



OKAGE SAMA DE BECAUSE OF YOU I AM...

NVMC Inaugural Japan Tour Builds Friendship, and Cultural Bridges

By: Deidre Tegarden

The inaugural NVMC spring tour to Japan whisked us through Kyoto, Hiroshima, Miyajima, Fukuyama, Tomonoura, and Osaka. With just six days to explore, we packed in a whirlwind of activity — each participant clocking up an impressive 27,000 steps daily! All that walking helped balance out our delicious foodie stops: dango, ice cream, sizzling okonomiyaki, and decadent cake sets.

In Kyoto, the vibrant bustle of Shijo-dori contrasted beautifully with the peaceful strolls in the Heian Shrine Gardens. We capped off our first day with a feast fit for royalty at Kaniya, where crab was the star of the show.



Hiroshima Peace Park



Fukuyama Rose Parade

Some intrepid souls ventured into Gion afterwards, though elusive Geisha sightings remained out of reach.

Next up: Hiroshima. Here, we indulged in some retail therapy and took in fascinating sights, including an Ukiyo-e cat exhibit at the Hiroshima Museum of Art and the historic Hiroshima Castle. Dinner was a mouthwatering plate of Okonomiyaki.

The mood grew contemplative under grey skies at the Peace Museum and Peace Memorial Park, where the powerful “No More War” message resonated deeply.

A scenic ferry ride brought us to Miyajima — think gentle deer, a mesmerizing tour of Itsukushima Shrine, and indulgent momiji-manju and ice cream before we headed back to Hiroshima.

Then it was off to our Sister City Fukuyama and the charming port town of Tomonoura. That evening we enjoyed a Japanese dinner at Chidori

alongside distinguished guests from the Fukuyama Chamber of Commerce and Industry — Ms. Takayama and Mr. Hori — and the gracious Fukuyama First Lady, Mrs. Edahiro.

The next day we joined Councilman Gabe Johnson on a visit with Mayor Edahiro and the City Council ahead of the parade.

Prior to the parade, each NVMC participant received a beautiful lei crafted by Ms. Karen Mahoe, who set the tone with a Hawaiian chant. We all joined the parade, handing out one-of-a-kind NVMC stickers designed by Tiara Kobayashi-Bautista. The crowd was so excited and the stickers were snatched up so fast we couldn't keep up!

On our last day, we roamed the magnificent Himeji Castle and soaked up the energy of Osaka's famed Dotonbori district, squeezing in some final shopping before heading home from Kansai Airport.

THIS STORY CONTINUES ON PAGE 2 →

THE OKAGE SAMA DE newsletter is a free publication issued by the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center.

We encourage family and friends to submit articles, information, photos, questions, and comments to

Nisei Veterans Memorial Center
P.O. Box 216
Kahului, HI 96733-6716

THE NVMC MISSION

The NVMC ignites human potential by inspiring people to find the hero in themselves through the legacy of the Nisei veterans.

THE NVMC VISION

We envision a community where all people act selflessly for the greater good.

THE NVMC VALUES

Being selfless for the greater good.
Leading by example. Living in gratitude.
Inspiring courage in adversity. Doing the right thing, always.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Deidre Tegarden

ARCHIVE DIRECTOR

Melanie Agrabante

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kyoko Kimura, President
Rachelle Ouye, Vice President
Cathy Shimizu, Treasurer
Linden Joesting, Secretary

DIRECTORS

Cummins 'Bo' Mahoe	Dana Young
Michael Munekiyo	Kirk Kurokawa
Jan Yokouchi	Valerie Matsunaga

NISEI VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER

1 Go For Broke Place, Wailuku

HOURS:

Monday-Tuesday, 12-4 P.M.
Thursday-Friday, 12-4 P.M.

PHONE: (808) 244-NVMC (6862)
www.nvmc.org



PHOTO CAPTIONS:

1. Dottonbori, Osaka
2. Himeji Castle
3. Arashiyama, Kyoto

Huge thanks to Charlene Schroeder of Palms Travel for curating this unforgettable journey, and boundless appreciation to our fantastic inaugural tour members. You're not just Charter Members — you're cherished advisors and, most importantly, dear friends.

Stay tuned for the 2026 tour which will take place May 10-19, 2026. Tour highlights will include: Kyoto's Kiyomizu-dera, Hiroshima Peace Park,

Miyajima, Suo-Oshima's Emigration Museum, lunch in the mountains at San-Zoku Mountain Hideaway, a Tea Ceremony class in Kurashiki, and a sake brewery visit in Osaka ... and, of course, walking in the Fukuyama Rose Parade.

For more information, contact Charlene Schroeder at Palms Travel (808) 243-3709.



As I reflect on this past year, I'm filled with gratitude for the journeys we've taken, the stories we've shared, and the vibrant community that grows around us.

Our inaugural tour to Japan was fantastic. From Kyoto's quiet temples, to a solemn visit at Hiroshima Peace Museum, followed by walking in Fukuyama City's "Rose Parade," the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center (NVMC) deepened our sister city bonds and celebrated cultural exchange. Each moment reminded us that connection across oceans and generations is the heartbeat of our mission.

One of this year's highlights has been announcing the Chrysanthemum Ambassadors Program. With a few updates and twists, the NVMC is honored to continue the 70+ year tradition of the Chrysanthemum Ball & Festival created by the AJA Veterans and the Maui's Sons and Daughters of the Nisei Veterans. The Chrysanthemum Ambassador program empowers Maui youth to exemplify the values of the Nisei veterans through active community involvement. The program provides opportunities for raising funds, fostering cultural awareness, internationalism and educational growth and the winner

earns a fully paid trip to Japan and the opportunity to represent the NVMC at both Hiroshima Peace Park and the Fukuyama Rose Parade as the Chrysanthemum Ambassador.

The ambassador and their liaisons will be announced at the Annual Dinner on April 24, 2026.

This year we hosted new workshops and film screenings that sparked dialogue and discovery. From traditional crafts to contemporary cinema, these gatherings offered space for reflection, laughter, shared insight ... and, of course, delicious snacks and food.

Our second annual Natsu Matsuri fundraiser was a success bringing the community together in support of NVMC, Kansha Preschool, and Maui Adult Day Care Centers' programs. Mahalo to Service Rentals and Supplies, Arisumi Brothers, Goodfellow Brothers, Alexander and Baldwin, and the vendors for sponsoring this campus-wide fundraiser. The energy was electric and the generosity of our community was humbling.

Japan beckoned again, and through the NVMC, I was part of the Maui County Sister Cities delegation at the Sister Cities International Conference in Osaka in September. Speaking on a panel

regarding how Sister Cities reach out during times of devastation, my remarks concluded with the veteran's guiding principle of "for continuing service," highlighting the efforts of the returning Nisei veterans who played a pivotal role in establishing, supporting, and initiating many of Maui's sister cities.

We look ahead to 2026 and carry a deep sense of hope. In a world that often feels uncertain, our work reminds us of the legacy of the Nisei veterans and their values to inspire efforts to foster understanding and unity. Every event, every exchanged story is an act of remembrance and gratitude for paths paved.

To each of you who has walked with us — whether as a volunteer, donor, participant, or quiet supporter — *okage sama de*.

Because of you, we stand tall. Because of you, we move forward.

With Aloha,

PHOTO CAPTION:

Ready for the Fukuyama Rose Parade

2025 NVMC Annual Dinner

By: Kathy Collins

Inspiration and gratitude prevailed as the main ingredients of the NVMC 2025 annual dinner, held at the Maui Beach Hotel Ballroom on April 4.

