

Community Leader to Share Experience as Japanese American Internee During World War II May 7 at UC San Diego

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Jan Jennings

A community leader and a former local teacher and partner/owner of a landscape architecture firm, who was banished from San Diego as a youth to an American internment camp in Arizona during World War II, will offer reflections on the Japanese American internment May 7 in the Price Center at the University of California, San Diego.

Elizabeth Yamada will talk on *Americans Betrayed, One Internee's Perspective* at noon in the Price Center's Davis/Riverside Room. Part of UC San Diego's Asian and Pacific-Islander American Heritages celebration, *Spring Roles*, the event is free and open to the public.

Yamada's reflections on the Japanese American internment will include pictures and a video tape entitled, *Dear Miss Breed*, a real life story of how San Diego children's librarian Clara Breed (1906-1994) became a hero to Japanese American youth in Poston, the Arizona concentration camp for Japanese Americans during World War II, sending the children books, letters, gifts, and treats. The video draws on home videos and excerpts from 250 letters.

"The visual is more important than my talk" says Yamada.

One of Breed's correspondents in Poston, Yamada says, "How much poorer our lives would have been without those books. You're stuck in this isolated place ... but you're reading *Black Beauty* or *Little House on the Prairie*, the same things that any American child would be reading. Books weren't an escape. Books brought the outside world to us."

In addition to the video, Yamada will offer her personal reflections.

Yamada is a member of the Japanese American Citizens League and has served on the board of directors of the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation in Washington, D.C., and the Board of Governors of the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.

Yamada currently serves on the Board of Governors of the San Diego Foundation, the UC San Diego Board of Overseers, San Diego State University College of Professional Studies and Fine Arts advisory board, the Family Literacy Foundation, and the Charter 100 board of directors.

Past community activities have included board positions with the Museum of Photographic Arts, the City of San Diego Commission for Arts and Culture, and the Design Review Committee for the San Diego Parks and Recreation Board, as well as serving on the LEAD advisory board and the San Diego Historical Society advisory committee.

Among Yamada's awards are the Salvation Army Auxiliary's Women of Dedication, 1987; the City Club Citizen of the Year, 1988; the Charter 100 Woman of the Year, 2003, and the Cool Woman Award from the Girl Scouts of America, 2006.

Yamada received a bachelor of arts degree from the University of California, Berkeley, and a California Secondary Teaching Credential. She taught English at San Diego High School and joined the landscape architecture firm, Wimmer Yamada and Associates, in 1976, becoming a partner/owner, retiring in 1995.

Yamada's talk is part of the Asian and Pacific-Islander American Planning Committee's second annual *Spring Roles*. The theme is *Building Bridges , Maintaining Visibility, Exploring Identities, and Creating Consciousness*. The celebration's goal is to increase campus awareness of Asian and Pacific-Islander American concerns and honor the diversity of their cultures.

For further information on the *Americans Betrayed* program, contact Irma Martinez Velasco at (858) 534-6862.

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