

KOKORO KARA

Summer 2014

**HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION**

*“from our heart”*



**In This Issue:**

- Advisor in Residence: Eva Kuwata
- Archivist Joins HMWF Staff
- An Artistic Legacy at Heart Mountain

# Celebrating the Generations at Heart Mountain:

## Board Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi

I hope you had a wonderful Asian Pacific American Heritage Month in May!

I want to thank all of our friends who joined us at the Hogan Lovells offices in Washington, D.C., on May 12 for a screening of David Ono and Jeff MacIntyre's *Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain*. It was a huge success. Secretary Norman Mineta and I participated on a panel discussion with Vincent Eng, Partner and CEO of the VENG Group, and Mee Moua, President and Executive Director of Asian Americans Advancing Justice. The questions the audience asked were incredibly thoughtful.

One question we received was: "My grandmother, who was incarcerated, recently passed away. How do we keep the story alive?"

I replied, "You should take responsibility and help spread the word."

As the Chair of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation (HMWF), I have been fortunate to meet young people who are passionate about telling the story of Heart Mountain. I have met wonderful volunteers who have come out to help at our events—some who don't even have a family connection to Heart Mountain but feel it's important, others who want to preserve their families' legacy. I have spoken with filmmakers who have made documentaries about their families' experiences at Heart Mountain. I have worked with writers who have told their stories in our newsletter and in publications across the country. I have shaken hands with artists who have taken Heart Mountain as their inspiration.

These people are passionate about telling the story of Heart Mountain because it is their story. It is our story. It is an American story.

It is the story of the courage of people who faced racism and stayed true to the ideals of their country. It is the story of the determination of people who overcame prejudice and built better lives for their

children. What is more American than that?

When I was a child, though, schools did not teach the story of the forced relocation of Japanese Americans. That is a problem. Because when this story is not told, we become at risk of repeating the mistakes of the past. When we do not remember what happened to the *Issei* and *Nisei*, we lose a part of our history. When we do not use our voices to tell this story when everyone else seems to have forgotten it, we are at danger of forgetting it ourselves.



Shirley Ann Higuchi

We all share this responsibility. I have met many children and grandchildren of Heart Mountain internees who want to make sure that their children know their family history—and take pride in that history. I have met many who bring their parents and their children to our Pilgrimages year after year. And I have met

many who are dedicated to spreading the word—even if they did not have family at Heart Mountain themselves.

This past May, I spoke with Steven Yoda, President of the Japanese American Bar Association. His organization has agreed to sponsor the 26th Annual Conference of the National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts, which is being hosted by the HMWF. The conference will take place this June, with events in Cody and at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. In addition, he is working to spread the word to his members about our Annual Pilgrimage this August. Already, we have heard from Heart Mountain descendants who want to know more.

I have met many former internees who want to make sure the Heart Mountain story is preserved as well—on our board, in our advisory council, at our events. It has been an honor to hear your stories. This June, Tak Hoshizaki and Yosh Kuromiya will tell their stories to a new audience in a reenactment of the Heart Moun-

tain Draft Resisters Trial as part of the National Consortium Conference. This August, veterans, like Jack Kunitomi, will come to our August Pilgrimage, and we will honor them for their contribution to this country.

*Nisei*, *Sansei* and *Yonsei* alike are all working together to make sure that the story of Heart Mountain is remembered. Every summer, we will celebrate generations—as three or sometimes four generations of one family join us in Wyoming for our Pilgrimages.

This summer, as I do every summer, I will remember my mother who had a dream that something would be built at Heart Mountain. By the time I knew how much Heart Mountain meant to her, it was too late for me to share that experience with her. She was gone—but I knew I could honor her memory by making sure that her dream came true.

So, to the young *Yonsei* who asked me what she could do to help keep the story alive: Ask your grandparents or your parents, if it's not too late, to share their stories with you. Return to the place where your grandparents lost their freedom. Speak up when you hear of wrongs being committed against others, support those who have been wronged by their own country, and tell the stories of the 120,000 people who were incarcerated in this country so that it never happens again. Dream of building something because this country was built on dreams.

*Shirley Ann Higuchi welcomes your comments and can be reached at [shiguchi@heartmountain.org](mailto:shiguchi@heartmountain.org).*

### ON THE COVER

*This edition's cover image was done by Jamie Fujimoto, a descendant of Heart Mountain internees from California. The story on page 8 covers her grandfather's experience at Heart Mountain and the inspiration for the image she created.*

# Children of Heart Mountain: Executive Director Brian Liesinger

I look forward to spring with great anticipation every year, as the long winters take their toll. But this spring has brought joy unlike any other for me. Along with bright sunshine, budding trees and blooming flowers, I welcomed my first child on May 13. Her name is Vivian Kay and has succeeded at doing what most parents warned me she would do: changed my perspective on nearly everything.