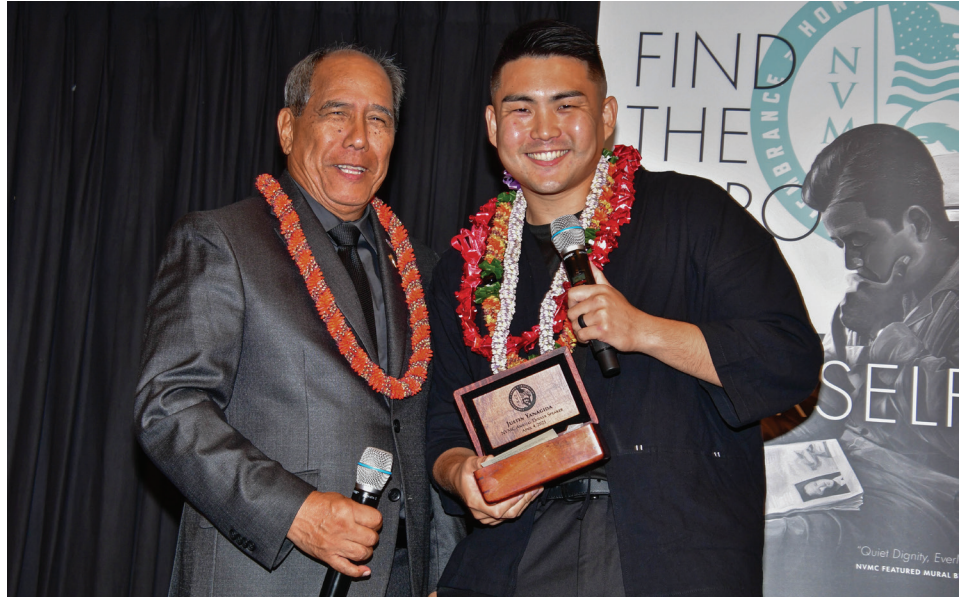
The dinner theme, “Celebrating Our Heroes,” pertained to the presentation of the esteemed Hero Awards, naturally, but also imbued every aspect of the evening, beginning with Executive Director Deidre Tegarden’s welcome message and report.

Recapping NVMC activities over the past two years, Deidre recounted 12 hands-on workshops, 24 film screenings, and eight Yakamashii talk story sessions. Additionally, the center facilitated the Japanese government’s involvement in 2023 wildfire relief and recovery efforts, and entered its second year of partnership with the Go For Broke National Education Center’s Torchbearers program. Deidre also announced the addition of Brian Tsuruta to the staff, helping archivist Melanie Agrabante with the tremendous task of digitizing the archives, and assisting in other areas where needed. Future NVMC endeavors will include taking over the cherished Chrysanthemum Festival from the Maui Sons and Daughters of the Nisei Veterans, and an exciting new community outreach partnership with Central Pacific Bank.

“Yes, you can delete a couple of pages from the website, but you can never delete the legacy of our heroes.”

KYOKO KIMURA,
NVMC Board President

NVMC Board President Kyoko Kimura was the first of several speakers who referred to the removal of the Asian American and Pacific Islanders Heritage



Bo Mahoe and Justin Yanagida

section from the U.S. Army website, following Donald Trump’s Executive Order on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), just three weeks before the annual dinner. “Yes, you can delete a couple of pages from the website, but you can never delete the legacy of our heroes.” Kyoko proclaimed that the NVMC is thriving, “despite the change on the Hill,” thanks to the contributions and commitment of the center’s staff, Board, volunteers, donors, and supporters - heroes all.

Congresswoman Jill Tokuda passionately echoed the sentiment and called for action. “The memory of our Nisei must never be erased...Moments in history like [this] require us to embrace the mission and the values of the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center...It calls on us to find the hero within; it demands we lead by example, to live in gratitude and inspire courage in adversity.”

2024 National Torchbearer Chelsea Kau, who, with Raina Ouye and Sterling Kim, comprised our inaugural cohort, also invoked Nisei values while describing the Torchbearers experience.

“We were challenged to apply the Go For Broke spirit, not just in remembering history, but in taking social action...As Torchbearers, we are entrusted with sharing the stories of the Nisei veterans and all who fought for our rights. It is both our duty and our privilege to shine a light on the inequities and the injustices.”

She, too, expressed the outrage felt across the nation following the Army website whitewash. “That was not just an erasure of military history; it was an erasure of truth, of the resilience of our Nisei soldiers, of their sacrifices, of the blood they shed for a country that questioned their loyalty.” Before ending her speech with a heartfelt plea for all of us to go forth and be torchbearers, Chelsea asserted, “We will not be silenced. We will not be erased. And our stories will be remembered.”

In his greeting remarks, Yoshinori Kodama, Consul General of Japan in Honolulu, diplomatically acknowledged the political climate change, while stating his belief that the friendship and alliance between the U.S. and Japan is intact and eternal. He thanked

the NVMC for its role in expediting Japan's post-wildfire assistance, which is ongoing and includes sharing of lessons learned following numerous natural disasters in his country. He emphasized the importance of grass roots connections and exchange, "not only government to government, but region to region...school to school, student to student," citing the successful sister city relationships already established, and the Kibou (Hope) for Maui initiative.

Keynote speaker Justin Yanagida, founder of Yanagida Fitness and author of the inspirational book "Fighting Sickness with Fitness," proclaimed that "everybody here is a hero." Having triumphed over serious health challenges throughout childhood and as a young adult, Justin embodies the Go For Broke philosophy, with his trademark enthusiasm and positivity. Recently named Maui Economic Opportunity's Volunteer of the Year for his work with middle and high school students, he is a certified personal trainer and nutrition coach, a competitive martial artist, and the current president of the Japanese Cultural Society. In paying tribute to everyday heroes, he quoted his wife's grandfather, Isamu Iwashii, who, when asked to share words of wisdom, said, "Be grateful, live with purpose, and never give up."

The evening also included an informal interview and talk story session with special guests Rachel Kondo and Justin Marks. Rachel and Justin are the power couple behind the acclaimed FX TV series "Shogun," which won a record-breaking 18 Emmy Awards, four Golden Globe Awards, and a Peabody Award in 2024.

Born and raised on Maui, Rachel was named one of the year's Most Impactful Asians by Gold House, an international nonprofit organization that promotes the interests of people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent. But, as she pointed out in our dinner conversation, being Japanese American is very different from being a Japanese national. "Language is culture, and if you don't



Rachel Kondo and Justin Marks

speaking the language, you can't have that special insight...We went into [the production] thinking, 'Oh, we're going to tell the Japanese story,' but then, very quickly, we realized that we can never, ever eradicate our Western gaze... So, we were kind of forced to create this...combination that could, hopefully, take the strengths from both sides and blend them together. It's not unlike the pidgin English that came out of our plantation camps: you band together, you bring your best self, you bring your best stuff, and you make something that couldn't have been made otherwise."

Much of the show's dialogue is in Japanese with English subtitles, a deliberate choice by the couple to immerse viewers in the historical setting. Justin, an Academy Award nominated writer ("Top Gun: Maverick," "The Jungle Book") elaborated on the painstaking process of translation. "Working with our two point Japanese producers, Eriko Miyagawa and (series star) Hiroyuki Sanada, we talked a lot about what kind of Japanese we wanted in this story, how we wanted it to feel. I grew up watching a lot of *jidaigeki* (traditional samurai stories), so I knew the kind of performance I'd come to expect...It turned into this evolving process, where we would send the script to a group of translators who would render it into Japanese, but then we would send that script to a playwright in Japan, who spoke no English, but who specialized in *jidaigeki* Japanese. She would do a polish, send it to Eriko

and Hiro, they would work it through on set, and the actors would do their thing..." It became evident that the subtitles based on the original script were no longer accurate, as Justin said, "the lines had taken on a life of their own...So it became like a big game of telephone," with new subtitles translated from the Japanese actors' actual dialogue into English.

Besides sharing fascinating details of the meticulous, five-year process that culminated in the first Japanese Language series to win a Primetime Emmy Award for Outstanding Drama Series, Rachel and Justin confirmed that "Shogun" has been renewed for a second season on FX.

The evening's main event began with the presentation of the 2025 Hero Award for Leadership. In presenting the award to Maui's Gamma Chapter of Alpha Delta Kappa (ADK), Deidre said, "When the Nisei veterans returned from war, they continued to lead the Maui community with the strength of their character and the integrity of their actions. This award recognizes individuals who have led Maui County forward with the leadership style of our Nisei. These amazing ladies - teachers, retired and continuing teachers - they epitomize quiet, generous, and unwavering leadership." She noted that they are always the first to offer assistance and the last to leave, and that NVMC is just one of many organizations who benefit from ADK's volunteerism and support.

The Maui ADK Gamma Chapter was founded by 15 local teachers in May 1967. The chapter now includes 60



The women of ADK

members, some of whom were in attendance, including founding member Shirley Kimizuka. In accepting the award, Co-Presidents Jasmine Domingo and Mary Jean Bega expressed gratitude, humility, and commitment. "This award serves as a reminder of our responsibility to grow, innovate, and create meaningful changes in our world."

The Philanthropy Award was given to Nelson Okumura, head of VIP Food Service and Island Grocery Depot, which were founded by his parents, Roy and Lorraine Okumura. NVMC Board member Mike Munekiyo presented the award, saying, "Nelson has carried on the family legacy, which is firmly grounded in compassion and concern for others...while our gratitude to Nelson, the Okumura family, and the VIP companies cannot be adequately expressed in words, we can honor their commitment to community and their spirit of selflessness [with this award]."

