



Peoria, Ill. to Host "Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American WWII Experience"

National GFBNEC Exhibition Unveils Little-Known History of Peoria, Bradley University

LOS ANGELES and PEORIA, IL. (Nov. 5, 2018)-Bradley University, in partnership with the Peoria Public Library, will host "Courage and Compassion: Our Shared Story of the Japanese American World War II Experience" from Nov. 9 to December 13, 2018. The national exhibit, sponsored by Go For Broke National Education Center in Los Angeles, highlights little-known acts of conscience and community by local Peoria residents, Bradley University and other organizations during the turbulent days of World War II.

Funded in part by a grant from the National Park Service, "Courage and Compassion" 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. Visitors will learn about the Nisei (second-generation Japanese American) WWII experience and its legacy, engage with questions about what courage looks like during a time of crisis and consider the relevance to today's society.

During World War II, more than 25,000 Japanese Americans resettled in the Midwest after being forcibly removed from their homes and incarcerated in concentration camps far from the West Coast. The majority settled in the Chicago area, but a sizeable number found their way to smaller Midwestern cities like Peoria. From 1943 to 1946, more than 130 Japanese Americans moved to Peoria where they found employment, new homes, and a welcoming local population.

College-aged Japanese Americans found a rare opportunity to continue their education at Bradley University (then known as the Bradley Polytechnic Institute) and the Saint Francis Hospital School of Nursing. Although many resettlers left the Peoria area after the war, several families chose to make it their permanent home. The exhibition follows the stories of the Yamada and Kataoka families as they adapt to the harsh Midwestern winters, navigate their new communities, and find acceptance in central Illinois.

The exhibit will be on display Nov. 9-Dec. 13, 2018 at the Peoria Public Library, [107 NE Monroe, Peoria, IL, 61602](#), Monday through Saturday from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. in the Gallery on Lower Level 1. "Courage and Compassion" will be free and open to the public. For more information, please visit www.peoriapubliclibrary.org.

Mitchell T. Maki, Ph.D., president and chief executive officer of GFBNEC, noted that many residents of Peoria showed compassion and support for their Japanese American neighbors, who were able to find employment and educational opportunities in their new community. "The community and institutions in Peoria offered Japanese Americans a rare chance to put down roots and seek the American Dream," Maki said. "Despite the hysteria and suspicion fanned by World War II, everyday people did not discriminate against fellow citizens based on the color of their skin, the God whom they worshipped, or their country of origin."

Bradford C. Brown, Ph. D. and chair of the Department of History at Bradley University, expressed admiration and gratitude for the hard work and scholarly expertise of professor Rustin Gates, Ph.D., and his student, Tina Morris, a local history teacher, in researching these stories and handling the logistics of

this wonderful exhibition, generously funded and organized by GFBNEC. "Stories of courage and compassion are a testament not only to the individuals and families who persevered against discrimination but the essential importance of Peoria's civic institutions, then and now, whose purpose continues to be the promotion of the strength of our community on the basis of freedom and equality," Brown said. "The determined effort to remember these stories by our students and faculty at Bradley University reminds us that we are all-businesses, hospitals, libraries and local government, museums, schools and universities-stronger together."

From July 2017 through summer 2019, the exhibit is visiting 10 U.S. communities where citizens extended a helping hand to Japanese Americans during and after the end of WWII. Other community partners include: Willamette Heritage Center, Salem, Ore.; Japanese Cultural Center of Hawai'i, Honolulu; the Kingsburg Historical Society, Kingsburg, Calif.; Oberlin College and Conservatory, Oberlin, Ohio; Historic Ft. Snelling, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.; History Center of Olmsted County, Rochester, Minn.; 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. For more information and upcoming dates, please visit www.goforbroke.org/visit/traveling_exhibit/index.php.

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 Japanese American 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 JACS grant program, please contact Kara Miyagishima, Program Manager, Japanese American Confinement Sites Grant Program, NPS, at 303-969-2885.

About Bradley University

Bradley University is a top-ranked private university in Peoria, Illinois, that offers 5,400 undergraduate and graduate students opportunities and resources of a larger university and the personal attention and exceptional learning experience of a smaller university. Bradley offers more than 185 undergraduate and graduate academic programs in business, communications, education, engineering, fine arts, health sciences, liberal arts and sciences, and technology. Inspired by founder Lydia Moss Bradley's commitment to useful learning and ethics, Bradley University educates leaders, innovators, and contributors to the wellbeing of all humanity.

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