

FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL WORLD WAR II MEMORIAL'S STATEMENT ON THE PASSING OF THE HONORABLE NORMAN Y. MINETA

The Friends of the National World War II Memorial (Friends) is deeply saddened by the passing of former Congressman, Cabinet member and military veteran Norman Mineta.

As the son of Japanese immigrants, he spent the early years of his life in the shameful internment camps that have now been legally condemned for their unconstitutionality.

Despite the injustice done to him and his family, Mineta remained committed to the American ideal. He graduated from the University of California at Berkeley and joined the Army, serving in Japan and Korea.

He entered public life, serving as the Mayor of San Jose, a U.S. Congressman, and as Secretary of Commerce and Secretary of Transportation. As Transportation Secretary during the September 11, 2001 attacks, he was an inspirational and pivotal leader during those tragic events. In a time of great upheaval, he ensured that racial profiling and discrimination would not become American policy.

He continued to live a life of public service and leadership, an exceptional advocate for unity and for faith in American democracy. In his words, at the age of 10, he “made a choice to believe in the American idea, not harbor a resentment.”

As a nation, we are incredibly grateful for people like Norman Mineta - people who suffered, sacrificed, persevered, and inspired.

In February 2022, the Friends of the National World War II Memorial presented Mineta with the 2022 Brigadier General Charles E. McGee UNITY Award. The award signified Mineta's lifelong public service as a military veteran, Congressman, Cabinet member, and advocate for noble causes. Norm Mineta and Charles McGee are two men who overcame great adversity with grace, grit, and courage. In turbulent times, we will look to the example set by these two, so that we will be inspired by the power of unity and be reminded of the meaning of sacrifice.