



THE RICE PAPER

A newsletter of the Twin Cities Chapter
of the Japanese American Citizens League

e-mail: info@tcjacl.org

website: www.tcjacl.org | [@TwinCitiesJACL](https://twitter.com/TwinCitiesJACL)

April 2025

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write message in box)

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

準備をしましょう。

It's time to prepare.

What a start to 2025. We're only four months in, yet it feels like we're already years into the second Trump administration. Since his inauguration on Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we have witnessed what can only be described as the aggressive, deliberate, and targeted dismantling of our democracy and the civil liberties we hold dear.

Copying countless totalitarian regimes, the Trump administration is hunting, imprisoning, and deporting the most vulnerable members of our society: foreign nationals and immigrants. And the president's rhetoric has already made it clear that he doesn't intend to stop there. As the famous 1946 piece by German pastor Martin Niemöller warns, although they may first come after others, eventually they will come after us.

So what can we do? We start by not being silent. In our own ways, we each have a responsibility to our fellow Americans to speak out against injustice and hold onto our collective rights. I, too, had an opportunity to speak up recently when I was interviewed by MPR's Tom Crann for a segment of [All Things Considered](#), where we discussed the implications of Day of Remembrance when we once again see the Alien Enemies Act of 1798 being invoked to persecute Americans of specific backgrounds.

National JACL has taken the bold additional step of joining other civil rights organizations in a lawsuit against Elon Musk and his so-called "Department of Government Efficiency" (DOGE), which has been recklessly slashing the federal services millions of Americans depend on with no oversight and in blatant disregard of the constitutionally mandated separation of powers.

If you are in any way impacted by the current administration, please get in touch with us, and we will do our best to connect you with helpful resources.

If you would like to contribute to the important work that JACL and our many local and national partners are doing, please get in touch with us and tell us about your interests and capacity.

And if you have your own ideas of what else we could be doing, please get in touch with us, and let's see what we can do together.

必ず乗り換えます。

We shall overcome.

In solidarity,

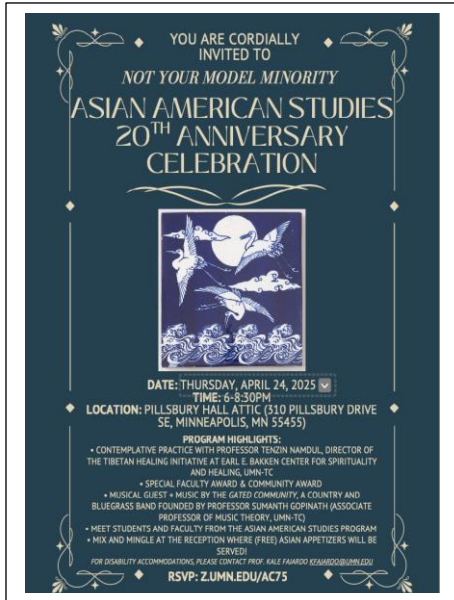


Vinicius Taguchi
Chapter President

UPCOMING EVENTS – Save these Dates

Even after a very busy schedule of events from February through the middle of April, the Twin Cities Chapter of JACL continues to plan additional events for you to experience this spring and early summer.

- **Thursday, April 24, 2025 – 20th Anniversary Celebration for Asian American Studies at the University of Minnesota**



On behalf of the Asian American Studies Program, U of M Associate Professor Yuichiro Onishi cordially invites you to this celebratory event, “Not Your Model Minority: Asian American Studies 20th Anniversary Celebration!.”

The celebration will be from 6-8:30 pm at the Pillsbury Hall Attic, 320 Pillsbury Drive SE on the East Bank. Please RSVP to [ZUMN.EDU/AC75](https://umn.edu/ac75).

- **Wednesday, April 30, 2025 – Asian Minnesotan Day at the Capitol**

CAAL (Coalition of Asian American Leaders) invites you to this event – a Kick Off to APPI (Asian American and Pacific Islander) Heritage Month. Register by going to the CAAL website. In addition, the APPI website provides a history of its organization as well as many resources for you to learn about its mission.

One way Minnesota will be celebrating May’s AAPI Heritage Month is this event in Edina.

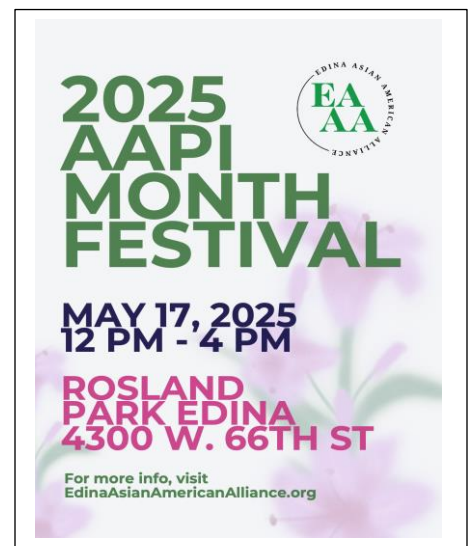
- **Saturday, May 17, 2025 – Edina Asian American (EAAA)’s 3rd Annual Asian American Pacific Islander Month Festival**

The TC JACL will be participating in the Festival at Rosland Park, Edina, on Saturday, May 17, 2025, from 12 to 4 pm. (the same location as the annual TC JACL picnic).

There will be a Japanese-themed game table with prizes for the children. We will also distribute information about our chapter to students and adults. Please let us know if you would like to help at our table for any length of time, or feel free to just stop by, say hello and mingle with the many other organizations that will be represented. There will be a food truck and lots of fun activities and entertainment.

Contact Cheryl Hirata-Dulas at chiratadulas@tcjacl.org to volunteer or with any questions.

Submitted by Cheryl Hirata-Dulas



- **Saturday, May 3, 2025 – Cherry Tree Celebration**



Another spring time celebration to enjoy with your family! FOR FREE! It's the Cherry Tree Celebration at Como Park by the Cherry Blossom Trees, from 9-11:30 am. There will be taiko and a Lion Dance as well as dancing by Sansei Yonsei Kai. JASM (Japan American Society of Minnesota) will make samurai newspaper hats and a student group will make origami frogs and set up frog races. There will also be crafts such as making uchiwa fans and sumi-e inspired watercolors, among others.

A special guest, Nagasaki Mayor from 2007 to 2023, Tomihisa Taue, will be in attendance, arriving around 10 am. He will be a guest of honor at an all-American potluck picnic at Phalen Park at 12 noon, hosted by Sansei Yonsei Kai and the St. Paul Nagasaki Sister City Committee.

