On Saturday, September 14, 2019 revelers came to Portland’s historic Japantown in Old Town to celebrate the 30th Anniversary of Oregon Nikkei Endowment and to witness the reveal of the museum’s new name, logo, and future location at 411 NW Flanders Street.

The momentous occasion celebrated the culmination of years of strategic planning and partnerships, and recognized our generous supporters, dedicated volunteers, and community that worked tirelessly to secure a permanent home for the organization and museum. It also kicked off Lighting the Legacy, the capital campaign in support of that effort.

The 30th Anniversary Celebration and Reveal in Japantown brought Japanese food, music, dance, and culture back to the area of Portland that once was home to over a hundred Japanese businesses. In addition, the Minidoka Swing Band brought the big band sound back to Nihonmachi, while Portland Taiko and the community ensemble of Gambatte: An American Legacy performed and inspired people to get out of their seats to dance in the street!

2019 marked the 30th Anniversary of our organization and it has indeed been a monumental year! On September 14th at our Reveal in Japantown event, we announced our new name and gave attendees a sneak peek at the space that will become our new home, the Japanese American Museum of Oregon at Naito Center.

For many years, we have been searching for a permanent location that would allow us to stay within the boundaries of Portland’s historic Japantown. Thanks to truly remarkable lead gifts of two million dollars from Anne Naito-Campbell and one million dollars from Calvin and Mayho Tanabe, that dream has become a reality. Their tremendous generosity enabled us to work in partnership with Prosper Portland to purchase and begin renovation of the first floor of the Old Town Lofts at 411 NW Flanders Street.

The centerpiece of the museum will be a new permanent exhibit with immersive, interactive, multimedia learning environments that will also provide opportunities to rotate and share items from our extensive collections.

We will temporarily close to the public in March to enable us to transition to our new location. Scheduled school tours will continue throughout that month, and we will be holding our annual March 28th Minoru Yasui Day celebration and ever-popular Cherry Blossom Bazaar as well. We plan to continue leasing our present location in the Merchant Hotel building to allow us to expand our educational offerings and develop exciting new Living Arts programs that include an artists’ collective gallery.

This organization has stood on the shoulders and hard work of many that went before us to pave the way forward. “Okage sama de; I am what I am because of you, I owe it all to you”. We are indebted to our founders, past and present Board members and staff, community, supporters and volunteers—all who have been the life blood of the organization and have led us to this moment. It takes a village and we owe a debt of gratitude to all these people.

On January 1, 2020, our name officially changes to the Japanese American Museum of Oregon. Stay tuned for the announcement of our grand opening!

Wishing you and your loved ones joyful holidays and a Happy New Year!

—Lynn Fuchigami Parks
Attendees gathered at the Japanese American Historical Plaza and Bill of Rights Memorial for Min Yasui Day on March 28, 2019. After a reading by Heath Hyun and poem by Kurt Ikeda, the event moved across the street to the University of Oregon School of Law for a panel discussion featuring Peggy Nagae, Rod Kawakami and Karen Kai, the attorneys representing the coram nobis cases of Minoru Yasui, Gordon Hirabayashi and Fred Korematsu.

Presented by Oregon Nikkei Endowment and the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project; sponsored by the University of Oregon School of Law; co-sponsored by the ACLU, OAPABA (Oregon Asian Pacific American Bar Association) and National Park Service; and supported by Western States Center, Basic Rights Oregon, Coalition of Communities of Color, and Causa.

On June 8, 2019 Oregon Nikkei Endowment held a reception for our volunteer translators who have been helping with the translation of ten special issues of the Oshu Nippo newspaper. This project was supported by the Oregon Heritage Commission and involved the help of 91 volunteer translators from Sapporo, Japan, and 56 volunteer translators from Portland.

