



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

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JACL CELEBRATES THE UNVEILING OF SECRETARY'S PORTRAIT

Washington, D.C.—The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization, congratulates former Congressman and Secretary Norman Y. Mineta, whose portrait is now part of the permanent collection at the National Portrait Gallery (NPG) in the Nation's capital. With a growing number of Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) leaders in government today, it is with the greatest privilege that the JACL honors Secretary Norman Mineta, who was one of the first wave of great AAPI leaders in government and has opened many doors for the AAPI community.

Secretary Mineta's portrait, painted by artist Everett Raymond Kinstler, was unveiled on July 26, 2010, with a reception following the ceremony honoring the former cabinet member at the NPG as part of the *New Arrivals* Collection. It was a gift from the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program to the NPG with donors from within the community. Following remarks from the Deputy Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Carolyn K. Carr, the Smithsonian Institute's Undersecretary for History, Art, and Culture, Richard Kurin, and Acting Director of the Smithsonian Institute's Asian Pacific American Program, Konrad Ng, former Secretary Mineta also addressed those in attendance celebrating the unveiling of his portrait. He reminisced about his past that has resulted in a permanent place at the Gallery, and shared stories of his experience in service to the nation and of his family and their struggles as Japanese Americans during a time of animosity against them.

"It is with great pride that we see Secretary Mineta's remarkable story of leadership and service honored in the Portrait Gallery," said Asian Pacific American Program Acting Director Ng. "He represents the key roles that Asian Pacific Americans have played in U.S. culture, history and politics."

A pioneer in AAPI politics, Secretary Mineta was born in San Jose, California, where he later became Mayor. He also served as a Member of Congress, co-founding the Congressional Asian Pacific American Caucus (CAPAC), and leading the passage of H.R. 442, the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, an official government apology for the incarceration of those of Japanese ancestry during World War II. Appointed Secretary of Commerce by President Bill Clinton, and then Secretary of Transportation by President George W. Bush, Mineta served until his retirement in 2006, when he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian award. Since the 1960's, Secretary Mineta has been an active part of the JACL, and today serves as a great presence in the AAPI community.

Inclusion in the NPG is an attestation to an individual's contribution to American culture and history. Each portrait is recognition of the importance of an individual in U.S. history. The Portrait Gallery includes Presidents, visionaries, and activists, among those whose lives tell the American story. The Secretary's portrait is also part of an effort in having more living sittings as part of the collection of portraits at the Gallery.

The JACL supported the project from its inception. JACL National Executive Director, Floyd Mori, who attended the unveiling ceremony, stated: “Norman Mineta has been a great member and supporter of the JACL as well as an outstanding leader for all Asian Americans and the country as a whole. We are proud of him and congratulate him for his accomplishments and example of true leadership. The JACL joins with others in expressing thanks for his many years of service to the nation. This latest honor is well deserved.”

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