Vivian will no doubt be a child of Heart Mountain, but, thankfully, a different kind than those babies born here during World War II. I can't help but think of the more than 500 born at Heart Mountain from 1942–45 (a few of whom I was able to meet at our Pilgrimage last year). Unbeknownst to them at the time, they became forever linked to Heart Mountain.

It also reminds me of a gentleman who called one weekday this spring, not to ask a question about the site or about the Interpretive Center. But to ask about what he should put on his passport application on the line asking for “place of birth.”

He said he was born at Heart Mountain Hospital but wasn't sure what to put because Heart Mountain doesn't exist as a city. The best advice I could provide was simply: “If Heart Mountain is on your birth certificate, you should probably write that.” And I was left pondering how important our places of birth are—how our identities are shaped by the places we are born.

When “Heart Mountain babies” returned to the site prior to 2011, there were only a few worn out structures to mark their birthplace. As the youngest of the internees, conjuring up memories of confinement must have been nearly impossible. Now when they return, the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center can shed light on the “city” of their birth. They are able to share with their children, grandchildren and perhaps even great-grandchildren stories of life at Heart Mountain through the exhibits.

It is a link that must be passed down, as HMWF Board Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi emphasizes in her column. And the Heart Mountain World War II Japanese American Confinement Site has evolved to allow for so many ways to participate and contribute to the Heart Mountain story.

As a new parent, I also have a renewed appreciation for the internee parents who bore the weight of incarceration with grace and fortitude so that their children would not be crushed by it. With “*shikata ga nai*” as their mantra, they labored to provide for their children with great odds stacked against them. But behind their veneer of stoic compliance must have been tremendous despair felt from the needless hardships they had been put through.

Yet, many former internees, like Eva Kuwata, who is featured in this issue, recall their childhood memories in camp as primarily joyful ones. I marvel at this sentiment, which I've heard time and time again from former internees. Somehow their parents were able to—both collectively and within each family unit—establish and maintain a sense of normalcy amid the hardships.

It also brings to mind an anecdote shared with me by Joe Kuwabara, who visited the Interpretive Center last year. When I asked about his memories of camp, he responded with a chuckle about fetching coal from the coal piles in front of the barracks to fuel the cast iron stoves. He has a birthmark on his stomach, and his mother joked with him that it had come as a result of carrying so much coal up against his body. They were able to share a laugh about one of the most brutal facts of Heart Mountain life: trying to stay warm through the long winters.

A common historical narrative of the Japanese American attitude during forced relocation and confinement during World War II is one of willing compliance—due in part to their loyalty as Americans as well as in observance of the long-held Japanese trait of obedience to authority. I have come

to view their compliance and their ability to mask discontent for being torn from their lives as a desire to see their children affected as little as possible from the bitterness and anguish that very well could have been the hallmark sentiments of camp life.

It is from these parents I have derived daily inspiration at Heart Mountain. And this inspiration becomes even more profound now that I have embraced fatherhood. While I fret about vaccinations and child care and swaddling and sleep patterns, it is important to recognize my concerns as minor by comparison to the challenges internee parents overcame.

Vivian is years away from understanding what happened at Heart Mountain, but that won't prevent me from ensuring she makes regular visits to the Interpretive Center. From the lessons contained there, I will be able to ensure that she understands—and that I am reminded of—the privileges we enjoy due to the many sacrifices made by those who came before us.



Brian Liesinger

## HEART MOUNTAIN WYOMING FOUNDATION

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# 2014 HEART MOUNTAIN PILGRIMAGE TO HONOR VETERANS

In late 1944, incarcerated at Heart Mountain sought to recognize the soldiers who were away fighting in the U.S. Army. These soldiers fought, often while their families were still incarcerated by the country they were fighting for. More than 800 incarcerated from Heart Mountain served their country. Back at Heart Mountain, their families and friends built an Honor Roll monument, which listed the names of those who were fighting. That Honor Roll is one of the few original structures that remain at the Heart Mountain World War II Japanese American Confinement Site.

On August 22–23, 2014, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Annual Pilgrimage will once more recognize these veterans who were incarcerated at Heart Mountain during World War II. The theme of the Pilgrimage is “Honoring Selfless Service.”

“As our most important event, the Annual Pilgrimage serves our mission by educating the public about the history of Japanese American confinement and engaging visitors in a discussion about racial prejudice and civil rights, as well as hopefully providing an opportunity for healing for former incarcerated and their families,” said Brian Liesinger, Executive Director of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation.

