

Shirley, Norm, and Rose

Dear Aura,

Thank you for your lengthy email. I have nothing whatever against the bi-partisan friendship that existed between Norm Mineta and Alan Simpson, a model of a bygone era tragically no longer part of our public life. And I'm happy that the Simpson-Mineta Foundation continues to pay respect to their personal friendship. I do, however, take firm exception to any assertion that the two Scouting friends had anything to do with the passage of S. 1009, Sparky's redress bill in the Senate.

The test of what the Scouting friends did not do: Ask Alan Simpson, a sometime resident of Cody, if he can name a single senator he persuaded to vote for S. 1009. He cannot.

Simpson might say to you that he kept the junior Senator from Wyoming, Malcolm Wallop, from filibustering the bill. But Sparky had 71 co-sponsors in his pocket, 11 more than the 60 needed to break any attempt to filibuster the redress bill. And so Wallop was not about to embarrass himself by his filibuster failing. On the floor, Sparky's bill received 69 votes. One senator, I don't know which one, changed his mind, and Al Gore was out of town and absent.

During the floor debate, Simpson said, "The money sticks in my craw." And he not long ago in the *Washington Post* wrote that "the money made the apology insincere." Which is a headscratcher. For most Japanese Americans: no money, no redress. An apology was the easy part, the money was hard part. Simpson was happy to give us the easy part – symbolism only.

As for changing Reagan's mind. I did talk to Gary Bauer, Reagan's

Domestic Policy Advisor, in the West Wing of the White House. Bauer said maybe he could support us even while, he also said, his Marine veteran father hated the very idea of redress for any *Japanese* from anywhere, US or otherwise. But as it turned out, Gary had no clout with Reagan, rarely meeting with him about anything. Nobody ever talked to John Bolton because he didn't have the issue at the Justice Department until Reagan had already changed his mind and decided to sign HR 442. That Shirley writes that Bolton opposition to us had meaning and somebody lobbied him is, for me, a clear mark against her understanding what happened and her presumed (and the Foundation's) standard of objectivity, which as we all know, depends always on a firm hold on ordinary factual accuracy.

I'll say as an aside that much of what you quote in Shirley's book appears to be based on some my speeches about redress. The material in the speeches are mostly not to be found anywhere else. See link below:

<https://grantujifusa.com/speeches-given/>

But much as I like and respect Shirley, the account you give of her views present many factual errors, not just the one about Bolton, and call into question what you say are the Foundation's and Shirley's high standards of objectivity, which I presumably fail to meet. But those standards, and Shirley's standards, appear to me to be whatever Shirley now says and whatever Norm once said.

But unknown to Shirley, the real opposition in the Reagan Administration came from Ed Meese, not as she says Bolton or OMB. The Attorney General and Meese's close personal friend S. I. Hayakawa just hated what they, especially "Sam" as he was called by Meese and Reagan, felt was a bill supported by only by radical left wing Japanese Americans associated with college campuses in California.

Hayakawa was the only Japanese American who Reagan and Meese knew, and they liked him because he was a conservative Republican and had a great sense of humor.

The Assistant Attorney General for the Civil Division, not the Civil Rights Division, who was given the issue at the Justice Department and who spoke publicly for Meese and testified against our bill in the House was not Bolton, but Richard Willard. As Willard and I chatted in his office, we discovered that his pastor in Virginia, Bruce Cooke, was my high school debate coach in Worland, Wyoming. After we talked, Willard said he would back off to the extent that he could, but the decision for or against HR 442 was of course only Reagan's and his Administration had been publicly opposed to the bill for more than two years.

Now we come to Rose Ochi. If she actually convinced Reagan to change his mind, there should be some record of her physical presence at the White House and at the Justice Department as she lobbied our bill. But there is absolutely no record in the White House visitor logs of any Ochi visit at any time. Nor to any visit to the Justice Department; nor to OMB because Rose never did any of the work of redress inside any of the buildings. Those logs and Rose's complete absence from all of them can be examined today at the Reagan Library or at the National Archives.

