

SEATTLE, WA 98108
JULY 29, 1981

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE ON REDRESS
318 6th AVE S #108
SEATTLE, WA 98104

DEAR COMMITTEE MEMBER:

ON DECEMBER 7, 1941, I WAS TWENTY YEARS OF AGE, ATTENDING THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL OF MUSIC IN NEW YORK CITY. I LIVED AT THE INTERNATIONAL HOUSE ON 125th & RIVERSIDE. AT THE OUTBREAK OF THE WAR, I WAS VERY UNEASY AND VERY FRIGHTENED. WITH THE ORDER OF EVACUATION FOR MY FAMILY IN SEATTLE, I COULD NO LONGER GO TO SCHOOL BECAUSE OF FINANCIAL REASONS. I QUIT SCHOOL AND LEFT THE INTERNATIONAL HOUSE AND WORKED IN CONNECTICUT IN A HOME AS A MEANS OF SUPPORTING MYSELF. I SOON LEFT TO JOIN MY FAMILY IN CAMP AS THEY WERE VERY WORRIED ABOUT ME AND WERE CONCERNED FOR MY WELL BEING. CAMP WAS A SHOCKING SIGHT. MUDDY, WET, CRAMPED QUARTERS WITH NO PRIVACY AS A FAMILY. AS I LOOK BACK AFTER FORTY YEARS, IT WAS A REAL INJUSTICE TO AMERICAN CITIZENS AND TRULY A DEPRIVATION OF OUR CIVIL RIGHTS. CONDITIONS BEING AS SUCH, AND BEING INMATURE, THERE WAS NOT AN UTTER OF PROTEST EXCEPT FOR THE FEW DARING ONES. WE TOLERATED A LOT HUMILIATION, POOR LIVING STANDARDS WITHOUT COMPLAINING. I GUESS WE WERE IGNORANT THAT WE DID HAVE THE RIGHT TO FREE SPEECH AND DID NOT MAKE OURSELVES HEARD.

MY FATHER HAD TWO GROCERY STORES AND IT A COMPLETE LOSS FOR HIM. HE DID NOT GET A PENNY FOR HIS FIXTURES OR HIS INVENTORIES. HE RECEIVED SOMETHING LIKE \$50. FOR HIS 1940 CHEVROLET. WE LOST OUR FURNISHINGS AS NO ONE WOULD PAY US FOR ANYTHING. THE MENTAL AGONY OF BEING JAPANESE AND BEING LOOKED UPON SUSPICIOUSLY REALLY GAVE ME A SEVERE COMPLEX IN WHICH THERE WAS A DEEP WITHDRAWAL IN PERSONALITY. MY DEAR FRIEND IN NEW YORK WHO ALSO LIVED AT THE INTERNATIONAL, GOT A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN AND SINCE THEN SHE HAS BEEN IN AND OUT OF HOSPITALS AND HAS NEVER BEEN HER OWN SELF. AFTER BOTH PARENTS DIED, IT WAS A SHOCK TO HER, AND SHE IS BETTER NOW WHERE SHE LIVES IN A GROUP HOME AND IS WORKING AT A SHLTERED WORK SHOP.

IN 1944, I LEFT CAMP TO BE MARRIED TO MY HUSBAND. WE WERE MARRIED IN CHICAGO, IN BETWEEN FURLOGHS, AND WENT TO MINNEAPOLIS WHERE HE WAS TO REPORT TO THE MILITARY INTELLIGENCE SCHOOL. WE FOUND A ONE ROOM UNIT WHERE WE COOKED, SLEPT AND ATE. SOON AFTER, MY FATHER CAME OUT AND STAYED WITH ME UNTIL HE FOUND A JOB AND HOUSING FOR HIS FAMILY. HE SETTLED IN MINNEAPOLIS ABOUT SIX YEARS. I LIVED IN MINNEAPOLIS UNTIL MY HUSBAND DISCHARGED FROM THE SERVICE.

POST EVACUATION IN SEATTLE WAS A DIFFICULT ADJUSTMENT. MY HUSBAND COULD NOT FIND A JOB SO HE WORKED AS A GARDENER FOR A YEAR OR TWO. WE LIVED IN THE SEATTLE HOUSING PROJECT IN THE RAINIER VALLEY DISTRICT. WE FELT THE SNEERS AND JEERS, AND WE WERE TRYING TO BE AS INCONSPICUOUS AS POSSIBLE. WE TRIED TO HIDE FROM HERITAGE, CONSEQUENTLY OUR OFF SPRINGS WERE DENIED THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR HERITAGE. WE HAVE ALWAYS LIVED AS SECOND CLASS CITIZENS WITH AN INFERIOR COMPLEX.

MY HUSBAND DID NOT LIKE BEING TREATED AS A SECOND CLASS CITIZEN SO HE WAS ALWAYS CHALLENGING THE SYSTEM IN THE BUSINESS H WAS IN. HE HAS BEEN DECEASED FOR 14 YEARS.

THE PROUD ISSEIS WERE NOT SO PROUD BEING HELD IN CAMP AS PRISONERS. IT WAS REAL HUMILIATION TO BE MARCHED OFF TO THE ASSEMBLY CENTERS AND THEN TO THE CAMPS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DESERT, BEING IMPRISONED FOR A CRIME THEY DID NOT COMMIT. SEEING A SENTRY WITH A GUN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BARBED WIRES PARADING AND DOING HIS DUTY WAS NOT A PLEASANT SIGHT FROM THE INSIDE.

EVACUATION CERTINLY DESTROYED EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR MANY OF US. IT DISRUPTED OUR LIFE AT CRUCIAL POINTS.WE HAVE LIVEDWITH COMPLEXES, INSECURITY IN THIS LAND OF FREEDOM BECAUSE OF ECONOMIC EXPLOITATIONS,RACISM,AND MASS HYSTERIA CREATED BY THE PRESS. I HOPE FOR THE SAKE OF MY GRANCHILDREN AND THEIR GRANDCHILDREN, THERE WILL NEVER BE ANOTHER MASS EVACUATION. "IN GOD WE TRUST."

HIDE SHIMOMURA (NEE HIDEKO TSUBOI)

SEATTLE, WA 98108

Hide Shimomura
PUYALLUP ASSEMBLY CENTER
MINIDOKA WRC