At the Pilgrimage, the Foundation will unveil the newly restored Heart Mountain Honor Roll. In recent years, the Foundation has taken measures to preserve the Honor Roll for future generations. Board Member Kris Horiuchi and principal of Horiuchi Solien Landscape Architects has been guiding the restoration plan for the Honor Roll’s stone wall and steps. In August, this Honor Roll will be dedicated to the late Senator Daniel K. Inouye. Sen. Inouye was not only a highly decorated veteran of World War II. He would later become one of the most highly-respected and longest-serving members of the U.S. Senate, rising to the rank of President pro tempore.

“As a young lawyer working in Washington, D.C., I was inspired by Senator Inouye,” said HMWF Board Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi. “And I know I am not alone in that feeling. He served his country valiantly, both in the army and in Congress.

It was an honor to know this extraordinary American, and it meant so much to all of us at Heart Mountain that he was here for our Grand Opening.”

Irene Hirano, Sen. Inouye’s widow, as well as Sen. Al Simpson (ret.) and Secretary Norman Mineta (ret.), will join the Foundation as it remembers Sen. Inouye and all veterans.

The film *A Flicker in Eternity* will be screened, and one of its creators, Sharon Yamato, will give remarks. This film tells the story of Stanley Hayami, who was incarcerated at Heart Mountain as a teenager and fought with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. He kept a journal with illustrations of his life both at Heart Mountain and while serving in Europe. Hayami was killed in combat in Italy, while attempting to help a fellow soldier. He was 19 years old. He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star and Purple Heart.

Sharon Yamato, Ann Kaneko and Joanne Oppenheim created the documentary based on entries from Hayami’s journal. Hayami’s vivid illustrations of life at Heart Mountain gave his life a visual quality that translated well into film. The experience was transformative for Yamato. She knew very little about the veterans before the project. While working on this film, Yamato said, “It became so much clearer to me how complicated that decision to fight


for our country at a time when their families were being held in camp was. That was an amazing thing those men did.”

This winter, the Foundation began a campaign to identify and invite living Heart Mountain veterans to attend the Pilgrimage in an effort to honor them and those who are no longer with us. Fund-raising is underway to provide travel stipends to bring veterans to the event wherever possible.

Heart Mountain veterans who wish to attend the event will receive stipends to help defray travel and lodging expenses. The Foundation asks any Heart Mountain veterans or anyone who knows of Heart Mountain veterans to contact the Interpretive Center at [info@heartmountain.org](mailto:info@heartmountain.org) or by phone at (307)-754-8000. In addition, the HMWF is seeking individuals and organizations to help sponsor these veterans. Interested sponsors can also contact the HMWF via the information above.

“We are pleased to recognize these veterans for their service,” said Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi. “They have done so much for our country and for the Heart Mountain community. They fought so that their families would be recognized as Americans—and they proved their loyalty time and again. We can never do justice to their legacy, but I hope we can make sure that their service is never forgotten.”

## 2014 Pilgrimage Sponsors



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If you or your organization would like to join the above businesses with a sponsorship, contact Operations Manager Bethany Sandvik at [bethanys@heartmountain.org](mailto:bethanys@heartmountain.org) or call 307-754-8000.

# Interpretive Center Welcomes First Archivist

The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation is advancing its archival collection and research center with the recent hiring of Archivist Nicole Blechynden.

As the site of one of only ten original World War II “Relocation Centers” built shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941, Heart Mountain provides a tremendous opportunity for historic interpretation through its collections. Blechynden’s work there will help bring to the collections greater historic detail, as well as improved access to these details for the public.

Blechynden brings a strong background as a preservationist, archivist and librarian. Most recently, she served as Preservation Assessment and Processing Coordinator for Department of Archives and Special Collections at the University of Colorado in Boulder. The collection housed at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center includes a variety of archival content, historical artifacts and library materials, which presents a unique opportunity for her to apply her different skill sets.

“What we have here is not just evidence and artifacts of a certain place, time and series of events. We have a living history,” she said. “Former incarcerated are still actively telling their stories, and they play an important role in giving context to the items in our collections... Along with many local residents who have been involved with this history, they also help grow the collection with their donations.”

The HMWF was able to hire Blechynden with help from the federal Japanese American Confinement Sites (JACS) grant program. During her two-year appointment, her goal is to bring a new level of currency in managing the collections through the application of professional standards and technology. As her work progresses, the HMWF will be able to reach out to new audiences, in addition to serving its current members, scholars and the surrounding communities.

“Thanks to the generosity of donors, as well as the award of the JACS grant, we have the opportunity to advance our incredibly unique collection through Nicole’s work,” said HMWF Executive Director Brian Liesinger. “With her knowledge and experience, she will help take our col-



Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Archivist Nicole Blechynden (left) digs into the collection under the guidance of volunteer curator and HMWF Board Member LaDonna Zall. Blechynden joined the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center staff in March 2014.

lection to the next level.”

