



# JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE/JACL

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## JACL PRESS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### JACL MOURNS PASSING OF ETSU MINETA MASAOKA

**Washington, D.C., --** The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization, deeply mourns the passing of Etsu Mineta Masaoka, a dedicated member of the JACL. She passed away yesterday. Etsu devoted her life to the causes that were important to her husband, Mike Masaoka, and to her. She attended nearly every local JACL event in the Washington, D.C. area and has attended most of the National JACL Conventions over the past sixty years; Etsu was planning to attend this year's Convention in Los Angeles with her granddaughter, Michelle Amano, and son in law, Richard Amano.

Etsu first saw Mike Masaoka on a Greyhound bus ride from San Francisco to the JACL convention in Monterey in 1941 and met later that night at a dance. However, on December 7, 1941, when Japan attacked the Pearl Harbor naval base in Hawaii, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed Executive Order 9066 which sent the Mineta family, including her brother, the Honorable Norman Mineta, to Heart Mountain, Wyoming.

Etsu was able to leave the camp when she rode a bus alone to Salt Lake City to marry Mike Masaoka in 1943. She did not know until she arrived that Mike had already volunteered for the Army. They married and then lived in a rented room until he was inducted. Mike Masaoka later said: "Etsu deserves an equal share of the credit for anything I may have been able to accomplish."

National Executive Director of the JACL, Floyd Mori, said, "We are extremely saddened by the passing of Etsu, who has been a great friend to the JACL. She and her husband, Mike, have dedicated their lives to the JACL. We are very grateful for the life she has lived and the great example she has been to all of us. We express our deepest condolences to her family."

David Kawamoto, National President of the JACL, added: "I was deeply saddened when I received a call from the family of Etsu Masaoka informing me that Etsu has passed away. Etsu, the wife of JACL icon Mike Masaoka and sister of Norman Mineta, is a JACL icon in her own right."

Etsu was preceded in death by her husband and two children. Our deepest condolences go out to the Mineta, Masaoka, and Amano families.

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