President Vini is asking if anyone would like to table the event. It could involve an activity (such as picking up beans with chopsticks) or handing out literature. You will have to provide your own table and chair. Let him know ASAP if you are interested.

- **Thursday, May 8, 2025 – Scholarship Banquet**

Twin Cities JACL Scholarship News

2025 High School Graduate Scholarship Award – The 2025 High School Graduate Scholarships will be awarded on May 8. More information regarding these scholarships will be included in the next issue of *The Rice Paper*.

2025 Undergraduate / Graduate Scholarship Applications Available in September

The Twin Cities JACL is pleased to announce the availability of undergraduate/graduate level scholarships to be awarded later this year.

Scholarship applications will be available on September 1, 2025 for students currently enrolled in a post-secondary educational program and students who are currently enrolled in a graduate level program.

Scholarships are available to current JACL – Twin Cities Chapter members only. Membership must be active as of September 1, 2025.

Applications will be available at <https://www.tcjacl.org/scholarships/apply/> Only one scholarship may be received during a degree program. Applications are due November 1, 2025. For more information, please contact scholarship@tcjacl.org

Past Scholarship Recipients – what are they up to today?

Erik Ohno Dagoberg, JACL member and recipient of the Tom and Reiko Ohno Memorial High School Graduate Scholarship and the Tom and Reiko Ohno Memorial Undergraduate Scholarship, played a lead role as MIS linguist, Tamio Takahashi in the world premiere cast of *Secret Warriors* by R.A. Shiomi and directed by Lily Tung Crystal.

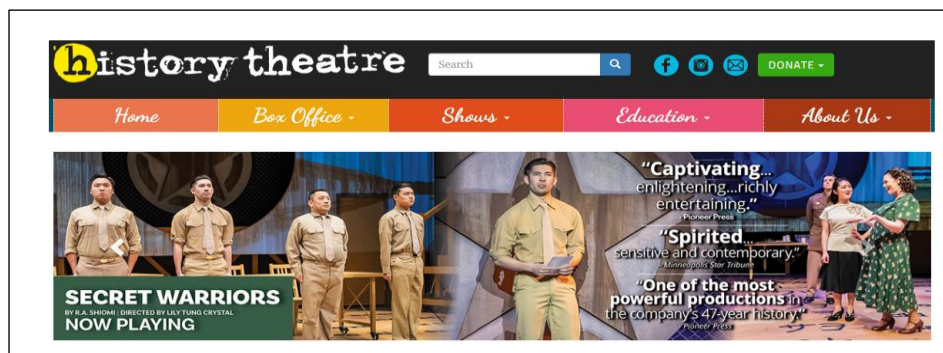


Photo from <https://www.historytheater.com> (Erik is the actor in the middle)

We'd love to hear what you've been up to since receiving your scholarship! Share your achievements, milestones, or any updates you'd like to feature in an upcoming issue of The Rice Paper. Please send your updates to scholarship@tcjacl.org. Your story could inspire future scholarship recipients!

Information about the history of the Twin Cities JACL Scholarship program can be found at the following link:
<https://www.tcjacl.org/scholarships/history/>

Donations may be sent to Twin Cities JACL Scholarship
c/o Fred Tsuchiya, 5311 Scenic Heights Drive, Minnetonka,
MN, 55345.

If you are interested in learning more about available scholarships,
please contact scholarship@tcjacl.org

Submitted by Pam Dagoberg, Scholarship Chair

- **Thursday, May 15 – Mia Lecture**

Join the Minneapolis Institute of Art in welcoming the incredible art and story of Japan's Kondō family of ceramicists.

Lecture 6–7pm

Hear from Joe Earle, the editor of the catalogue for the show.

Panel discussion 7–7:30pm

With Kondō Takahiro, Joan Mirviss, Joe Earle, Matthew Welch, and Andreas Marks.

The free exhibition *Transcendent Clay: The Kondō Family's Path of Porcelain Innovations* will be open from March 1 – September 7, 2025.

Based in Kyoto, three generations of artists have put their mark on the family tradition. This traveling exhibition brings together a wide range of their works from the 1930s to today, from freehand-painted vases to the dramatic shapes and textures created by Kondō Takahiro, the family's modern innovator, who describes his objects as "water born from fire." Most of the works are from the collection of Carol and Jeffrey Horvitz, long-time supporters of Mia.

- **Friday, May 16 – Talk at Sibley Historic Site**

Karen Tanaka Lucas will be speaking at the Dakota County Historical Society's *Mendota After Hours* monthly series about historical people and events, on Friday, May 16. The title of Karen's talk is *Camp Savage and the Birth of US Military Language: One Soldier's Story*. The program begins at 6 pm and lasts for an hour. It will be held in the DuPuis House at the top of the hill. Reservations are required; cost is \$20 per person. Space is limited.

Karen's father, Walter Tanaka, was in the first class that trained at Camp Savage in 1942. Karen will share her father's experiences before, during, and after the war. She will also share photos of Camp Savage from her family's private collection.

*Editor's Note – I have just begun reading *When a Tiger Dies: The Life of Walter Tanaka (1918-2012)*. "The events and conversations in this book represent Walter Tanaka's words, memories, and point of view, edited for flow and clarity." Many of the Tanaka family members were involved in putting this book together, including its editor, Chelsey Tanaka, Walter's granddaughter. If interested in the book, contact Karen at katalucas49@gmail.com*



Japanese American Citizens League
Twin Cities Chapter

Who Do You Know?
Help us identify young people between high school and pre-school for our scholarship program!

Send the following:

Name, address, expected graduation year

to: scholarship@tcjacl.org

Names will be added to our database and applications sent to individuals to apply their senior year!

- **Saturday, May 17 – Commemoration of Minnesota Japanese American Veterans**



**In Observance of Memorial Day,
the Twin Cities JACL cordially invites
Family and Friends to Commemorate
the Service and Sacrifice of
Minnesota Japanese American Veterans
by Decorating Gravesites at Fort Snelling National Cemetery**



**Saturday, May 17, 2025
Pick up flowers between 10 and 11 a.m.**

**Enter Main Gate off 34th Ave. Follow signs to
main flagpole/Mallon Rd (see map)
Fort Snelling National Cemetery
7601 34th Avenue South, Minneapolis, MN 55450**

Will be held rain or shine.

