

Friends of Michi Weglyn  
in care of Mr. Yosh Kuromiya  
2605 Orange Grove Ave.  
Alhambra, CA 91803

Nov. 1, 1997

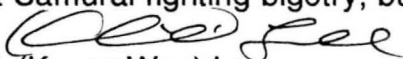
Dear Friends of Michi Weglyn:

It's almost 20 years late, but never too late to let the world know that Michi Weglyn has been a critical link in an unbroken chain of extraordinary human beings committed to a thing called decency and fairness in human affairs leading to the freedom of Korean immigrant Chol Soo Lee from San Quentin's death row. Her middle name, in my book, is constancy. Ranko, Michi, Alice (Nishi), Peggy (Saika), Tom Nakashima, Jeff Adachi, Jeff Mori, and Harry Honda, to cite a few, are all locked in my memory forever. Michi was instrumental in having ABC's 20/20 do a piece on Chol Soo Lee -- a small miracle in deed and indeed. And that changed the chemistry of the drive in public perception of the issue. Without Ranko Yamada, there would have been no beginning of the movement. Without Michi, the movement would have stayed subterranean in the Asian American pond. I dare say that without the participation of Japanese American activists across the country the Chol Soo Lee movement could never have been launched. Theirs was a vital contribution to Korean American history. I hope and pray our children and children's children will remember their role.

I have never met Michi Weglyn but feel as though I had worked with her face to face alongside Ranko Yamada since the early days of what is now known as the Chol Soo Lee movement. She has never ceased to amaze me, compelling me to wonder at times how is it possible for such a human being to exist in this world. I don't think she has ever pushed aside Chol Soo Lee from her consciousness for a moment during those heady and hectic years. She has written me a ton of HANDWRITTEN (THE CAPS ARE MY EMPHASIS) notes or letters or reports or copies of letters or appeals she has written to others along the Chol Soo Lee passage. I have treasured every handwritten letter she has written to me (I was reporting for The now-defunct Sacramento Union and later publishing Koreatown Weekly during those years) but most of them were lost or misplaced during my peripatetic period. Still several of her letters remain alive in my 40-year collection now in the hands of UC-Davis Shields Library.

In any movement, it's the exceptional or SPLENDID few who carry the fire and burden of the cause. Michi Weglyn looms and shines like a lone star in a stormy night, and I am among those who aren't dazzled by so many bogus stars crowding today's night skies.

I thank you for giving me this opportunity to offer this witness account on behalf of a Great Samurai fighting bigotry, bully and blind mind.

  
.K. W. (Kyung Won) Lee

## Letter to the Editor

### An Open Letter to President Clinton

*(Editor's note: The following letter, written by noted historian Michi Nishiura Weglyn, calls for presidential action in the cases of redress for Japanese Latin Americans and railroad and mine workers.)*

October 11, 1997

President Bill Clinton  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue  
Washington, D.C. 20500-0003

Dear President Clinton:

The several documents I have enclosed may enable you to understand why I feel, with a strong degree of confidence, that

1) an Executive Order can quickly and quietly undo the unconscionable slight to those brought to mainland concentration camps from Latin American republics, who are still being denied redress on a ridiculous technicality.

2) a Benefit of a Doubt ruling is just and should be invoked by the Office of Redress administration for another ignored category of long-suffering applicants, the railroad and mine workers and others caught in ubiquitous "military zones" established in areas surrounding plants, utilities, bridges, radio stations, etc. deemed strategic. Enough evidence has turned up to prove the government's involvement in the layoffs of railroad and mine workers; and, worse, of entire families being evicted overnight from their domiciles, some of whom were subjected to shocking human rights violations by being made to live like cornered animals under armed guards, denied food, medical care, schooling, decent shelter and sanitary facilities.

Vigilante-style justice prevailed in certain communities, especially where city, county and even state defense councils were active. Not only the FBI but the military exploited their enthusiasm. Civilian defense councils, as of March 24, 1942, became an adjunct to the Wartime Civil Control Administration of DeWitt's Western Defense Command. By August, there were some 300 actively cooperating with the military.

The ORA office is presently making preparation to close in 1998. I therefore share a special concern that the landmark redress program ends on a note of triumph, so that we may be able to celebrate with you in August, 1998 the greatness of a nation which responded justly to the cries of all of the once-wronged, even "the forgotten ones" ignored by history and by top historians. We must all apologize for this failure — to acknowledge those who have suffered the most.

Sincerely,  
**Michi Nishiura Weglyn**  
New York, NY