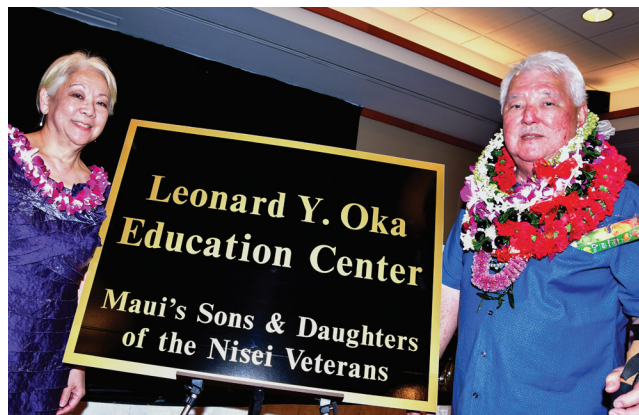
Typical of his humble nature, Nelson responded, "Actually, I'm just a figurehead for the entity that gives out the grants and donations...the Roy H. & Lorraine M. Okumura Foundation." He went on to relate the heartwarming history of his family's foundation, begun in 2007 with his father's deathbed request to give his shares of company stock to their employees, and to form a charitable foundation with the rest of his assets. It was on a Saturday morning when Nelson called company CFO Elton Nakagawa with the urgent request; remarkably, the legal documents were ready for signatures on Monday. "The only reason the documents were ready by Monday is because Elton's wife, Carolyn, is a paralegal for attorney Paul Ueoka," Nelson revealed. Roy Okumura died two days after signing the document, which specifies the NVMC as a beneficiary. When Lorraine passed away ten years later, her assets were added to the foundation, which, as Nelson stated, "represents the life work of my parents...And Elton, Carolyn, and Paul, without you, the foundation wouldn't have been formed. So, the

Nisei Veterans Center [and myself] will be eternally grateful for what you folks did that weekend."

The final presentation of the evening was the Legacy Award, given to NVMC founding member Leonard Oka. Leonard was introduced and extolled by Barbara Watanabe, the center's first Executive Director and Leonard's childhood friend, who traveled from California just to make the presentation. Barbara delivered an eloquent, heartfelt tribute, relating how Leonard was inspired by his father, Clarence Oka, to ensure the preservation of the Nisei story. She described a moment in 1980, when Leonard was visiting his parents' home with his toddler son, Brandon. "His father, a 442nd veteran, is regaling Brandon with stories about the war. And as Leonard sits there, he realizes that, by the time Brandon is old enough to understand the magnitude of what his father is saying, many of the Nisei veterans will have passed away. So he resolves to create an organization...with the mission of preserving and perpetuating the Nisei soldier legacy. And in 1981, the Maui Sons and Daughters of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team is formed: the first organization of its kind in the country."

"Without Leonard, there would never have been an NVMC," she declared. "Through funding challenges, through construction setbacks, he never lost sight, he never lost hope, he never gave up. So...tonight, we thank you for your visionary leadership, your integrity, and most importantly, your stick-to-it-ness to take an idea that formed in your parents' kitchen and guide it to the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center that we have today."

In accepting the award, Leonard humbly thanked the many people who helped to bring about the NVMC, his family for their patience and understanding



Barbara Watanabe and Leonard Oka

during the countless hours he spent working toward his vision, and all of the night's attendees for their support of the center. "Last, but not least, thank you to my mom and dad, and to Hiroshi (Arisumi). I know that you are up there, still looking after me and the Nisei Veteran Memorial Center."

The celebration concluded with a surprise that brought chicken skin and tears to many in the audience. Ted Kesaji announced, "The Maui Sons and Daughters of the Nisei Veterans and the Nisei Veterans Center board would like to honor you by naming the education center the Leonard Y. Oka Education Center" as the new sign was unveiled on stage.

"Celebrating our Heroes" was co-emceed by Deidre and NVMC board member Bo Mahoe, and sponsored by HouseMart Family Foundation, Arisumi Brothers, the Mizoguchi family, NAPA United Auto Parts, Service Rentals and Supplies, Munekiyo Hiraga, Mutual Underwriters, and VIP Food Service. Video of the entire evening, produced by Todd Perkins, is available for viewing on the NVMC YouTube channel.

Photo Credits:

Ann Kabasawa and Clyde Sugimoto

★ Mahalo to Our Generous Donors ★

The following list recognizes contributions to the NVMC for the period ending August 2025.

ARMY (\$2,500 and over)

Lloyd & Pauline Pui-Yu Arisumi
 Arisumi Brothers, Inc.
 John Chun & Barbara Watanabe
 Terry & Kimberly Dembroski
 Edwin Fujinaka
 Jason & Neva Jean Fukuda
 Hawaii Community Foundation
FOR THE NVMC INTERNSHIP PROGRAM
 Howard & Pam Ikeda
IN MEMORY OF TAKEO "IKE" IKEDA & ROBERT MASAKAZU FUJIMOTO
 Island Insurance Foundation
 JA Community Foundation
 Hideo & Joyce Kawahara
 Carl Kobayashi
 Mahi Pono, LLC
 Maui Chemical & Paper Supplies
 Maui Hotel and Lodging Association
 Maui Toyota
 Mid-Pacific Pest Control
 Mark Mizoguchi
 Paul & Jessie Mizoguchi
 Lyman & Marilyn Morikawa
IN MEMORY OF GARY NAKAMA
 Munekiyo & Hiraga, Inc.
 Nelson Okumura
 Richard & Lois Prey
 Sae Design Group
 Palms Travel
 Printers Inc.
 Service Rentals & Supplies, Inc.
 The Roy and Lorraine Okumura Foundation
 Rickey & Virginia Woo
 Jon & Jan Yokouchi

DIVISION (\$1,000 - 2,499)

Alexander & Baldwin, Inc.
 Tady & Sandy Arisumi
 Gene & Beryl Bal
 John & Elaine Brouillard
 Jill Chinen
 Stan Oka & Debbie Ahina-Oka
 Terry & Kimberly Dembroski
 Anonymous Donor
IN MEMORY OF HIROSHI & EDNA ARISUMI
 Anonymous Donor
IN MEMORY OF HIROSHI ARISUMI

Anonymous Donor
IN MEMORY OF RAYMOND YAMAMOTO

Everett Dowling
 Edwin Fujinaka
 Charles & Tamara Fujinaka
 Jeffrey & Carol Fujioka
IN HONOR OF THE 232ND ENGINEERS
 Glenn & Edean Goya
 Teri Hamasaki
IN HONOR KAZUICHI HAMASAKI, TADAYOSHI HAMASAKI, RICHARD NISHIZAWA & FRED FUJIKANE
 Grace Hamasaki
IN MEMORY OF KAZUICHI HAMASAKI, DORIS & RICHARD NISHIZAWA

Howard & Pam Ikeda
 Howard Kihune
 Rowan & Francine Lee
IN MEMORY OF EDWARD NISHIHARA, SR.
 Melissa Leighton
 Cummins Mahoe
 Matson
 Colbert & Gail Matsumoto
 Maui Oil Company, Inc.
 Maui's Sons and Daughters of the Nisei Veterans
 Marion H. Morikawa
IN HONOR OF LEONARD OKA, FROM THE SAM MORIKAWA FAMILY

Morikawa Family
IN MEMORY OF MARION MORIKAWA
 Albert & Julia Morita
 Mutual Underwriters
 Allen & Elaine Nakagawa
 Nakamura/Matsui Family
 James Onoda
 Warren & Joanne Shibuya
 John & JoAnn Sinton
 Tiara Koba Designs
 The Benevity Community Impact Fund
 The Red Cabin Foundation
 Leona Wilson
 June Yamamoto
 Eric & Iris Yamashige
 Clarice Yokouchi
 Stacey Yoshinaga

REGIMENT (\$500 - 999)

Gene & Beryl Bal
 Merle & Lorna Beghtel
IN MEMORY OF HISASHI YOSHIHARA

Clarence Uehara & Cheryl Okuma
 Anonymous Donor
IN MEMORY OF FRED YAMASHIGE
 Anonymous Donor
IN MEMORY OF MITSUO ARISUMI

Joanne Erceg
 Goodfellow Brothers, Inc.
 Faith & Brian Griffith
 Kay Hanano
 Pamela Harima
 James & Takane Hashi
 Hawaii Kansha Foundation
 HiPerformance Athletics
 Leighton & Rosetta Hiranaga
 Stanley & Ann Honda
 Hester Honda
 Alfred Itamura
 Dwayne Jacintho
 Linden Joesting
 Dale Kawahara
 Gerald H. Kibe
 Kyoko Kimura
 Eleanor Kondo
 Wayne & Joyce Maeda
 Eric & Elaine Miyajima
 Peggy Mizumoto
 Marion H. Morikawa
IN MEMORY OF THE 522ND
 Erin Mukai
 Munekiyo & Hiraga, Inc.

