

The Interpreter

Archives, University of Colorado at Boulder Libraries

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★ Remember September 11, 2001 ★

arv@colorado.edu

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Our Mission

In the Spring of 2000, the Archives continued the original efforts of Captain Roger Pineau and William Hudson, and the Archives first attempts in 1992, to gather the papers, letters, photographs, and records of graduates of the US Navy Japanese/Oriental Language School, University of Colorado at Boulder, 1942-1946. We assemble these papers in recognition of the contributions made by JLS/OLS instructors and graduates to the War effort in the Pacific and the Cold War, to the creation of East Asian language programs across the country, and to the development of Japanese-American cultural reconciliation programs after World War II.

Berkeley JLS Graduate

I learned of your project from my old friend Wayne Suttles (JLS 1943). We had been out of touch for quite a few years, but he, unlike me, is one of those modern old codgers who fool around with computers and the "web," and he chanced to run across the email address of my son, Wilvan I. Van Campen, and with a flash of perspicuity proper to a Naval Intelligence veteran concluded that a Wilvan G. Van Campen and a Wilvan I. Van Campen might know each other, it not being quite as common a moniker as, say, Tom Smith. So we got our correspondence re-established, and I am enjoying learning from Wayne about matters of mutual interest, such as the Chinook Jargon. We were at Berkeley together, then worked together in the translation section of JICPOA and even for a while shared a ramshackle "penthouse" atop an old frame house on the Beach near Diamond Head. We saw each other a few times in Canada, after the War, but after I

moved to Washington, DC and he to Portland, OR, our correspondence lapsed. . . .

I am quite interested in knowing more about Gerald Holtom. His brother John and I were roommates in our boarding house in Berkeley. He got quite angry at me once for expressing doubt that putting rum in a coconut and stoppering it up and keeping it in a closet for a spell was going to result in some damn fine "popskull". I never did hear how the experiment turned out. His brother, Don, used to come up from Palo Alto to visit and I gather that he later joined the program at Boulder. I don't remember ever seeing a brother Gerald. He is reported as having been a Captain, when he was killed at Makin (now more known as Butari-tari) and I don't see how he could have come out of a Japanese Language program and attained that rank by the time of the Makin Raid (August of 1942).

Bill Van Campen
Berkeley JLS 1942

[Ed. Note: I found this great letter and decided to print it, having filled in Mr. Van Campen on Gerald Holtom's early life and military career from a copy of Holtom's Marine records provided by Ms. Holtom Jones. Captain Richard McDonald, USN, ret., consulted with Mr. Van Campen in the Spring of 2000 in order to help create the FRUPAC/JICPOA Exhibit at Pearl Harbor.]

Switching Languages: Howell Calhoun

I was born on October 3, 1920 in New York City. I earned my bachelors degree *cum laude* at the City College of New York in 1941. I received an M.A. in English literature from Columbia University in 1942. That fall I started work on my Ph.D. while teaching freshman English at the University of North Carolina, but I had to leave at the end of the first trimester to report to the Navy Japanese Language School in Boulder. I arrived in December 1942.

Upon completing the 14 month course I attended the advanced Naval Intelligence School in New York City and then was assigned to the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Area (JICPOA), in Hawaii, where I translated captured Japanese documents. In June of 1945 I volunteered to become a member of a Civil Censorship Detachment (CCD) leaving for Okinawa. However on arrival, we found nothing to censor, as there was no telephone service or mail delivery and the capital city of Naha was reduced to rubble. We were then transferred to Manila, and from there to Japan following her surrender in August 1945. Assigned to CCD Osaka I served there until March 1946 when I was sent to Tokyo for release to inactive duty. Preferring to remain in Japan, I secured employment at the Civil Information and Education Section (CI&E) GHQ, SCAP as a Department of the Army Civilian employee (DAC) assigned as a research analyst. When CI&E was abolished with the signing of the Peace Treaty in 1952, I became a counter-intelligence analyst working for various G2-related agencies, the last of which was the 500th Military Intelligence Group. In 1965 our portion of it was moved to Hawaii, establishing itself on Ford Island, Oahu. In 1968 I applied for employment at G2 US Army, Japan, where I served as a counter intelligence analyst until 1971. I then returned to the 500th Military Intelligence Group on Ford Island, and took early retirement from Civil Service in 1973.

In 1963 I married Sueko Kobayashi and later adopted her two children, Toshio and Marie. We just recently celebrated our 40th wedding anniversary.

In total I spent 23 years in Japan including both my naval and Department of the Army civilian service.

Howell Calhoun
JLS 1944

Okamoto Sensei Dies at 95

Takeo Okamoto, a fixture in the San Francisco Japantown community, died on August 19, 2003 at 2AM at his home. He was 95 [Sorry for the delay].