In my case, there are in fact visitor log records of my West Wing visits to Gary Bauer and my visit on Valentine's Day, February 14th, 1988, to the office of Reagan Chief of Staff Ken Duberstein. From him I learned that Ronald Reagan was going to sign HR 442. Outside of the White House inner circle, I was the first to know that Japanese American redress was to become a reality.

There are also records at the National Archives about my two visits to Office of Management and Budget located in what was then called the

Old Executive Office Building. I met with the number two person at OMB and her staff. She said, "What you want is absolutely impossible. You've heard nothing about our massive budget deficit?" But she changed her tune completely at a second meeting much later after she learned that redress was something "the Old Man" wanted and was going to make happen.

Oddly, one of her staffers told me he once worked for Sparky Matsunaga, and just loved him. This was nice but had no bearing on anything. Also and oddly, the number two at Reagan's OMB once worked for liberal Republican Bob Packwood of Oregon, a big redress supporter, who called her and said back off and calm down.

In any case, OMB, contrary to Shirley's understanding of things, never had any real authority over whether HR 442 was become the law of the land. That decision was finally only Reagan's.

There are records of what happened of all my meetings with people at the White House and in the Reagan Administration departments and agencies at the Reagan Library or at the National Archives. Ditto records on the visitor logs.

This should not surprise anyone. My role as JACL Strategy Chair was to lobby Republican members of the House, Reagan himself and members of his Administration. I represented the largest Japanese American organization the country. Rose represented only herself and had no access at the White House.

Even so, are there any records that citizen Rose Ochi personally lobbied or wrote letters on behalf of redress to any member of the Reagan Administration to be found anywhere in the Reagan Library or the National Archives? **None, Nada, Zip, Zero.** But if Shirley has written a thoroughly "objective" book about redress making a case for Rose turning Reagan around, did Shirley spend any time researching

what Rose contributed to redress at the Reagan Library or the National Archives? Any time at all. I don't think so. But ask her.

Contrast Rose's complete absence at the Reagan Library and the Archives with the links found below. The last link was written by Art Hansen, longtime JA historian at JANM. You should know that his remarks were made at Cal State Fullerton, and are not to be found at the Library.

<https://grantujifusa.com/three-letters-read-by-reagan-via-tom-kean/>

So how come Reagan mentioned Rose's name in his remarks? The day before the signing event, Harry Honda arrived in Washington with ancient edition of *Pacific Citizen* that featured the story of young Reagan's presence at Kaz Matsuda's memorial service in 1945. Harry handed the PC to Norm and Norm got it to the young PR people setting up the signing ceremony, saying to them that Rose was responsible for the Reagan's decision to sign. The PR people got the mention into Reagan's remarks, but later corrected what was said to the reporter covering the event for the New York Times. Those young PR people are probably still alive and can be talked to.

(New York Times photo and caption just below)

New York Times

THURSDAY, AUGUST 11, 1988



President Reagan shaking hands with June Masuda Goto, whose sister was mentioned in Mr. Reagan's speech, before signing bill to compensate Japanese-

The New York Times / Jose R. Lopez
Americans interned in World War II. From right were Representative Patricia Saiki and Senators Ted Stevens and Daniel K. Inouye.

In any case, for the NYT and so for the world, the event belonged to Kaz Masuda's sister June, not to Rose, who was physically blocked as she rushed up the aisle to reach Reagan at the lectern following the ceremony. People sitting up front can confirm how she was kept away. The guest list remains public property, and you track down the people who saw what happened

But I'll tell you now. The Japanese American Nisei who physically cordoned Rose off was a friend of June Masuda Goto, sister of Kaz Masuda, who was seated to the left of him. The blocker was sitting front row center next to the aisle. He was a 442 veteran and a member of famed Company K that rescued "The Lost Battalion." The vet stretched his crutch across the aisle more than once to stymie Rose's approach. And so she was kept away from a completely undeserved photo op with Reagan after he signed the bill, which was among the most important events in Japanese American history. The Nisei veteran was Rudy Tokiwa.

