

MICHI DAY: SCRIPT

0:00:00- Main auditorium-One hour: Storytelling for children. Selected stars and writers tell children stories to children-with Lawson Inada, telling the story of who Michi Weglyn is.

break-

seat Guests

add 4 chairs stool mike

01:00:00-Main auditorium-One hour tribute to Michi Weglyn, Spirit of Redress, NCCR Fighting Spirit Award ceremony-, and announcement of workshops.

HOUSELIGHTS DOWN & OUT-

VOICE OVER- (O.S.L.)

Welcome Ladies and Gentlemen to the 18th National Coalition for Redress/Reparations' Day of Remembrance. Your masters of ceremonies, Ayako Hagihara and Frank Emi.

ON RISE- Podium to one side of the stage. The Hosts step up to the mikes.

AYAKO HAGIHARA

The Day of Remembrance was first conceived to commemorate the issuance of Executive Order 9066 on February 19, 1942. This historical date reminds us of the injustices that a group of people suffered at the hands of the United States government simply because of their Japanese ancestry.

Today is also a day to remember all those who have passed away -- the Issei who toiled the land and worked to the bone only to see their and their children's civil liberties violated. The Nisei who grew up in camp faced much discrimination in schools and the job market after the war.

The Day of Remembrance memorializes a day in history that significantly impacted the lives of hundreds of thousands of Japanese Americans. We also remember the struggle that the Japanese Americans waged to stand up and fight for justice as they demanded redress and reparations from their government for the heinous act of crime committed during World War II.

Today is a day of celebration--we remember the courage of the people who testified in community organizations and members to achieve one goal--to see that justice is served to a people whose rights were callously ignored.

FRANK EMI

The National Coalition for Redress/Reparations is one organization that is committed to this goal. Speaking for NCRR--NCRR Vice President Kathy Nishimoto-Masaoka

KATHY MASAOKA

3

2

01:10:00

MICHI TRIBUTE

FRANK EMI

Is there a Japanese American alive who has not read Michi Weglyn's book, YEARS OF INFAMY? Well, maybe....Is there a Japanese American alive who has not heard of Michi Weglyn? I doubt it. Is there a published scholar of Japanese America, the Evacuation and Internment, the campaign for redress, any campaign, who has not received invaluable information and pounds of documents, from Michi Weglyn full of new information on every page? Probably not. And then, more than likely, a phone call from New York. It's Walter Weglyn. Michi wants to talk to you, but she's very tired, near exhaustion, and he made her promise not to be on the phone any longer than ten minutes. And for the next hour and half Michi gushes information from the archives and library and issues marching orders. .

01:11:00

AYAKO HAGIHARA:

Even before before her book YEARS OF INFAMY, Michi was leading Japanese America into spheres of America few of us had ever been--the world inside show business. . She made her mark as a designer for the Perry Como Show in the days of live TV, and had her own fashion house in New York.

On the set of the Perry Como Show, one day, she approached the star Perry Como to tell him of her brief career as a midnight disk jockey at Seabrook Farms. The song most requested by the Nisei students at Seabrook was Perry Como's recording of PRISONER OF LOVE. She thought Perry Como would enjoy her story. "Perry," she said, "You know, I used to be disk jockey. And the song the students requested most, was PRISONER OF WAR!"

She says it was a Freudian slip.

01:11:54

FRANK EMI:

Who is Michi Weglyn the historian? Why do so many Japanese Americans cherish the book, YEARS OF INFAMY?

Who is Michi Weglyn the spirit of redress?---Former President of the Japanese American Citizens League, and former president of the Japanese American Historical Society Dr. Clifford Uyeda, of San Francisco, and Historian Dr. Arthur T. Hansen, Director of the Oral History Program at the University of California at Fullerton-

01:12:02

Lights up- on semi-circle of seated friends of Michi Weglyn. Dr. Clifford Uyeda, Art Hansen, Robin Kramer, Ruth Mizobe, William Hohri. Mike in center of semi-circle with a tall stool.

Behind the semi-circle of speakers is bleacher seating. Michi is seated here, with her friends, friends of the speakers, people who don't mind sitting on stage.

Clifford Uyeda

It was the summer of 1976 that Ernest Uno, brother of Edison Uno, and I drove from San Francisco to



Sacramento to meet Michi and Walter Weglyn. It was our first meeting. It was Edison Uno who had said to me to be on the lookout for the book which was about to be released to the American public, YEARS OF INFAMY: THE UNTOLD STORY OF AMERICA'S CONCENTRATION CAMPS.

Michi Nishiura Weglyn is a wonderful, remarkably accomplished woman. In her words I found my own feelings, as I grew up in the State of Washington. I had fled the West Coast of the United States in 1936 and had gone to Wisconsin in an effort to prove to myself that the West Coast of the United States was not American, that it was anti-America.

Michi had broken with the Nisei convention of passive submission to white racism, tyranny and oppression. She not only called the government liars, but she proved it. And most remarkable and refreshing was her anger. The anger that no Nisei dared put in a book, but every Nisei felt. She was emotional about the camps. That emotion was shared by all of us. I recall the statement Michi made to me many years ago, "When I wrote that book, I was hoping that Nisei would become angry." She had accomplished her purpose.

