

# Message for dinner honoring Col. Young O. Kim

Senator Spark M. Matsunaga Papers

Senate, Public relations, Speeches, Organizations, Box PR79, Folder 62

<https://hdl.handle.net/10524/82969>

---

Items in eVols are protected by copyright, with all rights reserved, unless otherwise indicated.

*UHM Library Digital Collections Disclaimer and Copyright Information*

MEMBERS OF THE  
BOARD OF THE JAPANESE  
AMERICAN NATIONAL  
MUSEUM, DISTINGUISHED  
GUESTS, FRIENDS AND  
SUPPORTERS OF THE  
MUSEUM: ALOHA! IT IS  
A GREAT PLEASURE TO  
JOIN YOU TONIGHT IN  
HONORING ONE OF OUR  
NATION'S MOST  
OUTSTANDING ASIAN  
AMERICANS, MY DEAR  
FRIEND AND BUDDY  
COLONEL YOUNG O. KIM.

I FIRST MET  
YOUNG KIM WHEN HE WAS  
ASSIGNED TO THE  
100TH INFANTRY  
BATTALION, THE ALL  
NISEI BATTALION WHICH  
WAS ORGANIZED IN HAWAII  
OUT OF MEN WHO WERE  
ALREADY ON ACTIVE  
MILITARY SERVICE PRIOR  
TO THE OUTBREAK OF  
WORLD WAR II ON  
DECEMBER 7, 1941.

BECAUSE THERE WERE A  
NUMBER OF THOSE WHO  
WERE ASSIGNED TO THE  
100TH BATTALION WHO  
WERE PART JAPANESE,  
WITH NON-JAPANESE  
NAMES, WE JUST ASSUMED  
THAT YOUNG KIM WAS PART  
JAPANESE. WHEN  
PRESIDENT  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT  
GRANTED OUR PETITION,  
SIGNED BY EVERY MEMBER  
OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY OF  
THE BATTALION, TO SEND  
US TO THE BATTLEFRONT  
SO WE COULD PROVE OUR  
LOYALTY TO THE  
UNITED STATES, ALL  
NON-JAPANESE ASSIGNED  
TO THE BATTALION WERE  
GRANTED THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO LEAVE THE BATTALION.  
BECAUSE OF HIS  
NON-JAPANESE ANCESTRY  
LIEUTENANT YOUNG KIM  
WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE  
TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE

COMBAT-DESTINED 100TH  
INFANTRY BATTALION, IF  
HE CHOSE TO DO SO.  
WITHOUT GIVING SECOND  
THOUGHT TO THIS GRAVE  
MATTER OF POSSIBLE  
DEATH ON THE  
BATTLEFIELD, HE  
DECLINED THE TRANSFER,  
SAYING: "WE ARE ALL  
AMERICANS. WE ARE ALL  
FIGHTING FOR THE SAME  
CAUSE. I DON'T SEE WHY  
I CAN'T STAY WITH THIS  
UNIT?"

THAT SEEMINGLY  
INSIGNIFICANT DECISION  
MADE BY AN UNKNOWN,  
YOUNG ARMY LIEUTENANT  
WAS LATER TO DEVELOP  
INTO A LIFE-SAVER FOR  
HUNDREDS OF HIS  
COMRADES IN THE  
100TH BATTALION AND  
442ND REGIMENTAL  
COMBAT-TEAM. IT WAS  
THE BEGINNING OF ONE OF  
OUR NATION'S MOST