Blechynden was in part attracted to the position because her grandparents were World War II civilian POWs. Following virtually the same timeline as Japanese Americans incarcerated in the U.S., they were residents of Manila and were imprisoned by Japanese troops in the Philippines shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

Growing up, when the term “internment camp” was mentioned, her association was always the experience of her grandparents in the Philippines. It was not until she was in college that she was introduced to the injustices suffered by Americans of Japanese descent during World War II.

Blechynden hopes that her own family’s experience will provide her with helpful insight as she strives to preserve and enhance access to the history of the Japanese American incarceration experience, especially as the descendants of the incarcerated seek to learn about and understand their own family histories.

“It is truly an honor to be entrusted with the care of these materials, and I take very seriously the responsibility of sustaining this collection and ensuring its availability for research,” she said. “I am grateful to

have the added benefit of working alongside the namesake of the Research Center, LaDonna Zall, who continues to enrich the collection and my understanding of it. I am as much a student as I am a steward.”

Zall has devoted 15 years to the HMWF as acting curator and as a board member. The collections management has fallen under her care during this time, and she is now thrilled with the addition of a full-time staff person devoted to collections care. “Nicole seems to be a perfect fit to advance opportunities for educating people about what happened here and preventing it from ever happening again,” Zall said.

## HMWF Collections Update

*Currently we are conducting a comprehensive inventory and updating records in our collections management system. This effort will be followed by the processing of archival materials, including the Frank Emi papers. The Archives continues to accept incoming donations and anticipates formally opening the archives to researchers in early 2015.*

# Witness Film Screening Highlights L.A. Events

When Patti Hirahara told ABC7 Reporter David Ono that she had a story for him, Ono did not want to work on another “Asian story.” He and producer Jeff MacIntyre had just finished a piece about the 442nd Regimental Combat Team. As an anchorman in a city as diverse as Los Angeles, Ono felt an obligation to show the rest of the community that he cared about their stories as well. But when Patti Hirahara called, he heard a Heart Mountain story that he could not resist.

Thus began what would become *Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain*, a moving film about triumph and tragedy behind barbed wire at Heart Mountain. He teamed up once more with MacIntyre, who was a self-proclaimed “Japanese American internment dummy” at the time, and they traveled around California and to Cody, WY, to research this piece.

On February 22, 2014, their hard work was on display at the Tateuchi Democracy Forum at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM). The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation held a Town Hall Meeting and a film premiere there in an effort to reach out to its Los Angeles constituents. The events were packed, with more than 200 people attending one or both of the events. Many former internees and their families were in attendance.

While the events were enjoyable, the HMWF leadership had also traveled to Los Angeles for meetings as well. With JANM as their hosts, the board and members and the advisory council gathered for two days of meetings. Over the course of the weekend, members of the board also met with leaders in the Japanese American community in Los Angeles to trade insight and discuss the future. Some of the people they met with were Dr. G. W. Kimura, JANM President and CEO; Christine Sato-Yamazaki, Chair of the National Veterans Network; and Go For Broke Chair Bill Seki and Executive Director Don Nose.

“We were thrilled to see so many friends and to make new ones while we were in Los Angeles,” said Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi. “Thanks to JANM and to all who came out to show their support.”

At the Town Hall Meeting, Congresswoman Judy Chu (D-Calif.) gave remarks and presented the Foundation with a certificate in honor of its upcoming 2014 Pilgrimage. She commended the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center for educating the public about the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. “Let’s continue to fight and advocate for the stories of the API community,” she said.

The Foundation recognized Advisory Council Member Nancy Araki for her dedication as well. Araki recently retired from her position as the Director of Community Affairs at JANM. She was presented with an original brick from the Heart Mountain World War II Japanese American Confinement Site.

“Few people have done as much as Nancy Araki to support the thoughtful preservation, research and education around the World War II experience of Japanese Americans,” said HMWF Vice-Chair Doug Nelson. “The Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Board is especially indebted and grateful to Nancy for the steadfast friendship, personal support and wise counsel that she has brought to our work at Heart Mountain over these last fifteen years.”



Jeff MacIntyre and David Ono lead a panel discussion at the Japanese American National Museum’s Tateuchi Democracy Forum in February. The panel consisted of (from left to right) HMWF Board Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi, Darrell Kunitomi, Toshi Ito, Patti Hirahara and JANM President and CEO Dr. G. W. Kimura.

The HMWF Board addressed questions from the audience and then many headed over to the film screening in the Tateuchi Democracy Forum. Ono and MacIntyre spoke to the audience about the experience of creating the film, which had many members of the audience in tears by the time the credits rolled.

The film screening was followed by a panel discussion that featured Higuchi, Kimura and Hirahara, as well as Darrell Kunitomi, son of Heart Mountain internees, and Toshi Ito, a former Heart Mountain internee and HMWF Advisory Council Member. Ono and MacIntyre moderated the discussion.

