

January 2021

From Executive Director Tom Ikeda

Dear Friends,

25 years ago this month, Densho started out in a dusty former classroom of the Japanese Language School in Seattle. The physical beginnings were humble, but our vision soared as we sketched out with chalk and blackboard the idea of creating a trusted source of stories about the WWII Japanese American experience. In 1996, we knew information was going digital, and with it came the possibility of reaching millions around the world with authentic stories of Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during WWII. We excitedly talked about inspiring and educating new audiences through collaborations with authors, filmmakers, journalists, and teachers.

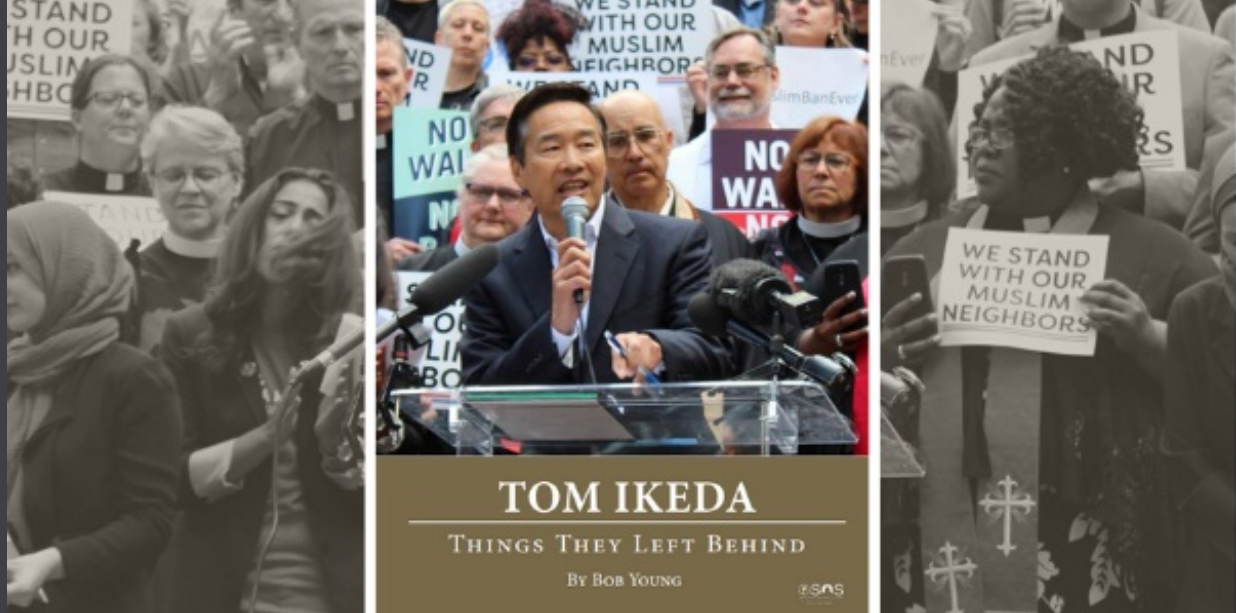
Now, 25 years later, I look back at this journey with some satisfaction knowing that millions have visited our website and that creative projects, like [podcasts](#) and [books](#), are created each year from Densho materials. However, what I am most thankful for, especially during this tumultuous time, are the friendships and relationships that have blossomed because of Densho. There are thousands of you who preserve stories, photos, and documents; educate the next generation with these primary sources; create books, films, curriculum, and podcasts; and most importantly, learn from all these materials. We are honored to work with all of you.

I believe the lessons learned from the Japanese American incarceration and the redress movement are needed more now than ever. There is a tremendous need for understanding the root causes of the divisions in our country—and the process of healing. Your support over the years has put us in a position to rise up and meet this moment. Thank you so much for being on this journey with us.

I hope you'll join us in the coming year as we remember our roots and rise to the future. Please mark your calendars for our virtual 25th anniversary celebration on October 23rd, and, if you can't wait 'til then, [take a look back at 25 years of Densho and learn more about where we're headed.](#)

In appreciation,

Tom



Tom Ikeda: Things They Left Behind

We're so honored that our executive director Tom Ikeda was profiled by Legacy Washington in their exclusive series, "Extraordinary People, Compelling Stories." Legacy Washington documents extraordinary stories in Washington history. This collaborative venture, spearheaded by the Secretary of State, relies on original sources at the Washington State Library, the Washington State Archives and heritage organizations across the state. [Check out the full profile here](#) and watch the [Lunch and Learn interview with Tom on YouTube](#).

[Read the Profile](#)



Campu Episode 5: Latrines

Campu episode 5 is available anywhere you listen to podcasts. In this episode, we talk about everything you never wanted to know about latrines in WWII Japanese American concentration camps. Our research may have gone down the toilet, but we promise this story isn't all about poop. We'll look at how incarcerated people adapted to extremely adverse conditions and the unique challenges women incarcerated people faced, including sexual violence and harassment.

- >> [See episode transcripts and learn more](#)
- >> [Find resources for teaching with Campu](#)

Campu was featured in the Los Angeles Review of Books' Podcast Review! Check out their list of [5 Podcasts to Listen to in January](#).

[Listen to Campu](#)



UNTOLD STORIES OF NIKKEI NEW YORK

Untold Stories of Nikkei New York

Join us this [Thursday for a book launch and conversation](#) featuring little known stories from Nikkei New York. From beatniks and boxers to entrepreneurs, activists, and even a "shark lady," scholar and native New Yorker Greg Robinson will highlight profiles from his new book, "The Unsung Great: Stories of Extraordinary Japanese Americans." Robinson will be joined by artists Tomie Arai and Sheila Hamanaka for a conversation about how art, politics, and activism have shaped New York's Nikkei community before, during, and after WWII.

[Register for Webinar](#)



Blog Spotlight: Nisei Notables Who Would Have Turned 100 in 2021

1921 likely marked the peak year of Nisei births in the continental US. So with the arrival of 2021, there are a whole host of Nisei artists, activists, performers, civil servants, and more whose 100th birthdays are well worth commemorating. We're kicking off the new year with a look

back at some of these Nisei notables.

[Read more](#)

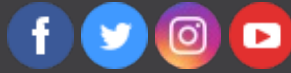


Oral History Spotlight: Densho's First Narrators

Edith Watanabe and her husband Harvey were Densho's very first narrators! Edith grew up in Burlington, Washington and was attending business college when WWII broke out. In a clip from that first Densho interview, she remembers attending classes with her sister the day after Pearl Harbor and being refused bus service on her way home.

[Watch the Clip](#)

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