



+ CALIFORNIA NISEI COLLEGE DIPLOMA PROJECT
Dreams Finally Realized
December 2009 | San Francisco

The Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California (JCCCNC) coordinated the state wide California Nisei College Diploma Project to provide support for Assembly Bill 37, authored by Assembly Member Warren Furutani, that bestowed honorary degrees to Japanese American citizens, living or deceased, who were forced to leave their college studies and were incarcerated in America's concentration camps during World War II.

Over 2,500 students of Japanese ancestry were estimated to have been in school at the time of the incarceration, with the Nisei (or second generation Japanese Americans) as the largest number affected. Under this project, the JCCCNC reached out and assisted 18 schools. Each school hosted their own graduation ceremony for the Nisei, allowing everyone from the student body to the general public to witness and learn about this historic part of our community.

2009 became a memorable and rewarding year for hundreds of Nisei and for the Japanese American community. The Nisei were finally honored with an opportunity to heal from a grave injustice and from the loss of critical school years during their youth. They walked on stage in their cap and gowns, received their diplomas from their respective universities and displayed big smiles for cameras to capture. This was an empowering movement for not only the Nisei but also for the Japanese American community because the state of California and the universities throughout California were finally able to recognize the significant impact of Executive Order 9066 (EO9066) on the constituents of the Japanese American community through a formal and public commemorative event. The California Nisei College Diploma Project was an emotional celebration that genuinely appertained to correcting and fulfilling a promise 67 years later; thus, it was also a significant opportunity to educate others of the events surrounding EO9066.

The CA Nisei Project succeeded in providing community outreach, education and support to individuals of Japanese descent who were unable to complete their college education in the State of California. The JCCCNC located approximately 900 Nisei and their family members amongst the 1,800 names of eligible recipients.