Hirahara told the story that started this project: how her father and grandfather dug a darkroom underneath their barrack at Heart Mountain in which they would develop more than 2,000 photographs. Since photography was originally not permitted in the camps, their collection is the largest created by internees at Heart Mountain. Hirahara has dedicated years to researching, cataloguing and spreading the word about their photographs.

“We’re trying to get this story across the country,” she said. “It’s a great story and I’m glad that Jeff and David with their beautiful camera work, editing and writing will forever be my friends.”

Many expressed gratitude to Ono and MacIntyre for sharing this story—for choosing to tell one more “Asian story” to the world. Screenings of the extended version of *Witness* later showed in Portland, OR, and in Washington, D.C. The story was also aired in Los Angeles on May 10 and San Francisco May 31.

“We know this story is an important Japanese American story,” said Kimura. “Even more important, we need this story to be understood as an important American story.”

# HMWF Marks Asian Pacific American Heritage Month with Events in Washington, D.C.

On May 12, the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation participated in a screening of David Ono and Jeff MacIntyre's film *Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain* hosted by the Hogan Lovells law firm in Washington, D.C. A shorter version of the film recently won an Edward R. Murrow Award. Since the screening, the HMWF has had several inquiries about future screenings of the film in venues around the country.

Demetria Johnson, Director of Diversity and Inclusion at Hogan Lovells, said, "It was very enlightening to see the documentary and then hear first-hand that although there were many obstacles and tragedies that the internees faced, their legacy became a source of inspiration to so many."

A panel discussion followed the film screening, and included HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi, Retired Secretary of Transportation Norman Y. Mineta, Partner and CEO of the VENG Group Vincent Eng, and Asian Americans Advancing Justice Executive Director Mee Moua. The audience asked pertinent questions about immigration reform and the relevance of the story of Heart Mountain to a modern audience. Other topics included the issues caused by the perpetuation of the "model minority" myth and the challenges of including stories of disenfranchised Americans in classrooms in this country.

Warren Maruyama, a partner from Hogan Lovells, is the son and grandson of Heart Mountain internees and helped to organize the event. He said, "It was good to see a such a large audience, and particularly since it included a broad cross-section of the Asian-American community and the Washington, D.C. legal community. The audience was moved by the film and fully engaged during the panel discussion. It was clear the Heart Mountain story resonated and that they understood its continued relevance."

The event was cosponsored by the D.C. chapter of the Asian Pacific American Bar Association, the Korean American Bar Association and the South Asian Bar Association. Many people from the local

Japanese American community were present, including Gerald Yamada, president of the Japanese American Veterans Association, and Priscilla Ouchida, president of the Japanese American Citizens League.

Later in May, Hogan Lovells hosted two other screenings of the film in its offices in New York and Denver, as well as a recording of the discussion from May 12. On May 21, the American Psychological Association hosted a second viewing of the film *Witness: The Legacy of Heart Mountain*

and Higuchi gave brief remarks.

"These APA Heritage Month events helped us get the word out to connect with the larger APA community and find points of commonality in our stories," Higuchi said. "It was a pleasure to participate in these events and we hope to continue to work with the organizations and individuals in attendance to educate the public about what occurred at Heart Mountain and to all 120,000 individuals who were imprisoned."



PHOTO BY KAVEH SARDARI, COURTESY OF HOGAN LOVELLS

Former U.S. Secretary Norman Mineta (center) speaks with attendees at an Asian Pacific American Heritage event in May, held at the offices of Hogan Lovells law firm in Washington, D.C.

## Recent Heart Mountain Events

**Now–August 31:** *Colors of Confinement: Rare Kodachrome Photographs of Japanese American Incarceration in World War II* exhibit at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, CA

**June 2–6:** Advisor in Residence Eva Kuwata at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center

**June 25–28:** National Consortium on Racial and Ethnic Fairness in the Courts Annual Meeting, hosted by the HMWF in Cody, WY

**August 22–23:** Heart Mountain Annual Pilgrimage, honoring selfless service to our country in Cody, WY, and at the Interpretive Center

Connect with us through any or all of these events and be sure to stay connected via social media as well: [twitter.com/HeartMountainWY](https://twitter.com/HeartMountainWY) and [facebook.com/heartmountainwy](https://facebook.com/heartmountainwy)

# A Heart Mountain Family's Artistic Legacy

Sam Fujimoto was a teenager in California when his family was sent to the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center.”

“It was very, very desolate,” he recalls.

Sam's most vivid memory of Heart Mountain is the time he and his friends tried to go fishing in the Shoshone River. They snuck off, crawling on the ground so that they wouldn't get caught. It didn't go very well.

