

## Achieving social justice main topic of installation banquet

By Louis Watanabe and Arlene Oki

Martha Choe, Director of the State of Washington's Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development, addressed a crowd of 400 at the Seattle JACL's 78<sup>th</sup> annual banquet last month. Contemplating the theme "2000: Achieving Social Justice," Choe called on Asian Americans to recognize their "shared and collective history as Americans."

Choe expressed concerns in the post-Initiative 200 world, about plummeting college enrollments and contracting opportunities for communities of color. She urged the community to "find our voice" through leadership as public officials, journalists, artists, and in other professions.

Other speakers echoed these sentiments:

"We all know that we cannot undo the injustices of the past, but it is critical that we understand that our history of racism and exclusion is recent history," said Governor Gary Locke. He pointed out that slavery existed during his grandfather's lifetime and that it was also only two generations ago that Congress, acting on anti-Chinese sentiment, passed the Chinese Exclusion Act.

Gov. Locke praised the civil rights and redress movements and asked the crowd to remember how far they have come. Yet, the governor said he was puzzled that Asian Americans should have one of the lowest rates of voter registration. "Asian Americans should use the power we have as citizens," he said.

King County Executive Ron Sims told the crowd that the only way to bring about change was to speak loudly and be a noisy,

squeaky wheel.

Seattle Mayor Paul Schell praised State Representative Kip Tokuda for sponsoring the Civil Liberties Public Education bill and congratulated the Chapter for its long history of advocacy on behalf of Japanese Americans and other groups.

Japanese Consul General Yoshio Nomoto praised the region's diversity and the JACL as a supporter of Japan-U.S. relations.

Four outstanding community advocates received awards:

Friends of JACL: Leae "Mom" Wilson, retired Seattle school-teacher; and Nate Miles, Public Affairs Manager for Eli Lilly and Company.

Youth Leadership: Ryan Chin, recent UW grad and Arthur Andersen CPA.

JACL Community award: Lori Matsukawa, KING/KONG TV anchor.

*( See the chapter newsletter at our website for a more complete version of this article and the complete text of Martha Choe's keynote address.)*

## District and National oratorical competition approaches

It's time for the Year 2000 JACL Min Yasui Oratorical Competition.

The purpose of this event is to encourage and strengthen verbal communication skills among the young members of the JACL. There are two competitions. The District competition will take place on Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> at the District Meeting. First place winners will receive a travel stipend and one night's hotel accommodations in order to represent the District at the National Competition in Monterey, California. The finalists from the District competition will go on to compete at the National Convention, on Friday, June 30<sup>th</sup>. The prizes for the winners of the National Competition are as follows: first place winner will receive two round trip tickets to Japan and a plaque from the National JACL. Second place winner will receive two round trip tickets anywhere in the United States. All contestants will receive honorable mention.

Speeches should respond to the following question:

How would the Japanese American Community differ today if Japanese Americans were not interned during World War II?

Questions? Contact Mari Hirabayashi (myh21@hotmail.com) or Elaine Akagi (reikoa@aol.com).

### Notices

#### JACL Scholarships

It's time for the JACL Scholarship applications! Interested students should visit the JACL Web site to download the scholarship application. Scholarship recipients must be JACL members. Applications are due April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2000. For more information, please contact Mari Hirabayashi [myh21@hotmail.com](mailto:myh21@hotmail.com).

#### Ayame Kai Rummage Sale

The Annual Ayame Kai Rummage Sale to benefit Seattle Keiro Nursing Home WILL BE ONE MONTH EARLY THIS YEAR.

Saturday, April 15th, 9:30AM-3:00PM.

Donation items may be dropped off at the church on April 12, 13 & 14, 9:00AM-9:00PM (No Tuesday drop off). Questions should be directed to Nina Chinn, 206-722-2451.

#### Lost Coat

Rose Nohara, past president of the Lake Washington Chapter JACL, lost her coat at the Seattle Chapter's Installation Banquet January 29. It appears that someone took her coat by mistake, as the only coat left was one identical to Rose's. The full length, black wool coat is new, has a Talbot's label and is a size 6 petite. Whoever has the coat should contact Rose at [hiromirose@worldnet.att.net](mailto:hiromirose@worldnet.att.net) or call her at 425-455-8379.

