



California Nisei College Diploma Project

1840 Sutter Street

San Francisco, CA 94115

(P)415.567.5505

(F)415.567.4222

(E)caniseiproject@jcccnc.org

ASSEMBLYMEMBER WARREN FURUTANI

of the 55th Assembly District authored AB 37, the bill authorizing postsecondary educational institutions to confer honorary degrees to Japanese Americans who were incarcerated during World War II.



"It is not only about correcting a wrong, it's about real history, real stories, tragic and triumphant, it's about teaching a new generation about their own history, it's about making good on a promise 67 years old."

-Assemblymember Warren Furutani.

THE CALIFORNIA NISEI COLLEGE DIPLOMA PROJECT

was established to provide community outreach and education for a new law, AB 37. The *California Nisei College Diploma Project* seeks to identify and support individuals of Japanese descent who were unable to complete their college education in the State of California because of forced removal and incarceration during World War II.



*Mary Okumura Kitahara receives her diploma at Mountain View High School
(Photo courtesy of: Dan Miranda/Los Altos Town Crier)*

- *Issei* – first generation Japanese immigrants
- *Nisei* – second generation, U.S. born children of the Issei
- *Executive Order 9066*: order issued by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, which resulted in the removal of all persons of Japanese ancestry from the West Coast.

What is Assembly Bill 37?

Assembly Bill 37, signed into California State Law on October 11, 2009 [Chapter 213, Statutes of 2009], authorizes all California State Universities and California Community Colleges in the State of California to retroactively grant an honorary degree to any former pupil who was incarcerated in the United States by order of the federal government during World War II.



Norman Hirose, Margaret Kusaba, and Robert Hata at the Berkeley High School graduation ceremony in May 2004.

What will the California Nisei College Diploma Project do?

California Nisei College Diploma Project will provide community outreach, educate the general public, and honor former detainees or any of their family members through Assembly Bill 37. The project plans are as follows:

- **Coordinate** community outreach efforts to identify and locate those eligible to benefit from the legislation, to ensure that all eligible Japanese Americans are informed about this opportunity made possible by AB 37.
- **Support** educators and administrators through the three college systems, providing community resource support on AB 37 and information on related Japanese American experiences during World War II.
- **Honor** former incarcerated students whose college years were interrupted due to Executive Order 9066 by working and encouraging California's public college and university systems to include Nisei and/or their families in their 2009-2010 commencement ceremonies.
- **Educate** the public about AB 37 and encourage an exchange of "living history" between former incarcerated students and current college students through shared commencement ceremonies.

California Nisei College Diploma Project is a project of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC)
1840 Sutter Street, San Francisco, CA 94115-3220 (415) 567-5505 www.jcccnc.org

Funding by the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program, a program of the California State Library, and in cooperation with Union Bank
(Photos courtesy of Mark Coplan and Berkeley Unified School District)



APPLICATION PROCESS

How can I receive a retroactive honorary degree for the class of 1942 to 1945?

Individuals (or their family members) can apply to *California Nisei College Diploma Project* or the postsecondary educational institution (UC, CSU, CCC) in which you or they were formerly enrolled.

Who may apply?

Japanese Americans who were residing in the State of California and whose college years were interrupted due to the forced removal and incarceration during World War II (February 1942 - August 1945) are eligible to apply. A family member can also submit an application on behalf of an eligible individual, living or deceased.

What are the requirements?

The *California Nisei College Diploma Project* is available to help make the process as simple as possible.

Applications are to be sent to either *California Nisei College Diploma Project* or the appropriate postsecondary institution (UC, CSU, CCC) in which you were (or would have been) formerly enrolled.

What will happen after I apply?

- 1) Once your application is received, *California Nisei College Diploma Project* or the postsecondary institution (UC, CSU, CCC) will request a diploma from the particular college you have indicated.
- 2) You will be notified by the college or the institution office of the status of your request. Each college may vary in the way in which diplomas are issued and recognition is given. However, colleges are encouraged to properly acknowledge and recognize you as a member of the graduating college class in the State of California.
- 3) *California Nisei College Diploma Project* requests postsecondary institutions to notify us of any honorary college graduates who will be recognized in compliance with AB 37.

The collaboration will help to facilitate community outreach and assist honorees and their families with the process.



Robert Hata receives his high school diploma, as members of Berkeley High School's Class of 2004 look on.

Who is involved with the *California Nisei College Diploma Project*?

California Nisei High School Diploma Project, a project administered by the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC), is supported through a grant from the California Civil Liberties Public Education Program and in cooperation with Union Bank. It is also endorsed by Assembly Member Warren Furutani, 55th District of the California Legislature.

California Nisei College Diploma Project invites educators and community organizations to join in support of the project. The following is a partial list of community supporters:

American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees • Arlene Inouye, Individual • Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach • California Japanese American Community Leadership Council • California State Student Association • Community Works West • Japanese American Citizens League - N. California - W. Nevada – Pacific District and Pacific Southwest District • Japanese American Cultural and Community Center • Japanese American Museum of San Jose • Japanese American National Museum • Japanese American Religious Federation • Japanese American Services of the East Bay • Japantown Community Congress of San Jose • Japanese Community Youth Council • Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California • Jon Kaji, Individual • Lewis Kawahara, College of San Mateo • Little Tokyo Service Center • National Japanese American Historical Society • Nikkei for Civil Rights and Redress • Nisei Student Relocation Commemorative Fund • San Francisco Japanese American Citizens League • Union Bank • University of Southern California Asian Pacific Alumni Association • Yu-Ai Kai/Japanese American Community Senior Service

For more information or questions, please contact the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) at (415) 567-5505 or email CANiseiProject@jcccnc.org

University of California (UC) inquiries:
UC Berkeley, UC Davis and UC San Francisco contact:
Jeffrey Chu, Project Coordinator x 234

UC Los Angeles contact:
Aya Ino, Project Coordinator x 228

California State University (CSU) and California Community College (CCC) inquiries:
Courtney Okuhara, Project Coordinator x 229

You may also contact schools directly:

University of California
(510) 987-0239, HonoraryDegree@ucop.edu

California State University
(562) 951-4723, Nisei@calstate.edu

California Community College
(916) 327-5361, lmichalo@cccco.edu

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