

Our University

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESIDENT FOR THE UC COMMUNITY



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This printer-friendly version of *Our University* from the UC Office of the President is intended to be posted in order to be accessible to members of the UC community without easy access to a computer at work. The web version is available at: <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/ouruniversity/0909/>.



UC employees make honorary degrees their mission

By Anne Wolf

Aiko "Grace" Obata Amemiya has always wanted two things: to be a nurse and to have a UC degree. Her wish to be a nurse was deferred when she and more than 110,000 other Japanese-Americans were forced into internment camps in 1942. And her dream of a UC degree was denied - until now.

Making Amemiya's dream come true was in large part the work of a small group of UC employees, including Zina Mirsky, Bill Kidder and Judy Sakaki. For each of them, honoring her and several hundred other Japanese Americans who never graduated was more a mission than a job.

Mirsky, associate dean of administration for the UC San Francisco School of Nursing, first raised the issue of granting degrees to interned students on her campus in 2004 after meeting Amemiya.

"Grace recounted all the courses she had taken at UC Berkeley, how she was inappropriately advised and so had to wait a year to be admitted to nursing school, and how, as a result, she was unable to finish her degree because of the Executive Order to go to an internment camp," Mirsky recalled.

Mirsky was deeply moved by the story and promised to do anything she could to get Amemiya a degree. After a couple of setbacks, in 2008 Mirsky took her inquiry to Joseph Castro, UCSF vice provost for student academic affairs, to see if the UC Office of the President might be willing to take on this issue -- not only for Amemiya, but for all the Japanese-American students who had been unable to finish UC degrees. "When I heard Judy Sakaki's name, I began to think there was a chance," Mirsky said.

Sakaki, vice president for student affairs, is the daughter and granddaughter of former internees. On her office wall hangs the wooden sign bearing her father's name and ID number which once hung outside her father's internment camp barracks.

With Daniel Simmons, professor of law at UC Davis, she co-chaired the task force that researched and eventually recommended that the Regents grant special honorary degrees to the internees.

I am extremely proud of the action that the Regents took to address this 'unfinished business,' " Sakaki said. "It means a great deal to me personally, to all former internees and to the entire Japanese American community."

Bill Kidder, now assistant executive vice chancellor at UC Riverside, worked for Sakaki when Mirsky's and Castro's inquiry came to her office. An experience in law school ten years earlier motivated him to find a way for the University to honor these students. "When I was in law school at UC, Fred Korematsu spoke movingly before my class, and ever since, the story of the Japanese-American internment has stayed in my memory as an epic injustice." Korematsu, who is sometimes compared to Rosa Parks for taking an unpopular stand at a critical juncture in American history, was convicted for attempting to stay in the Bay Area in 1942. His case challenging the Executive Order leading to internment went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, where he lost in 1944.

Kidder's exhaustive research on the Executive Order, the UC students affected by it, and the University's position on awarding honorary degrees played a significant role in moving the issue forward. The momentum built as other campuses and children of former internees began inquiring to UCOP and the Regents about the possibility of honorary degrees.

Sakaki and Kidder spoke with Mary Croughan, chair of the Academic Senate, since the Senate confers degrees. From there a task force was created, comprised of faculty and staff from Berkeley, UCLA, UC Davis and UCSF, the four campuses which had Japanese-American students who were forced to leave before completing their degrees.

**Help locate UC students
who were WWII internees.**

**Contact via e-mail:
HonoraryDegree@ucop.edu
or call (510) 987-0239.**

Whether to honor the former students was never a question for task force members; the primary question was how to honor them, given the Regents' moratorium on awarding honorary degrees. Great care was taken to limit the precedent this might set for the future, and both the Academic Senate and Academic Council unanimously endorsed the proposal before it was taken to the Regents.

"It was a great collaborative effort," Sakaki said. "Everyone on the task force felt that this would be a good thing, that we could right a wrong and that we could find a way to award degrees because a degree is what people wanted."

Task Force member Donald Kishi, clinical professor of pharmacy at UCSF who was born in an internment camp, agreed. "We did it and we did it well. By recommending a fairly limited action, it was hard to argue against it."

