

Friday evening presenters:

Ann Tamaki Dion is a Topaz descendant; nineteen of her relatives were imprisoned in Topaz. Ann helped found The Friends of Topaz Museum to support the Museum by organizing local community outreach and fundraising events in California. Subsequently, in 2014, she participated in the National Park Service's review of the Museum's narrative and exhibits offering her input as a community stakeholder prior to the Museum's Grand Opening in 2017. Later, she helped create the on-line Topaz Stories Collection which was also made into a public exhibition at the Utah State Capitol for all of 2022. Currently, she serves on the Topaz Museum Board as an ex-officio member.

Sherrie Hayashi is a Topaz descendant. Her grandparents, Bunzo and Naka Fujii and four of their children were incarcerated at Topaz. Sherrie is the former Utah Labor Commissioner and currently works at the University of Utah.

Jani Iwamoto served in the Utah State Senate (2014-2022). She served in leadership as the Assistant Minority Whip. She previously served on the Salt Lake County Council where she became the first Asian American woman elected in Utah. Jani graduated from the University of Utah and received a J.D. from the UC Davis School of Law. She practiced law as a partner at the Cartwright, et al. law firm in San Francisco. Jani serves as chair of the Utah Advisory Committee to the US Commission on Civil Rights, the National Japanese American Historical Society, efforts for the restoration of Japantown, among others.

John Lambert is founder and former owner of Abstract Masonry Restoration, located in Salt Lake City Utah and Boston Massachusetts. Over the past 3 decades, he has overseen the restoration of over 2,300 historic masonry projects - most notable of which are Frank Lloyd Wright's Fallingwater in Pennsylvania, Mission San Juan Capistrano in Texas, St. Francis Cathedral Basilica in New Mexico, and many historic coastal lighthouses. John now provides historic masonry restoration training, consulting and legal expert witness services throughout the country.

Karen Kiyo Lowhurst is a yonsei descendant of Heart Mountain survivors. Her grandfather, James Tsutomu Uyeda, was a member of the Heart Mountain Fair Play Committee. Karen is a Deputy Attorney General for the State of California Department of Justice, practicing civil rights litigation for 29 years. She is currently co-president of the Berkeley Chapter of the JAACL, where she serves on the Scholarship, Membership, and Civil Rights committees. She mother of 4, wife of one, and a beekeeper.

Christopher W. Merritt, Ph.D. Utah State Historic Preservation Officer. Chris has worked as a professional archaeologist for the past 18 years, and for the State of Utah since 2012. Merritt received a Ph.D. in Anthropology from the University of Montana and a Master's of Science in Industrial Archaeology from Michigan Technological University. The mission of the State Historic Preservation Office is to promote the preservation and stewardship of Utah's cultural resources for our current and future generations in memory and honor of all those before.

Hisashi Bill Sugaya is an urban planner and long-time historic preservation professional. He is a partner at Carey & Co. Inc., San Francisco and previously served on the City and County of San Francisco Planning Commission and as Director of the National Trust for Historic Preservation Western Regional Office. He was born in Topaz, Utah and has served on the Board since 1996.

Masako Takahashi is a professional writer and artist and is President of the Henri and Tomoye Takahashi Charitable Foundation, which was founded by her parents to support the Japanese American Community. Born in Topaz, Utah, she grew up in San Francisco, her parent's home town, and graduated with a BA from the University of California, Berkeley. The Takahashi family were early donors to the Topaz Museum, since the 1990's, when it was just a dream. Now, Takahashi supports efforts to uplift the administration to professional levels by coordinating with the Utah SHPO and the National Park Service, in preserving the Topaz National Historic Monument and the Wakasa Memorial Stone in perpetuity.

Nancy Ukai is a sansei descendant of 12 Topaz incarcerated. Her half-brother was born the day after James Wakasa was killed and a second half-brother died at childbirth at Topaz on Christmas Day, 1944. She is director of the 50 Objects website under a National Park Service JACS grant. She found in the National Archives the map that led archaeologists to locate the Wakasa Monument. Nancy is past co-president of the Berkeley JACL, current chair of the Nichi Bei Foundation Board and a founding member of the Wakasa Memorial Committee.

Saturday religious officiants and presenters:

Darlene Arrum is Chairwoman of the Kanosh Band of Paiute Indians.

France A. Davis was born in rural Georgia to John and Julia Davis. He attend those all “colored” school through his first college at Tuskegee and served in the Air Force for 4 years. He graduated with undergraduate degrees in Rhetoric from UC Berkeley as well as Religion and Philosophy from Westminster College and master degrees in communication from the University of Utah and Religious Studies from Northwest Nazarene University. He taught at the University of Utah for 42 years and served as Pastor of the Calvary Baptist Church for 46 years. He marched with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr on the march from Selma to Montgomery and was active in civil right in Utah from 72 until now. He is married to the lovely Willene, they have three children, four grand children, and one great grandchild.

Rev. Amy Uzunoe-Chin was ordained as a Konko Minister in 1997. She is currently an Associate Minister of the Konko Church of Portland.

Rev. Michael Yoshii is a retired United Methodist clergy in the California Nevada Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church. He currently serves as the Co-Chair of the Friends of Wadi Foquin, a partnership with a Palestinian Muslim village in the Bethlehem District of the West Bank. His grandparents, Susuke and Misao Yoshii, and his father, Tadashi Yoshii (101 years old) were incarcerated in Tanforan and Topaz during World War II.

Rev. Duncan Ryuken Williams was ordained as a Soto Zen Buddhist priest at Kotakuji Temple (Nagano, Japan) in 1993 and currently serves as a priest at Zenshuji Soto Mission in Los Angeles. He is a Professor of Religion at the University of Southern California; the author and editor of nine books including American Sutra: A Story of Faith and Freedom in the Second World War (Harvard University Press) about Buddhism and the WWII Japanese American incarceration; and director of the Irei Names Monument, a project to honor those of Japanese ancestry who were incarcerated in America’s internment and concentration camps during WWII.

Joshua Shimizu is honored to be participating in this remembrance and memorial of the life of James Wakasa. Joshua’s past musical performances include Gardner Village’s Witchapalooza, Noorda Center for the Arts’ production of Sweeney Todd, and the musical As One, as part of the 150th Anniversary of the Transcontinental Railroad Celebration at Promontory Point. He has also performed in musicals such as The King and I, Pirates of Penzeance, and A Christmas Carol at Hale Centre Theatre, and is currently the cantor for Holy Family Catholic Church in South Ogden. Outside of music, Joshua is world history enthusiast, and an avid follower of Formula 1 and INDYCAR racing.