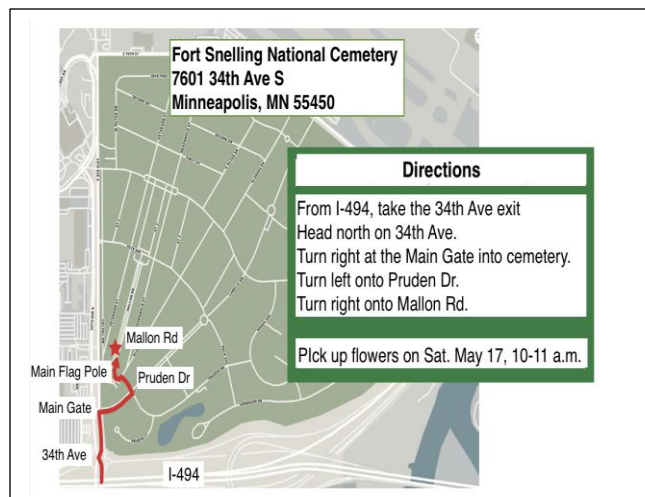
Note: There will not be a formal program.

**Families of Japanese American veterans who are buried at other cemeteries
(e.g., Lakewood Cemetery) are also invited to pick up a bouquet.**

**RSVP by Wed., May 14 to:
Cheryl Hirata-Dulas at chiratadulas@tcjacl.org**

**For family/friends unable to attend, volunteers will decorate veterans'
gravesites at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.
To volunteer, contact Lani Bennett at lanib@tcjacl.org**

Map to Flower Pick-Up Area



Honoring and Remembering Japanese American Veterans

With the upcoming Memorial Day holiday, we would like to honor and acknowledge the Japanese American men and women who served and who are currently serving our country in the Armed Forces. We owe each veteran and active-duty service personnel our deepest and heartfelt gratitude.

The Honor Roll below lists 134 deceased Japanese American veterans with connections to Minnesota. We will forever remember their service, sacrifices, and contributions.

HONOR ROLL

Toshio Abe	Tom Kosobayashi	Minoru Onomiya	Masao Tanamachi
Sadao Akaki	Henry Kumagai	Dr. Takeshi (Tak) Osada	George Tani
Yuki Akaki	Hisashi (Butch) Kumagai	John Oshima	Benjamin Masaru Tashiro
Saburo (Bill) Doi	Tsutomu (Steve) Kumagai	Frank Owata	Charles Tatsuda
Edward John Evans, Sr.	Tadaji Kuranishi	Nobukazu Oyanagi	Robert Teragawa
William Ezaki	Jim Kurata	Tom Oye	Minoru (Min) Tsuchimochi
John Takeo Fukuda	Jerry Kusano	Dean Saiki	Takuzo Tsuchiya
Frank Fukumoto	Kiyoshi Jim Kusunoki	George Saiki	Charles Ujifusa
William Furuyama	Warren Kyono	Isamu Saito	Harry Umeda
Sam Hara	Morris Lundin	James Sakaguchi	Tom Urabe
Tsuyoshi Hashimoto	Brian Matsumoto	Seiji Sakai	Tom Utsunomiya
Richard Hidani	Kaye Matsumoto	Yoshio Sako	George Watanabe
Theodore Hirabayashi	Masao Matsumoto	Bujiro Sanmonji	Hideo Watanabe
Patrick Hirasawa	Yoshio Matsumoto	Ann Sato	David Yahanda
Osamu (Sam) Honda	Herb Matsuura	Shigeo Sato	Ken Yamaguchi
Yoshinori Honda	Diane Moriguchi	Robert Sawamura	Yukio Yamaguchi
George Hoshino	Tom Moriguchi	Yutaka Semba	Ryoji Yamakuchi
Tom Ichimura	Frank Mukai	Paul Shimada	Albert Yamamoto
Isaac Iijima	James Murakami	Sam Shimada	George Yamane
Keiji Iko	Larry Murakami	Dr. Paul Shimizu	Robert Rivera Yamashita
Muneo Robert (Bob) Imon	Nobuo Murakami	Isamu (Sam) Sugimoto	Edward Yamazaki
Ted Inouye	Tom Nagamitsu	James Sugimura	Frank Fusao Yanari
Kiyoshi Ishibashi	Sam Nakanishi	Tsuguo Sumada	Mitsuso (Mits) Yoneji
Phil Sunao Ishio	Tadashi Nakauchi	George M. Suzuki	Tokio Yonekawa
Jim Katayama	Harold Nakayama	Susumu Taguchi	George Yoshida
Mitz Kawaguchi	Harry Nishimura	John Akira Takekawa	Minoru Yoshida
Junie Kawamura	Robert Nishizuka	Thomas Tsuyoshi Takekawa	Edward Yoshikawa
Jodie Anne Kimura	Mikiri (Mickey) Ogata	Yutaka Takekawa	Howard Yoshimura
Nobuo Kimura	Robert Ohama	Nobuo Tanabe	George Yoshino
Jim Kwanichi Kiriara	Fred Ohno	Donald Tanaka	Henry Yoshitaka Yoshino
Mikio Kiriara	Henry Ohno	Frank Tanaka	Hikaru Yoshino
David Kitagawa	Joe Ohno	Ken Tanaka	John Yutaka Yoshino
Shiro Kosobayashi	Tom Ohno	Seigi Tanaka	Paul Yoshino
	Edward Okada	Walter Tanaka	

**OUR DEBT TO THE HEROIC MEN AND VALIANT WOMEN IN THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY
CAN NEVER BE REPAID. THEY HAVE EARNED OUR UNDYING GRATITUDE.**

AMERICA WILL NEVER FORGET THEIR SACRIFICES.

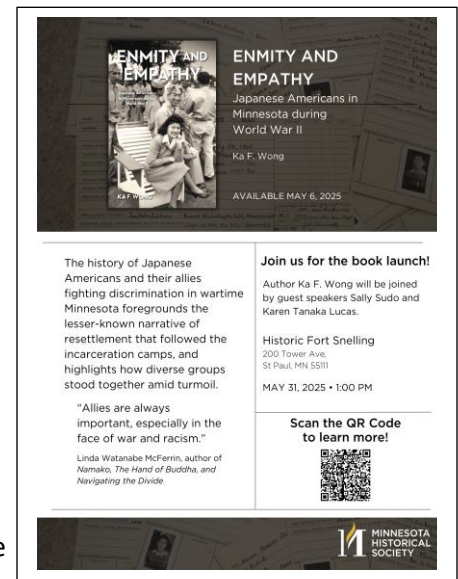
PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN – April 17, 1945

- Saturday, May 31, 2025 – Book Event at Fort Snelling**

This event is for the official book release by Professor Ka Wong entitled *Enmity and Empathy: Japanese Americans in Minnesota during World War II*. The program is from 1:00 -2:30 pm at the Historic Fort Snelling Visitor Center. A panel discussion with Sally Sudo and Karen Tanaka Lucas will also take place. Copies of the book will be available for purchase and signing.

