

August 2018

From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

Tomorrow will mark 30 years since the 1988 Civil Liberties Act was signed into law. This federal action resulted in a \$20,000 redress payment and a Presidential apology to Japanese American survivors of the exclusion and mass incarceration during World War II. On social media, I have seen photographs of the signing that show smiling faces of mostly politicians surrounding the signer. What is missing are the faces and stories of the hundreds of activists and organizers who worked untold hours squeezed between work and family life to make redress a reality. We need to be clear that the story is not about President Reagan, who is in the center of these congratulatory photographs. His administration was more of a barrier than a supporter of this cause. The important story is with the organizers who worked as tireless, unpaid volunteers for a cause that most felt had no chance of success. These individuals are the heroes of Redress.

Today we have another President who commands the center of attention. We must remember that our focus and support need to go to a new generation of heroes protecting and standing with people who are unjustly targeted and persecuted.

Three decades after the Civil Liberties Act, we're still witnessing cruel and xenophobic policies caused by racism, hysteria, and failed political leadership, while other communities are still fighting to receive reparations. The Redress Movement has unfinished business, and we should support those working to continue that struggle. Our history, our responsibility.

Tom Ikeda

#NeverAgainIsNow



30 years ago the Civil Liberties Act acknowledged the injustice of Japanese American incarceration.

Today, we're still witnessing state violence caused by racism, hysteria and failed political leadership—but the Redress Movement lives on in our fight for a world without bans, walls or cages.

The struggle isn't over until we're all free.

"Never Again" is right now!



Illustration by Kiku Hughes for Densho.

It's been thirty years since the Civil Liberties Act of 1988 granted an apology and reparations to Japanese Americans incarcerated during WWII. This landmark legislation was the culmination of decades of grassroots organizing and coalition-building, inspired by powerful social movements of the 1960s. But three decades later, we're still witnessing immigrant families being torn apart by the same racism, xenophobia and corrupt leadership that fueled Executive Order 9066. We see Black and Indigenous communities continue to call for reparations to address the deep and lasting harms of the genocidal violence upon which this country was built, while Japanese Latin Americans abducted from their homes during WWII are still waiting for recognition.

Our struggle didn't end 30 years ago. We still have unfinished business.

That's why we're calling on Japanese Americans and our allies across the country to commemorate this history by standing with communities being targeted today. The fight for redress is not over until all of us are free, and "Never Again" is right now.

[Join us this Friday, August 10](#) as we flood with the internet with messages of solidarity and resistance. Share stories of your Redress heroes, show how the movement inspires you today, and help us tell the world that #NeverAgainIsNow!

>> [Join the Facebook event page](#)

>> [Draw material and inspiration from this Digital Toolkit](#)

As we mark the 30th Anniversary of the Civil Liberties Act, we mourn the loss of two icons of Redress history:

Aiko Herzig Yoshinaga

Last month we lost redress hero Aiko

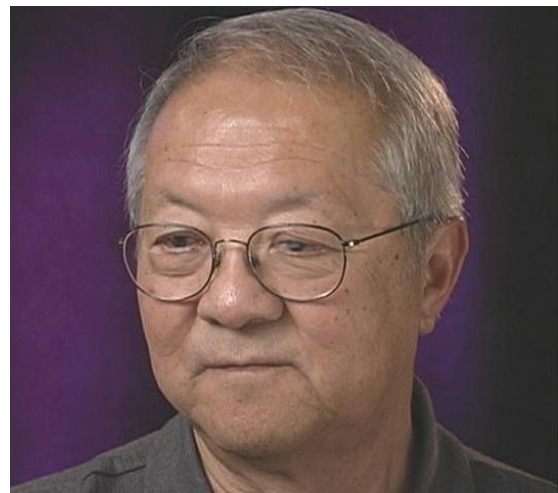
Herzig-Yoshinaga. Aiko was incarcerated during World War II in the Manzanar concentration camp, California, and the Jerome concentration camp, Arkansas. Densho director Tom Ikeda remarked, "Aiko was the primary researcher for the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians that led to the U.S. Government apology to the Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II. This short video comes from an interview I did with her nine years ago — it gives a glimpse of her dedication during the thousands of hours she spent working in government archives, work that was extremely important to Redress and the coram nobis cases. But perhaps even more importantly, Aiko was beloved for her honesty, smarts, toughness, and kindness. She will be sorely missed. Rest in Power, Aiko."



>> [Watch the clip.](#)

Art Shibayama

Art Shibayama was a champion for a redress story that has yet to be truly resolved. Born in Peru, Art was 13 years old when he and his family were deported to the United States for detention at Crystal City. After WWII ended, Art and many other Japanese Latin Americans became stateless citizens, deemed "illegal" in the US and barred from returning to their home countries. They were only able to avoid deportation to Japan by gaining sponsorship from New Jersey's Seabrook Farms. Though still considered an illegal alien, Art was drafted into the US Army in 1952 and forced to defend the country that had kidnapped and detained him. While stationed in Germany his superior officer applied for US citizenship on his behalf, but the US government declared him ineligible, claiming he had entered the United States illegally. He was finally granted legal alien status in 1956 and citizenship in 1972.