The reception also honored a visiting delegation of city council members from our sister city Sapporo, Japan, and Mayor Katsuhiro Akimoto.
A selection of photographs from the family album of Joni Kimoto. These provide a playful, intimate look at a Japanese American family in Portland prior to World War II. Joni recently donated the album along with some historical documents to the museum. She is a longtime docent at the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center and is a child survivor of the Minidoka Concentration Camp. She often speaks about her experience to others so that this part of American history is never forgotten.

COLLECTIONS UP CLOSE

Museum docent Joni Kimoto recently donated a family photo album to the permanent collection of Oregon Nikkei Endowment. The album dates from 1913 to 1919 and offers a rare look at daily life in Portland’s Nihonmachi. The album was put together by Kimoto’s great-aunt Michiko (Mary) Akamatsu. Most of the photos are of the Akamatsu and Inouye families who once lived in Nihonmachi. The Akamatsu-Inouye families operated the Mikado restaurant, bathhouse, laundry and hotel from 1910 to 1936. The album is a record of a family newly arrived in America with photographs that range from formal portraits to casual snapshots of picnics, parade floats, pets and boat trips.

Photo albums became popular in 1900 when the Kodak Brownie camera was invented. This hand-held camera was easy to use; it came preloaded with film for one hundred photos and instructions on how to take pictures. Family outings, dinners, birthday parties and even places of work could be captured with the click of a button. People began to amass thousands of family photos that could be collected and arranged in photo albums such as this one. The creator often embellished the albums with drawings, captions written in white ink and photos cut into interesting shapes.

This photo album is a welcome addition to our collection, and we are grateful to Joni Kimoto for sharing this precious artifact.
OREGON’S NIKKEI LEGACY FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNERS

During 2019, the docent team took Oregon’s Japanese American story on the road from schools in Vancouver to Oregon City, to teacher conferences in Salem and senior centers in Hood River, and to the Minidoka Concentration Camp in southern Idaho. This year alone, over 3,000 people learned about Oregon’s Nikkei history.

The Oregon Nikkei Endowment is also partnering with the Minoru Yasui Legacy Project to bring the Min Yasui story into classrooms and communities across the United States. With the new documentary, “Never Give Up! Minoru Yasui and the Fight for Justice,” the Oregon Nikkei Endowment has worked with Min’s daughter Holly Yasui to create educational material for the film. Four student winners of the 2nd annual Minoru Yasui Day Essay contest were given awards on March 28, 2019. The 2020 Minoru Yasui Day Student contest will take the form of “Make Your Own Exhibit!” For more information go to oregonnikkei.org/education.htm

2020 Contest Prompt: Reflecting on Yasui’s legacy during the Redress movement of the 1980s, create an action plan for a civil rights violation that our country should redress today (to apologize for, to set right).

Kurt Ikeda, Education Manager (photographed above), is very appreciative of the open arms with which the Portland Nikkei community has welcomed him. Drawing upon his experience as a high school English teacher, he aims to finish out 2019 by cultivating a more robust docent staff, connecting the arts to education programming, and creating deeper connections between the stories of today to the WWII Nikkei experience.

NO MORE TEARS

On June 22, 2019 Oregon’s Japanese American community and allies stood in solidarity with the protest being held that day at Fort Sill against the incarceration of migrant children seeking asylum. Over 150 people participated in the event at the Japanese American Historical Plaza, many from communities that share the traumatic history of Fort Sill. Japanese Americans who were child survivors of incarceration during WWII, shared their story alongside speakers from Portland’s Native American and Latinx communities.

Tsuru for Solidarity

With the momentum from No More Tears, Oregonians are joining the national Tsuru for Solidarity movement to say “Never again is NOW.” Tsuru for Solidarity is a nonviolent, direct action project of Japanese American social justice advocates working to end detention sites and support front-line immigrant and refugee communities that are being targeted by racist, inhumane immigration policies.