- Monday, June 9, 2025 – AFRO 3866 – The Civil Rights and Black Power Movement**

Professor Yuichiro Onishi is teaching a summer course about civil rights and black power. It is 3 credits and will meet twice a week on Mondays and Wednesdays from 4:45 to 7:45 pm, beginning on June 9 and ending on August 1. Even though it is a regular undergraduate class, it is being offered to those who are 62+ years and IT IS FREE if you would just want to audit the class (no credits). The class will be held on campus. Please contact Professor Onishi at ohni0001@umn.edu or 612-655-9969 for more information.



- Sunday, June 15, 2025 – Daifuku Mochi Making Class with Sally Sudo**

Participants may want to bring an apron to the class which will be held at Carolyn Nayematsu's residence in St. Paul. Register with Gloria Kumagai at gloriak377@aol.com. Gloria will respond to registrations after April 28 with information, including Carolyn's address and directions. Class size is limited to 8 participants. A second session may be added based on demand.

Other Upcoming Events

- May - Meet & Eat – Date and place to be determined.**

Do you want to meet up with friends for a delicious dinner, catch up with friends, and meet new ones? TC JACL is putting together its first Meet & Eat event of the year. This is how it works: An Asian themed restaurant is chosen and participants meet at the restaurant. Everyone is responsible for their own dinner, and you enjoy a fun night out! For more information, contact Amy Dickerson at adickerson323@gmail.com or on her call at 612-554-5023 OR Gloria Kumagai at gloriak377@aol.com or on her cell at 612-201-7447.

- May or June – Book Club – Date to be determined.**

Rental House by Weike Wang is the next book the group will be discussing. The group meets via Zoom so everyone can participate even though you are not in the Twin Cities. Contact Book Club Chair, Ammanda Neitz, at amneitz@gmail.com for more information.

- Sunday, July 27, 2025 – JACL Summer Picnic**

This year JASM is partnering with the TC JACL to host the Summer Picnic at Rosland Park in Edina. Details will be available in the July issue of *The Rice Paper*.

- Sunday, August 17, 2025 – Obon Festival**

TC JACL's major fundraiser each year is the Obon Festival in Como Park. We sell festival items and items that are donated by our members and their friends. In the past few years, the member donations have been a major part of the funds raised. If you have any "treasures" (such as books, kimonos, dishes, cooking items, Japanese dolls, wall art, etc.) to donate to the TC JACL, please contact Amy Dickerson at adickerson323@gmail.com or 612-554-5023. More information will be available in the next newsletter. And THANK YOU to all of you who have donated in the past!

- October 2025 – Chrysanthemum Banquet**

The specific day (probably a Sunday) for the banquet will be determined when confirmation is received from our speaker. Location will be at the Minnesota Humanities Center in St. Paul, the same venue as last year. Stay tuned for details in the next newsletter.

Recent Events

- **Prior to March 29, 2025**

Karen Tanaka Lucas was the only TC JACL member included in reviewing and providing input to the many drafts of the play. She had to promise not to share the content. Rick used her father, Walter Tanaka, as inspiration for Koji Kimura, and Roy Matsumoto as inspiration for Tamio Takahashi. Rick communicated with Matsumoto's daughters, Karen and Fumi Matsumoto, later in the play development. Members of the chapter also attended the readings as audience members.

- **Saturday, March 29, 2025 – Pre-Opening Events for the premier of *Secret Warriors***
Panel Discussion

Prior to the opening performance of *Secret Warriors*, the History Theatre hosted an afternoon of events that started off with a panel discussion featuring TC JACL members Matt Abe and playwright Rick Shiomi, along with Richard D. Thompson, History Theater's Artistic Director, who served as moderator.

Titled, "Japanese American Experience: From Migration to Internment, Service, and Beyond," the program engaged attendees with important background and context regarding the origins of the Military Intelligence Service Language School, its relocation from the Presidio of San Francisco to Minnesota due to the exclusion of Japanese Americans from the west coast, and recruitment of Nisei linguists, their training and critically important contributions to the Allied Forces throughout the Pacific Theater during World War II.

Matt Abe talked about his father, Toshio Abe, and shared remarkable stories about his experiences as a linguist in the inaugural class at the Military Intelligence Service Language School when it relocated from San Francisco to Camp Savage. The elder Abe grew up in the San Diego, CA area and was drafted into the U.S. Army about eight months before the attack on Pearl Harbor. Following completion of his language training, he served in the China-Burma-India Theater by translating captured documents and obtaining information by wiretapping field lines and eavesdropping on enemy conversations, as well as interrogating POWs. Upon discharge, he returned to Minnesota, and with his wife, Mary, he raised Matt and his two siblings in Bloomington.



Pictured (L to R): Matt Abe, Rick Shiomi, and Richard Thompson participating in a panel discussion



Matt Abe (3rd from left) with wife, Lynn, son, Joe (2nd from left) with friends at the panel discussion

Rick Shiomi discussed his ten-year long journey of developing the script for the play. He also shared his family's experiences as Japanese Canadians during WWII, which paralleled the experience of Japanese Americans on the west coast. Interestingly, Shiomi's grandfather was involved in theater in Canada. During WWII, sadly, his costume collection was lost. Richard Thompson served as moderator. Richard grew up in the Twin Cities area, and he recalled his mother taking him to Yamato Imports, a Japanese goods store at the Hyatt Hotel in Minneapolis that was run by relatives of the Abe family. The program ended with a huge round of applause from the audience in appreciation for the afternoon of extraordinary educational insights.

Submitted by and Photo Credit: Cheryl Hirata-Dulas

Activities in the History Theatre Lobby

Several partner organizations set up informational tables in the History Theatre lobby. Representatives from the Minnesota Military Museum, the Japan American Society of Minnesota, JC JACL and the Minnesota historical Society staffed tables and answered questions from opening night attendees.



Kimmy Tanaka, (left) Director of Inclusion and Community at the Minnesota Historical society and chair of the TC JACL Education Committee, and Erica Skarohlid, Marketing Director of the History Theatre, are standing at the display table of resource materials, such as hard-bound interviews of Toshio Abe and Edwin (Bud) Nakasone, the *Minnesota History* magazine issue on the MIS, featuring Toshio Abe, and the TC JACL's Curriculum Guide on the MIS.



