

## From the Director: Tom Ikeda

Last week I had the great pleasure of attending a Seattle Mariners game with four Japanese American former semi-pro baseball players. These men had been on an all-star team while confined in the Minidoka, Idaho, incarceration camp during World War II. Camp authorities periodically gave them temporary passes to travel and play a neighboring town's semi-pro baseball team. In listening to the friendly banter of the men, I learned they had been highly competitive, winning ten games and losing only to the Idaho Falls team.



The men were special guests of the Mariners because of Densho's recent screening of the feature film *American Pastime*. A Mariners official who attended the screening was moved by the story of how Japanese Americans regained a sense of dignity in the camps through the game of baseball. The official

not only invited the men to the game; he also arranged for a pre-game meeting with Mariners Kenji Johjima and Ichiro Suzuki. Pictured left to right are Ichiro, Joe Matsuzaki (behind Ichiro), George Nakagawa, Hank Ito, and Hank Matsubu.

As the two Mariners returned to the field, one of the former ball players called out to Ichiro to get three hits. Ichiro laughed and waved. He then proceeded to get three hits, and the Mariners won for a completely satisfying conclusion to a memorable evening.



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## From the Archive

### Beauty from Barrenness: Art Made by Detainees

*"I thought it [Heart Mountain] was a thing of beauty and that maybe it was the only sanity that I was experiencing at the time. There was something permanent about it and something that... all-knowing. Like it had been there a long time, and we were just passing through, and in time it would all blow over."*

-- Yosh Kuromiya

In preparation for being interviewed by Densho several years ago, an elderly Japanese American woman shared her journal, family photos, and a trove of lovely jewelry made from shells. During her incarceration at the Tule Lake camp, located on a drained lake bed, she and other detainees crafted objects of great delicacy from shells they dug from the ground. Despite a shortage of tools, others built elegant cabinets from scrap lumber, carved clever toys for the children, and coaxed flower and vegetable gardens from previously barren soil. The detainees' determination to make their bleak surroundings more bearable exemplifies the Japanese concept of *gaman*, or the strength to endure painful circumstances with dignity.



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## *Densho News*

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Tickets for the sixth annual Sushi & Sake Fest are selling briskly. Last year's event sold out early. Don't miss your opportunity to savor delectable sushi and taste fine sake while supporting Densho's preservation and education work. Order your ticket by **August 31** and you will be eligible to win two free tickets. Early-bird tickets are \$75; entrance is \$90 after September 15. This popular event takes place **October 30** at 6:00pm at the Westin Hotel Seattle. A silent auction features coveted items like hotel stays and Asian artwork. Please note that attendees must be 21 or older. For more information contact Densho at 206-320-0095 or [sushitickets@densho.org](mailto:sushitickets@densho.org).

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