Ryan Nagoshi
 Kathleen Ohta
 Justin Ohta
 Mark & Frances Oka
 Leonard & Laurel Oka
 Yukio & Jane Okuda
 Saedene Ota
 Donna Petro
IN MEMORY OF TAKAO "TAKA" ITO
 Charles & Jacqueline Probst
IN MEMORY OF TORAO NAKANO AND MICKEY KUROKAWA, 442ND RCT
 Rimfire Imports Inc
 Jonathan & Jill Ross
 Michael & Vicki Shimaji
 Robin Shishido
 John & JoAnn Sinton
 Robert Stoner
 Sohny Strong

Martin Oiye & Susan Nakagawa
IN MEMORY OF OSAMU & IRENE NAKAGAWA

Howard & Susan Takamori
IN MEMORY OF IWAO TAKAMORI
 Takumi Legacy Fund
IN HONOR OF TAKEO TAKUMI
 Tasty Crust Restaurant
 Kiki Ting
 David & Michiko Watanabe
 Merle Watanabe
 Leslie-Ann Yokouchi
 Karen Yokouchi-Polvere

BATTALION (\$250 - 499)

Myrtle Agrabante
 George & Joyce Akamine
IN MEMORY OF TSUTOMU "TOM" NAGATA, 100THIFB
 Russell & Donna Ando
IN MEMORY OF KAORU & FUJIE MURAOKA
 Alan Arai
 John Chun & Barbara Watanabe
 Ann Kabasawa & Clyde Sugimoto
 Kathy Collins
 Bob & Chieko Dan
 Daniel & Cheryl Hirata Dulas
 Patti & Peter Finie
 Keene Fujinaka
 Glenn & Katherine Hamai
 Ronald & Susan Hayashida
IN MEMORY OF HIDEYUKI HAYASHIDA
 Wendy Higa
 Alexa Higashi
 Roy & Barbara Huntley
IN MEMORY OF DR. SEIYA OHATA
 Sharky Ikeda
 Jan Ikeda Yokouchi
 Karen Ishizuka
 Donald & Faith Ito
 James Jones
 Ronald & Blossom Kawahara
 Hideo & Joyce Kawahara
 Kyoko Kimura
 Cory Kochi
 Kenneth & Bette Kurihara
 Kirk Kurokawa
 Tilden Jio Leonid Pesin-Melzer
IN MEMORY OF MITSUGU & RACHAEL JIO
 Karen Motooka

Maui Center Helps Seniors Stay Active, Engaged Through Diverse Programs

By: Mary Martinez, Ocean View Center Activity/Specialist II

Aloha from Maui Adult Day Care Centers (MADCC) Ocean View Center.

We provide a variety of activities for adult clients to enjoy. We exercise twice daily — morning and afternoon. Clients stretch and move their body to wake up their senses. We exercise to varied videos for amazing health benefits with simplistic, safe movements. Our clients take on a calm pace in the morning, and in the afternoon we speed things up with more upbeat and lively movement to rev up our energy. We use a mix of chair yoga, dancing and aerobics in a fun safe way to help us be expressive and show how we are feeling inside.

The clients we serve have a variety of different needs. Our goal is to reach many of them through meaningful connections. Our monthly scheduled activities engage clients and provide them a means to connect with each other. Some of our most fun and meaningful activities have been creating art. In August, clients made lei using finger crochet, which uses the brain to repeat patterns. This exercises the brain and helps maintain cognition. We celebrate national days, such as “Puppy Day” when we offered a choice of puppies to paint, in a way of “adopting” a puppy. Clients were able to talk about their dream puppies for adoption, as well as remembering what animals they cared for in the past. It was a beautiful time of sharing and reminiscing about their diverse life experiences.

Clients enjoy modified sport activities, such as “chair bowling,” where they sit

and roll a ball with the thrill of knocking down the pins. Most of our male clients prefer the joy of a game with its challenges versus art. We have many who were sports champions in their time and will gladly tell us about it during the duration of the game. A client favorite is “balloon volleyball.” Staff release balloons of various sizes and colors into the room. Clients will try to use fly swatters, pool noodles, and/or their hands to bounce the balloon around the tables. This works in a multitude of components in the body and the brain. It also builds social skills as some clients will move around the room to engage in the game play. This game fills our center with laughter and smiles lasting the remainder of the day.

To enhance the Ocean View Center’s program, we added the concept of “Clubs.” We started a Garden Club and a Book Club. Staff built a raised, accessible garden bed for the Garden Club to grow vegetables they can later cook and share with each other. Clients will be able to take pride in knowing they grew plants and were able to benefit from their hard work. This helps to exercise patience, which is required to raise a garden. Our Book Club meets twice a week to enjoy hearing a story read or to share about their own life stories. Clients enjoy a quieter space with friends to enjoy stories and snacks. This club is especially good for those clients who prefer to enjoy meaningful, calm activity while connecting with others.

Excursions are a way to connect to the community we live in. Our latest excursion was to the Maui Arts and Cultural Center. We were given a guided tour of the gallery. Jonathan Clark, exhibit director, showed us the artwork selected by a panel of judges. He told us these pieces were the few selected against hundreds of others to be displayed over a two-week period, and then they would change to a fresh set of art to view. Clients were able to walk around and learn about the art from how it was made to a basic idea of what the artist wanted us to know about the

piece. The clients loved getting out into the community to see something new. We browsed the gallery for little over an hour where clients were provided chairs and able to talk to each other about the things they were seeing. They were also given the option to ask questions and discuss the art in front of them.

We are excited for upcoming excursions: the Humane Society to see pets, as well as the MADCC Kihei Center to lunch with other clients. We are working with as many community groups as possible to create a more diverse experience. We hope to build awareness and create a fulfilled lifestyle for our clients. Getting out into the community is a very important part of quality dementia care and resolves one of the main challenges with aging “living in isolation.” MADCC hopes to continue our mission and provide a safe, happy, healthy experience at the Ocean View Center for those adults who need a safe setting for their wellbeing and safety. Decreasing the loss of control an adult may be feeling with compassionate, unconditional support and restoring confidence that there is still plenty of life left to be lived.

Kansha Honors 10-Year Educator, Welcomes New Students and Partners

What a year it has been! Kansha Pre-school celebrated a milestone year marked by staff recognition, international collaboration, and student success.

The preschool team recognized our lead teacher, Aunty Danae, for her ten years of dedication to Kansha Pre-school. We look forward to many more wonderful years with her and are deeply grateful for Aunty's extraordinary dedication. Her presence has nurtured countless teachable moments, guiding our keiki as they set out to become responsible, contributing members of our community.

In January, we were lucky enough to have some fun visitors join us this year, including Aunty Ayaka from Kikyō Kindergarten in Japan. She shared her origami skills with us and showed some of us her soccer skills as well. We all enjoyed her visit very much.



In June, we said farewell as nine keiki headed off to kindergarten. We celebrated their advancement with a special ceremony with family and friends. It's always a proud moment for teachers when we send our preschoolers on their way into the next part of their learning journey.

August will bring a new school year to Kansha. We'll be welcoming back a few familiar faces and many new ones. With a total of 14 children enrolled in our program, we hope to make the new school year just as fun and meaningful as the last.

Kansha is currently working with Inspired Play on O'ahu to design and install outdoor play equipment. Our hope is to provide a simple and unique play area where our children can explore their physical abilities in the beautiful outdoor space we have.



Kansha Preschool, located at the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center, is dedicated to honoring the legacy of the Nisei veterans by fostering values of love, respect, and service within our intergenerational community, where children and elders learn and grow together through shared experiences and cultural appreciation. We remain committed to doing our part in the community by providing quality care to the families and keiki in our care. The Kansha 'ohana thanks everyone for their continued support.

