

The first letter here was drafted by Grant Ujifusa for June Masuda Goto's signature, and the second was written by Grant. Both were sent in October of 1987 to President Ronald Reagan by New Jersey Governor Tom Kean, who used a special line of access for Republican governors.

10214 Oriole Avenue
Fountain Valley, CA 92708
November 19, 1987

President Ronald Reagan
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20500

Dear President Reagan:

Thank you for taking the time to read my letter.

Perhaps you recall a very special day for our family, December 9, 1945, in Santa Ana, California, when General "Vinegar Joe" Stilwell awarded a posthumous Distinguished Service Cross medal to my brother, Kazuo Masuda. He was killed in action on the banks of the Arno River in Italy on August 27, 1944, while serving with the 442nd Regimental Combat Team.

You were then Captain Ronald Reagan, and joined General Stilwell after his 3000-mile flight from Washington. All of you came, I feel, not only to honor Kaz, but to help calm great hostility in Orange County to Japanese Americans. People at the time did not accept us as Americans, even after my brother's death. The local cemetery, for example, refused to accept my brother's body for burial. The presence of you and General Stilwell greatly affected the community, and led to a better life for our family.

After General Stilwell pinned the medal on my sister in front of our farm house (I have enclosed a photograph), there was a ceremony at the Santa Ana Bowl. General Stilwell said: "The amount of money, the color of one's skin do not make a measure of Americanism. A square deal all around; free speech; equality before the law; a fair field with no favor; obedience to the majority. An American not only believes in such things, but is willing to fight for them. Who, after all, is the real American? The real American is the man who calls it a fair exchange to lay down his life in order that American ideals may go on living. And judging by such a test, Sgt. Masuda was a better American than any of us here today."

You then rose, and said the following words: "The blood that has soaked into the sand is all one color. America stands unique in the world, the only country not founded on

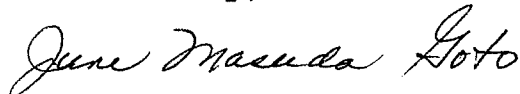
race, but on a way -- an ideal. Not in spite of, but because of our polyglot background, we have had all the strength in the world. That is the American way. Mr. and Mrs. Masuda, just as one member of the family of Americans, speaking to another member, I want to say for what your son Kazuo did -- Thanks."

Many times I have been asked to speak at the Kazuo Masuda middle school. I speak to all the history classes, and quote your words to the students.

I bring this up to you because our family feels that what you and General Stilwell said in 1945 are as true and important as ever: the ideals for which all good Americans should be willing to fight and die. My brother did both, even though his parents and family were stripped of all their American rights, and placed in an Arizona internment camp.

The words also express why so many of us in the Japanese American community so deeply support redress legislation now pending in Congress. If the legislation comes to you, I hope you will look upon it favorably. All of us in our family -- I believe Kaz as well -- would be greatly honored if you would. I also believe that America, through you, would honor itself.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "June Masuda Goto". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the typed name.

June Masuda Goto

9 Greenridge Drive
Chappaqua, New York 10514
November 24, 1987

Governor Tom Kean
State House
125 West State Street
Trenton, New Jersey 08625

Dear Governor Kean:

On behalf of the Japanese American community, I want to thank you for bringing up redress legislation in your conversation with President Reagan. When you told me that the President understood and sympathized personally with our cause, it was one of the most deeply affecting moments of my life. As an Asian American citizen, I have worked hard for Japanese American redress because I believe that our effort is part of what our country has always stood for and what it will always mean. So it is that our country is finally a great affair of the heart.

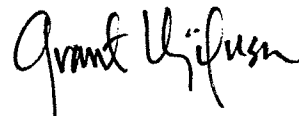
From June Masuda Goto, I have enclosed a letter, a photograph, and some material about a California episode in which Ronald Reagan showed his mettle and truly distinguished himself in our community. This was in 1945 in Santa Ana, as he may recall.

I have also included some photographs of my own. These, I feel, show that Japanese Americans during World War II were not beneficiaries of "protective custody." We did not voluntarily leave our homes, our neighborhoods, and our work, but as the San Francisco Examiner had it, we were "ousted" from our rights and our property. The guns were pointed toward us, and not toward any group that may have wanted to hurt us.

The truth is that the "protective custody" argument was developed by some government officials and journalists as an after the fact rationalization. Many of these people were ashamed of what they advocated and did; some were not. In any case, Japanese Americans were soon enough confronted with the three-cents-on-the-dollar-red-tape horror of the Evacuations Claims Act of 1948. This also scarred our community, adding insult to a profound sense of injury.

We knew we were innocent in 1942; other ordinary Americans could not easily get at the truth. But now with the help of full hindsight, all Americans, I hope, will support us as we petition Congress and our President for redress. We feel that we ask only for simple justice.

Sincerely,


Grant Ujifusa