



JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE / JACL

Headquarters: 1765 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115
DC Office: 1828 L Street NW, Suite 802 • Washington, DC • 20036
Phone: (202) 223-1240 • Fax: (202) 296-8082 • E-mail: natdir@jacl.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
SEPTEMBER 25, 2009

CONTACT: PATTY WADA
(415) 345-1075

JACL Praises CSU Decision to Grant Honorary Degrees to JA Students

San Francisco -- The Japanese American Citizens League (JACL) praised the California State University Board of Trustees for its decision to grant honorary bachelor's degrees to Japanese Americans who were enrolled at CSU campuses, but forced to leave school due to Executive Order 9066.

The September 22 vote by the CSU Board of Trustees was unanimous. CSU Chancellor Charles B. Reed stated, "Hundreds of students were removed from colleges and universities, forced to delay or abandon their dreams based solely on their ancestry. The internment of Japanese Americans and Japanese immigrants represents the worst of a nation driven by fear and prejudice. By issuing honorary degrees, we hope to achieve a small right in the face of such grave wrongs."

The JACL Chapters throughout California sent in letters to support Assembly Bill 37, introduced by Assembly Member Warren Furutani. This bill directs California's post-secondary education institutions to extend honorary degrees to individuals who were abruptly forced to leave school, abandon their homes and report to concentration camps during World War II.

In July, the University of California Board of Regents also voted to award honorary degrees to students of Japanese ancestry who were enrolled at a UC campus at the time of their removal and confinement.

JACL National Director Floyd Mori commented, "While the injustice suffered by Japanese Americans during World War II can never be totally reversed, the University of California and the California State University system are to be commended for recognition of the wrong and providing this long overdue acknowledgment to their former students."

Historical records show that close to 250 Americans of Japanese ancestry were attending CSU campuses when President Franklin Roosevelt issued EO 9066. Campuses in existence at the time included Chico, Fresno, Humboldt, Pomona, San Diego, San Francisco, San Luis Obispo, San Jose and the California Maritime Academy.

JACL National President Larry Oda said, "We are pleased that the California State University system has acknowledged the damage done to the educational dreams and careers of Japanese American students. We are also grateful for Assembly Member Furutani's dedication and effort to honor these Americans of Japanese descent who were forced to abandon their studies."

Former CSU students or surviving family members of students whose educations were interrupted due to EO 9066 are asked to call (562) 951-4723 or email nisei@calstate.edu.

###