Photo on the right, taken from the 2nd level of the History Theatre, shows the panels produced specifically for *Secret Warriors*.



TaikoArts Midwest performed a powerful, energetic, and immersive taiko set leaving the audience moved and inspired – a perfect prelude to the weighty and intense themes of the play.



One of the TC JACL Board members, Pam Ohno Dagoberg (middle of the pictures, in blue) played in a group, Kogen Taiko, for many years.



Some of the historical photographs of Camp Savage and Fort Snelling



Submitted by Kimmy Tanaka, Education Chair, and Cheryl Hirata-Dulas
Photo credit: Cheryl Hirata-Dulas

TC JACL Involvement in *Secret Warriors* and Displays in the History Theatre Lobby

The TC JACL Education Committee assisted with many aspects of *Secret Warriors*. In addition to collaborating with playwright Shiomi by providing background information on MIS linguists' experiences, reviewing drafts of the play, and participating as audience members in on-stage readings, members of the Education Committee, in partnership with the Minnesota Historical society, created a display for the lobby and the theater vestibule detailing the history of Camp Savage and Fort Snelling with background information and a collection of historical photographs.

The exhibit panels were on display in the lobby and vestibule during the opening performance and continued to be on display for the run of the production. Two sets of MIS informational banners were printed so that members of the TC JACL speaker's Bureau will be able to easily transport and set them up when giving their presentations on the Japanese American experience during WWII.

Reviews of *Secret Warriors*

Secret Warriors, performed at the History Theatre in St. Paul from March 29 through April 19, 2025, received highly positive reviews. Inspired by the stories of the Japanese Americans who served as translators and interrogators for the U.S. Armed Forces, *Secret Warriors* featured two men, Koji Kimura and Tamio Takahashi, who took extraordinary risks to save their fellow soldiers in the Pacific Theater during World War II. As the eyes and ears of General Douglas MacArthur, they saved countless Allied lives and shortened the war by two years. The play depicted their compelling personal journeys and heartfelt love stories set against the backdrop of the war and the incarceration of their families.

Erik Ohno Dagoberg, son of Tim and TC JACL Scholarship Chair, Pam Ohno Dagoberg, especially shines in the role of main character, Tamio Takahashi. *The Stages of MN* wrote about his performance: "Dagoberg is electric, from the moment he comes on stage. It's a role that requires a big personality and he delivers that but without being over the top. He's subtly charismatic and that draws the audience into him even more."

We are grateful to playwright Rick Shiomi for bringing the contributions of our MIS "Secret Warrior" linguists to the stage and expanding the public's consciousness of the WWII Japanese American experience. We also thank Lily Tung Crystal for her exceptional artistic direction and interpretation.

Reviews:

<https://thestagesofmn.com/2025/03/30/secret-warriors-examines-the-sacrifices-and-heroism-of-japanese-americans-in-wwii-at-history-theatre/>

<https://www.startribune.com/review-these-heroic-secret-warriors-helped-america-win-a-war-even-as-they-were-treated-as-enemies/601310518>

<https://www.twincities.com/2025/03/30/review-history-theatres-secret-warriors-a-gripping-take-on-a-seldom-told-story/#>

<https://playoffthepage.com/2025/04/review-and-reflections-on-secret-warrior-at-the-history-theatre/>

<https://www.mprnews.org/story/2025/04/03/secret-warriors-sheds-light-on-japanese-american-involvement-in-wwii>

<https://www.talkinbroadway.com/page/regional/minn/minn1358.html>

Submitted by and Photo Credit: Kimmy Tanaka, Education Chair and Cheryl Hirata-Dulas

Editor's Note:

I asked members of another group I am in to react to their experience watching the play. One member, a Caucasian, "really enjoyed the play...the acting was very good and the set was interesting. I really learned a lot, as I only had minimal knowledge of the MIS. It was a very emotional experience."

Two other two members of this group are Japanese American. One commented, "I was pleasantly surprised to see so many Caucasian seniors in the audience. My father was one of the MIS soldiers at Fort Snelling...due to prohibitions about their missions, I never heard any stories of my father's experiences. It wasn't until I moved to Minnesota that I heard about MIS...I remember feeling overwhelmed my first time, walking through Fort Snelling, my first time there, and after I found out that my father was there. I also felt sad that I never knew anything about my father's history and his war experiences...There are a lot of us who...want to learn about our parents and forefathers' contributions to our country. It was good for my husband to learn about MIS also. His dad was in the...Japanese American Regiment 442" serving as a medic."

- **March 29 – MDC (Midwest District Council) Meeting**

On Saturday, March 29, TC JACL proudly hosted delegates from JACL chapters across the Midwest in our very own Twin cities. The day began with the Midwest Council business meeting, where Midwest District Governor, Eric Langowski (Chicago) shared the latest news from the National JACL, followed by news from each JACL chapter. Chapters in attendance were Chicago, Cincinnati, Dayton, Detroit, Hoosier, Houston, Omaha, Twin Cities and Wisconsin.

Following the business meeting, MDC delegates were invited to participate in an intergenerational, interracial, interethnic Community Summit organized as part of TC JACL's ongoing Legacy Fund Grant Project [Community Kai](#). This summit was the very first in-person gathering of the first Community Kai cohort, which meets monthly over Zoom and has been exploring relationship-based community organizing. This program goes beyond the "what we do" and "why we do it" to explore the "how" we build community together by being in relationship with each other.



Delegates from across the Midwest participating in the MDC business meeting



Community Summit participants

To start off the Community Summit, participants shared identity collages that they had created ahead of the event to represent their identities, interests, and stories. These ranged from physical artworks to virtual photo galleries, to even a recorded remix of taiko performances. The participants, ranging in age from 20 to 70+ years, quickly got to know each other on a deeper and more personal level after sharing things that don't normally come up in conversation.



Eli Nishimura (left) and Ben Nishimura (right) of Chicago shared their identity collage



Asia O'Neil (Twin Cities) participating in the Community Simulation game

Next came the main activity of the summit, which was a community simulation game. The game takes the form of a tabletop mapmaking role-playing game, modified from [The Quiet Year](#) by Buried without Ceremony. Participants divided into small groups, and assumed roles and identities within their communities. They then took turns adding to the map as their community and organized together to respond to new challenges. The game provided players with the ability to navigate conflicting goals and priorities while considering real-world community challenges such as gentrification and hostile government policies.

