



D E N S H Ō

*The Japanese American Legacy Project*

## **PRESS RELEASE**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Patricia Kiyono, 206-320-0095, [patricia.kiyono@densho.org](mailto:patricia.kiyono@densho.org)

### **FOUNDING DIRECTOR OF DENSHŌ: THE JAPANESE AMERICAN LEGACY PROJECT WINS HUMANITIES AWARD**

SEATTLE, April 2004 -- Tom Ikeda, Executive Director of Denshō: The Japanese American Legacy Project, has won the 2004 Humanities Washington Award for outstanding and exemplary achievement in the public humanities. The annual recipient of this award is honored for devoting imaginative leadership and extraordinary vision to increase public understanding of cultural heritage, community values, and humanity's creative achievements.

An award luncheon will be held on Wednesday, June 9, 2004, at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel and Towers. The keynote speaker is Franklin Odo, Director of the Asian Pacific American Program at the Smithsonian Institution. For ticket information and reservations, contact Humanities Washington at 206-682-1700 or [info@humanities.org](mailto:info@humanities.org) by June 4.

Ikeda is the founding executive director of Denshō (meaning "to pass on to future generations"), a Seattle-based nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving rapidly vanishing testimonies of the unjust incarceration of Japanese Americans during World War II. In eight years of unpaid full-time service, Ikeda has led Denshō's drive to collect 400 hours of video oral histories, 2,000 historical images, and a curriculum on civil rights co-developed with the SPICE program of Stanford University.

All the Denshō materials are offered free of charge on the website [www.densho.org](http://www.densho.org). The life stories, historical images, and contextual readings not only honor one ethnic group that suffered injustice in a past period of national anxiety; they encourage people of all backgrounds to think critically about the precarious balance of personal freedom and public security that we face today.

Born in Seattle, Ikeda earned degrees in chemistry and chemical engineering and an MBA from the University of Washington. In 1995, Ikeda creatively applied his training and experience in developing multimedia products for Microsoft toward safeguarding a cultural legacy for public benefit. Organizing community volunteers and consulting scholars, he developed the online archive of digitized interviews, photos, and artifacts that document a much neglected aspect of our national history.

Under Ikeda's direction, Denshō has earned a national reputation for excellence and innovation in preserving and disseminating primary sources of American history. Denshō has donated excerpts of the compelling interviews to exhibitions at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles, the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York, and the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. Recently Denshō has contracted with the National Park Service to produce video oral histories documenting the incarceration camp at Minidoka, Idaho.

Past recipients of the Humanities Washington Award include the Washington State Holocaust Education Resource Center; Ron Chew, Wing Luke Asian Museum; and Nancy Pearl, Seattle Public Library. Founded in 1973, Humanities Washington (formerly known as Washington Commission for the Humanities) supports programs that nurture creativity, promote dialogue, and spark critical thinking. The organization is affiliated with the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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*Preserving the past, inspiring the future*