Two other things and I'm done. Unknown to many Japanese Americans, both Norm and Rose exhibited a sometimes distant relationship with the truths and realities of life as most people experience and remember them. As fIn Norm's case, the 9/11 Commissioners found his claim that he ordered the planes down on 9/11 was "untruthful" and refused to include the testimony of a sitting Secretary of Transportation in their *Final Report*. The Commission's *Report* was a national bestseller for many months, and can still be purchased on Amazon and read.

But you can't read Norm's testimony because it is not there. A mid-level official at the Transportation Department, Ben Sliney, had ordered aircraft all over the country right down after a terrorist plane hit the Pentagon at 9:37 am on 9/11. But White House logs show that Norm didn't get to the White House until after 10 am, even while he told the 9/11 Commissioners he got there around 9:30 am, in time to issue the order that Sliney already had.

The exhaustive investigation that led to Norm's exclusion from the Commission's *Final Report* for being "untruthful" is found in the link below:

http://www.911myths.com/index.php?title=Norman_Mineta

The Commission went to great lengths to look into Norm's claim because his testimony was used by Alex Jones, among the country's leading conspiracy theorists, "to prove" that Bush and Cheney were the real architects behind the 9/11 attack. Norm's 9/11 Commission testimony, judged "untruthful" by the Commission, was successfully used by Jones' to form the basis of his "Truthers" movement.

The Commission didn't want to happen to it what happened to Warren Commission whose sloppy work engendered all kinds of conspiracy theories – the second shooter behind the grassy knoll, among many others.

The work of the 9/11 Commission produced no such raft of conspiratorial fantasies, thanks in part because it concluded that Norm's testimony before the Commission was "untruthful" and so did not carry the imprimatur of the Commission for use by conspiracy theorists. Alex Jones didn't care, and was a notable exception.

Because Norm said under oath that he got to the White House before he actually did, he ended up saying to conspiracy theorists that Cheney was refusing to shoot down the terrorist plane approaching the Pentagon. But the exchange that Norm overheard between Cheney and his aide was about a still standing Cheney order to shoot down the plane that ultimately crashed into a Pennsylvania farm field at 10:03 am.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kfra6Xtsh9A&ab_channel=HistoryCommons

The bottom line: The plane that hit the Pentagon struck it well before Mineta got to the White House, and by the time Norm got there, Sliney had long since ordered all the planes all over the country down.

The short version of why Norm was excluded from *The Final Report* can be found in a NYT op-ed written by members of the 9/11 Commission's staff:

<https://grantujifusa.com/wp-content/uploads/2008/09/Mineta-NYT.pdf>

Mineta's FAA Administrator, Jane Garvey, called Sliney and asked him to just go along with Norm's story. Sliney refused, saying he could not in good conscience alter what happened at an important moment in the nation's history.

As for Rose, she was never as she presented herself to the JA community an Assistant Attorney General in the Clinton's Justice Department, which made her, she said, the highest ranking Asian American ever to serve in the Justice Department -- among the 15 top officials in a bureaucracy of 120,000 people. Rose was instead the Assistant to the Attorney General for Community Relations Services in the Clinton Administration, ten years after Reagan signed HR 442.

The link to her installation in her real position below:

<https://www.justice.gov/archive/ag/speeches/1998/0918crs.htm>

Okay, Aura, I'm almost done. Let's read what Dan Inouye said about what Sparky Matsunaga did to make Senate passage of the redress happen:

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"The man who should take nearly all of the credit for the passage of the redress bill is Sen. Sparky Matsunaga. He is the one who sponsored the bill and organized the vote on that in the Senate. If Sen. Matsunaga's efforts were to be weighted at 10, mine would be one."

Eye witness to the events in the Senate, Dan Inouye, who made possible for redress payments an entitlement, makes no reference to long ago Heart Mountain Scouting friend back in Wyoming.

Your Wyoming friend,

Grant