

May 2017

From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

Ten days ago I stood in front of the jail cell that held Martin Luther King, Jr. in Birmingham, Alabama. It was here Dr. King wrote the [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#), while imprisoned for his nonviolent demonstration against segregation. Shivers went down my back as I read his words, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," and thought of the struggles, sacrifices, and deaths during the Civil Rights Movement.

As Densho collaborates more and more with other organizations and communities, I cannot help but see the patterns of systemic racism that have plagued our country for centuries, and continue into today. This only strengthens my resolve to share more broadly and deeply the injustice of the World War II incarceration of Japanese Americans.

Later this week I will be speaking at a ceremony in Seattle commemorating the imprisonment of another non-violent protestor. On May 15th the King County Council will be placing a plaque near the jail cell that [Gordon Hirabayashi](#) entered 75 years ago, for the "crime" of protesting the removal and incarceration of Japanese Americans. From his cell, Gordon wrote these words on July 4, 1942:

"But even though this is America, these things happening today are not American. They are the results of misinterpretations, mis-emphasis concerning the right thing to do, hysteria, and short-sightedness. It is up to those of us who feel that a wrong has been committed, that we have fallen short, to bear witness to that fact. It is our obligation to show forth our light in times of darkness, nay, our privilege."

Now is our moment to come together to work toward a more just future. Please help us in that endeavor by giving what you can to the GiveBIG campaign that ends tomorrow. Your contribution will be tripled!

Sincerely,

Tom Ikeda

GiveBIG 2017: Triple your Donations

MAY 10, 2017

Join us for
Seattle's biggest
giving event of
the year. Your
support matters

NOW

MORE THAN EVER

give
BIG



DENSHO



Do you love the stories we share here? The invaluable oral histories we've recorded? Our on-the-ground work to stand up for civil liberties? Our innovative education program? We're able to do all that because of the generous support of our community, and we need to ask you for that support now. Whether it's your first time contributing or you're a long-time donor, now is a great time to give!

To increase the impact of your donation, every dollar you contribute will be matched with two dollarsthanks to a matching grant provided to Densho by theNational Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program. This funding will increase our efforts to preserve the personalstories of the World War II Japanese American experience and help students, teachers, researchers, and the public access these materials.

To participate in this matching opportunity, you need to schedule your gift between now and midnight on May 10th.

>> [Schedule your donation now.](#)

Awards & Accolades

In the span of a month Tom Ikeda and Densho will have received three important awards from our community:

The Seattle Chapter of the Japanese American Citizens' League honored Densho with a [Community Engagement Award](#).

The Association of King County Historical Organizations honored Tom Ikeda with the [Charles Payton Award](#).

And, last but not least, the Japanese American National Museum honored Tom with their prestigious [Founders' Award](#) at their annual gala.

Thanks to all who helped make this



Densho in the News: Birmingham's Weld Magazine

Tom Ikeda's talk generated local interest in Birmingham, Alabama so a reporter from the city's arts weekly interviewed him.

"I know the South has the civil rights issues, but when we think about as a country putting into laws where we're going to round up 120,000 people — and two-thirds are U.S. citizens — and [they] have no trials, no hearings, and just based on their ancestry round them up and place them in these camps when they've done nothing wrong... We wonder, we fear, and we want to discuss whether or not similar things can happen in our country today," said Ikeda.

>> [Read the article.](#)

NEWS & VIEWS April 25, 2017

Today: A history of injustice in words and pictures

BIRMINGHAM CIVIL RIGHTS INSTITUTE PAYS TRIBUTE TO JAPANESE-AMERICAN SURVIVORS OF U.S. INTERNMENT CAMPS — CONNECTING THE DOTS BETWEEN A WARTIME DISGRACE AND 21ST-CENTURY FEARS.

Michelle Love
Michelle Love is currently receiving her degree from University of Alabama at Birmingham in Professional Writing and has been writing with Weld since August 2014.

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TOM IKEDA'S GRANDPARENTS (LEFT) RECEIVING THE AMERICAN FLAG FOR THEIR SON, FRANCIS KINOSHITA, WHO WAS SHOT AND KILLED IN ACTION WHILE FIGHTING FOR THE 442ND REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM IN ITALY. THE MAN ON THE RIGHT IS AN UNIDENTIFIED FAMILY FRIEND. PHOTO COURTESY OF TOM IKEDA.

Blog Highlight: Yellow Power: The Origins of Asian America

Prior to the social and political upheavals of the 1960s, there was no "Asian America"—at least not as we know it today. While Americans of Asian descent had joined forces on the picket line and plantation field throughout history, their identities and struggles were mostly defined along distinct ethnic lines. But amidst the tumult of the civil rights movement, young people united their communities to forge a new identity based on their collective experiences as Asian Americans.

>> [Read more.](#)



Oral History Spotlight

Bob Santos, a well-known civil rights activist from Seattle, Washington, grew up in the Chinatown/International District area of Seattle. From 1972 to 1989, he served as Executive Director of the International

District Improvement Association (InterIm), which brought together community members of diverse ethnic backgrounds. In this clip, he describes a successful effort to save a historic hotel.

>> [Watch interview clip.](#)



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