It was this emotional realization and her documentations of the American government's wrongdoings that was the primary reason behind the push for redress by the Japanese Americans and supported by millions of other Americans. Her book became a bible for the 20th Century Japanese Americans.

I had come to know many survivors of the Nazi Holocaust, and Michi's husband Walter was unforgettable. I can't ever remember seeing him not dressed immaculately in a suit and tie and handkerchief. He was a member of the underground war against the Nazi occupation. He was a survivor of the Holocaust. He had encouraged Michi to write her book. Michi recalls that he used to give her exact change for the bus ride to and from

the library, when she was doing her research. He was a man of charm, impeccable manners, with dignity and was always thoroughly devoted to Michi

It is a great honor to be able to participate in honoring Michi Nishiura Weglyn today, and in bringing back the image of her loving husband Walter.

Thank you.

01:15:02

Dr. Art Hansen

(THIS IS AN APPROXIMATION OF HANSEN'S REMARKS-TIMED TO READ: 2:45)

I am a professional historian. There are those who say Japanese American history cannot be written by a Japanese American, that only an unbiased and objective outsider can write Japanese American history. As a professional historian, I can honestly say there is no such body of elite professional historians who are not without bias. There is no objectivity without a weighing of all the facts, and all the acts and all the influences on Japanese American history. And Japanese American history cannot be written without Japanese American historians, amateur, professional, occasional, confessional.

I will be more specific in the workshop: Who Writes Japanese American History, in the next hour.

I believe, here, I am speaking to Japanese Americans who lived in and lived out the history, certain historians claim only they know and understand. I am not sure most of you read the books by those historians.

There are two periods of time and thought in the history of the Internment and Redress. The first period is the period of explaining Japanese America's response to the camps as "Shigatagenai". The notable Nisei literary works of this period are Mike Masaoka's JAPANESE AMERICAN CREED, and Bill Hosokawa's NISEI: THE QUIET AMERICANS. I am sure, most of you have read and know of The Japanese American Creed and NISEI; THE QUIET AMERICANS. These works characterize the Japanese Americans as a pathological victim people, earnest but ineffectual, eager, but helpless, racially despised, but grateful.

The definitive work of the second period is Michi Weglyn's YEARS OF INFAMY. This book with its intelligence and anger gave the lie to shigatagenai. The Japanese American was victimized but not a pathological victim, not helpless, not submissive, not passive. And in this second period led by Japanese Americans neither defined by nor preaching shigategenai Japanese Americans appeared to root out the facts of their history and appeared to people like me, to get their stories told. Gone were the stereotypes of shigatagenai Japanese Americans cowering in submissive helplessness, afraid to talk about the camps. If Michi Weglyn's YEARS OF INFAMY did not inspire all Japanese Americans to become historians, her book certainly marks, to the day, the period when Japanese America gave up helplessness and wrote for themselves. We are still in that day. It's a good day, Michi Nishiura Weglyn.

01:18:02

#### FRANK EMI

Ruth Mizobe Shikada is a Sansei who has taken Michi Weglyn's example to heart. She has been active in finding, teaching and acting on the issues of Japanese American history since her college days. She is a former Pacific Southwest District Governor of the Japanese American Citizen League. She has also recently become the mother of baby girl.

William Hohri was a teenager in Manzanar. The former Chicago resident led the National Council for Japanese American Redress class action suit for redress that influenced congress's decision to pass a redress bill that awarded \$20,000 to each former internee. The class action suit would have paid \$10,000 a cause for twenty causes, for a total of redress payment of \$20,000 per internee.

#### AYAKO HAGIHARA

First, the new mother, Ruth Mizobe Shikada:

01:20:12

#### RUTH MIZOBE

It is an honor to be here today to pay tribute to Michi Weglyn and to congratulate her as the 1998 recipient of



the Fighting Spirit award. Through her personal convictions and her written work, stories of the injustices suffered by the Japanese Americans will never be forgotten. These stories will be passed on from generation to generation in the continuing struggle to obtain redress for those whose civil rights were trampled upon and in the hopes that history will never repeat itself.

It was three years ago that as the Pacific Southwest District Governor of the Japanese American Citizens League that I had the privilege to represent more than 30 JACL chapters in offering an apology to the Fair Play Committee and the draft resisters of conscience for the JACL's wartime attempt to single out these men as disloyal to their country and for failing to support their right to object to the unjust actions of the United States government. The JACL apology was made in recognition of its wartime mistake and in an attempt to heal the division in the Japanese American community that still exists today. If the story for the Fair Play Committee and the draft resisters hadn't been told by Michi Weglyn and others in our community --our children would not know of the struggles and sacrifices of these men who stood up against their government demanding the rights guaranteed to them as American citizens.

Thank you Michi for your commitment to the truth-- your commitment to justice--so that we may never forget and recognize all those who have sacrificed.