After the Community Summit, everyone took the Green Line (light rail) east to St. Paul, where they attended the opening night premiere of the new theater production [Secret Warriors](#), written by Rick Shiomi and staged at the Minnesota History Theatre. The powerful opening night performance, preceded by a panel discussion, community fair, food, and presentation by TaikoArts Midwest, was a true showcase of the talents, stories, and perseverance of our community.

This incredible visit to the Twin Cities would not have been possible without the tireless efforts of our dedicated TC JACL community members. A special thanks is due to Amy Dickerson and Carolyn Nayematsu, who made all of the logistics possible. And additional gratitude is due to Zara Espinoza, Kathy Moua, Misa Westby, Asia O'Neil, Ben Hartmann, Kendal Takeshita, and Eli Nishimura for their support in planning the Community Summit.

- **Sunday, February 16 – Day of Remembrance**

Premiere of Kerwin Berk's film, *Kintsukuroi* – A Great Success!

This year's Day of Remembrance event took place at the Minnesota History Center on February 16. Observed on February 19, the Day of Remembrance commemorates the unjust imprisonment of over 125,000 Americans of Japanese ancestry as a result of President Franklin Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. In partnership with the Minnesota Historical Society, the TC JACL hosted director Kerwin Berk for a screening of his film, *Kintsukuroi*. The film follows members of the Ito family from their pre-war life in San Francisco's Japantown to the concentration camps of the American West to the battlefields of Europe as they struggle to pick up the pieces of their shattered lives.

The event was attended by about 150 people, including Macalester College and University of Minnesota students, and TC JACL members. A panel discussion followed the screening with Director Berk who traveled to the Twin Cities for the event. Joining virtually were Jon Funabiki, a retired journalism professor from San Francisco State University, and David Kiyoshi Tom. David is an actor and was cast in the movie. A post screening reception was catered by JK's Table who prepared a special-order platter of SPAM musubi. Part of the proceeds from ticket sales were donated to TC JACL.



Kerwin Berk (left) with Scott Sakaguchi (middle) and Laurie Miller (right) at the film screening. Jon Funabiki, one of the panelists and an extra in the film, is Sakaguchi's cousin. In addition, Sakaguchi's father, James, trained at the MISLS at Fort Snelling and served in the MIS.



After the screening of the movie, some TC JACL members gathered with Director Berk (front row in black). Others in the front row are (from the left) Kimmy Tanaka, Sally Sudo, Judy Murakami, George Murakami, and Patti Kameya. Back row (from the left) are Pam Ohno Dagoberg, Gloria Kumagai, Ben Hartmann, Amy Dickerson, Carolyn Nayematsu, Peggy Doi, and Karen Tanaka Lucas.

- **March 22, 2025 – Stories of Japanese American Girlhood**



Anna Tanaka Murakami
and Sally Sudo

March proved to be a very full month starting with the *Stories of Japanese American Girlhood* event at the Minnesota History Center. The event was held as part of a women's history month series in concert with the Smithsonian's traveling exhibit, *Girlhood (It's Complicated)*. Opening the program was a presentation by Dr. Ka Wong in anticipation of his forthcoming book, *Enmity and Empathy: Race, Resettlement, and Remembrance of Japanese Americans in Minnesota during World War II*, to be released in May.

Then panelists, Sally Sudo and Anna Tanaka Murakami, were interviewed. Sally shared stories of her Childhood in Seattle, experiences at the Minidoka concentration camp in Idaho, and eventually settling in in Minneapolis.

Anna, who recently turned 96 years old, recounted her childhood in Japan as a mixed-race child of a Japanese father and German immigrant mother. She was raised by her biological aunt and uncle and spent 19 years just outside of Hiroshima, where she experienced first-hand (and survived) the atomic bombing during WWII.

Sally's oral history is available at Densho Digital Repository and Anna's with the Minnesota Historical Society Collections. The presentations were given to a full audience of nearly two hundred people.

- **Summer 2024 – Youth Writing Project**

During the summer of 2024, the Educational Committee, under the leadership of Professor Yuichiro Onishi of the University of Minnesota, introduced a pilot summer and research writing project for high school students. The goal was to give students an opportunity to explore Japanese American history by promoting historical research. Four high school students have been enrolled: Ben Berger, Kasumi Lucas, Osumare Hernandez Abreu, and Romare Onishi.

Ben, Kasumi, and Romare intended to embark on doing historical research with Yuichiro leading the group. Ultimately, they did not have sufficient time to begin the work of historical research and writing. But they did read and discuss Walter Tanaka's *When a Tiger Dies* and read selected chapters from Roger Daniels' *Prisoners without Trial*. They also identified research topics with Kimmy Tanaka who helped the group in choosing the topics and directing them to primary sources. Romare selected the MISLS mascot. Kasumi selected the MISLS swing band called "Eager Beavers." Ben was interested in unearthing LGBTQ stories of Japanese American incarceration.



From the left, Ben, Kasumi, Osumare and Romare in front of the Prince exhibit

Because she reached out after the opportunity to join the youth study circle was posted on social media, Osumare was not able to participate in the "historical research and writing" group. She joined a separate study/reading group entirely led by Romare and Kasumi. Ben also joined this group as well. The group read George Takei's graphic novel, *They Called Us Enemy*, and watched the documentary *The Registry* (Bill Kubota and Steve Ozone). They met several times on their own via zoom. All four students also experienced hands-on archival research at the Minnesota Historical Society with support of and guidance from Kimmy on June 27, 2024.

The group enhanced their research through involvement in JACL activities. Osumare, Ben, and Romare participated in the summer picnic and Romare continued his involvement by serving as the JACL Midwest District Youth Representative.

Examples of Student Writing – Reactions to *When a Tiger Dies*

Romare Onishi

When a Tiger Dies: The Life of Walter Tanaka chronicles the life of a Japanese American man living through the disastrous effects of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066 while serving in active duty for the United States during World War II. Walter Tanaka represents the enigmatic identity of Japanese Americans serving in active combat during this tumultuous and unjust era. The story, edited by his granddaughter Chelsey Tanaka, patches together interviews and first-hand accounts from Tanaka himself. These recollections paint a portrait of his family history: his father's early struggles in the United States, his experiences growing up in a white dominant setting, and his enlistment in the U.S. military and subsequent tours. The subtext of this narrative and its cultural significance make for a compelling argument for its inclusion in more mainstream circles of American historical literature. It raises an essential question: how does one simultaneously reckon with the devastating effects of government inflicted atrocities and one's own loyalty and unwavering patriotism?

