

June 2017

## From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

Historical knowledge changes over time. Events that were once seen as justified become clear civil rights violations as we learn more about the people involved and what motivated their actions. My evolving understanding of [Japanese American World War II draft resisters](#) is an example of this.

In high school, I read the classic novel "[No-No Boy](#)," which painted the protagonist as tormented by his decision to resist the draft, in large part because of the pro-Japan influence of his mother. Based on this reading, I thought draft resisters were confused men who second-guessed their decision.

Ten years later, I had my first conversation with a real life draft resister, the man who would become my father-in-law, Frank Yamasaki. Frank told me how his gut said not to enlist, and I remember his clarity when he said, "I would have joined the Army if only they let my family go back to Seattle." A few years later, after watching the film "[Conscience and the Constitution](#)" and reading the book "[Free to Die for their Country](#)" I came to understand my father-in-law's convictions were shared by hundreds of other men.

I tell this story because this month is the anniversary of the largest mass trial in Wyoming's history. In a federal courthouse in Cheyenne, sixty-three young Japanese American men, incarcerated at the Heart Mountain concentration camp, were tried and convicted for their principled stand to resist the military draft until their civil liberties were restored. They were members of the [Fair Play Committee](#), a group unified against the injustice of being held in a concentration camp under armed guard and without due process. I now think of these men as "resisters of conscience," as they clearly stated their loyalty to the U.S. and were willing to fight in the armed forces but first demanded to be treated fairly as citizens.

These men received three year prison terms, and were criticized and shunned by members of the Japanese American community for decades. They practiced non-violent protest at a great cost to themselves. Today, we recognize these men as a shining example that "dissent is not the enemy of Patriotism." I hope their stand for justice inspires you as much as it has inspired me.

Sincerely,

## Oral History Spotlight

Frank Emi was one of the leaders of the Fair Play Committee at the HeartMountain concentration camp, Wyoming, during World War II. He was convicted of conspiracy for organizing against the draft when the U.S. Army began enlisting Japanese Americans out of camp, and was imprisoned for eighteen months at Leavenworth, Kansas. In this clip, Frank talks about how he felt when he received the so-called "loyalty questionnaire" in camp in 1943.

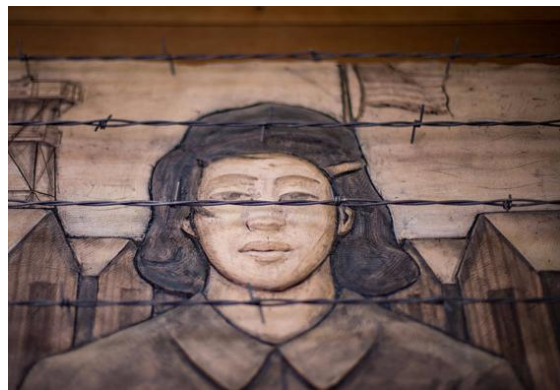


>> [Watch interview clip.](#)

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## Densho in the News: What Japanese Internment Taught Us About Standing Up for Our Neighbors

Densho's Brian Niiya talked with *YES! Magazine* about the absence of organized protests and civil disobedience from Japanese Americans and their allies during WWII, and the lessons we can learn in responding to injustices today.



>> [Read more.](#)

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## Nihonjin Face: Full Performance

The one-act play, "Nihonjin Face," was co-authored by Densho Education Specialist Janet Hayakawa and Tere Martinez. The play is about a Tacoma family incarcerated during World War II and the empathy they develop for others who suffer from civil rights abuses. For a limited time, you can watch the full play online at the link below.



>> [Watch online.](#)

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## JANM Founders' Award

Tom Ikeda was presented with the

Founders' Award at the Japanese American National Museum's 2017 Gala Dinner. The award was established to recognize an individual or organization that advances the mission and vision of the museum's founders in a meaningful way on a national or international scale. The founders' vision includes, among other goals, presenting the Japanese American experience from a first-person perspective and as an integral part of America's heritage, and encouraging appreciation for cultural diversity.

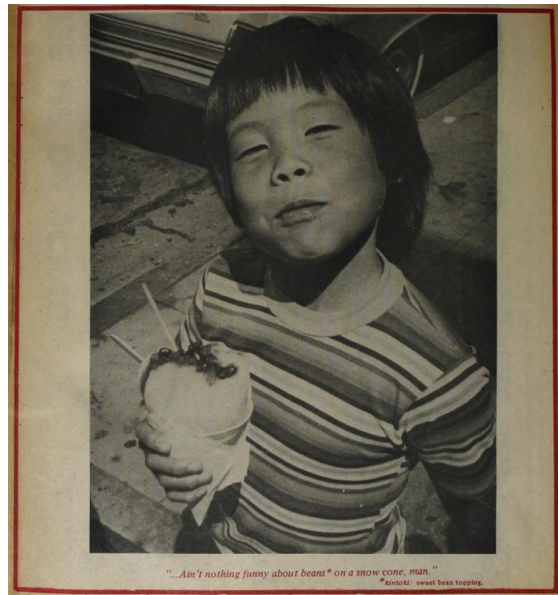


>> [Watch JANM's tribute to Tom Ikeda.](#)

## Blog Highlight: 25 Times Gidra was Goddamn Glorious

From 1969 to 1974, the monthly newsletter Gidra helped define the terms of the Asian American Movement. Articles, art, poetry, and satire addressed the most critical social issues of the era. Click through to see some of Gidra's greatest hits.

>> [Read more.](#)



## Honoring Gordon Hirabayashi

75 years after Gordon Hirabayashi was imprisoned in Seattle's King County Jail, a plaque was dedicated in his honor. The Densho team was honored to partake in this ceremony and Tom Ikeda appeared as an invited speaker alongside Gordon's son Jay Hirabayashi and other dignitaries.

>> [Watch the full event.](#)



Community Announcement: Seattle University Law Library offers Free



## Exhibits about Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi

The Seattle University School of Law Library is pleased to offer its two exhibits—one about Fred Korematsu and one about Gordon Hirabayashi—for display without charge to libraries, schools, colleges, community centers, and other non-profit organizations. The exhibits draw on archival material from institutions such as the National Archives, the Wing Luke Museum of the Asian Pacific American Experience, and Densho, as well as material from the Korematsu and Hirabayashi families.



The exhibits are a way to learn about the Japanese American removal and incarceration cases from World War II and reflect on their impact in this country today. For more information please contact Stephanie Wilson at [wilsons3@seattleu.edu](mailto:wilsons3@seattleu.edu) or 206-398-4222.

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## GiveBIG 2017: Thank you!!



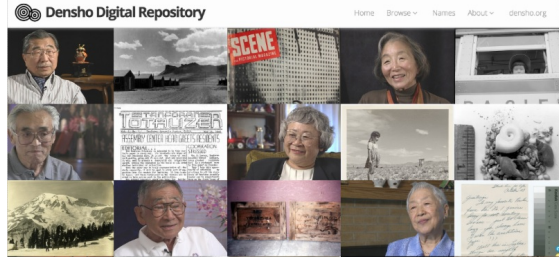
We offer a sincere thanks to all who contributed during this annual day of giving. You helped make this one of our most successful GiveBIG events to date! If you missed out on this opportunity, please keep an eye out for our annual appeal. It should be landing in your mailboxes later this month.

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### Notice: Archives Migration

A reminder to all who use our archives that

we have migrated all of our 900+ oral history videos to the [Densho Digital Repository](#). Our [old Archive page](#) will be taken down at the end of the summer.



Densho | [info@densho.org](mailto:info@densho.org) | [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org)

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