**President's Message**

**Remembering February 19, 1942**

by Sharon Sobie Seymour

On Friday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, the 2000 Day Of Remembrance Committee organized an assembly for over 400 Highline School District students, for the Day Of Remembrance (DOR). Along with the program, we provided internment curriculum, Living Voices performances and personal testimonies from Ben Kodama, Miyo Uchiyama and Mako Nakagawa. The teachers in attendance were excited and greatly appreciative of the resources provided and overall presentation. Judging by the questions posed to our panelists, the students seemed very interested in their stories as well as the entire internment experience. This project is a good example of why we need the passage of Washington State Civil Liberties Public Education Bill.

This legislation could help ensure the inclusion of education on the internment and help illuminate the importance of protecting



Sharon Sobie Seymour

**Spotlight on Ayako Hurd**

by Sharon Sobie Seymour

I hope this gives you some insight into the background of one of our treasured board members.

Ayako, born June 19, 1909, grew up on a farm in Fife, Washington. She graduated from Fife High School and Knapp business school, and in 1933 married an Issei, Rokuro Okubo, a University of Washington graduate. Ayako joined the Puyallup Chapter JACL in its first year in existence.

During the Depression they moved to Los Angeles where they lived until World War II broke out. She and her husband were incarcerated at Amache, Colorado. After the war they moved to Arlington, Illinois, where Ayako gave birth to three daughters and worked as an accountant and bookkeeper. She was involved in 4H club and her church, and found time to learn to play the organ. The couple moved back to Seattle in 1975.

A few years later Rokuro passed away. In 1979 Ayako married Lee Hurd who worked for the phone company.

Ayako joined the Seattle Chapter JACL in the early 1980s, helping Cherry Kinoshita keep track of incoming Redress monies. Since then she has been active on the board—as a member on the Installation Banquet Committee for over 10 years, as Corresponding Secretary and as a member on many other project committees. Currently, she sits on the new Electronic Venue Committee which overlooks the technological aspect of our chapter. When she is not busy with JACL activities she belongs to two organist groups, attends church and loves to garden. When asked about her plans for the future she replied, "For the rest of my life I want to take it easy and spend time with my husband and grandchildren."



Ayako Hurd

and standing up for all citizens' civil liberties. It is always amazing to me how many people I encounter who are either unaware of the internment or know very little about it. Most of them are shocked that such a thing could have happened in our country and are interested in learning more. It's apparent that for right now our community will have to take the lead in getting this information in the history books. So it is up to all of us to take the time and effort to contact our legislators and let them know what the JA community needs and expects from them.

Let's make our voice known and heard. This is imperative in order to enlighten our children, not only on the contributions of Japanese Americans to this country's history, but to help prevent this type of injustice from occurring in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Please call Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, Education Chairperson, at (360)786-7600 or for more information log on to the CLPEF website @ [www.clpef.net](http://www.clpef.net).

I would also like to thank and recognize the other 2000 DOR Committee members: Alice Ito (Densho), Amy Waschke (Seattle Repertory Theater & Living Voices), Charlene Mano (Wing Luke Asian Museum), Tanya Kim (WLAM), Byron Yong (WLAM), Hyeok Kim (Aide to Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos), and Anndi Kawamura (Aide to Rep. Kip Tokuda).

**The time to act is now!!**

**JACL—Still Relevant?**

by David Yamaguchi

On Valentine's weekend, I was visiting my cousins, when one of them asked me what the JACL was doing these days. He believes that the organization has served its purpose, that it is time to move on. By chance, the next day, messages began appearing in my e-mail that suggested otherwise.

The messages, from legislative assistant **Anndi Kawamura**, described a last-minute need for citizen testimony before the State Senate Education Committee in support of the Civil Liberties Public Education Bill. Readers will recall that the bill supports funding the development of teaching materials related to JA internment, and to those of other minority groups whose civil rights have been violated. It is co-sponsored by House Reps. Wensman, Tokuda, Santos, Voloria, and others. The appeals went out to many people and organizations.

At our monthly board meeting that Wednesday, **Arlene Oki** added that board members **Bill Tashima** and **Jeffrey Hattori** had sent hundreds of letters in support of the bill to state legislators. Arlene also quietly asked me if I could join those making statements the next day. While her request was flattering, I considered declining, then decided not to commit either way.

After the meeting, board member **Matthew Nakata**, a legislative assistant who had to drive back to Olympia that night, added

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that the Senate committee needed only a minute of testimony from each citizen, pointing out that it really helps legislators to see that real people care about a bill. They help prove that a bill isn't a stunt, perhaps one cooked up by JA legislators.

