



National Association of Japanese Canadians

GORDON HIRABAYASHI HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD REPORT

By: Lorene Oikawa

2018 Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Awarded to Kay Kiyoshi Kato Shimizu

The NAJC is very pleased and honoured to confirm the awarding of the 2018 Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Award to Kay Kiyoshi Kato Shimizu. The award presentation took place in Oakville Ontario where she lives. Kay Shimizu was the first Japanese Canadian social worker and assisted Japanese Canadians during internment. The nomination by the Greater Vancouver Japanese Canadian Citizens' Association (GVJCCA) Human Rights Committee and Jean Kamimura was well supported by members of the Japanese Canadian community. Anne Sunahara offered testimony to Ms. Shimizu's activities as the first Japanese Canadian social worker in the 1940s. She says Ms. Shimizu was a valuable resource when she was researching her book, *The Politics of Racism: The Uprooting of Japanese Canadians During the Second World War*.

In 1985, Ms. Shimizu was Chairperson of the Ottawa Redress Committee. She moved to Vancouver and became involved in the Vancouver Redress movement. Ms. Shimizu introduced her nominator Jean Kamimura to the program of Abbeyfield Housing for Seniors and worked with her, Lillian Kadota, and others to make the idea for housing a reality and the housing still exists today. Jean Kamimura was also involved in the Vancouver Redress campaign and says she got to know Ms. Shimizu and learned of her "heart wrenching experience in 1942 tending to the needs of the people in Hastings Park..."

The National Association of Japanese Canadians (NAJC) Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Award is presented every two years in recognition of an individual or organization contributing to the development or promotion of human rights and equality in Canada.



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Photo caption: NAJC Vice President Lorene Oikawa presents the 2018 Dr. Gordon Hirabayashi Human Rights Award to Kay Kiyoshi Kato Shimizu. The award presentation took place in Oakville Ontario where she lives.