Tsuru for Solidarity is planning a protest in Washington D.C. on June 5-7, 2020. Oregon supporters of Tsuru have set a goal of folding 10,000 of the 125,000 origami cranes, or tsuru, that will be brought to the White House as expressions of solidarity with immigrant and refugee communities that are under attack today. Come by the Legacy Center’s crane folding station in the main exhibit for more information on how to get involved on the local level. For additional information, sign up for the Tsuru for Solidarity National email list at their website tsuruforsolidarity.org.
Thank you to our donors through September 30, 2019

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Thank you to our donors through September 30, 2019
In February of 2019, Oregon Nikkei Endowment joined over 20 organizations in the Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium (JACSC) in Washington D.C. for three days of advocacy, community building, and strategizing. Our Consortium visited our respective elected officials to advocate for fully funding the Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program at $2.9 Million for FY 2020. Oregon Nikkei Endowment has been a recipient of the JACSC grant and encouraged our senators to support making this grant a permanently funded program. In May of 2019, the House Appropriations Committee recommended $3,155,000 for Japanese Confinement Site Grants, an increase of $250,000 above the enacted level and $3,155,000 above the budget request.

The JACSC is comprised of organizations committed to collectively preserving, protecting, and interpreting the history of the World War II experiences of Japanese Americans and elevating the related social justice lessons that inform current issues today. Members include the ten War Relocation Authority confinement sites, as well as historical organizations, endowments, museums, commissions, and educational institutes.

O.N.E. Executive Director, Lynn Fuchigami Parks and Education Manager, Kurt Ikeda visiting Oregon Senator Jeff Merkley to advocate for funding of the JACSC program.
For the past year we have been showcasing exciting new work by Japanese American emerging artists in our back gallery. Portlander A’msa Chiu’s exhibition, *mirror images/mere images*, featured vibrant, playful paintings of five generations of her family members based on family snapshots. Portland artist and educator, Lynn Yarne explored the history and culture of Portland’s Japantown/Chinatown district through the stories of nine elders in her multi-media exhibit, *Stories from Nihonmachi*. In her exhibit *Fabric & Skin*, Oakland based tattoo artist/artist, Allie Takahashi presented large scale multi-media pieces based on the visual language of the ukiyo-e (Edo-period Japanese woodblock prints).

Following the emerging artists exhibitions we collaborated with Portland Taiko on an exhibit tracing Portland Taiko’s 25-year history. Curated by Portland Taiko executive director Wynn Kiyama, the exhibit featured photographs, videos of performances and artifacts from the rich history of this beloved institution.

Finally and perhaps most important, after submitting Request For Proposals to several national design firms, we chose AldrichPears Associates to design our new permanent exhibit. We have been working closely with them to design an exciting new exhibition that traces the history of Japanese Americans in Oregon.

With the support of a grant from Oregon Heritage Commission, we translated ten special issues of the Oshu Nippo newspaper produced in Nihonmachi from 1906–1953. The issues date from 1918 to 1925 and can be found on our website. Led by Yoko Gulde, a team of over fifty Portland volunteers and ninety-six Sapporo volunteers translated the newspapers. A delegation of Sapporo visiting dignitaries and some of the translators visited the museum in July (see Oshu Nippo Reception, page 3). The culmination of the project included a trip to Sapporo to honor the translators. Yoko Gulde, O.N.E. board member Sean Egusa, and Mayor Ted Wheeler were part of the visiting delegation.

We received a two-year National Park Service Japanese American Confinement Site grant to catalog and make available online documents, artifacts and photographs from our permanent collection associated with Minidoka. So far over 140 records have been posted online and 640 items are in various stages of being cataloged. A kiosk has been installed in the museum to allow visitors to view the Minidoka collection online. Two “interactive trunks” are being designed to expand the Minidoka story. One will be on permanent display in the new museum and the other will travel to various locations throughout the northwest.
YES, I WANT TO JOIN!

My support will help ensure that the history, art and culture of the Nikkei are preserved and shared with the community for generations to come.

