

December 30, 1997

Dear Paul,

Letter to Ruth Mizobe Shikada follows.

Dear Ruth Mizobe Shikada:

This is to officially, on behalf of the motley group who call ourselves the Friends of Michi Weglyn, invite you to speak at the coming Day of Remembrance. The next Day of Remembrance will be a tribute to Michi Weglyn and a celebration of the spirit of redress she embodies. Please, as an accomplished Sansei civil rights activist, say a few words on Michi Weglyn, her book, her example, her meaning, her effect on you. And please do it, in three minutes or less.

Instead of one distinguished person making one long speech, we are asking for five distinguished persons to speak briefly on Michi's effect on their work as historians, redress activists, authors, civil libertarians, Japanese Americans. In this way, we hope to give an impression of the depth and variety of her effects on the Japanese American community and perhaps, the very sense of Japanese American community, if there is such a thing.

You led the _____ of the JACL to apologise to and honor the leaders and resisters of the Heart Mountain Fair Play committee and Nisei who resisted the draft on constitutional grounds. This, in our eyes, is an accomplishment in civil rights and civility that stands out, as uniquely sensitive to the emotional and community issues of Japanese American history. The portion of the community you represented made an occasion of receiving and accepting the resisters into your community of thought if not the community of the JACL.

We are asking you and Dr. Clifford Uyeda, former President of the JACL and the Japanese American Historical Society; Art Hansen, historian, U.C. Fullerton; William Hohri, author of "Repairing America" and head of the former NCJAR; Robin Kramer, representing Mayor Riordin; and Toshiko Kawamoto, representing the resisters. to speak for no longer than three minutes. Toshiko Kawamoto is Dave Kawamoto's widow, and became outspoken and active on the resister's cause when they started to come out of the obscurity resulting from the social ostracism, you did so much to end.

We do not offer a few words to put in your own, as we have done with the others. Michi's effect on their work is obvious. They have since sent us timed texts of their remarks. We are sending you suggestions of what they might, and in some cases, will say, so you won't be surprised, and to help you avoid repeating their effusive remarks. Even though it's Michi, the number of remarks one might effuse are finite, and repetition is a possibility. And we don't know how, if at all, Michi Weglyn touched your life. It's not for us to tell you. It is for you to tell us.

We would like you to offer a column to the Los Angeles Rafu Shimpō, a think piece on the occasion of this Day of Remembrance, and Michi Nishiura Weglyn, redress, Sansei, the future of the community, as seen through the eyes of a new mother, From the text of this piece, we would like you to edit a three minute word for Michi. This is just a suggestion. We have not talked to the Rafu. We have not written a piece for you to front. Of course a piece set to come out the Friday before the event would give us a boost. But it has to be a piece you want to write, no matter what.

When you are ready, we would like the text of your three minutes, or less, remarks. If we see a piece by you appear in the Rafu that happens to give us a boost, we will reproduce it and include that piece in our press kit.

The 1998 Day of Remembrance is being presented by NCRR and the Friends of Michi Weglyn. We are a diverse group including Frank Emi, Sue Embrey, Art Hansen, Yosh and Irene Kuromiya, William Hohri and many others convened for the single purpose of expressing our gratitude for her book and her example, and appreciation of her singular place in the life of the community.

If you have any questions or would like more information, don't hesitate to call me at the number below.

For the Friends of Michi Weglyn, I am
Sincerely yours,

Paul Tsuneishi