

Opponent of Japanese Americans’ WWII treatment honored

By Heather Hollingsworth
The Associated Press

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Relatives of a civil-rights attorney who last month was honored posthumously with a Presidential Medal of Freedom for challenging the treatment of Japanese Americans during World War II are alarmed by recent opposition to Syrian refugees resettling in the U.S.

Laurie Yasui, 64, of Kansas City, said her father, Minoru Yasui, would be “up on his soap box, stomping his feet, and shaking his fist” because of the political response to the Paris attacks. She and other relatives were at the White House to witness the honoring of her father and 16 others, including baseball greats Willie Mays and the late Yogi Berra, with the nation’s highest civilian award.

Lawmakers and more than half of U.S. governors have raised questions about the vetting of Syrian refugees, with some expressing concerns that Islamic extremists may try to take advantage of the process to enter the country. Several governors have said they want to stop Syrian refugees from entering their states. And David Bowers, the mayor of Roanoke, Virginia, invoked the mass detention of Japanese Americans during World War II in comments about keeping Syrian refugees out of the region.

“I was just aghast,” Laurie Yasui said, noting that Japanese internment has come to be viewed as a “dark moment in history.”



PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL OF FREEDOM. President Barack Obama shakes hands with Laurie Yasui, center, accepting the Presidential Medal of Freedom for her father, the late civil-rights leader Minoru Yasui, during a ceremony in the East Room of the White House in Washington. Yasui challenged the constitutionality of a military curfew order during World War II on the grounds of racial discrimination, and spent many months in solitary confinement during the legal battle. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

convinced a trial court to vacate his 1942 arrest. A case challenging the constitutionality of his conviction was pending before a federal appeals court.

“He would have been very proud to receive this,” Laurie Yasui said of the medal. “I think it would have said volumes to him about the state of the union today that he is being recognized by the government that he fought so hard to defend.”

But Chani Hawkins, his 31-year-old granddaughter, also of Kansas City, said the family’s excitement is tempered by the nation’s response to the Syrian refugees. She noted that after the internment camps closed, many states sought to keep the newly released Japanese Americans from resettling within their borders. Yasui settled in Colorado, one of the few places where the former internees were welcomed.

“Again,” Hawkins said, “we are at this kind of crossroad where fear and hysteria is playing into the decisions that are being made.”

See related story on page 11.

Bowers apologized after calls for his resignation.

After Pearl Harbor, a fearful nation cracked down on Japanese Americans and Yasui’s law practice focused largely on helping them transfer assets and prepare for the internment camps. Yasui had wanted to fight for the U.S., but was rejected when he tried to enlist. Outraged, he deliberately violated a military curfew placed on Japanese Americans and demanded to be arrested in 1942. He spent nine months in solitary confinement, with the Supreme Court ultimately ruling against him.

“The thing of it was, he loved this

country,” Laurie Yasui said. “He thought that this country was the greatest country on earth and made a point to say that this is the only country where you could stand up and object to the government and the president and be allowed to make that objection without being killed or destroyed.”

In the years that followed the war, he crisscrossed the country demanding — ultimately successfully — that the U.S. pay reparations to former Japanese internees and their heirs. The nation also formally apologized for the forced internment, and when Yasui died in 1986 at the age of 70, he had successfully

Sia video features child karate master with Olympic dreams

Continued from page one

talents” — has a quick sweet smile when she isn’t screaming.

Her kicks, turns, and punches in the air are part of *kata* forms that are like choreography in the Japanese defensive martial art of karate. Kata competition is separate from combat matches, which are also part of the sport.

When doing kata, you slip into a focused character, Mahiro says, by imagining “a far more powerful enemy.”

She lost a contest just once, when she was in kindergarten. She wept, she recalls, so painful was it to lose. The trick is to practice as though you are in competition, and compete as though you are in practice, she said.

And she practices with a ferocious frenzy, working out every day after school with her older brother. She was four years old when she started karate, inspired by her brother, then five years old, who began lessons with their father, a truck driver.

The moves must be powerful, precise, and sharp, and getting better never ends, you can keep working at one detail after another, she added, sounding almost like a guru.

When asked about the appeal of karate, her reply is rather simple — being able to make friends.

“You get to play with them,” such as tag, she said.

Her parents say they are grateful to karate because it teaches a child discipline, hard work, the resilience to perform under pressure, and manners. Bowing and cheerful replies, as well as constant practice and respect to hierarchy, exemplified in the belt system signifying skill levels, are integral to karate.

Her teacher, Takako Kikuchi, acknowledged that some purists may disapprove of a young woman’s participation



GRADE-SCHOOL GURU. Mahiro Takano, center, a three-time Japan karate champion in her age group, found making a music video was quite fun, and agreed she would do it again, especially if Justin Bieber or Taylor Swift offers. Mahiro’s video shoot with singer Sia in a Tokyo suburb took about a week. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

in a music video.

“But this little girl did not compromise in the music video. She is doing her best, delivering, correctly and thoroughly, one by one, the moves that she knows, with utmost concentration. There is nothing false about it, nothing made up. She is truly telling the world the way of karate,” Kikuchi said proudly.

Mahiro has already been chosen as an official “ambassador” for karate for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. The sport is vying to be chosen for the games. Never mind that, even if that happens, Mahiro may not be old enough to compete. The age cutoff is still undecided.

“I want to go to the Olympics,” she says, “and win a gold medal.”

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Difficulty level: Medium #12548

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that the digits 1 through 9 appear one time each in every row, column, and 3x3 box.

Solution to last week’s puzzle

Puzzle #26485 (Easy)

All solutions available at <www.sudoku.com>.

2			6	4	8			5
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