In this interview with Densho, Art talks about learning that he and other Japanese Latin Americans were not eligible for Redress since they had entered the country

"illegally." Art spent the rest of his life fighting for justice and we vow to do our part to continue that fight in his honor.

>> [Watch the clip.](#)

Blog Highlight: 8 Lessons in Resistance from Tule Lake

The 2018 Tule Lake Pilgrimage included a protest and panels that allowed participants to engage more deeply in narratives of resistance, and to apply them to injustices unfolding across our country today. In a session on this very subject, New York-based activist and organizer Mike Ishii encouraged people to get involved, even if activism doesn't come naturally to them. **"No one is born an activist," he said, "you come to it out of necessity."** What followed was the creation of the [Japanese American Action Network](#) and radical conversation about forms of resistance — both direct and indirect — that we can all learn from.

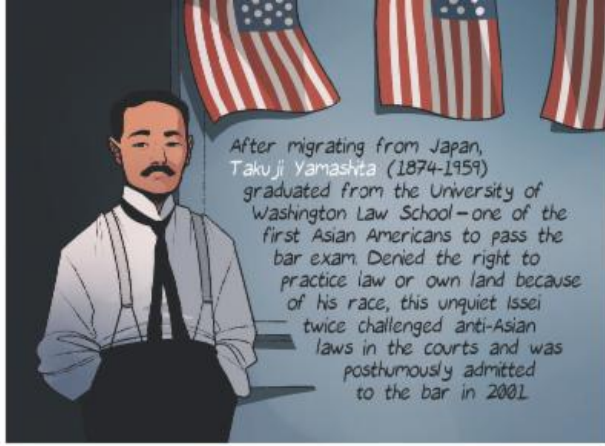


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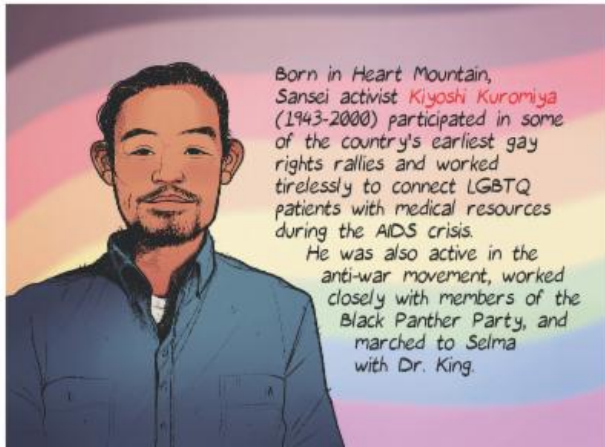
Despite the setbacks of WWII, **Ruth Asawa** (1926-2013) grew into a unique artist, melding the modern and traditional in her work. A major force in public arts education, she inspired thousands of young artists as an instructor and helped establish a San Francisco art school that still bears her name.



After migrating from Japan, **Takuji Yamashita** (1874-1959) graduated from the University of Washington Law School—one of the first Asian Americans to pass the bar exam. Denied the right to practice law or own land because of his race, this unquiet Issei twice challenged anti-Asian laws in the courts and was posthumously admitted to the bar in 2001.



From desegregation to denuclearization, redress to reparations, **Yuri Kochiyama** (1921-2014) dedicated her life to fighting the kind of state-sanctioned racism that led to Japanese American incarceration—and left behind a revolutionary, decades-long legacy of building bridges and interrupting injustice.



Born in Heart Mountain, Sansei activist **Kiyoshi Kuromiya** (1943-2000) participated in some of the country's earliest gay rights rallies and worked tirelessly to connect LGBTQ patients with medical resources during the AIDS crisis. He was also active in the anti-war movement, worked closely with members of the Black Panther Party, and marched to Selma with Dr. King.

Densho preserves the history of Japanese American WWII incarceration with more than 900 oral history interviews, 50,000 digital photographs and historic documents, an extensive encyclopedia, and resources for teachers. We are able to make this material free to everyone thanks, in part, to your generous donations. If you value the work we do here at Densho, please consider making a tax-deductible financial contribution.

And in case the warm, fuzzy feeling you get from supporting isn't enough, we're happy to offer some exclusive gifts as a sign of our gratitude. **Make a donation before August 31, 2018** and we will send you **five custom stamps** featuring Aiko Herzig-Yoshinaga. **Donate \$125 or more** and we'll send you a set of custom magnets or a copy of *Fred Korematsu Stands Up*. **Donate \$200 or more** and we'll send you both!

[Donate](#)

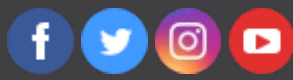
Sushi, Sake, and More on November 3rd!

The second annual Densho Dinner will be held on November 3, 2018, and we've got some amazing speakers and performers for you this year. We'll be announcing our key note speaker and entertainment in the coming weeks — so watch this space!

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



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