



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

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PRESS RELEASE

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JACL GALA TO HONOR CAPPY HARADA

Washington, D.C. -- The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL), the nation's oldest and largest Asian American civil and human rights organization, will be holding its Gala, "A Salute to Champions" in Washington, D.C. on September 29, 2011. This year's Gala will award Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders who have made outstanding contributions to the field of athletics, and the JACL is proud honor Tsueno "Cappy" Harada posthumously at the 2011 National JACL Gala.

"There are many who have tried to bridge the gap between Major League Baseball in North America and the game as it is played in Japan, but perhaps no one has done more for Major League Baseball-Nippon Professional Baseball (MLB-NPB) relations than Tsuneo "Cappy" Harada.

Harada was born in Santa Maria, California., in 1921. He was a high school and semi-pro ballplayer supposedly scouted by the St. Louis Cardinals prior to the outbreak of World War II but, like many Japanese-Americans, he was caught in no man's land after the attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 and wound up in the U.S. military intelligence service working in the Pacific.

Harada's contributions in building the "baseball bridge across the Pacific" are extremely noteworthy. He is credited with advising Japanese baseball officials as they set up the two-league system in 1950 and suggesting the Japan Series between the winners of the two league pennants be staged as the local version of MLB's World Series.

He helped another Japanese-American, Wally Yonamine from Hawaii, become the first post-war foreign player in Japan when Wally joined the Tokyo Giants in 1951. That opened the door for the more than 850 gaikokujin who have since played, managed, coached and umpired in Japanese baseball.

Cappy was also instrumental in arranging goodwill tours of Japan by American teams, including those led by Lefty O'Doul, the minor league San Francisco Seals in 1949 and major league All-Star teams in the early-1950s.

Most notably, he brought the "Yankee Clipper" Joe DiMaggio, to Tokyo in 1954 along with his bride Marilyn Monroe. They were on their honeymoon.

Harada continued his baseball diplomacy in the following decades, sending several former major leaguers from the U.S. to play for Japanese teams and working out the agreement whereby the Pacific League's Nankai Hawks sent then-19-year-old left-handed pitcher Masanori Murakami to the San Francisco Giants. "Mashi" became the first Japanese player in the majors in 1964.

As late as the mid-1980s, Harada was still sending American players to Japan and doing other work to strengthen the baseball alliance between the two countries, until player agents got

involved and relations between the MLB and NPB and their respective commissioner's offices began to heat up.

Harada passed away on June 5, 2010 at the age of 88 in California. Although he may not have envisioned it 50 or 60 years ago, Harada can take pride in knowing that he had something to do with the eventual success in the majors of Japanese stars such as Hideo Nomo, Ichiro Suzuki and Hideki Matsui” (WAYNE GRACZYK, search.japantimes.co.jp).

JACL National Executive Director Floyd Mori said, “Cappy Harada is an unsung hero of bringing diversity to MLB. Not only did he bring the first player from Japan to the US, but he encouraged MLB to open more doors of opportunity for minorities in all aspects of the League. In addition his promotion of the “Big League” stars to Japan gave a war torn Japan reason to cheer and to make baseball Japan's national pastime.”

The JACL is proud to honor Cappy Harada for his outstanding leadership and contributions to MLB-NPB relations. His legacy lives on to this day. For more information regarding the 2011 National JACL Gala, please visit: www.jacl.org.

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