“We ran into a rifle and a soldier and he chased us back,” Sam says, with a laugh.

Sam left Heart Mountain in the summer of 1944. He and his family were not permitted to return to the West Coast at the time so he went to Chicago instead. He was a senior in high school and had aspirations of becoming an artist. When he graduated, he began to attend classes at the Chicago Art Institute. There, he painted two works of his life at Heart Mountain—scenes of the mountain and of skaters on the ice rink.

“I went to see a professional evaluator in New York City,” Sam says. “He threw a bunch of cold water on it. I think he wanted to see cartoon strips.”

With his dreams of becoming an artist dashed, Sam returned to Chicago. Eventually, he moved back to California, and his paintings of Heart Mountain went in the shed in the back of the house.

For a long time, Sam didn't speak about the experience to his sons or to his granddaughter, Jamie. He didn't tell them the story of trying to sneak out of Heart Mountain to go fishing. He didn't tell them how gangs formed on his block and fought with each other and picked on him because he was small for his age.

Jamie first learned about the forced relocation of Japanese Americans in high school and began asking her grandfather about what happened to him while living behind barbed wire at Heart Mountain.

Sam told her how he was forced to move out of his house, how they could only take what they could carry on their backs, how they had no idea where they were going. He told her how each family was assigned a room in which to live. He showed her the paintings he had made.



PHOTO BY J.K. YAMAMOTO/RAFU SHIMPO  
The Fujimoto family shares their artwork with Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation leadership during events in Los Angeles in February 2014. Pictured from left to right are Steve Fujimoto, Sam Fujimoto, HMWF Chair Shirley Ann Higuchi, Jamie Fujimoto, HMWF Vice-Chair Doug Nelson and Nikki Fujimoto.

“The one thing I remember him emphasizing the most was that to this day, he will never eat pork sausage because that's what they got for almost every meal while they were in camp,” she says.

A couple of years before the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Grand Opening, Jamie and her family returned to Heart Mountain. “It was a little surreal to actually be in that spot after hearing my grandpa's stories of it,” she says. Two years later, they returned once more for the Grand Opening.

For her grandfather, returning to Heart Mountain was a heartwarming experience. Sam was heartened by the warm welcome from members of the Powell and Cody community at the Grand Opening and recalls being moved by Senator Daniel K. Inouye's speech.

These experiences inspired Jamie to use Heart Mountain as her subject in a print making class in college. The print she created depicts the confinement site as it was in 1942, with a puddle in which

the Interpretive Center can be seen in the reflection.

She may have inherited her passion for art from her grandfather, but they each have their own aesthetic. “Typical of her—she would not paint a realistic view of Heart Mountain,” her grandfather jokes.

Jamie has agreed to let the Interpretive Center sell a print of her Heart Mountain image in the store. Visitors will be able to purchase the card, which is featured on the cover of this newsletter, beginning this summer.

“I'm excited to share my work with people that also have an interest in Heart Mountain and the history there,” Jamie says. “Also, I'm excited to get my name out there.”

This piece was pivotal for her. Since then, Jamie's work has become more abstract but it is inspired by mountain ranges and photos that she took on her family's trip to Heart Mountain. She graduated from college this spring, and she hopes to pursue a career in graphic design.



## Advisor in Residence: Eva Kuwata Enriches Interpretive Center Visits

Returning to Heart Mountain for the first time since her confinement, Eva Kuwata visited the Interpretive Center in June to share her memories from living at the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center” during World War II.

Kuwata came as a part of the 2014 Advisor in Residence Program from June 2–5, enriching the experiences of visitors to the Heart Mountain World War II Japanese American Confinement Site.

“The Advisor in Residence Program is an opportunity for visitors to engage with former incarcerated and hear about the experience of confinement through the words of those who lived it,” said Brian Liesinger, Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation Executive Director. “We focus on first-person accounts in our exhibits, so Ms. Kuwata’s presence added significant depth for visitors to the site.”

Kuwata’s visit included two public presentations that were free and open to the public at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center. She also spent time in the galleries interacting with visitors on a more personal level.

Kuwata was born in El Centro, CA, on May 29, 1934 and was the only child of Toshichi and Chiyo Nakamura. Her parents, who owned a hotel in Obispo, CA, had just leased a new hotel property in Los

Angeles right before the US entered World War II. They lived in the hotel and catered to Japanese boarders traveling between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

Kuwata was in the second grade when she arrived at Heart Mountain, after spending time in the Santa Anita Assembly Center, a racetrack located in Arcadia, CA.

“I don’t have many memories of Santa Anita,” notes Eva. “I remember we had to fill our ‘mattresses’ with straw to sleep on when we arrived there and that we ate in a green mess hall. I also remember being in the stands during the day, which comprised our schooling.”