I thought about Arlene's request on the way home, and decided to sleep on it. The next morning, I looked at myself in the mirror, and decided to call Arlene to arrange a ride with her and **Elaine Akagi**. In Olympia, waiting by the car while Arlene went to feed the meter, I heard a "Hi Dave!" I looked up to see new chapter members, **Tom and Janet Kometani**, en route to the Senate Building. Later, in the committee room, **Aaron Owada**, of the Olympia JACL, joined us.

When the time came for citizen input, five of us speaking in turn informed the Senators about the likely educational benefits of the bill: Elaine spoke as a teacher; Arlene as an activist; Aaron as an attorney and school board member; Tom as a former internee and frequent classroom guest-speaker; and myself as a scientist who has

lived or worked in seven states. It turned out to be helpful that I was there. One of the Senators questioned the duration of the internment and I was able to enlighten him because I had been studying the the wartime correspondence between my grandfather and father.

Other JACLers and "friends of JACL" were present in the room—Representatives **Tokuda** and **Sharon Santos**, who eloquently introduced the bill to the committee; **Antonio Cube**, who helped us sign in as testifiers, and legislative assistants **Hyeok Kim** and **Matt**.

We at Seattle JACL don't always get everything right. But in this case, we were the only JAs outside of Olympia able to make it to Olympia on such short notice. We were able to testify because of (a) the regional e-mail communication network that we set up through Seattle JACL during 1999; and (b) the personal connections that have developed among us. We are comfortable calling each other late and in the early morning. Is JACL still relevant? You decide.

*(Edited article. For a more complete version, see the chapter newsletter at our website.)*

**Aki Kurose Academy name change challenged**

by Bob Shimabukuro

Joseph "Bill" Baillargeon, a former chief executive of Seattle Trust and Savings Bank, is leading a campaign to reexamine the naming of Aki Kurose Academy (formerly Sharples/South Shore). Baillargeon feels that the name change was disrespectful to the Caspar Sharples, despite the fact that

Sharples School went out of existence 20 years ago. Baillargeon also charged that the Seattle School Board failed to follow established procedures.

The name change campaign, initiated by retired schoolteacher **Leahe "Mom" Wilson** and supported by the Kurose family, gar-



Leahe "Mom" Wilson

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JACLers testifying on behalf of the Civil Liberties Public Education Bill to the State Senate Education Committee, and friends. Pictured (L-R) are Janet and Tom Kometani, Elaine Akagi, Arlene Oki, Anndi Kawamura, and Antonio Cube (Commission on Asian-Pacific American Affairs).

**New Members & Renewals**

Members	Boosters
Lisaye Ishikawa	Mitsuko Morishita
Gene Kanamori	Kaz & Kiku
Alan Yabui & Carolyn Statham	Tatsumi
Sylvia Nogaki	
John & Rose Tenma	

**Membership Categories**

Individual	\$50
Couple	\$85
1000 Club/Century	\$70-\$140
Spouse	\$40
Lifetime	\$1,000-\$2,000
Student/Youth (up to 25 years of age)	\$20
Boosters (Seattle JACL only)	
Regular	\$20
Seniors	\$15

Membership payments and questions should be directed to Jill Beppu: <membership@jaclseattle.com>

**Donations**

**Aki Kurose Scholarship**

Dr. Roland Kumasaka (in memory of Hank & Shiz Hashimoto)  
Eli Lilly & Co.  
Go Kurose  
Marie Kurose-Woo  
Ruthann Kurose  
Alan Yabui & Carolyn Statham

**Directory**

Toru Sakahara  
Masao Sutow

**General Fund**

Takashi Hori  
Keniji Onishi

**Thank You!!!**

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nered broad-based, diverse support from over 1,000 individuals and groups, and just about every sector of the community. The name change, approved last November 3rd, was the first school in the school district named after a Japanese American and for a school teacher.

Those wishing information should contact Jeff Hattori at 206-726-6504. Those who want to help preserve the name change should contact the Committee for the Aki Kurose Academy, 3820 Rainier Ave. S., #C, Seattle, WA 98118. The Committee is asking that letters of support to be sent to: Barbara Schaad-Lamphere, President, Seattle School Board, 815 4th Ave. North, Seattle, WA 98109.

**Seattle Chapter JAACL Newsletter**

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Board members should submit materials to the editor (shimaito@foxinternet.net, fax 206-722-2044, 6621 S. Bangor St., Seattle, WA 98178) by the Friday after the monthly board meeting.

Calendar items emphasize chapter or community events not likely to be covered by community newspapers or by other newsletters.

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