BRILLIANT MILITARY  
CAREERS. FROM THE  
TIME, HE CAPTURED THE  
FIRST TWO GERMAN  
SOLDIERS ON THE ITALIAN  
FRONT, WITHOUT FIRING A  
SINGLE SHOT, TO THE  
TIME WHEN HE SAVED  
COUNTLESS AMERICAN  
LIVES TO WIN THE  
NATIONS 2ND HIGHEST  
AWARD FOR VALOR, THE  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
CROSS, YOUNG KIM FOUGHT  
WITH A DEEP-ROOTED  
CONVICTION THAT  
REGARDLESS OF RACE OR  
ANCESTRY WE WHO CALLED  
OURSELVES AMERICANS  
WERE ALL FIGHTING TO  
PRESERVE THAT GREAT  
HERITAGE GUARANTEED BY  
OUR FEDERAL  
CONSTITUTION: LIFE  
LIBERTY, EQUALITY,  
JUSTICE AND THE PURSUIT  
OF HAPPINESS. HIS  
CONVICTION WAS SO

STRONG THAT HE LED MANY  
OTHERS TO FOLLOW IN HIS  
FOOTSTEPS. BY HIS  
COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP,  
HE NOT ONLY WON THE  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
CROSS, HE ALSO RECEIVED  
THE SILVER STAR WITH  
OAK LEAF CLUSTER, THE  
LEGION OF MERIT WITH  
CLUSTER, THE BRONZE  
STAR, THREE PURPLE  
HEARTS, THE ITALIAN  
CROSS OF VALOR AND THE  
FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE,  
AMONG OTHER  
DECORATIONS.

IN THE SAME  
SPIRIT, SINCE HIS  
RETIREMENT FROM THE  
ARMY, COLONEL, AS HIS  
FRIENDS NOW CALL HIM,  
HAS DISTINGUISHED  
HIMSELF AS A COMMUNITY  
LEADER, SERVING ON THE  
BOARD OF THE UNITED WAY  
OF LOS ANGELES, AS A  
BOARD MEMBER OF THE

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF  
THE KEIRO HOMES, AS AN  
ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE  
100TH/442ND VETERANS  
ASSOCIATION, AND AS A  
MEMBER OF THE KOREAN  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION.

IF THERE WERE A  
CIVILIAN DISTINGUISHED  
SERVICE CROSS AWARDED  
FOR PROMOTING BETTER  
UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE  
DIVERSE COMMUNITIES OF  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA,  
FOR SERVICE TO HIS  
NEIGHBORS, AND FOR  
MAKING LOS ANGELES A  
BETTER PLACE IN WHICH  
TO LIVE, HE WOULD NO  
DOUBT RECEIVE IT.

PERHAPS THE MOST  
AMBITIOUS AND  
FARSIGHTED PROJECT  
WHICH COLONEL HAS  
UNDERTAKEN TO DATE IS  
THE FOUNDING OF THE  
JAPANESE AMERICAN  
NATIONAL MUSEUM.

INITIATED IN 1985, THE  
MUSEUM IS INTENDED TO  
COLLECT, PRESERVE AND  
INTERPRET THE HISTORY  
OF THE JAPANESE IN  
AMERICA FOR ALL  
AMERICANS. LED BY  
COLONEL AND ITS OTHER  
FOUNDERS, THE MUSEUM  
HAS INCORPORATED THE  
IDEAS AND ASPIRATIONS  
OF A COMMITTED GROUP OF  
GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERS.  
ITS PROGRESS HAS BEEN  
TRULY REMARKABLE. IN  
ONLY TWO YEARS, THE  
MUSEUM HAS ACQUIRED A  
PERMANENT SITE -- THE  
HISTORIC NISHI  
HONGWANJI BUDDHIST  
TEMPLE -- AND FUNDS TO  
BEGIN RESTORING THE  
TEMPLE. THAT SO MUCH  
HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED  
IN SO SHORT A PERIOD IS  
A REAL TRIBUTE TO THE  
"SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP"  
WHICH IS THE THEME OF

THIS DINNER, HONORING  
YOUNG O. KIM.

AS AN HONORARY  
BOARD MEMBER OF THE  
MUSEUM, I DO HOPE THAT  
YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE  
TO WORK IN THE SPIRIT  
OF FRIENDSHIP AND IN  
THE "GO FOR BROKE"  
SPIRIT TO REALIZE  
COLONEL'S AND OUR DREAM  
AND TO MAKE THE MUSEUM  
A REALITY. TO YOU  
COLONEL: BANZAI!