William Hohri

Frank Emi:

In 1944, the ONLY organized resistance to the military draft, on constitutional grounds, took place at Heart Mountain concentration camp. Seven leaders were convicted and sentenced to four years in a Federal penitentiary. Eighty five young men who resisted were sentenced to three years. Subsequently, the convictions of the leaders were reversed on appeal in the Appellate Court after serving fifteen months. The eighty five young men, including all nisei camp draft resisters were given a Presidential pardon after serving their sentences, with restoration of all their civil and political rights, accompanied by words from the head of the Amnesty Board stating the Government fully understood why the men took the stand that they did. One of those young men was David Kawamoto.

There was a time, before the redress movement, when the resisters were not expected to participate in community life as former resisters.

Now, here we are.

To thank Michi for helping to restore what we stood for, to the community, Mrs. Toshiko Kawamoto.

#### Toshiko Kawamoto

Today on this very memorable occasion, we are here to honor our very dear friend, Michi Nishiura Weglyn. I am happy to say a few words for the friendship I have with Michi. She and her late husband Walter have been such gracious friends and have been so supportive and instrumental in bringing attention to the unique cause of the resisters.

As many of you know, my husband Dave was one of the 63 young men at Heart Mountain Relocation Center who had refused to be inducted into military service because of being denied their constitutional rights I am very proud of the stand that he took.

"In 1942 he was an NCAA wrestling champion, as a senior at San Jose State College, and was majoring in business administration with hopes of a career in



electronics. With just weeks away from earning his degree, the war came.

Dave attempted to volunteer into the military service after Pearl Harbor but was not accepted. He was classified as "4-C" an enemy alien.

A few months later, President Franklin Roosevelt, bowing to local political pressure and public hysteria signed Executive Order 9066 which began the forced internment of all Japanese Americans from the west coast. Dave and his family were evacuated first to the Pomona Assembly Center and then on to Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming.

When Michi learned that Dave had not graduated in 1942 because of Evacuation, she wrote to President Robert Caret at San Jose State University. After the faculty evaluation, I was notified that a posthumous Bachelor's degree would be awarded to Dave and I was asked to speak at the commencement exercises. Michi's letter must have been effective. I was overwhelmed. It was an honor to receive Dave's diploma made possible by the concerted and kind efforts of Michi.

At the commencement exercises, President Caret said, "We can never atone for the damage done to the loyal, principled men who maintained they deserved their democratic rights regardless of their ancestry."

Through the years, Michi and Walter's friendship encouraged the resisters to return to their communities and stand up for what they did to set right the wrong done to all Japanese Americans.

On behalf of my family, I want to express my most sincere appreciation to Michi for all she has done to benefit so many.

## FRANK EMI:

Michi is the one force in Japanese America that transcends all the otherwise, insoluble differences in the Japanese American community. Our differences may remain as they were, but on three things we all agree: (1) We won redress. All of us. (2) We owe Michi Weglyn. (3) Today is a day to celebrate the Spirit of redress and thank Michi and Walter Weglyn, for Michi's book, her courage, and her fight.

## AYAKO HAGIHARA:

Ladies and Gentleman, Representing the the Honorable Mr. Richard Riordin, Mayor of Los Angeles, the Mayor's assistant, Mr. Tom LaBonge

01:18:22

## The Mayor's Message:

"Los Angeles is proud of the Japanese Americans, the Nikkei of Los Angeles and all of America for winning redress. The Japanese Americans proved --though it's difficult sometimes--the constitution works. American democracy, even when it is imperfect, works, if and when the people are willing to make it work.

"The Executive Branch, the President himself, the Congress, the Supreme Court, all three branches of the government wronged Japanese America, failed Japanese America in 1942. Japanese Americans are to be congratulated and thanked for waging the long fight to right this wrong.

"I am delighted to be here to at last, thank you for demonstrating once again, that our political process works, and to meet the woman who had the courage to tell the untold story of America's concentration camps with solid information, and a knowing anger --the average reader would expect, but no Japanese American had ever revealed. Both non-Japanese and former Japanese American internees found a great release in Michi Weglyn's anger, and inspiration in her research.

"Michi Weglyn is the best advertisement for the Public Library I can think of. She used her library card to get the goods to make the case for redress.

"The Los Angeles of today is a better city, being home to a Japanese American community that takes pride in its history, its civil rights, and its people."

#### NCRR AWARDS CEREMONY-

##### AYAKO HAGIHARA:

(introduces President of NCRR or NCRR designee to present award)

##### NCRR

Each year

The National Coalition for Redress/Reparations honors individuals who have dedicated themselves to the struggle for justice and who exemplify the fighting spirit that enabled the Nisei Community to win redress and reparations. Past recipients of the Fighting Spirit Award are Rev. Paul Nakamura, ~~Amy Uno Ishii~~, Tom Shiroishi, Frank Emi, Bert Nakano, Lily Okamoto, Bernadette Nishimura, Jim Matsuoka, James Omura, Jim Saito and David Monkawa, Gerald Sato, Linda Consolo, Bruce Iwasaki, Yuri and Bill Kochiyama.

The winner of the 1997 Fighting Spirit Award -- Michi Nishiura Weglyn.

Michi Weglyn rises to receive award and flowers.

##### MICHI WEGLYN

(Paul: Add Michi script here)