to the party." The invitation took the form of a JACL sponsored event presented shortly after the Oahu premiere of the film, "Pearl Harbor." I had seen the film and was left with a feeling of frustration and disappointment. In my opinion, the movie had missed the point altogether. The following is excerpted from the letter I wrote to the *Pacific Citizen*:

The movie-makers appeared to believe that pre-World War II Oahu was populated only by Caucasian military personnel and a couple of Asians. As is evident by now, "Pearl Harbor" is a misnomer for the film. The name/place is only a scenic reference and provides visual background for a pseudo-poignant love story which could have happened in any war, at any time. In fact, the film's pivotal event - the downing and presumed death of the Ben Affleck character - happened in the European theater and had nothing to do with the attack on Pearl Harbor.

I had the privilege of attending the Hawai'i JACL's follow-up program several days after the Honolulu opening of the film. During the event which took place at the Japanese Cultural Center, a panel of Hawai'i's Japanese-Americans described their experiences during and immediately following the attack. One of the panelists had been a locally enlisted serviceman and suffered indignities at the hands of a previously friendly superior immediately following the raid. An attorney spoke, heart rendingly, about her father's incarceration on the mainland and her family's subsequent enforced separation from an incapacitated older sister who eventually died in a hospital (having drowned in a bathtub). All of the participants spoke about repercussions on their lives. Many of the stories were painfully sad and moving; others were touchingly humorous. In no instance did anyone express less than complete allegiance to the United States of America. The occasion presented a profound contrast to the superficiality of the "Pearl Harbor" film.

I was overwhelmed by the panelists' memories, and of the ways in which their lives had been affected. The humanity of the presentations contrasted sharply with the triviality of the film. The JACL had put a poignant face on the anonymity rendered in the "Pearl Harbor" movie. It was an inspired antidote to the insipidness of Hollywood's version and made me newly proud to be part of JACL. Exiting the panel event, I stopped to offer my services to JACL in whatever way might be appropriate. I had "come to the party." I was "born again."

Currently, I (the non-joiner) serve on the Board of JACL and as chair of the Education Committee. I have arrived through birthright, practicality, and most especially through enthusiasm for the vision and mission of JACL as demonstrated through its policies and programs.

The moral of this story? If at first you don't succeed, try, try again, because ... the third time just might be the charm.



JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM *presents*

## A New Generation Explores U.S.-Japan Relations in the 21st Century

Thursday, September 25, 2003  
Program 5:30 – 7:00 pm  
Reception 7:00 – 8:00 pm

Free

Hawaii Prince Hotel Waikiki  
Mauna Kea Ballroom  
100 Holomoana Street  
Honolulu, Hawai`i 96815

The program will discuss how to strengthen and expand the future involvement of Japanese Americans, especially Sansei and Yonsei, in U.S.-Japan relations.

To RSVP, please complete and return the enclosed response card  
Or contact Rene' Tomita, Hawai`i Office  
at 808.946.5417 or [rtomita@janm.org](mailto:rtomita@janm.org)  
By September 19, 2003

Supported in part by a grant from the U.S.-Japan Foundation

### Discussion featuring:



Moderator,  
**Dr. Richard J. Wood**, President, United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia and immediate past Chair of the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission



**Glen S. Fukushima**, President & CEO of Cadence Design Systems (Japan) and Past President, American Chamber of Commerce in Japan



**Dr. Dennis Ogawa**, Graduate Chair, University of Hawai`i at Manoa, Department of American Studies and President, Nippon Golden Network

### Remarks by 2003 Delegates, Japanese American Leadership Program to Japan:



**The Honorable Paula Nakayama**, Justice, Hawai`i State Supreme Court



**Scott Nishimoto**, Representative, Hawaii State Legislature

369 East First Street, Los Angeles, California 90012  
Telephone 213.625.0414 • Facsimile 213.625.1770  
Website [www.janm.org](http://www.janm.org) • Museum Store [www.janmstore.com](http://www.janmstore.com)

JAPANESE AMERICAN NATIONAL MUSEUM





Susan Kitsu, Senator Daniel Inouye, and Art Koga



JACL-ers and  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation, Norman Mineta



Congressman Honda, Susan Kitsu, and Art Koga



Art Koga, Congressman Matsui, and Susan Kitsu



Miss Nisei Week poses with Art Koga

Photos from the  
National JACL and PSW District  
Gala Dinner

An American Testimonial:  
A Salute to Japanese American  
National Leaders

September 13, 2003



JACL Hawai'i  
Honolulu Chapter  
P.O. Box 1291  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96807

## Typical American Beauty

Yoshie Tanabe

Remember those old songs we used to sing in grade school in the 1930's? Many of them were by Stephen Foster. One of them keeps haunting me:

### Old Uncle Ned

There was an old darky and his name was Uncle Ned  
And he died long ago, long ago;  
He had no wool on the top of his head  
In the place where the wool ought to grow.

Oh, lay down the shovel and the hoe, oe, oe, oe,  
Hang up the fiddle and the bow,  
For there's no more work for poor old Ned,  
He's gone where the good darkies go.

Stephen Foster (1826-1864) wrote "Old Black Joe," "Old Folks at Home," "Massa's in de Cold, Cold Ground" and many more pre-Civil War songs which portrayed the poignant despair of the slaves.

As children we were taught these songs and sang them so lustily, not realizing what the words were really saying. Can you imagine a Black person hearing us sing—"He had no WOOL on

the top of his head, In the place where the WOOL ought to grow?" Is it not like saying, "Japs have slant eyes and flat faces?"

Recently an article appeared in the Hawaii Herald, August 15, 2003—very innocent, I am sure. But it again points out how deep, how automatic our thinking of the definition of an "American" is. The writer wrote about a young lady who lived in Japan whose mother is Japanese and whose father is Finnish, Scottish and German. He goes on to write: "she often felt shunned by other Japanese children because of her American appearance."

I felt compelled to write to the author the following: What is an "American appearance?" When we lived in Chicago (1965 to 1992) an article appeared in one of the daily newspapers about Mrs. Joan Kennedy (ex-wife of Ted Kennedy's). She was described as a "typical American beauty" with blue eyes, blonde hair, peach complexion, etc. I wrote to the paper and asked, "What is a TYPICAL American beauty?" One could say black hair, brown slanted eyes, dark complexion, etc. and still describe an American beauty. Fact is, there is no TYPICAL American beauty—that is the BEAUTY of the essence of our country, America!

*I feel very strongly about this matter because I believe it is time, and way past time, we recognize American-ness is a matter of the heart and mind and not looks.*