

Dear Family and Friends,

We all know this much about Al Simpson and Norm Mineta: They have been chums for a long time. As their wives, we can vouch for the deep bond that these two men have shared for more than 75 years—ever since they first met as Boy Scouts behind the barbed wire of the World War II Heart Mountain Relocation camp near Cody, Wyoming.

Their chance meeting in 1943 at Heart Mountain, where Norm was one of 14,000 Americans incarcerated because of their Japanese ancestry, shaped the rest of their lives. Al and other scouts feared going until their scoutmaster assured them that decency required their local troop to welcome the scouts like Norm whose lives had been uprooted by World War II. From the moment they were partnered together, Al and Norm realized the strength of their shared values.

“Hatred corrodes the container in which it is carried,” Al often says, and he and Norm have spent their lives and careers rejecting the hate that often poisons public life. Norm and Al have always bridged personal and political differences to put country first. They know that a result created by people working out their ideological differences is always stronger than one pushed by one side over the other. For more than 50 years in public life, they have shown that if you want to make a difference you have to do your homework (to learn more) and serve unselfishly.

This is why we were sincerely honored when the Heart Mountain Foundation, which has built a world-class museum on the site of the former camp, came to us with an exciting idea. They hope to further Al and Norm’s values through the construction of the MINETA-SIMPSON INSTITUTE AT HEART MOUNTAIN. We believe the new facilities and programs that will make up this institute will enable future generations to learn so much more from the example Norm and Al have set.

You may not be familiar with the highlights of their careers. Serving in both the Congress and the Cabinet, Norm and Al have epitomized forthright leadership and political courage. When presidents of both parties needed to solve challenges such as fiscal policy, or the course of the Iraq War, they turned to Norm and Al for their straight talk and their belief that communication and cooperation can solve even the most vexing problems.

You may know less regarding Norm and Al’s steadfast backing of the Heart Mountain Wyoming Foundation. Over the last 15 years, they have worked together to support the creation and work of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center and the Foundation. They have been a large part of the Foundation’s remarkable achievements, earning national landmark status for the site in 2007, opening an award-winning museum in 2011, and preserving and restoring an original barrack, the root cellar and the camp’s iconic still-standing hospital chimney. The Foundation does all this



with a small, but mighty staff, capably led by Dakota Russell, and with its all-volunteer board led by Shirley Ann Higuchi and Doug Nelson, who have donated thousands of hours reaching new audiences while paying for their own travel and expenses in order to make this happen.

Over the last decade, the Foundation has welcomed nearly a quarter of a million visitors to the Center, expanded their exhibits, built a major research archive, and hosted scores of community and national events in addition to their increasingly large annual pilgrimages. The leaders of the Foundation, including Norm and Al, have had a big vision for telling the world the Heart Mountain story, and so far, their success has exceeded their loftiest dreams.

And now, the Heart Mountain board has embraced another dream: the Mineta-Simpson Institute. This new initiative has two overarching goals. The first is to memorialize the achievements, character and values of both Norm Mineta and Al Simpson by dedicating a new wing of the Heart Mountain Interpretive Center in their honor. The new Institute space will provide a venue for convening, conferencing, teaching and debating on subjects critical to our nation's future. In their spirit, the Institute will seek to inspire bipartisan solutions to vexing and complicated problems and emphasize the need to find principled common ground. The Institute will uphold the strong values and goals so central to our husbands' lifelong public service.

The second goal of the Mineta-Simpson Institute will be to use new processes and methods—from publications to augmented reality to documentaries to podcasts to digitized documents—to carry the story and lessons of Heart Mountain to national and even international audiences. The unjust incarceration of more than 120,000 Japanese Americans during World War II is a powerful reminder of the fragility of our rights and liberties when we are not vigilant in their defense. That message is so important for Americans today...and for future generations.

We are sharing this exciting news with our colleagues and friends who have been important to us and share in the lives of our families. We will request the Foundation to keep in touch with you so you may follow the progress of this wonderful endeavor. We do hope that in the months and years ahead, you may find a way to help the Heart Mountain Foundation turn this special dream for Norm and Al into a reality.

Thanks for taking the time to read this.

Respectfully and Sincerely,



Deni Mineta



Ann Simpson

