

June 2016

## From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

I write to you today with a heavy heart following the malicious attack on the LGBTQ community in Orlando this past weekend. I send my condolences to the victims and their families, and support to anyone who feels unsafe or afraid in the aftermath of this horrific massacre. This includes members of the American Muslim community, who have already seen unwarranted backlash because of a single man. In this sad time, we need to remember to see each other as fellow humans and not just for the race, religion, sexual orientations, and gender identities we represent.

To help in this effort, we need to also stand up when people, especially leaders, use bigoted language. Just last week Donald Trump made headlines again for claiming that Gonzalo Curiel, the American-born federal judge presiding over the Trump University case, is biased against him. Why? Because, according to Trump, Curiel is ["a 'hater' who was being unfair to him because the judge is 'Hispanic,' because he is 'Mexican' and because Trump is building a wall."](#)

Speaker of the House Paul Ryan condemned Trump's verbiage, calling it "the textbook definition of a racist comment." I agree with the Speaker. This is racist rhetoric that needs to be challenged.

These accusations are disturbingly reminiscent of another era of nationalistic racism. Eric L. Muller, professor at the University of North Carolina School of Law and Densho Encyclopedia contributor, pointed this out in an [incisive opinion piece](#). He wrote about how after Pearl Harbor, [John DeWitt](#)--then head of the Western Defense Command--argued that Americans with Japanese heritage maintained loyalty to Japan and were inherently the enemy:

"In the words of Lt. Gen. John DeWitt, the military leader who ordered the mass action, 'racial affinities' were 'not severed by migration' -- the 'Japanese race' was simply 'an enemy race.' Yes, there were 'second and third generation Japanese born on United States soil' who were U.S. citizens, DeWitt allowed, but the 'racial strains' in them were 'undiluted.' Their race determined their allegiances, U.S. citizenship notwithstanding."

DeWitt's words and actions were major influences on public opinion and the presidential action that led to mass removal and incarceration. This history shows us that racist words can lead directly to oppression and violence against the populations they target.

Sincerely,

Tom Ikeda

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## Densho to Launch Two New Initiatives to Document Japanese American History

We are excited to announce two new initiatives to be launched this summer. Highlights of the new programs include:

- Densho will digitize historically significant material in underserved, rural communities. The resulting high resolution images will be made available to the public for free at [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org).
- Digitizing the personal archives of WWII incarceration survivors is essential to passing the story on to future generations.
- A collaboratively developed topic thesaurus as well as the names of all WWII incarcerated will make the new digital archives even more accessible and useful to individuals, students, and scholars alike.
- Densho was recently awarded funding from the Department of the Interior, National Park Service through the Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program to help fund this important work. In order to unlock those funds, Densho must raise \$380,000 in 2016 to be able to access the \$760,000 in grant awards.

>>[Read more.](#)

>>[Support the fundraising effort.](#)

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### ANNOUNCEMENT: NEW INITIATIVE AIMS TO PRESERVE THE HISTORY OF LIFE PRIOR TO, DURING, AND AFTER WORLD WAR II INCARCERATION

THE INTERNATIONAL EXAMINER · JUNE 9, 2016

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These issei are having a picnic at Abi Point in Seattle. - Courtesy of the Tamura Family Collection, from Densho's website.

Organizations in Los Angeles, Seattle, San Francisco, Honolulu, San Jose, and Portland have worked for decades to document World War II incarceration and its aftermath. But in the rural areas and small towns beyond the borders of those cities, thousands of stories remain untold. As the numbers of those who experienced World War II-era incarceration dwindle, their knowledge and material records are at risk of being lost forever.

## Call for Family Testimonials

Do you have a relative who was interviewed by Densho? If so, we invite you to honor them through participation in our [Generations Project](#). All you have to do is take a few minutes to watch a segment of your relative's interview and then answer a few questions. We would also love to see photos of you with the relative we interviewed. For younger family members, we welcome drawings. The deadline for submissions is August 15.

>> [Learn more and submit an entry.](#)



## 20th Anniversary Gala Update

On Saturday, September 24, 2016 we'll celebrate our 20th anniversary with a gala at the Sheraton Seattle Downtown. We are pleased to announce that our live auction will now include a Prius v, as well as vacation packages and other premiums.\*



>> [More information and tickets.](#)

\*Actual vehicle will differ from photo.

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## Call for Volunteers

Volunteers are critical to the work we do at Densho! We are currently looking for help at our 20th anniversary gala, with scanning and data entry, as well as other special projects. Email [volunteer@densho.org](mailto:volunteer@densho.org) with questions.



>> [Learn more and apply.](#)

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## Oral History Spotlight

Ryo Imamura was born in the Gila River concentration camp, Arizona, during World War II. Coming from a long line of Buddhist ministers in Japan and the United States, Reverend Imamura was a minister with the Buddhist Churches of America for a number of years as well as a psychotherapist and professor of psychology. In this clip, he talks about working with the United Farm Workers and trying to garner support for the farmworker unions in the Japanese American community.



>> [Watch the video.](#)


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## Minoru Yasui Events in Seattle

[Never Give Up! Minoru Yasui and the Fight for Justice](#), a documentary film work-in-progress and a theatrical reading of the play "Citizen Min" will be presented in Seattle by the [Minoru Yasui Tribute](#)

[Committee](#). Film screening: June 25 at 7 p.m., [Wing Luke Museum](#) / Play reading: June 26 at 2 p.m., [Blaine Memorial United Methodist Church](#). Admission is free and each event will be followed by a panel discussion.

**NEVER GIVE UP!**



*MINORU YASUI and the Fight for Justice*  
A documentary film directed by Holly Yasui and Will Doolittle  
narrated by George Takei

Please help us to complete this film with your tax-free donation at [www.minoruyasuifilm.org](http://www.minoruyasuifilm.org)

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