Members of the task force now look forward to campus ceremonies later this fall when degrees will be awarded. So far, about 125 internees or relatives of deceased internees have come forward. The campuses are planning awards ceremonies, and efforts to search for former UC students who are eligible for the honor continue.

Mirsky eagerly awaits the day her promise to Grace Amemiya is fulfilled. In the meantime, "I am just so proud of the University for doing the right thing."

Solution: **DROUGHT**

Throughout the UC system, researchers are tackling the water crisis head on. They play a vital role in monitoring the state's water supply, documenting the environmental consequences of drought and leading the research on water-saving strategies — even creating new sources of water.

Read more about how UC is tackling the water crisis
<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/21800>



Systemwide News

Task Force to hold forums on future of UC retirement benefits

UC offers employees attractive pension and retiree health benefits as part of its efforts to attract and retain outstanding faculty and staff, as well as to reward employees for their years of career service. But the cost of those benefits has increased substantially, a trend that is projected to continue.

The President's Task Force on Post-Employment Benefits has been charged with developing options for balancing the long-term costs of post-employment benefits with the need to provide competitive compensation to faculty and staff. The Task Force will study the issues, weigh input from the UC community, and then make recommendations to UC President Mark Yudof on ways to change the funding and policies for post-employment benefits



The Task Force is holding forums at UC locations throughout the fall to give faculty, staff and retirees the opportunity to ask questions and learn about how fiscal pressures are affecting the University's pension and retiree health programs.

The forums will be tailored to local group needs and include a presentation on the issues, followed by time for participants to ask questions. The schedule of local sessions is beginning to take shape and will be available online at the Future of UC Retirement Benefits website

(<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/ucrfuture/welcome.html>). So check back for more campus-specific dates and watch for local announcements.

By the numbers

UC spends roughly \$1.5 billion annually in pension benefits and the retirement plan accrues an additional \$1.3 billion in pension liability each year for its current employees. The funded status of the UC Retirement Plan is expected to decline from 95 percent to 61 percent by 2013, even with the restart of contributions in April, 2010.

The University also pays approximately \$225 million each year for retiree health benefits. That expense, which is paid for with operating revenue, is projected to increase by about \$37 million per year. By 2013, UC will be spending \$373 million annually and by 2018, the figure will have climbed to an estimated \$610 million.

The University's long-term liabilities for retiree health benefits for current and future retirees are also projected to increase, from \$13 billion today to nearly \$26 billion by 2018. In other words, the liability is increasing at a rate of more than \$1.5 billion per year. Governmental accounting regulations now require UC and other employers to include this liability in their financial statements. Such a significant liability could affect UC's credit rating when borrowing money for campus buildings, hospitals and other projects.

More information about the Task Force, including a list of its members, is available on the Future of UC Retirement Benefits website (http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/ucrpfuture/emp_task.html).

UC launches letter-writing campaign

President Yudof calls on all members of the UC family – including faculty and staff -- to be part of a letter-writing campaign on behalf of UC and public higher education.

Read more about participating in the campaign
(<http://www.ucforcalifornia.org/uc4ca/issues/alert/?alertid=13940331>)

Is global warming making us sicker?

Smoggy air and other hallmarks of climate change may worsen health among the poor.

Read this report from *Your University*, President Yudof's monthly newsletter for UC friends



(<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/youruniversity/makingussicker.html>)

More News

Compensation task force hears progress reports

<http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/21683>

Solar energy focus of multi-campus research <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/21677>

New multi-campus center to focus on how stress, socioeconomic status effect obesity

<http://today.ucsf.edu/stories/new-center-to-focus-on-effects-of-stress-socioeconomic-status-on-obesity1/>

UC building projects and the budget crunch <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/article/21689>

UC Riverside releases new citrus variety http://newsroom.ucr.edu/news_item.html?action=page&id=2147

Artificial retina project wins R&D 100 Award http://www.ucsc.edu/news_events/text.asp?pid=3131

Exploring the Pacific Ocean garbage patch

<http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/newsrel/general/08-09SEAPLEX.asp>

UCSD composer named systemwide "University Professor"

<http://ucsdnews.ucsd.edu/newsrel/arts/08-09RogerReynolds.asp>

Read more UC news <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/news/>

The *HRB Briefing* newsletter mailed to UC employees' homes is now part of *Our University*, featuring the same benefits information that *HRB Briefing* provided. Complete employment information is available on [At Your Service](#).