For more information, visit www.kanshapreschool.net

★ Donor Listing Continued

- Ruth Mukai
- Jacqueline & Gary Murai
- James & Suzette Robinson
- Mark & Wendie Schwab
- Virginia Shaw
- Grace Shigeta
- Pauline Shiroma
- Allen & Janice Shishido
- Jacklyn Takakura
- Lance Takamiya
- Gail Terada
- Agnes Terao-Guiala
- Wayne Tsuji
- IN MEMORY OF YOSHIHARU TSUJI & SABURO MAEHARA**
- Sally Waki
- IN MEMORY OF DANIEL WAKI**
- Kyle & Colette Watanabe
- Gerald & Connie Watanabe
- Herbert & Marilyn Yuen

COMPANY (\$100-249)

- Christopher Minford & Dawne Miguel Minford
- Arthur & Ina Altman
- Patrick Arakawa
- IN MEMORY OF PAUL Y. ARAKAWA**
- Thomas & Marilyn Araki
- Richard & Annette Arine
- Roberta Arita
- Cindy Asato-Kochi
- Carl Bredhoff
- Robert & Geraldine Carroll
- Sandra Chang
- Lauren Chun
- Ann Kabasawa & Clyde Sugimoto
- Carroll Correa
- Jasmine Domingo
- Laura Echiverri
- Lester Yano & Estelle Chun
- Milton Fujii
- June Fujii
- IN MEMORY OF KOMAO MOCHIZUKI**
- Wessen & Lydia Furomoto
- GDH6 LLC
- Clyde & Gail Hamai
- Franklin Hamasaki
- IN MEMORY OF KAZUICHI & TADAYOSHI HAMASAKI**
- Wayne & Violet Harada
- Troy Hashimoto
- Lynn Hashizaki
- Hawaii Gamma Chapter
- Alpha Δ Kappa

WALTER SAKAMOTO:

Makawao to the Battlefields of Europe

By: David Fukuda

The following are notes taken from an interview with Walter Sakamoto at his residence at Roselani Place in Kahului, Maui on Sept. 22, 2012, at 9:00 am by David Fukuda.

Being a part of one of only two *hapa* families in Makawao was not an issue for Walter Sakamoto growing up. That changed on Dec. 7, 1941.

After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, two incidents demonstrated how his ancestry was suddenly perceived differently. The first occurred while he was making his regular milk delivery run for Haleakala Dairy to the military supply depot in Puunene. He was told: "Sakamoto, you can no longer make deliveries to this installation because of your name." A fellow named Rodriguez took over the route even though he was a quarter Japanese himself.

Walter faced rejection a second time when the ranch was asked to form a "posse" to guard the reservoir in Olinda from possible contamination by the Japanese. The route was too steep for the ranch trucks so the men were to go by horse and have guns issued, all exciting for the young work hands. Again, he was excluded.

Before the War

Walter Sakamoto was born on July 16, 1919, in Paia to Tatsuichi Sakamoto and Lotti Tavares and raised in Makawao. Tatsuichi was a yardman for Louis von Tempsky, the ranch manager, and there he met Lotti who was a maid for the

family. Together they raised four boys and four girls, Walter being the second youngest. Walter attended Makawao School through the eighth grade when he was sent off to Lahainaluna as a boarder for his high school education. His cousin also attended Lahainaluna, and Walter was able to catch rides during vacations to and from school with his cousin's father. Living away from home as a youth made the separation from his family during the war much easier.

After graduation in 1938, Walter joined Haleakala Dairy as a delivery assistant. Typically, the driver would bring along two assistants who would take a load of milk and drop it off at the individual homes in the camps, then meet the truck further on down the route for another load. The trucks would start off at 3:30 a.m. so that the daily deliveries (1–2 quarts per home) could be completed before the family left the premises. If the family left before they could make the delivery, the back door would be left open. The milk was unpasteurized with the head of cream resting on top of the milk.

On Dec. 7, 1941, Walter and his gang were sitting in his car parked in front of Komoda Store when they heard the news of the attack. Following the instructions on the airwaves, they

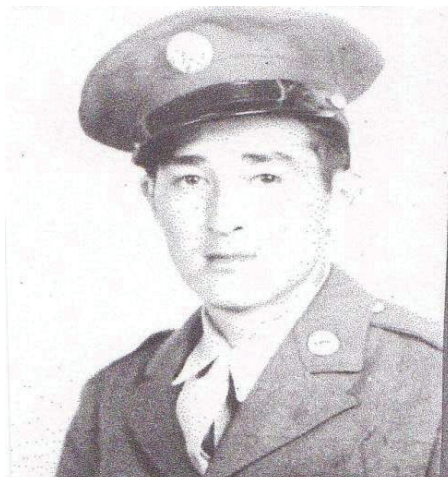
immediately returned to their homes. Houses were blacked out, curfews were observed, and changes in delivery schedules at the dairy were instituted. Instead of the 3:30 a.m. start, deliveries were made at 5:30 a.m. as the trucks' headlights were blacked out except for a narrow slit. The men made deliveries in the dark using flashlights with the same slit.

522nd Field Artillery Battalion

When the Army called for volunteers to join the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, Walter answered the call and was placed in the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion — which took him to battlefields of Europe. Although he was expected to be a driver due to his deliveryman experience, he was instead assigned to the communications section of Headquarters (HQ) Battery as the chief wireman for crew No. 1. The HQ wiremen were responsible for laying wire from the Observation Posts (OP) to the HQ switchboard. From there, the battery wiremen would lay wire to the firing batteries. Communication could also be carried out by radio; however, radio communication was more easily intercepted and wire was considered much more secure.

Wire was mounted on a spool on jeeps or hand carried on reel if the terrain was inaccessible by vehicle. Laying new line was always easier than recovering the wire, and old wire was often just left out in the field. The wiremen were trained to splice broken lines blindfolded, and the lines had to be constantly checked for breaks, particularly by tanks which invariably raised havoc with the lines.

On one occasion outside of Bruyeres, France, Walter recalls finding a line broken by tanks. It was easier and quicker to send the line overhead from a nearby telephone pole than digging a trench and burying it in the roadway.



Walter Sakamoto was placed in the 522nd Field Artillery Battalion

So Walter climbed up the pole and, as soon as he started to work on the line, he heard a sniper's bullet come buzzing by his head. Walter immediately shim-mied down the pole and started dig-ging a trench across the road to bury the line.

In the Vosges during the Battle of the Lost Battalion, Walter recalls his wire crew being huddled up for days in an abandoned German com-mand post from which they carried out their missions.



The 522nd was separated from the 442nd RCT and returned to north-ern France before entering Germany. It was on this mission that Walter recalls his unit, riding a gun truck, encountered the Dachau concentration camp, where the stench was overwhelming and ema-ciated prisoners wandered in search of food. The emaciated prisoners were wandering around and foraging, although strict orders were given not to feed them at the time.

Walter remembers others, mostly kids, coming around asking for food. In most of the towns, particularly in Italy, the people were mostly welcoming, even though the artillery may have caused destruction to their villages. They were happy to be liberated from the Ger-mans. He specifically recalled seeing the tremendous destruction in Naples.

In Germany, after the war ended, his wire crew took on military police func-tions, checking papers and directing traffic in Donauworth, Germany. It was almost like being on vacation as the HQ Battalion occupied a large hotel and assigned two men to a room.



Returning to Maui

Walter was released from Schofield Barracks on Jan. 19, 1946. He reunited with Winifred, the girl he had met after high school (on his milk route) and writ-ten to throughout the war. "Win" had graduated from Maui High in 1939 and worked for Von Ham Young and Emura Jewelers prior to their marriage on April 27, 1947. She converted to Catholicism and both Walter and Win tried to raise their children as Catholics.

Walter returned to his old job at Hale-akala Dairy as the lead driver with two assistants on his routes. He worked in that position for 30 years before moving into the sales and distribution manager position in 1976. He retired from Haleakala Dairy in 1981 with over 40 years of service.

