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David Dinkins Hails Court
Reinstatement of Japanese
Internment Suit

January 22, 1986

I applaud the January 21 decision of the United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia to reinstate a lawsuit brought on behalf of the 120,000 Japanese-Americans who were unjustly incarcerated by the U.S. government during World War II.

The majority opinion states that "extraordinary injustice can provoke extraordinary acts of concealment...where such concealment is alleged, it ill-behooves the Government of a free people to evade an honest accounting."

An honest accounting is long overdue for the victims of President Roosevelt's 1942 Executive Order 9066, which authorized the mass evacuation and imprisonment of Japanese-Americans. Two-thirds of those incarcerated were American citizens who had never even set foot on Japanese soil. In fact, according to a report commissioned by the government and completed in 1941, the Japanese-Americans were considered unquestionably loyal to the United States.

Yet they were branded as traitors and herded into concentration camps. Income, homes, savings and businesses were lost. But property was not the only loss incurred.

The mental, physical and spiritual anguish suffered by the Japanese-American people can never be repaired. No price can be set on the pain and degradation inflicted on men, women and children who were never charged with a specific crime other than being Japanese.

What occurred during WW II was more than a travesty of justice. It was a racist act. Without evidence of any wrongdoing and without due process of law, citizens and permanent residents alike were rounded up and declared enemy aliens who represented a grave threat

to the security of this nation.

Executive Order 9066 will forever remain a moral blot on the conscience of this nation. It saddens me that our government has to this day refused to acknowledge and right this wrong. The U.S. Government must recognize its responsibility to the victims and families of those Japanese-Americans interned in WW II. Monetary compensation for the losses suffered are long overdue.

In addition, a formal admission of wrongdoing must be given. Only in this way can we guard against the recurrence of such a tragic injustice.