The story begins in Walter's early years, and, thus, his father, Tsunejiro, is in the spotlight for much of the first two chapters. The Tanaka family lived in poverty for much of Walter's childhood due to Tsunejiro's lack of wealth and capital. This lack of resources was mainly the result of exclusionary policies that prevented Japanese nationals from obtaining U.S. citizenship, and thus land. Despite these hardships, it is clear from Walter's narrative that he looks back upon his father fondly, stating that he was "good" (43) and a "nice guy" (42); these descriptions of his father reside in close proximity to seemingly traumatic memories of his father waking him up with a gun in his face with "fire in his eyes," threatening to "kill" him (42) for misbehaving in his youth. It is clear that these memories do not define the legacy of Tsunejiro Tanaka; instead, Walter's narrative demonstrates a unique embrace of the dissonance of his past, an embrace that would serve as the basis for his relationship with his country. Memories do not define the legacy of Tsunejiro Tanaka; instead, Walter's narrative demonstrates a unique embrace of the dissonance of his past, an embrace that would serve as the basis for his relationship with his country.

Although Walter Tanaka escaped the experience of incarceration, his time in the U.S military was not without its moments of prejudice. Tanaka was recruited and educated through the Military Intelligence Service Language School (MISLS) to be a Japanese language interpreter on the frontlines of the war. Despite the importance of his duties, Walter would face suspicion and bigotry from his own ranks; the officials in Australia did not “trust” Walter and his fellow interpreters for fear of misinterpretation and sabotage (134). Even the Japanese soldiers whose interrogations he would translate for would call him a “spy,” alleging he was working for the enemy (135). These attacks cast Tanaka in a racial gray area; however, Tanaka did not allow this ambiguity to impugn his loyalty to the United States of America.

In his own words, Walter was “indoctrinated” into American culture from an early age (40). In his older years, this indoctrination holds firm; he urges his audience and his descendants to support the United States as a nation that “supports democracy” (206). Tanaka’s life story argues that holding the tension between a utopian American society and its realities is a truly democratic, and, ultimately, American paradigm

Kasumi Lucas

When A Tiger Dies is an eye-opening recount of Walter Tanaka’s life, an important figure in American military intelligence during World War II. This autobiography highlights the struggles of Japanese Americans at the time with unflinching honesty, such as the discrimination faced by many Japanese Americans and the unlawful detainment of those of Japanese descent. I learned about how Tanaka grew up amidst growing Japanese prejudice in California to his adulthood in the American military, where he continued to be looked upon by his peers with suspicion and disdain despite his unwavering loyalty.

This memoir was written posthumously from interviews with Tanaka and documents he wrote throughout his life. Because of the collection of materials used to put this together, some of the text feels repetitive and a little cumbersome to read.

Tanaka’s heartfelt stories of his childhood and young adult life, although unjust, were easy to empathize with, and I could truly understand what it was like at that time for Japanese Americans. It also put a new perspective on the Japanese American experience during WWII with Tanaka’s retellings of what he experienced being in the military at the time and how it was different for him compared to Americans without Japanese heritage.

One part of this memoir that I found particularly interesting was when Tanaka details how he was discriminated against as a child for being Japanese American and was not allowed into the public swimming pool with his classmates, instead being made to sit on the school bus and wait for his peers to finish swimming. As a young kid, experiencing this and feeling left out would have felt devastating, especially because he couldn’t do anything about it - he was born with his race. He may have also become more self-conscious because of this event and thought more about how others perceived him as different from those around him. This was astonishing to me because Tanaka’s childhood experience was so vastly different from my own and it made me sympathize with him and be grateful for my own childhood.

Ben Berger

When a Tiger Dies: The Life of Walter Tanaka, is a compelling, insightful account of Walter Tanaka’s life that provides an untold perspective of a Japanese American in the U.S. Army during World War II. The style of this autobiography immerses the reader in Walter’s life. The book is a compilation of interviews, letters, and personal stories that Walter created throughout his life. The format of an autobiography gives a unique view of one’s life: it is told as one sees it and wants the audience to see it. This gives an autobiography the ability to not only tell an account of a life, but also project the type of narrative that explains one’s decisions, passions, fears, and more. In this book, Walter Tanaka shows how Japanese Americans were both indoctrinated to be American, and that they never could be.

The book starts with the story of Tsunejiro and Ai Tanaka, Walter’s parents, whom both immigrated to the United States from Japan. From the very beginning of this book, we see the narrative of indoctrination, where Asian labor was both excluded and direly needed. Both Chinese and Japanese immigrants, such as Tsunejiro, worked on major continental railroad construction; however, this labor was rewarded by discrimination and hate. Around 1906, he was cited for riding a bike on a sidewalk when he was not (Tanaka 18). This is one of the first examples given of how indoctrination was turned against Japanese Americans.

On June 2, 1941, Walter was drafted into the army. He and the other Nisei soldiers from his town were honored by their community before they left for Camp Roberts (Tanaka 98). Walter speculates that the high proportion of Nisei in the role of medics was due to irrational fears, or the perception that Nisei were loyal to the Emperor of Japan (Tanaka 99). Despite this, Walter notes that his time at Camp Roberts was not filled with direct discrimination from fellow soldiers, or from officers. Even in the army, the most nationalistic arm of the U.S., white Americans feared that anyone of Japanese dissent would be loyal to the Emperor of Japan. The

intense nationalism and patriotic spirit of the army is unmatched, even today. Serving for the United States in any branch of the military animates a special indoctrination of pride, or patriotism, as Walter remarked about his childhood: “You’re indoctrinated into studying about America and about American History” (Tanaka 40). This nationalism is juxtaposed with the fear of Japanese people seen through the lens of war and the army and the Japanese American incarceration.

Today, the story of American indoctrination rings the same as it did 80 years ago: One must be both full American and yet at the same time kept from being such. Today countless groups of people are told that they must be more American, and yet treated as the other, placed outside of what America is. The life of Walter Tanaka as a son, a soldier, a father, a storyteller, and a human shows how when left to its own vices, white supremacy will keep people of color in a no-win situation, no matter how they interact with the world.

Osumare A. Hernandez Abreu – Osumare chose to report on George Takei’s graphic novel, *They Called Us Enemy*. The title of her essay is **The Struggle for Justice: Japanese American Internment**.

