

Immediate Release

September 18, 1992

HYMAN BRAVIN, DEFENDER OF NISEI "NO-NO" G.I.S, PASSES

Hyman Bravin, civil rights lawyer who defended Nisei "no-no" boys to regain good discharges after World War II, passed away suddenly in the early morning hours of September 16.

Bravin was belatedly recognized and honored by the Japanese community in New York last year at the Day of Remembrance celebration at the Japanese American United Church.

Bravin was past New York State Commander of the Jewish War Veterans, past County Leader of the Liberal Party, and was hailed as a fighter for human rights. He leaves behind his wife, Deanie, and daughter, Barbara, who helped Bravin as a paralegal in the 80's.

Despite a brilliant track record, Bravin was unknown to most Nikkeis until around 1984 when the unusual story surfaced through the effort of Cedric Shimo, an eloquent spokesperson for the "no-no's." Shimo's story appeared in Nikkei newspapers in California. He wrote of the New York lawyer who flew out to Los Angeles in 1984 when he heard that some Nisei veterans of the 1800 Engineers, ^{who refuse to fight during WW II,} ~~a work brigade~~, were still undergoing the stigma of having blue discharges. Bravin thought that he had changed the discharge status of these veterans in 1945. The "no-no's" position was that they would not serve in combat while their parents were held in concentration camps. Bravin believed in the reasonableness of their stance, and defended their principles and commitment to democratic ideals. He also admired their industriousness and courage while being maligned. Thus, he fought for their status change from blue to Honorable discharge.

He began his crusade at war's end in Camp Shelby, Mississippi,

where the 1800 Engineers were stationed (coincidentally the same camp where the 442nd and the 100th Infantry trained).

Bravin's mission was completed 40 years later. Shimo and his fellow-1800th-men in 1985 publicly thanked and honored Bravin at a gala banquet in L.A.'s Lil Tokyo.

As liaison for the Engineers, Shimo sent the following message to Atty Bravin's wife and daughter¹ *which was read at the funeral last Friday.*

"The news about Hyman came as an unexpected shock for which I have no appropriate words to express. The initial telephone call came from Kiyoshi Kawashima, who as you know, was the central figure in Hyman's most unselfish and victorious fight for justice.

The members of the World War II 1800 Engineer Battalion are eternally grateful to him for helping restore dignity and pride for the stand we had taken during the early war years--a stand against those humiliating and un-American discriminatory treatments forced ^{on} the Japanese Americans both in the U.S. Army and in the American concentration camps.

That the majority of Americans are fairminded and just was brought to surface through the efforts of Hyman Bravin and many others. As a result, we Japanese Americans are now rightfully flowing into the mainstream of American life. For this we are most grateful.

We are proud to have been associated with him, and in this moment of extreme sorrow, our deepest sympathy and prayers are with you."

Signed - Cedrick Shimo/1800 Engineer General Service Battalion.