



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

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NEWS RELEASE
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2011 Japanese American Living Legacy Award, John K. Iwamoto

In 2008, Ms. Sharon Tani sought to promote an annual community service award as a tribute and legacy to her father, the late Mamoru Tani (L Company 442nd RCT). She approached a few organizations and ultimately chose Japanese American Living Legacy as the host of the award. JA Living Legacy presents this award to community members who truly exhibit a tireless commitment to serving the Japanese American community by participating in work that promotes the community's legacy. This year, John K. Iwamoto from Kauai was nominated and selected as the 2011 Japanese American Living Legacy.

John K. Iwamoto was born on the island of Kauai. He is the seventh child of eleven. John attended Kauai High School where he graduated in 1946. John served in the Korean war and received many military awards including the Silver Star and Purple Heart. After returning home, John never forgot his comrades who made the ultimate sacrifice. It became John's mission to honor those lost lives. John was not one to simply sit on the sidelines; he wanted to get involved and make a difference in honoring those soldiers. In 1997, John spoke at the dedication ceremony in Los Angeles of the new Japanese American Korean War Memorial. During his speech he illustrated one particular soldier's sacrifice; his name was Noburo Nakamura. Nakamura saved Iwamoto's life by throwing his body on a live grenade; all Nakamura received for that action was a Purple Heart. In the audience was George Tabata (Korean War Veteran) who stood up and told John, "*why don't you do something about it?*" So upon John's return home, he began a letter writing campaign. John had tried to upgrade Nakamura's recognition to the Medal of Honor; ultimately, the Nakamura family received the Silver Star in Noboru's honor.

Fellow Kauai High School classmate, Russell Shoho, learned of John's dedication to the community and nominated him for the award. Supporting documentation was provided by Dr. Quentin Belles and Tom Tanaka. Some of the organizations John has volunteered with include, but are not limited to, the Okinawan Association, Korean War Veterans, Lihue Hongwanji, Hawaiian Plantation, Disabled American Veterans, Purple Heart, Japanese American Korean War Veterans, and Boy Scouts of America. John's ongoing commitment to the community defines a "Living Legacy."

Japanese American Living Legacy CEO, Susan Uyemura presented John Iwamoto with this award at the Korean War Reunion on Oahu on July 27, 2011 at the Pagoda Hotel. Along with this award, small monetary donations are made in the recipient's name to an organization or organizations where he volunteers his time.

Japanese American Living Legacy grants this award to outstanding individuals who demonstrate a deep commitment to the community through volunteering time and resources, providing leadership and educating the public of our community's rich history. This award is given annually. This year's organizations are Lihue Hongwanji and Hawaiian Plantation.

If you are interested in nominating a deserving individual please contact Natalia Yamashiro-Chogyoji at nyamashiro@jalivinglegacy.org. We thank the Tani family for their belief in our organization and allowing us the privilege of hosting this award.

Japanese American Living Legacy is a California Nonprofit 501c.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 (657) 278-4483.

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