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PAGE 9
Can you tell us a bit about yourself?
My name is Bridget Keaveney, and I graduated from PSU’s online degree program with a degree in Arts and Letters and Social Science, as well as a minor in International Studies. I grew up in a bilingual household with my mother being Japanese and my father being Irish-American. My father is a professor of Japanese Language and East Asian Studies and this has given our family the privilege to travel with him abroad on multiple occasions. I feel honored to have been introduced at such a young age to different cultures and societies, as it has given me the ability to view things from different perspectives.

It’s been a pleasure seeing how excited and animated you are when talking about your time at the Oregon Nikkei Legacy Center. What inspired you to become involved with Oregon Nikkei Endowment?
I took an Ethnic Studies class titled “Mixed Race Descent in the Americas”. There, I first learned about the Japanese American incarceration during WWII. I was horrified, as an Oregonian and Shin-Nisei (second generation Japanese American born after World War II), that I was not aware of this atrocity. Despite my limited knowledge on this history, the information and etiquette that I gleaned from my academic work allowed me to further understand the experience of Japanese Americans during WWII.

What are the different projects you’ve worked on here?
As a collections cataloger, I had the opportunity to help expand the museum’s exhibits, assist in cultural and educational programming, as well as prepare and organize the historical collections for safekeeping. As a curatorial assistant to the Oshu Nippo Translation Project, I helped to digitize, translate, and format 10 Special Issues of the Oshu Nippo, a Japanese-language newspaper printed from 1906-1953. As an intern, I loved exploring and observing what working in a museum is like.

What has been a highlight of your involvement with Oregon Nikkei Endowment?
I plan to take with me the ethics, standards, and professional practices I learned through this experience into my future career. I succeeded in not only meeting each of my learning objectives, but surpassing them as well. I’m grateful to have witnessed the ways my colleagues advocate for social justice. Their hard work in securing the museum’s financial sustainability, while also spreading its message, is truly awe-inspiring.

What advice would you give to others who are thinking about volunteering at Oregon Nikkei Endowment?
I would highly recommend the experience to other students who are interested in preserving and upholding the legacy of Japanese Americans. I would suggest to anyone interested in becoming an intern at ONLC to have a strong enthusiasm for Japanese culture, art, history, and social justice. ONLC provides a great opportunity for students wishing to help preserve historical cultural artifacts, the opportunity to work for a non-profit, and the chance to help design a space made for community engagement.

There are many ways to volunteer at Oregon Nikkei Endowment. We are always looking for docents, tour guides and front office help, along with volunteers for special projects and events.

To volunteer with us visit: www.oregonnikkei.org/volunteer.htm or contact us at: info@oregonnikkei.org
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Michael Hosokawa

In honor of Connie Masuoka’s birthday
Debbie Corry
Kay Endo
Lynn & Scott Grannan
Mary Shotton
Linda Tamura
Marleen & Roger Wallingford

In honor of Yoji & Martha Matsushima
Patrick Davis

In honor of Joni Kimoto
Mary Jacobs

In honor of Oregon Nikkei Endowment’s 30th Anniversary
Dana Kakishita, Chieko Kaishita, & Minnie Young

Our 7th Annual Cherry Blossom Bazaar on March 30 and 31, 2019 was our best one yet! Over $13,000 was raised to help fund the mission of Oregon Nikkei Endowment. Nearly 1,000 people came through over those two days.

Thank you to all our volunteers, donors, and shoppers.

Photograph courtesy of James Rodgers
MISSION
The mission of Oregon Nikkei Endowment is to preserve and honor the history and culture of the Japanese Americans in the Northwest, to educate the public about the Japanese American experience during World War II, and to advocate for the protection of civil rights for all.

The Oregon Nikkei Endowment newsletter is published to inform the Japanese American community, its friends, supporters, and the general public of its ongoing work in promoting an appreciation of the culture and historic legacy passed on to us by our immigrant forebears.

Below: Japanese American Confinement Sites Consortium members representing 20 organizations gather around House Speaker Nancy Pelosi after meeting in her office in the U.S. Capitol. Photograph by Brian Liesinger

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Sunday 12 PM to 3 PM
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