MEMBERS OF THE  
BOARD OF THE JAPANESE  
AMERICAN NATIONAL  
MUSEUM, DISTINGUISHED  
GUESTS, FRIENDS AND  
SUPPORTERS OF THE  
MUSEUM: ALOHA! IT IS  
A GREAT PLEASURE TO  
JOIN YOU TONIGHT IN  
HONORING ONE OF OUR  
NATION'S MOST  
OUTSTANDING ASIAN  
AMERICANS, MY DEAR  
FRIEND AND BUDDY  
COLONEL YOUNG O. KIM.

I FIRST MET  
YOUNG KIM WHEN HE WAS  
ASSIGNED TO THE  
100TH INFANTRY  
BATTALION, THE ALL  
NISEI BATTALION WHICH  
WAS ORGANIZED IN HAWAII  
OUT OF MEN WHO WERE  
ALREADY ON ACTIVE  
MILITARY SERVICE PRIOR  
TO THE OUTBREAK OF  
WORLD WAR II ON  
DECEMBER 7, 1941.

BECAUSE THERE WERE A  
NUMBER OF THOSE WHO  
WERE ASSIGNED TO THE  
100TH BATTALION WHO  
WERE PART JAPANESE,  
WITH NON-JAPANESE  
NAMES, WE JUST ASSUMED  
THAT YOUNG KIM WAS PART  
JAPANESE. WHEN  
PRESIDENT  
FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT  
GRANTED OUR PETITION,  
SIGNED BY EVERY MEMBER  
OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY OF  
THE BATTALION, TO SEND  
US TO THE BATTLEFRONT  
SO WE COULD PROVE OUR  
LOYALTY TO THE  
UNITED STATES, ALL  
NON-JAPANESE ASSIGNED  
TO THE BATTALION WERE  
GRANTED THE OPPORTUNITY  
TO LEAVE THE BATTALION.  
BECAUSE OF HIS  
NON-JAPANESE ANCESTRY  
LIEUTENANT YOUNG KIM  
WAS PRIVILEGED TO BE  
TRANSFERRED OUT OF THE

COMBAT-DESTINED 100TH  
INFANTRY BATTALION, IF  
HE CHOSE TO DO SO.  
WITHOUT GIVING SECOND  
THOUGHT TO THIS GRAVE  
MATTER OF POSSIBLE  
DEATH ON THE  
BATTLEFIELD, HE  
DECLINED THE TRANSFER,  
SAYING: "WE ARE ALL  
AMERICANS. WE ARE ALL  
FIGHTING FOR THE SAME  
CAUSE. I DON'T SEE WHY  
I CAN'T STAY WITH THIS  
UNIT?"

THAT SEEMINGLY  
INSIGNIFICANT DECISION  
MADE BY AN UNKNOWN,  
YOUNG ARMY LIEUTENANT  
WAS LATER TO DEVELOP  
INTO A LIFE-SAVER FOR  
HUNDREDS OF HIS  
COMRADES IN THE  
100TH BATTALION AND  
442ND REGIMENTAL  
COMBAT-TEAM. IT WAS  
THE BEGINNING OF ONE OF  
OUR NATION'S MOST

BRILLIANT MILITARY  
CAREERS. FROM THE  
TIME, HE CAPTURED THE  
FIRST TWO GERMAN  
SOLDIERS ON THE ITALIAN  
FRONT, WITHOUT FIRING A  
SINGLE SHOT, TO THE  
TIME WHEN HE SAVED  
COUNTLESS AMERICAN  
LIVES TO WIN THE  
NATIONS 2ND HIGHEST  
AWARD FOR VALOR, THE  
DISTINGUISHED SERVICE  
CROSS, YOUNG KIM FOUGHT  
WITH A DEEP-ROOTED  
CONVICTION THAT  
REGARDLESS OF RACE OR  
ANCESTRY WE WHO CALLED  
OURSELVES AMERICANS  
WERE ALL FIGHTING TO  
PRESERVE THAT GREAT  
HERITAGE GUARANTEED BY  
OUR FEDERAL  
CONSTITUTION: LIFE  
LIBERTY, EQUALITY,  
JUSTICE AND THE PURSUIT  
OF HAPPINESS. HIS  
CONVICTION WAS SO