- Bertha Hew
 Roy & Gwen Hiraga
 Laura Hirayama
 Paul & Gayle Hironaka
 Michael & Christine Hondo
 Koji & Sumie K. Ikeda
 Cynthia Ikeda
 Tsutomu Imamura
 Melvin & Noreen Inamasu
 Jules Ino
 Michael & Lois Ito
 Donald & Faith Ito
 Lester Iwamasa
 Japanese Cultural Center
 of Hawaii
 David & Anne Jinnai
IN MEMORY OF MASAO TSUTSUMI
 Ross Tanoue &
 Joyce Nakamura-Tanoue
 Miles & June Kaichi
 Janet Kamasaki
IN HONOR OF ADK FOUNDERS DAY
 Dennis Kameya
 Kamikaze Electronics
**IN MEMORY OF ANTHONY "TONY"
 TAKASHIMA, ROBERT SUGIMOTO &
 TAKEO SUGIMOTO**
 Ted & Wendy Kanamori
 Lila Kanda
**IN MEMORY OF WILLARD
 "LANKY" MATSUMOTO**
 Wenda Kanemaru
 Hideo & Jeanne Karatsu
 Donald & Mae Karimoto
IN MEMORY OF HARUO KARIMOTO
 Jeanne Kawabata
 Gary & Laura Kawahara
 Yasuhiko Kawawaki
 Ted & Naomi Kesaji
 Dennis Kimura
 William & Joanne King
 Lane & Arlette Kiriyaama
 Herbert & Alice Kogasaka
 Robert Kono
 Lynn Kreig
 Marian Kubota
 Leona Kushi
 Jean Kuwada
 Ed & Jackie Linn
 Barbara Long
 Wayne & Joyce Maeda
 Harvey & Charlene Makii
 Mamoru Marugaki
**IN MEMORY OF YOSHIKI
 "GAMBI" KIMURA**
 Mamoru Marugaki
IN MEMORY OF DOROTHY TOM BELL

SERVICE RENTALS & SUPPLIES:

3 Generations Committed To Community

By: Deidre Tegarden

Founded in 1971 by Richard, James, and Isami Ouye, Service Rentals & Supplies, Inc. (SRS) now operates six locations throughout four islands with 62 employees. I thought it might be difficult to schedule a sit-down interview with **Ryan Ouye**, president, and his son, **Rysan**, operations manager, but their generosity of time mirrors their commitment to others. Perhaps it also helped that our part-time employee, Raina Ouye, made the appointment.

We chatted for about an hour at the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center (NVMC) covering everything from the beginnings of SRS to the importance of service and plans for the future.

Deidre Tegarden (DT): Tell me about SRS's history with the NVMC.

Ryan: It all started with my dad, Richard. When the NVMC was raising money to build, he was very involved in making sure that we donated. He was very committed to the building of the NVMC.

Rysan: In addition, we have a pretty long line of veterans in our family as well. My grandfather served, his brothers served, and my great uncle was Nisei veteran Toshio Anzai. The values carry over into not only respecting veterans, but respecting foundations and organizations that help veterans.

DT: SRS continues to be a big supporter of the NVMC and also other community organizations.

Ryan: My dad, Richard, would always say that "service" is the most important thing a person can give. Service is more

than just renting equipment — it's fixing any problems, helping customers find what they need, and making sure their project gets done. It's in our name. Dad really emphasized importance of service.

DT: How do you balance business and "giving back to the community"?

Rysan: It's an interesting question. I'll go back to the Lahaina Fires. I think that's a good tie-in to this. We have the privilege of being able to provide essential services, especially in times of disaster. We don't succeed without the community. It's our civic responsibility to give back in any way we can. The Obon dances are a good example. It's very important for those areas to be safe, making sure that the walkways are well illuminated. Being able to provide is not really a business decision; it's a civic decision because those are our aunties and uncles. As a business owner in Hawai'i, you have to take care of your kupuna.

DT: Rysan, let's go to when you joined the company. At that time it was your father, uncles, and your mother, correct?

Ryan: I started working part-time after school. I took a year off because we owned a restaurant as well. We owned Spike's Cafe. They let me run the restaurant for a year. At the end of that year I said, forget it, I'm going to go back to school. My friends were back at school and I was 18. Working in a restaurant is a seven-days-a-week job. I give people who want to own a restaurant a lot of credit. It's hard work. The restaurant was my dad's passion. He always wanted to own a restaurant because he used to be a cook in the Army. He liked to host and he was a good cook.

DT: How did your father pivot to Service Rentals full time?

Ryan: What happened was my grandfather, uncle, and my dad went in on the



Being able to provide is not really a business decision; it's a civic decision because those are our aunties and uncles.

RYSAN OUYE

Service Rentals,
Operations Manager

business together, and my dad eventually bought them out. My uncle, who owned a construction company, said, "Hey, why don't you start your own business? Why don't you look at equipment rental because that's an up-and-coming industry. You can rent my equipment while you get your own equipment," So that's kind of how it started.

DT: Rysan, what about you? When did you join SRS?

Rysan: I didn't join right away. I worked in sales in Honolulu and the mainland for a number of years. The sense of community was lacking on the mainland, and I told my wife I'd rather do what I can do back home.

DT: Ryan, how happy were you when he chose the family business?

Ryan: I was very happy. I was glad he was coming with the family business.

DT: Rysan, am I correct in assuming that you're going to take over the business someday?

Rysan: That's the plan. I am passionate about strategy, business planning, growth planning, team building ... I love having discussions with the team on how do we do this better.

Ryan: Dad always said working here is like a game and how do you win? We do have different styles of management, but we have this drive to be better and I think that's, that's where ... what is the word ... where you're constantly getting up after you fall down? Resilience.

DT: Are you the only game in town?

Rysan: We have a lot of competition. But I will say we are the largest independent, family-owned rental company

in Hawai'i. That's something we're proud of, but we do have a lot of national competition.

DT: How important do you think it is continuing on with family?

Ryan: Very important. Who knows what the future will bring, but for he and I and my wife to work together is special. Not everybody gets to work with their family, and I like that.

DT: What are the core values of SRS?

Rysan: Commitment to the team. Great service equals great solutions. Moving forward together. Take care of each other and our community.

Ryan: It's important to note that we also have our ups and downs, but we continually work on it together. That's something I'm proud of as far as being a member of this family. We understand that nothing's perfect, but everything can always be made better.

Rysan: I feel like it's more than just a job or a business. It's really a way of life and a way to engage with the community in a positive way.

DT: Thank you so much for your time and unwavering support.

Patrick Matsui
Jason Matsui
IN MEMORY OF GEORGE & SHIRLEY MATSUI

Tomoe McMillan
Eric & Elaine Miyajima
Francis & Jean Miyamoto
IN MEMORY OF THE 1980 PONY WORLD SERIES CHAMPIONS

Randy & Curtis Miyoken
Merle Momita
Eric Moto
Brian Moto
Wendy Mukai
Jacqueline & Gary Murai
Cathleen Murayama
Gayle Nagasako
Norman Nagata
Kenneth & Doris Nakakura
Mason Nakamura
Warren Nakasone
Sidney & Diane Nako
Chris Nishimura
Carolyn Nishimura
Warren Oda
Diane Orikasa
Ken Ota
Liana Otake
Donna Ponce
Pearl Rockett
Jonathan & Jill Ross
Miki & Lucas Rotman
Lucas Rotman
David Yospe & Brenda Saifuku-Yospe
Karen & Patrick Saka

Jed & Lynda Sasaki
Mark & Lois Sato
Winston Shihenaga
Janet Shimada
Hachiro & Susan Shimanuki
IN MEMORY OF GOICHI SHIMANUKI

Glenn Shishido
Allen & Janice Shishido
Toshiko Sugiki
Burt & Betty Taira
Brian & Helen Takaki
Ann Takakura
Gary & Marci Takemoto
Nora Takeuchi
IN MEMORY OF SUSUMU FUKUYOSHI

Frances Takumi
Karen Tamanaha
Edward & Joan Tamori
Barbara Tanaka
Byron Tanaka
Faith Tengan
Marvin & Jocelyn Tengan
Gail Terada
Walter & Ione Tokishi
Jill Tokuda
Lynne & Charles Toma
Ronald Tomita
Brian Tsuruta
Ralph Ukishima
IN MEMORY OF JOHN UKISHIMA, MIS

Howard Umehira
John & Sharon Umeno
David & Gwen Utley
Kea Valley



Iris Folding Workshop



Natsu Matsuri

Maui WWII Veteran and Territorial Senator Ansai Broke Political Barriers

By: Raina Ouye

Toshio Ansai was born in 1908 in Wailuku, Maui, the second son among nine children born to Japanese immigrants Kumataro and Kesayo Ansai. His parents emigrated from Japan's Fukushima Prefecture, where they had worked as farmers with limited formal education — a common circumstance in Japan at the time. Among Toshio's eight siblings was his sister, Sadako, who married Isami Ouye and had three children, including Richard Ouye.

During his teenage years at St. Anthony, Toshio shouldered significant family responsibilities providing for the needs of his nine siblings and his parents. The

family lived in communal wooden barracks alongside other Japanese, Filipino and Portuguese immigrant families. Residents cooked their meals outdoors and brought food inside to eat. Meanwhile, his father, Kumataro, became active in the Japanese Hongwanji Mission and played a key role at the Japanese school. It was during these formative teenage years that Toshio developed his interest in politics, driven by a belief that problems in the country needed to be addressed.