A native of San Francisco, he was the oldest son of Mr. and Mrs. Jiro Okamoto. At age 3, in 1911, he was sent to Japan for his education; he returned to the US in 1925.

Upon his graduation from Lowell High School in San Francisco in 1928, Okamoto assisted his father in managing shoes and finding business in Oakland until the outbreak of World War II.

A 1933 graduate of UC Berkeley, Okamoto completed his college education in three years despite a tough class load and working as the president of T. Okamoto & Son. He also helped form the first Young Japanese Businessmen's Club in San Francisco.

Okamoto married Kay Tsuchiya of Alameda in 1938. The family was forced to move to the Tanforan Assembly Center in 1942. Okamoto then accepted a job teaching Japanese at the US Navy Japanese Language School at Colorado University in Boulder, a position he held throughout the War.

T. Okamoto & Co. was founded in 1946. Okamoto was the first Japanese American real estate broker in San Francisco as well as the first Nikkei member of the San Francisco Board of Realtors in the early 1950s and the first Nikkei honorary member of the San Francisco Association of Realtors in 1991.

His company, located on Buchanan Street, is now one of the largest Japanese real estate agencies in the Bay Area.

Among the many organizations Okamoto helped form were the National JACL in San Francisco, the Japanese Chamber of Commerce of Northern California, and the Kokusei Kei Shigin group.

In 1973, Okamoto and a group of community leaders talked about the need to establish a cultural and community organization to serve the local Nikkei. He was the first president of the Japanese Cultural and Community Center of Northern California, which envisioned a place where both young and old could gather.

With the opening of the JCCC-NC in 1986 and the subsequent construction of the community hall/gymnasium, he was happy to see his dream come true due to the tireless effort and

support from many people in the community. He was a recipient of the JCCC-NC's Cultural Award.

Okamoto was preceded in death by his wife, for whom the Kay Okamoto Volunteer Award is named. The community service award is presented annually by the San Francisco JACL and the Okamoto family at the Hamilton Senior Center's anniversary celebration.

Okamoto's eldest son, Steven, works for the American Cancer Society. His second son, Allen, runs the family business. His

daughter, Barbara Muramoto Coons, is a 15-term member of the Hawaii State Legislature and a recent candidate for Congress.

He is also survived by nine grandchildren and four great-grandchildren as well as a sister, Komiko Toyooka, and a sister-in-law, Jean Tsuchiya.

Allen Okamoto, who has headed T. Okamoto & Co. for 20 years and was the first Nikkei president of the San Francisco Association of Realtors in 1990, talked about his father in the 2000 book *Generations: A Japanese American Community*

Portrait.

"Initially, working with my father was hard," he recalled, "I was a college kid and thought I knew everything. Later, I realized it was him. We have the same belief system; he's honest and hard-working. He tried to instill all those good Nisei characteristics in me.

"I found my dad was a great teacher, and he's probably the most honest man I know. He's 91, and he still comes in every day." Services were held at the JCCC-NC on August 23, 2003

*Obituary provided by
Okamoto Family*

Staff of Naval Training School (Japanese Language) 1942-1943¹

Walne, Florence, Director, Associate Professor

Naval ROTC Unit

Welch, LF. Captain, USN,
Commandant, Professor Naval
Science and Tactics NS&T
Brenner, Russell F., Yeoman 2c,

USNR

Busch, Joseph B. CQM, USN
Foster, Everett J, LCDR, USN, Asst.
Pof. NS&T
Gergen, William AR. CY F4C
USNR, Chief Clerk NROTC and
Language School
Harris, Adrian, Yeoman 2c, USNR
Higman, Orian
Hoover, Guy B. CDR, USN (Ret),
Chief Staff Officer
Jucker, Edwin L., CSp (A) (AA) V-6
USNR, Physical Education
Instructor
Long, Veldon O., LT, USN
Maxwell, John, Jr., Boatwain USN
Vitalich, John, Jr., ENS, SC-V (G)
USNR, Disbursing Officer
Webb, Rogers W. CGM, USN, Drill

Assistant

[Ed. Note: John McCubbin asked about the Chiefs and staff of the US Navy JLS/OLS and where they went. My first move was to find out who they were. The 1942-43 directory was not much help as they failed to list any staff under Director Walne, so I listed those Naval personnel that were listed under Navy ROTC as likely to have assisted with the school. Chief Jucker's subsequent career as a university basketball coach has already been printed. Now that I have a list (all years of which will be eventually printed up), I can search for careers. Wish me luck. DMH]

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<http://ucblibraries.colorado.edu/archives/collections/jlsp/index.htm>

¹ Directory of the Students, Faculty and Employees of the University of Colorado, 1942-1943, Boulder, Colorado (Boulder, CO: University of Colorado, October 1942), 47-65, 69-70.