Despite the injustice of confinement, Kuwata’s Heart Mountain experiences were mostly pleasant ones. She was a Brownie Scout who had many friends, several of who she still keeps in touch with today. “I feel that since I was so young during the time I spent in camp, that I did not have the anguish or hatred that others might have felt or endured,” said Eva. “My memories are nothing but good memories.”

One such memory is of grocery shop-



Eva Kuwata

ping in Powell. Eva went to buy butter for her mother, thinking it would make a nice gift. She did not know it was rationed and that ration stamps were required to purchase it. However, a “very nice gentleman” who was standing behind her in the market line, kindly gave her his stamp. That simple gesture left a tremendous impression on Eva.

Today, Eva is 79 and a grandmother of two. She still takes Japanese folk dancing classes once a week. She is a cancer survivor who retired in 2010 after working as an Administrative Assistant and a Development Officer. She volunteers for the Belmont High School Alumni Association and at the Gardena Japanese Pioneer Project. She participates in many Japanese Folk Dancing festivals during the year and dances and teaches public lessons.

*For more information on the Advisor in Residence Program and how to participate, please contact Operations Manager Bethany Sandvik at [bethanys@heartmountain.org](mailto:bethanys@heartmountain.org).*

## Thank you donors: 2013 Memorial Gifts

*In the most recent winter Kokoro Kara newsletter, we thanked donors for their support of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. In doing so, we would also like to thank those gifts that arrived in honor of specific people and events.*

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# Scouting at Heart Mountain

By Ike Hatchimonji

Seen every morning and evening in front of the Heart Mountain Administration Building, the American flag was ceremonially raised by a group of uniformed Boy Scouts. The familiar “to the colors” would be sounded by the bugler in the morning for the raising followed by the playing of “retreat” as the flag is lowered in the evening. The flag ceremony became a daily activity for the Boy Scouts of Heart Mountain throughout the year. The scouts dutifully fulfilled their commitment but one story about the flag ceremonies is still remembered.

During the freezing winter mornings, the buglers faced a recurring challenge to play the flag raising call. To effectively play a bugle, a small amount of saliva applied to the mouthpiece is necessary to form the notes. However, due to the cold, the mouthpiece of the bugle would freeze on the lips, making it difficult to form the right notes. It’s an amusing story now but tells of one of the enduring scouting activities.

Honoring the flag was an example of the dedication of the scouts as good Americans that made scouting one of the most highly commended programs at Heart Mountain and, under the circumstances of the internment, is recognized as a true expression of loyalty to their country. Like their older brothers in military uniforms, despite their incarceration, the young Americans were proud to be part of a truly American tradition.

The initiative to organize a scouting program at the camps began early in September 1942 by a group of mostly first generation *Issei* as well as young adult *Nisei* who envisioned the benefits of scouting among the many youth coming together as a community in the internment camp. As the scouting program developed, seven troops were formed, some having previously been formed in pre-war communities.

In their enthusiasm to promote scouting, one of the challenges the *Issei* leaders faced was the prohibition of the *Issei* to hold the position of scout master of a troop, the top leadership position in the organization. The National Boy Scouts of

America rules prohibited aliens from becoming scout masters. Nevertheless, the adult *Nisei* became the scout masters while the *Issei* occupied other leadership positions in the program.

Thus, with the able leadership of key community leaders and the approval and support of the parents and camp administrators, the troops were formed, not only Boy Scouts but Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and Brownies. It also gave mothers the opportunity to become den mothers of the several Cub Scout packs while other adults or parents became helpers for their troops. Approximately 370 young boys joined the program during the camp years.

An interesting contrast to the formation of the scout troops was the formation of young gangs, a development brought on by the living conditions of the camp. Not unexpectedly, young boys turned easily to gang activity. Gangs had an appeal as they do for many youth as they mature. But, thanks to the leadership that believed in scouting as a positive alternative to gangs, the development of the troops was encouraged and succeeded as one of the best programs in the camp.

Scouting’s achievements among the young were many. Observing the Scout Oath and the motto of “do a good turn daily,” the objectives of the organization to build good character helped to develop

outstanding young people.

True to their oath of being helpful, the scouts served the community well. Examples were their participation in Clean Up Week; Fire Prevention Week; paper collection drives; U.S. Stamp and Bond Drives; and the March of Dimes. They joined the popular drum and bugle corps and appeared in many parades, concerts and special events such as the send-offs for *Nisei* men headed to war. The music of the drum and bugle corps lifted the spirits of the internees and was greatly appreciated by all who took pride in the Boy and Girl Scouts. Even distinguished visitors to Heart Mountain such as the National Director of the Boy Scouts and the National Director of the War Relocation Authority praised the achievements of the program.

