

RAFU SHIMPO

Celebrating Nisei War Heroes

CBS drama “Cold Case,” Medal of Honor recipients recognized at annual NJAMF gala in Washington.

Wednesday, April 22, 2009



Medal of Honor recipients George T. Sakato and Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura are joined by current members of the armed forces on April 17 at the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation’s annual gala in Washington. The theme of the gala was “Our Story, Your Rights.”

The National Japanese American Memorial Foundation (NJAMF) held its 2009 annual Gala on April 17 at the Capital Hilton Hotel. The evening’s theme, “Our Story, Your Rights” recalled the internment of Japanese Americans during World War II and the heroic service of Japanese American veterans. The Foundation is focused on increasing public awareness about the plight of Japanese American civilians during the war and the relevance of those experiences today.

The foundation’s Chairman’s Award was presented to CBS for an episode of the procedural drama “Cold Case,” which depicted the internment. The episode focused on whether a Nisei man’s internment in California during World War II had any bearing on his 1945 murder shortly after his release. “We are very proud of this special episode and honored that the National Japanese Memorial Foundation is recognizing it with its Chairman’s Award,” said Nina Tassler, president, CBS entertainment. “It’s a great feeling to present a broadcast with equal ability to entertain and inform, and bring awareness to this time in American history.”

NJAMF also presented the Special Recognition Legacy Award to four Japanese American Medal of Honor recipients, Sen. Daniel K. Inouye, Hiroshi “Hershey” Miyamura, Barney Hajiro and George T. Sakato for their distinguished military careers and patriotism. The

recipients are among the most highly decorated soldiers in American military history. Sakato and Miyamura were present to accept their awards.

During World War II, Inouye directed his platoon through a hall of automatic weapon fire, which resulted in the capture of an artillery and mortar post. He then crawled to within five yards of the nearest machine gun and, with grenades, destroyed the emplacement, later neutralizing the machine gun nest. Despite being wounded, he refused to evacuate.



During World War II, Hajiro assisted Allied troops in eastern France by exposing himself to attack and directing fire at an enemy strong point. He and a fellow soldier also took up an outpost security position and ambushed an 18-man enemy patrol, killing two, wounding one, and taking the rest as POWs. Moreover, Mr. Hajiro initiated an attack up Suicide Hill by running forward under fire. He then fearlessly destroyed two machine gun nests and killed two enemy snipers resulting in the operations success.

Miyamura distinguished himself by risking his life in hand-to-hand combat during the Korean War. Emerging from shelter, and with only his bayonet, he engaged in close fighting, then administered first aid to his unit and directed their evacuation from danger. He then bayoneted his way through infiltrated enemy soldiers to a gun emplacement and assisted in the operation.

“Since our community’s darkest days during the Second World War, we have struggled, successfully, to ensure that the lessons we and our fellow Americans learned from the injustice of the internment and evacuation are never forgotten,” said Norman Y. Mineta former Transportation Secretary and NJAMF vice chair. “Those lessons of history are our community’s legacy to all of our fellow Americans, and the work of ensuring they will always be remembered is the heart of the Foundations mission. I am tremendously proud to be a part of that work.”

Rep. Xavier Becerra received the Award for Constitutional Rights for contributions to constitutional rights that have materially improved the treatment of, and opportunities made available to, all Americans, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or gender. Congressman Becerra is active in promoting redress for the Japanese Latin Americans interned during World War II and introducing legislation to investigate what occurred.

Former CNN news anchor and founder of Sachi Koto Communications, Sachi Koto was the events mistress of ceremonies.