



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

OBERLIN COLLEGE TO HOST 'COURAGE AND COMPASSION' EXHIBITION

Oberlin, OH - Oberlin College and Conservatory will host the national traveling exhibition, "Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American WWII Experience" from Feb. 17 through March 18.

Planned by Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) and funded in part by a grant from the National Park Service, this professionally-designed and interactive exhibit chronicles the national story of the Japanese American experience during World War II and local stories of compassion in support of Japanese Americans from communities across the country.

In the wake of the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941, many officials and community members viewed residents of Japanese ancestry, U.S. citizens and immigrants alike, with fear and mistrust. Japanese Americans were targets for harassment and discrimination, and families on the west coast were forcibly removed to government-run incarceration camps.

The "Courage and Compassion" exhibition covers events from the attack on Pearl Harbor to the fateful decision to incarcerate Japanese Americans in wartime camps to the postwar fight for redress. It also brings alive the local stories of communities such as Oberlin, Ohio, that showed courage and compassion to Japanese Americans who were suspected of disloyalty solely because of their ancestry.

Oberlin was selected as one of the 10 cities to host the exhibit because the college and conservatory recruited and admitted nearly 40 Japanese American students during the war, city residents defended the students when their presence was questioned and Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) students here spoke out and organized against racism and wartime discrimination. The exhibition places this story of Oberlin's response to incarceration in the broader context of Oberlin's history of activism and current debates around sanctuary cities and campuses.

Visitors to "Courage and Compassion" will have the opportunity to learn about the Japanese American World War II experience and its legacy, to engage with questions about what courage looks like during a time of crisis and to consider the relevance of this history for today.

"This exhibit reminds us of a history that is extraordinarily relevant today," Renee Romano, the Robert. S. Danforth Professor of History at Oberlin College and project co-director explained. "It

offers us stories of local people who rejected wartime hysteria about Japanese Americans and who insisted that the United States live up to its democratic ideals. Today as the nation again debates issues of immigration, citizenship, and belonging, it is vital that we grapple with America's checkered history of exclusion."

Mitchell T. Maki, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer of GFBNEC, noted that Oberlin's strong history of social justice advocacy reflects the legacy of Japanese American WWII veterans. "The Nisei veterans championed the rights and duties of citizenship, the importance of due process and the rule of law in our democracy," Dr. Maki said. "They taught us that we cannot tolerate discrimination against individuals based on the color of their skin, the God whom they worship, or their country of origin. They exemplify the best that America has to offer."

From July 2017 through summer 2019, the exhibit will visit 10 U.S. communities where citizens extended a helping hand to Japanese Americans during and after the turbulent days of WWII. Besides Oberlin, other community partners include: Willamette Heritage Center, Salem, Ore.; Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, Honolulu; the Kingsburg Historical Society, Kingsburg, Calif.; St. Mary's School of Nursing Alumni Association, Rochester, Minn.; Twin Cities Japanese American Citizens League, Minneapolis; Monterey Japanese American Citizens League, Monterey, Calif.; History Department, Bradley University, Peoria, Ill.; Chicago Japanese American Historical Society and Japanese American Service Committee, Chicago; and New Mexico Japanese American Citizens League, Albuquerque, New Mexico.

"Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American WWII Experience" will be free and open to public at the Richard D. Baron '64 Art Gallery, located at [65 E. College St., Oberlin, Suite 5](#). The exhibit will be open on Saturdays from 10 a.m.- 5 p.m. and Sundays from noon- 5 p.m. from Feb. 17 through March 18. During its monthlong visit to Oberlin, the city, college and conservatory will host a series of events related to the exhibition, including academic lectures, documentary film screenings and talks by incarceration survivors. A full programming schedule is available at go.oberlin.edu/courage-and-compassion.

Media Contact:

Scott Wargo, Director of Media Relations, Oberlin College
Scott.wargo@oberlin.edu
440-775-5197

Media Contact:

Pauline Yoshihashi
Strategic Communications
For GFBNEC
323-683-8191 Direct
pyoshihashi@earthlink.net

Note to Media: "Go For Broke" was the motto of the 442nd Regimental Combat Team, a segregated Army unit composed of Japanese Americans from Hawaii and the mainland. The term was Hawaiian slang for "shooting the works," or risking everything for the big win in gambling - as the Nisei soldiers did while fighting in the field in WWII and facing prejudice at home in the U.S.

About Go For Broke National Education Center

Go For Broke National Education Center (GFBNEC) is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that educates the public on the valor of Japanese American veterans of World War II and their contributions to democracy. Our goal is to inspire new generations to embody the Nisei veterans' core values of courage, sacrifice, equality, humility and patriotism. Founded in 1989, GFBNEC maintains the Go For Broke Monument and the interactive "GFBNEC's Defining Courage Exhibition" in downtown Los Angeles, as well as extensive oral histories and archives, education and training programs, and other initiatives. For more information, please visit www.goforbroke.org.

About the NPS JACS Program

This project is funded, in part, by a grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Japanese American Confinement Site Grant Program. For more information regarding the JCAS grant program, please contact Kara Miyagishima, Program Manager, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, NPS, at 303-969-2885.