

## A MARCH FOR JUSTICE

My first experience involving redress was a rally and march that took place in Little Tokyo in August of 1989, just before the start of the Nisei Week festivities. The demonstration was called because Congress had taken no action to provide money for redress even though President Reagan had signed the bill a year earlier. Like others, I had been reluctant to get involved, but my friend Rei talked me into going and even drove me down there. I'm sure there were many people like me who had never really been involved with a civil rights group like NCCR, but their dedication and sincerity greatly impressed me.

There were so many backgrounds and ages gathered in the plaza by the Theater that I couldn't help but be impressed. An article in the Los Angeles Times covering the event estimated that about 500 people took part in the rally, some of whom wore black arm bands in memory of those who had passed on since the signing of the redress bill a year ago.



Haru Kuromiya

At the rally, we learned that the Office of Redress Administration said that some 2500 former internees had died during the year and were passing on at the rate of about 200 a month. Information like this added energy to our voices as we marched around Little Tokyo demanding "Justice Now!" We carried signs in both English and Japanese. The keynote speaker was the actor, Edward James Olmos, who used as a theme, the fact that "America has an obligation to take care of its problems."



The rally and the speakers were sure different than some of the comments I had been listening to. One, in fact, was from a very good friend of mine, who said that I was wasting my time. He even indicated that the internment was a good thing for his mother, who was housed and fed and was now able to relax and enjoy life! Needless to say, our friendship ended right there!

Even as I began to take part in more events and attend meetings, I still heard comments such as “if it weren’t for the evacuation, we Nisei wouldn’t have



spread out all over the United States!” My answer to them was always, “that didn’t make the internment right!” “We were in prison camps!” Some people really have trouble seeing the bigger picture!

Haru Kuromiya 2004