Tap UC resources to ease the furlough burden

Discounts on fitness-center memberships, tax-savings programs that can increase your take-home pay, and stress-management and financial-management workshops are just some of the many resources available to UC employees to help ease the burden of furloughs and pay reductions. You can view the resources online at: http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/emp_resources/index.html

New online application for Direct Deposit

Employees will no longer have to use cumbersome paper forms to change direct deposit elections.

An online application is up and running at UC Riverside, UC San Diego and Hastings. Most other locations will follow suit this fall.

Employees may use the online application to either enroll in or cancel direct deposit services. They may also use the online form to change the account where paychecks are automatically deposited.

The direct deposit application may be used by most employees, including student workers. The application is not available to Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory employees, post-doctoral scholars or retirees.

The service will roll out in September at UC Santa Barbara and UC Santa Cruz and later this fall at UCLA, UC Merced, Office of the President, UC San Francisco, UC Berkeley, UC Davis and UC Irvine.

Employees will find the direct deposit application under "Income & Taxes" after signing into their personal accounts from the [At Your Service](#) website. The application displays a generic sample check, with instructions on where to find routing numbers and other account information required for completing the form.

The processing time for direct deposit varies by UC location; in some instances, it can take one or more pay cycles before changes take effect.

More HR News

Health FSA card may not work at some retailers:

http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/news/general/0907-fsa_cards.html

UC benefits:

<http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/index.html>

Labor relations news:

http://atyourservice.ucop.edu/employees/policies_employee_labor_relations/labor_relations.html

TIP OF THE MONTH



Always Show Your UC Medical Plan Card

When you go to the doctor, it's always important to provide your UC-sponsored medical plan card to your doctor's office. This will ensure that your doctor's office has the most up-to-date information on your medical plan benefits and that billing is as accurate as possible. Even if you or a family member has Medicare, show your UC-sponsored medical plan card -- not your Medicare card -- to ensure that your doctor's office bills correctly. As an employee, your UC medical plan provides your primary insurance, not Medicare.

Ask It

Chances are there's something you've always wondered about, meant to look up or wished someone would explain. Now is your chance to satisfy that curiosity. [E-mail](#) your questions and we'll find the UC brainiac who can answer it. Science, health, culture, language - whatever your question, don't be shy. Just Ask it!

Q: "Should we rinse cans and bottles before we recycle, or does that just waste water?"

A: It just wastes water. Everything is melted at such a temperature that anything that is in it is burned off into the air. While there is a small amount of effluent, it really is not enough to worry about. The amount of water wasted is probably far more detrimental than the amount of stuff burned off into the air.

Q: "Is it greener to recycle paper in the bins for food scraps and plant matter, which get ground into compost, or is it better to put used paper in the paper waste containers, since much of our waste paper gets shipped overseas, and that uses fossil fuels?"

A: Making paper in the first place is a phenomenally polluting process. You cut down trees. You sometimes clear cut. You drive across forests, which then causes deforestation. There's infiltration in streams, which impacts fish habitat. Finally it gets into a plant. You mix it with chemicals, you grind it up using water, energy and more chemicals, probably bleach if it's white paper. It takes a lot of polluting processes to turn paper into paper form.

It makes every bit of sense to recycle it back into paper form. Just sending it right back into compost is a waste of all the energy and resources that have gone into making it paper originally.

Lisa Bauer is UC Berkeley's manager of recycling and refuse services and UC Sustainability Champion of the Year. Read more about her award at: http://berkeley.edu/news/media/releases/2009/07/27_bauer.shtml

Send Your Feedback

What would you like to read about in future editions of Our University? Send your comments and story suggestions to [Anne Wolf](#). Our University is produced by UC Communications, External Relations, UC Office of the President.

Resources

Budget updates <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/budget/>

Be a UC advocate <http://www.ucforcalifornia.org/uc4ca/home/>

UC Alumni Associations <http://www.ucalumni.net/>

Diversity at UC <http://www.universityofcalifornia.edu/diversity/>