Visits by scout troops from the nearby towns of Cody and Powell helped better the relations of the internees with the outside communities. When the camp was established, there were doubts about the communities’ attitude toward the Japanese in their area. To help dispel those doubts, outside troops were invited to the camp to join in jamborees, competitive sports and typical scout activities. Reaching out to the outside community through scouting bettered the relationship for all involved.

Within the troops, the earning of merit badges was one of their busiest activities.



YONE KUBO COLLECTION

Boy scouts march at the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center” with the drum and bugle corps leading the way.



PHOTO BY KEVIN MIYAZAKI

Bill Shishima (left) and Donald Yamamoto (right) prepare to raise the flag for the opening ceremony at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center Grand Opening in 2011, while a Cody boy scout looks on. Shishima and Yamamoto were members Boy Scout Troop 333 while incarcerated at the "Heart Mountain Relocation Center."

Many scouts joined as Tenderfoots and rose through the ranks acquiring merit badges while others reached the coveted rank of Eagle Scout. The camp-wide Courts of Honor were held each quarter to award individuals and their troops with merit badges and other forms of recognition.

Camping and hiking were enjoyed by all, especially the hikes to the top of Heart Mountain or camping along the Shoshone River. But, the highlight activity for all scouts, including Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts and the Camp Fire Girls was the camping trip to Yellowstone National Park.

Arranged through the Heart Mountain camp director and the scouting leadership, a large camp site was obtained in the park. One of the achievements of the Boy Scouts was the construction of a foot bridge over the Nez Perce Creek there. It was a wonderful experience for the campers to be away from the life in the internment camp in a beautiful place. In all, an estimated 500 Boy and Girl Scouts, Cubs, Brownies and Camp Fire Girls enjoyed Yellowstone National Park, far from the drab surroundings of the Heart Mountain Camp.

Of the many stories and experiences of the internment years in the numerous camps that detained the Japanese communities during World War II, there are many that told of the successful experiences of the internees. The success of the scouting program remains a tribute to the early organizers and their vision of a building a better community in the midst of confinement at Heart Mountain.

*Ike Hatchimonji was a member of Troop 379 at Heart Mountain and participated in the drum and bugle corps. Today, he shares his experiences while serving as a volunteer docent for the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles.*

## Girl Scout Exhibit to be Featured at Interpretive Center

The Heart Mountain Interpretive Center will display a traveling photo exhibit from the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center titled "Japanese-American Girl Scouts at Heart Mountain Relocation Center, 1942-1945." The exhibit, which has been touring Wyoming, will be at Heart Mountain from July 3 through August 31, 2014, and will include artifacts from the Heart Mountain collections.

With the bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941, and the subsequent confinement of 120,000 Japanese Americans from the West Coast, Wyoming found itself home to the "Heart Mountain Relocation Center" between Powell and Cody, WY, which housed more than 14,000 Japanese Americans from August 1942 to November 1945.

As the incarcerated strove to endure these years behind barbed wire, several sporting events, clubs and activities became an important part of daily life. One of the most popular activities was scouting at Heart

Mountain.

Scouting programs for both boys and girls were prominent throughout the United States during World War II. It was a time of heightened patriotism, and scouting programs fit the image of patriotism for people who were eager to be seen as loyal Americans. This proved true for internees and at Heart Mountain, even provided a point of connection with scouts outside of the camp.

The American Heritage Center (AHC) is the University of Wyoming's repository of manuscripts, collections, rare books and the university archives. Internationally known for its historical collections, the AHC first and foremost serves the students and citizens of Wyoming. The AHC sponsors a wide range of scholarly and popular programs



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

including lectures, symposia and exhibits. The AHC gratefully acknowledges the generous support of Capital West Bank for its exhibits program, and is happy to share the exhibit at the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center.



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## Bowls pay homage to Heart Mountain ceramics studio

The ceramic rice bowls pictured here were created by local artist Herli Wight of Cody and have recently been added to the Interpretive Center gift shop.

Herli takes her inspiration from traditional rice bowl shapes and celadon glazes that have been popularized by their heavy use in Japan and other Southeast Asian countries. She adds a unique touch to each piece creating small holes for chopsticks.

These pieces also pay homage to ceramics pieces created in the “Heart Mountain Relocation Center” during the Japanese American confinement. There was a small ceramic studio in operation at Heart Mountain. The War Relocation Authority made plans to expand the studio to a full production facility to supply the WRA and the armed forces with tableware. The plan was abandoned in March 1943 after months of planning, due to a “change in WRA policy.” Ceramics training continued in the studio, however, until the camp closed, and many beautiful pieces were created.

The bowls are now available in the Interpretive Center gift shop and on-line at [shopheartmountain.org](http://shopheartmountain.org).



PHOTOS BY SHARYL MCDOWELL