George Takei’s graphic novel *They Called Us Enemy* narrates his family’s experience in an internment camp. Takei urges readers to reflect on the real meaning of being an American citizen and what it means to be human when confronted with challenges that threaten one’s identity, rights, and community. The black-and-white artwork effectively conveys feelings and sounds, such as the clattering of trains and the wails of children. This novel sheds light on the injustices endured and serves as a powerful reminder of the need to fight against discrimination. It mainly explores themes of discrimination, family, and irony.

The overview of the graphic novel is that the Takei family was made aware on December 7, 1941 that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor, which led to the U.S. declaring war on Japan. Because of Executive Order 9066, which was enacted in response to the anti-Japanese emotions sparked by this incident, internment camps were created.

“Japs” was a common slur used for a person of Japanese descent. “They are Japanese and nothing else... regardless of how many generations may have been born in America. Undoubtedly many of them *intend* to be loyal... but when the final test comes, who can say what that ‘blood will test’. We cannot run the risk of another Pearl Harbor episode” (Takei 21). This was a speech that was given by the mayor of Los Angeles, Fletcher Borrow. testifying in Congress that Japanese Americans were “Non Assimilable.” The testimony only added more to the racial prejudice towards Japanese Americans and their immigrant parents.

The family was moved to Santa Anita Racetrack and then to Arkansas after being forced to leave their house in Los Angeles. George and Henry explore their new surroundings, despite the sometimes horrifying conditions in Camp Rohwer. A loyalty questionnaire containing discriminatory presumptions resulted from the fact that Japanese Americans may join the military if they demonstrate their devotion. Mama smuggled in her sewing machine to ensure she could continue caring for her family while they were in the camp, symbolizing her dedication to them. As the block manager, Daddy helped families acclimate and liaises between them and the camp administration. H.R. 4103, which allowed Japanese Americans to withdraw their citizenship, had been signed into law in 1944. After the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision, the camps started to close, which made the internees fearful. Wayne Collins, a California attorney, prevents the Takei family from being deported, and they move to Los Angeles. George pursues a career in acting, landing the role of Star Trek’s Sulu. He then utilizes his platform to advocate for Japanese American rights. He sees the United States atoning for incarceration over time, and he never stops speaking out against injustices and emphasizing the need to learn from the past to prevent it from happening again.

Throughout the book, Takei demonstrates many acts of discrimination against the manipulating many people to think that all the Japanese Americans living in the United States weren’t loyal to the country and its people. Loyalty toward family is one of the main themes in *They Called Us Enemy*. The Takei Family kept moving on and trying to improve their lives even when many barriers prevented them from succeeding, not just the family, but also the whole community of Japanese Americans who were forced into the internment camps. “There were fishermen and farmers, shopkeepers and professionals. We were so diverse. All so different. And yet, we were the *same*. We were all Japanese Americans and we were all in block 6 at Camp Rohwer. That was our common denominator. Daddy felt keenly that we needed to forge a community together” (Takei 76). The community they built only strengthened as time passed, and they faced more problems where they had to work together to find the solution.

There are certain sections where the author employs irony to allow the characters to effectively convey their thoughts and emotions, while also using the illustrations to express the feelings that they are feeling in the moment. “The irony was that the barbed-wire fences that incarcerated us also protected us.... If the fences were no longer there, we’d be in danger” (Takei 152). Takei’s message emphasizes that changes in laws do not necessarily lead to changes in people’s attitudes.

Thank you, students, for your willingness to participate in the program and for your insightful responses!

Spring Brings Showers of Presentations from the Speaker's Bureau

We are only four months into 2025 and the TC JACL Speaker's Bureau is already very busy. Peggy Doi has presented twice more on the docket. She spoke on February 18 to eighty parishioners and members of the Corpus Christy Catholic Church Social Justice Committee. On March 18 she spoke to thirty-nine residents and friends at Applewood Pointe of Roseville and is scheduled to speak to the residents of RosePointe of Roseville on April 30.

Sally Sudo and John Suzukida spoke to 140 Eastview High School students on February 20. On March 21, Rick Shiomi spoke to about thirty-five residents at Zvago, a senior living cooperative in St. Anthony Park.

Remember that Karen Tanaka Lucas speaks on May 16 and Karen and Sally Sudo are on a panel on May 31. See pages 4 and 7 for details.



In March, Sally Sudo spoke to about twenty 7th and 8th graders and educators at Sunny Hollow Montessori

The *Ireicho* is Touring the United States!

Ireicho, The Book of Names – a sacred book of names acting as a monument. It is the first comprehensive listing of over 125,000 of over 125,000 persons of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated in concentration camps during World War II. Its purpose is to address the erasure of the identities of the 125,000. Viewing the pages and stamping the names of loved ones is one way to honor them. The Japanese American National Museum (JANM) has published the *Ireicho* Tour Schedule for 2025-2026. The first stop is on April 26-27 at the Manzanar National Historic Site. Other stops include Amache and Denver, Jerome and Rohwer in May, San Francisco Bay Area in June, Minidoka and Heart Mountain in July. The other locations are Fort Lincoln (North Dakota) in September, Crystal City (Texas) and Poston in October, Gila River in October/November, and Chicago in November. The tour continues in 2026 with stops in Sacramento, Seattle, Honolulu, Topaz, and ends in Tule Lake on July 4-6.

More information can be found on the JANM Homepage. Click on *Ireicho* where there are all sorts of stories to discover. Finally, scroll to the bottom (in black) and click on What's On, JANM on the Go.

If you have been able to view the exhibit and/or did the stamping and want to make some comments about your experience, please email me at angelseyf@gmail.com by the end of June. Your descriptions will be published in the summer issue of *The Rice Paper*.

Excerpt from Japanese American National Museum (JANM)

In Memoriam – Harley Ogata



The obituary notice of long-time member, Harley Ogata, appeared in the Minneapolis Star Tribune and the St. Paul Pioneer Press in March.

Harley Ogata, 73, died on March 4, 2025 from cardiac arrest. He died quickly and without suffering, as he wanted. He is survived by wife Christina, his daughter and son-in-law Karly and Max, grandson Samuel, sisters Robin and Jody, and his large and loving village of friends and family. Commemorative event plans are in the works. Please send memorials to organizations that work for health and peace

My memory of Harley: Harley was very active with the Nikkei Project. He brought his mother to the lunches and was our bingo caller. He had the username Mochi Dog which I thought was so cool. When I was Membership Chair, Harley lapsed on his membership one year. I sent a reminder to Mochi Dog. He responded by renewing his membership and never lapsed again. Rest in peace, Mochi Dog.

Submitted by Gloria Kumagai