

Minoru Yasui to be Regents' lecturer

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JAPANESE-AMERICAN ACTIVIST NAMED REGENTS' LECTURER

Minoru Yasui, a Denver attorney who was the first Japanese American to protest internment during World War II, will be a regents' lecturer at the University of California, San Diego, April 7-11.

Yasui will speak to an Asian-American Studies Class, a class on civil rights, and will deliver a free public talk, "Liberty and Justice for All," on April 9 in Peterson Hall, Room 108, at 8 p.m.

In 1942, he was sent to an internment camp and later spent nine months in solitary confinement in a Portland jail for his resistance activities.

In his talk, Yasui will recount his experiences, discuss why internment happened, and whether it could happen again to another group.

"From an Asian-American viewpoint, Min Yasui is a historical figure, a role model for all people," said James Lin, a professor of mathematics who was instrumental in bringing Yasui to UCSD. "He is an extraordinary man, by all accounts.

"He has won numerous awards for his accomplishments, but perhaps he is best known for being the first Japanese American to legally test the U.S. government internment order which forced over 112,000 Japanese Americans to vacate their homes, give up their personal belongings, and go to wartime relocation camps," Lin said.

Yasui was director of community relations for the city of Denver until his recent retirement, and presently he is the chair of the Legislative Education Committee of the Japanese American Citizens League.

Yasui, a native of Hood River, Oregon, in 1939 became the first Japanese American to graduate from the University of Oregon law school, and later went on to graduate studies in sociology at the University of Denver and Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan.

As director of community relations for the city of Denver and the chair of the Legislative Education Committee of the Japanese American Citizens League, Yasui has built a reputation as a dynamic speaker.

"Minoru Yasui is especially good at bringing the period of internment back to life for students who, because of their age, were not a part of their parents or grandparents experience," said Lin, who also teaches the Asian-American Studies class.

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