In 1929, Toshio married Ruth Harimoto and had two children, one born before World War II and the other after the war. By his mid-20s in 1934, Toshio was serving on the County of Maui Board of Supervisors. He later sought a larger role in Hawai'i's territorial government, telling his future wife that the Republican Party needed younger leadership since most party members were in their 50s and 60s.

When Japan attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, Toshio enlisted in the Hawai'i National Guard despite having a family exemption. He served with both the

442nd Regimental Combat Team and military intelligence units during the war. His daughter Carol was born before his deployment.

According to a Maui County resolution, Toshio "distinguished himself by being a recipient of the Bronze Star for meritorious achievement in ground operations against the enemy and the Army Commendation Medal."

When the war ended in 1945, Toshio returned to Maui to focus on his political career with the County of Maui Board of Supervisors. He was elected to the Senate of the Territory of Hawai'i for eight years. As a young leader it took guts to lead, and Senator Ansai challenged the older establishment and advocated for economic development and civil rights issues. He continued supporting nonprofit and charitable organizations until his retirement.

Ansai passed away peacefully on April 28, 1992. Maui County and residents remember him for his contributions to serving in the 442nd Regimental Combat Team and being a compassionate leader to the community of Maui.



Rachel Kondo, Marilyn Barbosa, and Kathy Collins at 'Yakamashii'



Ikebana workshop



LEST WE FORGET

Masao “Masa” Motooka

JUNE 25, 1925 - JULY 19, 2025

Masao “Masa” Motooka reached his goal of celebrating his 100th birthday surrounded by family and friends at Hale Makua, where he spent the last one and a half years of his life. Just a few weeks later, on July 19, 2025, he passed away peacefully.

Born and raised in (“Heavenly”) Hana, Maui, on June 25, 1925, he always believed his hometown was a big reason for his joy and longevity. He attended Hana School, Mid-Pacific Institute in Honolulu, and graduated from Maui High School (Hamakuapoko). He then attended the Cannon School of Business before working as a book-keeper at the Moana Hotel in Waikiki.

Motooka was inducted into the U.S. Army on Jan. 19, 1945, served as an interpreter in Saipan, and was stationed on several small Pacific islands before landing in Tokyo. He received the Asiatic Pacific Service Medal, World War II Victory Medal, and Army of Occupation Medal for his time as an interpreter in the U.S. army. He was later awarded with the Congressional Gold Medal for his service as a Military Intelligence Service veteran in WWII.

After his service, he returned home to Hana, where he worked in the maintenance department at Hana Ranch and Hotel Hana Maui until his retirement in 1982. His most memorable project was to build a coffin of eucalyptus wood to fit a 6-foot-3 man — a personal request from a terminally ill Charles Lindberg.

Masa was the eldest child of Yasutaro and Fujiko Motooka. He was predeceased by his beloved wife, Violet; daughter, Janice; granddaughter, Cassie Lee; his parents; sisters, Helen Nakashima and Alice Kawaiaaea; and brothers, Jiro, Stanley, Richard, Melvin, and Jerry.

He is survived by his son, Bobby; daughters, Margaret (Jan) Young, Trudy Lee and AJ (Michael) Quinn; sister, Elaine Ichimura; grandchildren, Brandy, Malia Anne, and Michael Shea; and great-grandchildren, Nainoa and Aviani.

PHOTO CAPTION 1:

Painting by Kirk Kurokawa

PHOTO CAPTION 2:

Shane Sato with Masao Motooka

★ Donor Listing Continued

Louis and Jean Wada
IN MEMORY OF MINEO YAMAGATA (MIS), TSUKIO YAMAGATA (442ND RCT) & YUKIO YAMAGATA (US ARMY)

Louis and Jean Wada
IN MEMORY OF RAYMOND IWAMOTO

Sally Waki
 Kyle & Colette Watanabe
 Gerald & Connie Watanabe
 Merle Watanabe
 Betty Watanabe
 Brian Watanabe
 Susan Wilson
 Teri Wong

IN MEMORY OF KINGO KANECHIKA
 Alyce Yamaguchi
 June Yamamoto

Laura Yamamoto
IN MEMORY OF RICHARD MASAYUKI YAMAMOTO

Carol Yamamura
 Leslie & Alice Yamanaka
 Eleanor Yanagi

IN MEMORY OF CLAIRE SUZUKI
 Aimee Yatsushiro
 Catherine Yee
 Jon & Jan Yokouchi
 Larry S. & Joan C. Yokoyama
 Tadao Yoshimoto
 Marian & James Yoshioka

PLATOON (\$99 & Below)

Val Allen
 Susan Antoku
 Karen Apana
 Roberta Arita
 Ethel Asato
 Marilyn Barbosa

Maui Represented in National Torchbearer Convening

By: Valerie Matsunaga, Torchbearer Advisor

From April 24 to 27, 2025, five representatives from Maui traveled to Los Angeles' historic Little Tokyo district to take part in the 2025 National Torchbearer Convening, hosted by the Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC). This annual gathering brings together emerging leaders from across the nation to carry forward the legacy of Japanese American WWII veterans through civic dialogue, community engagement, and storytelling.



Left to right: Alan Matsunaga, Justin Yanagida, Rysan Ouye, Maia Taketa, Chelsea Kau, Valerie Matsunaga

This year's Maui delegation included returning Torchbearer **Chelsea Kau** and 2025 Torchbearers **Rysan Ouye, Maia Taketa, Justin Yanagida,** and myself, **Valerie Matsunaga,** serving as an advisor. With support from the Nisei Veterans Memorial Center, we proudly represented Maui and the values passed down by the Nisei generation.

CARRYING THE TORCH:

Honoring the Past, Building the Future

The convening opened with a warm welcome and a challenge from GFBNEC President and CEO **Dr. Mitch Maki** and Program Director **Kurt Ikeda:** embody the Go For Broke spirit through action. From the very first session — *Discussion, Debate, Disagreement*, led by Professor **Cody Walizer** — Torchbearers were encouraged to lean into discomfort

and complexity as they engaged in civil discourse and explored questions of justice, identity and leadership.



First row: Valerie Matsunaga, Maia Taketa, Chelsea Kau; **Second row:** Rysan Ouye, Justin Yanagida, Mitch Maki

Learning from History to Shape Tomorrow

Friday began with Dr. Maki's powerful presentation, *America's Promise*, which traced the Japanese American incarceration experience from Pearl Harbor to the Civil Liberties Act of 1988. He emphasized that the Nisei did not wait for justice — they demanded it through service, sacrifice, and organized action. Their Go For Broke legacy became the foundation of civil rights redress for all Americans.

Participants also engaged in an **Identity Walk** and a panel on **Community Leadership Over the Generations**, featuring **Dr. Joe Nunn** and **Carole Hayashino** (President Emerita, Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i). Their intergenerational insights reminded us that leadership is not only learned — it is lived.

Uplifting Voices from the Margins

Later that day, **Hwal Lee** (Torchbearer 2023) presented on the life and legacy of **Col. Young Oak Kim**, a Korean American who led the segregated 100th Infantry Battalion/442nd Regimental

Combat Team. Lee's work at GFBNEC continues Kim's legacy of unity across racial lines and community service.

Participants were then guided through a creative poetry session with Kurt Ikeda, reflecting on the question, *Where are you from?* — a powerful tool to reconnect with place, heritage and identity.

The day concluded with a **walking tour of Little Tokyo**, led by the Little Tokyo Historical Society, followed by a panel titled **Belonging in Little Tokyo**. Business and creative leaders — including James Choi (Cafe Dulce), Alison De La Cruz (Great Leap), and the team from Japangeles — shared how they are redefining what it means to belong in an ethnic enclave shaped by history and activism.

Building Inclusive Coalitions

Saturday explored themes of intergenerational activism and representation. A morning session on the **Go For Broke Plaza development project** shared plans for a mixed-use, 100% affordable housing site that will permanently house GFBNEC — ensuring the Nisei legacy has both a physical and symbolic home.

Panelists such as **Dr. Curtiss Rooks, Aiden Aizumi,** and **Pastor Danny Cortez** spoke on honoring identities across generations, including the experiences of multiracial leaders and LGBTQ+ Japanese Americans navigating family, faith, and community. The day closed with a keynote on reparations by **Don Tamaki**, a legal trailblazer who helped overturn Fred Korematsu's WWII conviction.

**OKAGE SAMA DE –
Because of You**

Our participation in the 2025 Torchbearer Convening would not have been possible without the foundation laid by our elders. As the phrase ‘Okage Sama De’ reminds us: *because of you, we are.*

To the Nisei veterans and their families, to our friends and supporters across Maui, and to NVMC — **mahalo** for entrusting us with this honor. We carry the torch forward in your name.

