

EXECUTIVE ORDER 9066. FIFTY YEARS ON  
(University of Connecticut, Asian American Studies Institute  
October 18, 1995, 2 pm. Panel. Asian Awareness Month

Roger has given you an insightful perspective on what happened during World War II, that you can have a clearer understanding of the U.S. government's role during that awesome period. Perhaps, at no other time in their history have Japanese Americans undergone anything so chilling and devastating as the uprootment, evacuation, and incarceration of that war-time experience. It was more than losing their homes, their livelihood, their personal properties, and their way of life; but losing their sense of belonging and attachment to wherever they lived, losing almost all of their civil rights, losing their connectedness to their friends and community, losing their self-confidence and initiative, losing their trust in the U.S. government, their faith in fellow-Americans, and their hope for any viable future.

Yet today, you see sitting here on this panel, men and women who did not give up, but kept their optimism, working, doing, and continuing on a path that despite some dark moments in some far-off concentration camp, went on to higher education (some coming right here to U/Conn or some other East Coast college), some serving in the U.S. military; and all of them contributing their skills in their special field, and finding fulfillment in their work. Each of these panelists "overcame" whatever obstacles lined their path. In finding some measure of success, their success was credited to all Japanese Americans. They made all

JAs proud of their accomplishments.

I will introduce each of the panelists that you can hear their individual stories: their tough times and their good times; their set-backs and their spurt to new life; their reminiscences of the past, and their advice for the future.

Let's begin with --

Shiro Aizawa

George Fukui

Nobu Hibino

Jack Koichi Hasegawa

Bob Maeda

In closing, I want to quote that great American evangelist, E. Stanley Jones, who visited all the camps. I remember when he came to Santa Anita, he said: "It doesn't matter so much what "to" you as what happens "inside" of you, and what you do about it." These people on the panel did not just gripe and groan in camp, they did something about their status and condition.

Japanese Americans - more than proved themselves on the battlefield of war. They proved themselves on the home-front that was also a battlefield--fighting prejudice, hysteria, and injustices. But these struggles are never-ending. We must join hands with others and continue fighting all the social evils, and political legislations that has hurt the poor or marginalized.

Concentration camps have not ceased. Imprisonment of people has not stopped; it has escalated. There is much we can do

together to make the future more equitable, more liveable and just. Thank you, Roger, focusing on Japanese Americans!