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The real story. Japanese American History told by those who lived it.

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NEWS RELEASE
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Los Angeles City Council Recognizes Mike Tsuji and Jim Yamashita



Photo caption:
Councilwoman Jan Perry
recognizes Isami Mike Tsuji
and Junwo Jim Yamashita,
founding members of
Americans of Japanese
Ancestry World War II
Memorial Alliance.

On Friday, October 31, 2008
in the John Ferraro Council
Chambers at Los Angeles
City Hall, Councilwoman
Jan Perry presented two
proclamations on behalf of
the City of Los Angeles to
Isami “Mike” Tsuji and
Junwo “Jim” Yamashita,
founding members of the

Americans of Japanese Ancestry World War II Memorial Alliance.

“Memorial Alliance” began in 1997 under the direction of the late Drs. Harold Harada and Roy Machida. Their personal convictions led them to form an all volunteer group of

100th Infantry Battalion, 442nd Regimental Combat Team and MIS WWII veterans who believed it was a personal calling to honor their killed-in-action (KIA) comrades with a dedicated memorial monument.

Over the past decade, the Memorial Alliance has produced two highly notable contributions to the community: the World War II Memorial monument located adjacent to the Japanese American Cultural and Community Center in downtown Los Angeles and an educational resource CD titled the “Echoes of Silence” project.

Memorial Alliance had recruited Mike Tsuji, of H Company, 442nd RCT to design their KIA monument. Mike donated his time and effort to design and oversee the construction of this memorial. On February 19, 2000, the World War II memorial honoring their KIA was unveiled; it stands today as a constant reminder of sacrifice, courage and patriotism. With the addition of the World War II Memorial, the site is now known as National Japanese American War Memorial Court.

Memorial Alliance also sought to create innovative projects to educate the public. Jim Yamashita of I Company, 442nd RCT, volunteered to be the Educational Project Manager to develop the “Echoes of Silence” CD ROM and website (www.ajawarvets.org); even now, Jim continues to lead this effort. Over 1,000 CD ROMs have been distributed to educators, researchers and persons of interests across the nation. The “Echoes” CD contains numerous written accounts of World War II battles, personal recollections and memories of wartime experiences by Japanese American veterans. Jim, along with valuable volunteers such Mits Kojimoto, Seiki Oshiro, Katherine Bashiki, Grant Ichikawa, Lisa Teruo Blum, Roger Eaton, George Yamashita, Russell K. Shoho, and many others continue to collect information about these soldiers so that future generations will never forget.

Councilwoman Jan Perry and her office staff were instrumental in making this tribute a wonderful event for Mike and Jim. Special thanks to Lynne Ozawa and Andrew Tsuji for working with Councilwoman Perry’s office. Over 50 participants attended the ceremony. Councilwoman Perry offered her congratulatory comments and posed for photos with the two awardees.

“Mike and Jim – your concerted efforts in creating these lasting tributes for the World War II KIAs are hallmarks of your dedication to the community; you raise awareness, educate the public and remind us all of the courageous sacrifices made by our men and women in the armed services. Your leadership is proof that sacrifice for our countries freedom should never be forgotten. On behalf of the City of Los Angeles, Memorial Alliance, JA Living Legacy thank you and congratulations.”

Following the proclamation ceremony, lunch was hosted at Empress Pavilion in Chinatown by Japanese American Living Legacy.



Councilwoman Jan Perry with Isami Mike Tsuji and Junwo Jim Yamashita receiving proclamations for their outstanding contributions to the City of Los Angeles.

If you are interested in receiving a complimentary copy of Echoes of Silence, please email Jim Yamashita at jyamashita@jalivinglegacy.org. For more information on WWII Nisei KIA soldiers, please go to our website www.ajawarvets.org.

Japanese American Living Legacy is a California nonprofit 501.c.3 organization based out of California State University, Fullerton. All of the board of directors, staff and advisors are volunteers. For more information on Japanese American Living Legacy, please visit their website at www.jalivinglegacy.org or call them at (714) 278-4483.

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