FOLLOW THE JOURNEY:

Instagram: @gfbnec
www.goforbroke.org

Torchbearer 2025

From afar we came
To become eternal flames
Started from a spark

-Matsunaga 2025



The GFBNEC Donor Appreciation Luncheon with 2025 Torchbearers in traditional 'T' formation



Speaking at the Sister Cities Conference

- John & Lori Candalino
- Clarence Uehara & Cheryl Okuma
- Daniel Dang
- Caroline Fujii
- Keene Fujinaka
- Phyllis & Earl Fukami
- Edwin & Delia Fukuji
- Lauren Gohara
- Karen Griffon
- Grace Hamasaki
- IN MEMORY OF MARION MORIKAWA**
- Kathleen Harman
- Jackie Higashiyama
- Mark & Ann Hiyakumoto
- Lilian & Ko Hiyama
- IN MEMORY OF MASAMI MAEDA**
- 442NDRCT & IN APPRECIATION OF MADCC**
- Steven Tanabe & Ileene Kawahara
- Pamela Iriguchi
- Blanche Ito
- Donald & Faith Ito
- Gail Iwamoto-Hamai
- Lyle & Audrey Kajihara
- Dick & Sharon Kamita
- Reiko Kato
- Wendy Kobashigawa
- Harry & Ann Kochi
- Reiko & Laurie Kondo
- Dennis Koyonagi
- Sherrie Kumashiro
- Tom & Krystene Lam
- Winona Lau Hee
- Curtis & Ella Lee
- IN MEMORY OF MARION MORIKAWA**
- W. Edward Linn
- Jason Matsui
- IN MEMORY OF RANDAL TAKATANI & ERIC OURA**
- Alan & Valerie Matsunaga
- Dan & Susan Michibata
- Frances Mitsumura
- Paul & Jessie Mizoguchi
- IN MEMORY OF MARION MORIKAWA**
- Debra Morioka
- Karen Motooka
- Masao & Robert Motooka
- IN MEMORY OF YAEMI YOGI FROM MASAO "MASA" MOTOOKA & OHANA**
- Masao & Robert Motooka
- Jacqueline & Gary Murai
- Cathleen Murayama
- Lisa Murphy
- Susan Naka

2025 TORCHBEARERS REFLECT:

Carrying the Go For Broke Spirit Forward

By: Valerie Matsunaga,
Torchbearer Advisor

From April 24 to 27, 2025, young leaders from across the nation gathered in the historic heart of Little Tokyo, Los Angeles, for the 2025 National Torchbearer Convening. For four days, fellows engaged in workshops, neighborhood walking tours, and deep community dialogue — all in the name of preserving and advancing the legacy of the Nisei veterans of WWII.

Among the participants were four powerful voices from Hawai'i: **Rysan Ouye**, **Justin Yanagida**, **Maia Taketa**, and returning fellow **Chelsea Kau**. Representing both islands and the broader Japanese American experience, these Torchbearers returned home deeply transformed. Their reflections reveal not just what was learned, but what now burns brighter in their hearts: the call to serve, remember and act.

To Remember Stories Is To Build New Ones



MAIA TAKETA

Torchbearer

Maia Taketa captured the essence of the convening through her gratitude, introspection, and call to action.

“The couple of days spent in Little Tokyo — meeting new friendly faces, grabbing delicious coffees at Café Dulce, and listening to incredible speakers — was truly enjoyable and educational. We dove into heavier topics around our

personal connections to the Nisei spirit. One of the biggest takeaways for me was the importance of building and investing in our communities. The best way to carry on the stories and keep the Nisei spirit alive is to get involved and participate.”

Maia emphasized that the Go For Broke spirit is not confined to one era or group of people.

“What really stood out was the idea that the Nisei spirit isn't just for Japanese Americans — it's for every American who embodies those values. It's for immigrants, young entrepreneurs, and anyone just trying to figure themselves out. The Nisei didn't have to give it their all, but they did. Now it's our turn.”

We Shared Our Stories, Dreams, and Struggles

RYSAN OUYE

Torchbearer



“This program gathered young members of the Japanese American community from around the country to reflect on the sacrifices of those who came before us. It was a moment of shared understanding — of our generation's hopes and challenges. We discussed identity pol-

itics, sacrifice, community involvement, and the historical patterns that shape our lives.”

The depth of connection among fellows became a cornerstone of the experience for Rayson.

“We made friendships and connections that helped us grow. We broke bread together. We laughed, cried, and dreamed together. I now feel more grounded in being a Nisei descendant and a Torchbearer. My hope is that this program continues — so future generations can return home with renewed pride and purpose.”



When Legacy Is Threatened, We Go For Broke — Again

CHELSEA KAU

Torchbearer 2024

As a returning Torchbearer, Chelsea brought the lens of continuity and mentorship to this year's gathering.

“Attending my second National Torchbearer Convening was both grounding and galvanizing. Surrounded by fellow changemakers and allies, I felt the weight and urgency of our shared responsibility: to preserve the legacy of the Nisei Veterans and carry their fight for justice into the present.”

Chelsea reminded us that remembrance without action is incomplete.

“Being a Torchbearer isn't just about remembrance — it's about movement. When history is erased, we write it back. When silence is expected, we speak. And when legacy is threatened, we go for broke — again.”



Say 'Yes' to Life

JUSTIN YANAGIDA

Torchbearer

Justin walked away with big questions and bold reminders. The convening deepened his appreciation for Nisei values — duty, family, and service to nation — and made him consider how today's generation can stretch their potential to serve and uplift others.

Lighting the Way Ahead

The National Torchbearer Convening is not a final destination — it is a spark. A spark that ignites new friendships, recommits old promises, and burns with the memory of those who went for broke so others could live free.

Through the voices of Rysan, Justin, Maia, and Chelsea, we see a generation rising — not just to remember, but to

“What is our potential? How can we grow more, serve more, and make a bigger impact?”

What stood out most were the breakout group conversations, where honest stories and different perspectives created moments of deep insight.

His message to the next generation?

“Just say yes to life. When in doubt, go work out.” — a reminder to take action, stay strong, and keep moving.

respond. Not only to honor the past, but to shape the future.

As the convening closed beneath the cherry blossoms of Little Tokyo, one message rang clear:

**おかげさまで — Okage Sama De —
Because of them, we are. And because of us, their legacy lives on.**

★ Donor Listing Continued

- Norma Nicolas
- Katy Nishimoto
- Iris Nitta
- Leonard & Laurel Oka
IN MEMORY OF MARION MORIKAWA
- Diane Orikasa
- Curtis & Faye Otsuka
- Michelle Payton
IN MEMORY OF MARION MORIKAWA
- Gary Ritchie
- Rodney Ryugo
- Edna Saifuku
- David Yospe & Brenda Saifuku-Yospe
- Dean & Bernice Saiki
- Sharon Sakamoto
- Diana Saltoon-Briggs
- Lee Seki
- Joanne Shiratori
- Patricia Shishido
IN MEMORY OF DONALD KARIMOTO
- Allen & Janice Shishido
- Robert & Colleen Shishido
- Gail K. St. Denis
- Tak & Yuki Lei Sugimura
- Jill Sullivan
- Paul & Judy Suyama
- Jacklyn Takakura
- Elaine Tanaka
- Allan & Linda Tanaka
- Deidre Tegarden
- Faith Tengan
- Gail Terada
- Harold & Irene Teraoka
- Frances Teshima
- Stefanie Tome
- Samuel & Norma Uchihara
- Nelly Uehara
- Maureen Vandenburg
- Stanley Vidinhar
- Nancy Yamashita
- Robert & Jane Yanabu
- Yanagida Fitness



Natsu Matsuri

P.O. BOX 216
KAHULUI, HI 96733-6716

**NON PROFIT
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
KAHULUI, HI
Permit No.319**

**RETURN
SERVICE
REQUESTED**



NISEI VETERANS MEMORIAL CENTER // FALL NEWSLETTER 2025

OKAGE SAMA DE BECAUSE OF YOU, I AM...



PHOTO CAPTIONS:

- 1. Maui's Sons and Daughters of the Nisei Veterans's Scholarship Winners:**
Taylor Deocares, Lillioe Quitazoi, Michelle Castillo, Kaila Kaneta, Dylan Arisumi, Cadence Ako, Joshua Mori.
2. Aliya Orikasa introduces her senior project
3. Tsukina Kawamura and Victoria Jacintho
4. Ka Ipu Kukui Fellows visit NVMC
5. Kyle Watanabe, Melanie Agrabante, and Marie Yamamoto