STRONG THAT HE LED MANY OTHERS TO FOLLOW IN HIS FOOTSTEPS. BY HIS COURAGE AND LEADERSHIP, HE NOT ONLY WON THE DISTINGUISHED SERVICE CROSS, HE ALSO RECEIVED THE SILVER STAR WITH OAK LEAF CLUSTER, THE LEGION OF MERIT WITH CLUSTER, THE BRONZE STAR, THREE PURPLE HEARTS, THE ITALIAN CROSS OF VALOR AND THE FRENCH CROIX DE GUERRE, AMONG OTHER DECORATIONS.

IN THE SAME SPIRIT, SINCE HIS RETIREMENT FROM THE ARMY, COLONEL, AS HIS FRIENDS NOW CALL HIM, HAS DISTINGUISHED HIMSELF AS A COMMUNITY LEADER, SERVING ON THE BOARD OF THE UNITED WAY OF LOS ANGELES, AS A BOARD MEMBER OF THE

FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF  
THE KEIRO HOMES, AS AN  
ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE  
100TH/442ND VETERANS  
ASSOCIATION, AND AS A  
MEMBER OF THE KOREAN  
AMERICAN ASSOCIATION.

IF THERE WERE A  
CIVILIAN DISTINGUISHED  
SERVICE CROSS AWARDED  
FOR PROMOTING BETTER  
UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE  
DIVERSE COMMUNITIES OF  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA,  
FOR SERVICE TO HIS  
NEIGHBORS, AND FOR  
MAKING LOS ANGELES A  
BETTER PLACE IN WHICH  
TO LIVE, HE WOULD NO  
DOUBT RECEIVE IT.

PERHAPS THE MOST  
AMBITIOUS AND  
FARSIGHTED PROJECT  
WHICH COLONEL HAS  
UNDERTAKEN TO DATE IS  
THE FOUNDING OF THE  
JAPANESE AMERICAN  
NATIONAL MUSEUM.

INITIATED IN 1985, THE  
MUSEUM IS INTENDED TO  
COLLECT, PRESERVE AND  
INTERPRET THE HISTORY  
OF THE JAPANESE IN  
AMERICA FOR ALL  
AMERICANS. LED BY  
COLONEL AND ITS OTHER  
FOUNDERS, THE MUSEUM  
HAS INCORPORATED THE  
IDEAS AND ASPIRATIONS  
OF A COMMITTED GROUP OF  
GRASSROOTS VOLUNTEERS.  
ITS PROGRESS HAS BEEN  
TRULY REMARKABLE. IN  
ONLY TWO YEARS, THE  
MUSEUM HAS ACQUIRED A  
PERMANENT SITE -- THE  
HISTORIC NISHI  
HONGWANJI BUDDHIST  
TEMPLE -- AND FUNDS TO  
BEGIN RESTORING THE  
TEMPLE. THAT SO MUCH  
HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED  
IN SO SHORT A PERIOD IS  
A REAL TRIBUTE TO THE  
"SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP"  
WHICH IS THE THEME OF

THIS DINNER, HONORING  
YOUNG O. KIM.

AS AN HONORARY  
BOARD MEMBER OF THE  
MUSEUM, I DO HOPE THAT  
YOU WILL ALL CONTINUE  
TO WORK IN THE SPIRIT  
OF FRIENDSHIP AND IN  
THE "GO FOR BROKE"  
SPIRIT TO REALIZE  
COLONEL'S AND OUR DREAM  
AND TO MAKE THE MUSEUM  
A REALITY. TO YOU  
COLONEL: BANZAI!