

-----Remembrances: LANE RYO HIRABAYASHI (1952 - 2020)-----

Submitted by Akemi Kikumura Yano

Lane Ryo Hirabayashi was renowned for his preeminent body of work based on a legacy of activism, research, and writings focusing on civil rights and social justice in America. He earned his doctorate in anthropology at UC Berkeley and held tenured positions at San Francisco State University, University of Colorado at Boulder, and University of California at Riverside. In 2006, he was appointed UCLA's first George and Sakaye Aratani Endowed Chair on the Japanese American Incarceration, Redress, and Community, that focused on the wartime confinement of Japanese Americans during WWII.

Lane's commitment for social justice was a deeply personal quest, embedded in his family's history. His uncle, Gordon Hirabayashi, was imprisoned for challenging and defying the exclusion and curfew orders that applied to Japanese living on the West Coast during WWII, his conviction finally overturned in 1987. Lane's father, James Akira Hirabayashi, was the first Dean of the School of Ethnic Studies at San Francisco State University who became involved with the Third World Strike at San Francisco State University that played an instrumental part in creating Ethnic Studies on college campuses in California.

I first met Lane in 1981 when we shared an office as Visiting Scholars at the UCLA, Asian American Studies Center. His research focused on the Gardena Valley Nikkei which forged his connection to the Gardena Valley Japanese Cultural Institute. My study examined the Japanese American farming community in Fowler, California, that settled there in the early 1900s. Our joint research collaboration started in 1998 at the Japanese American National Museum (JANM) with the International Nikkei Research Project (INRP) that investigated the Nikkei, persons of Japanese descent, who had immigrated and settled in seven countries in the Americas: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Canada, Paraguay, Peru, and the U.S.A.

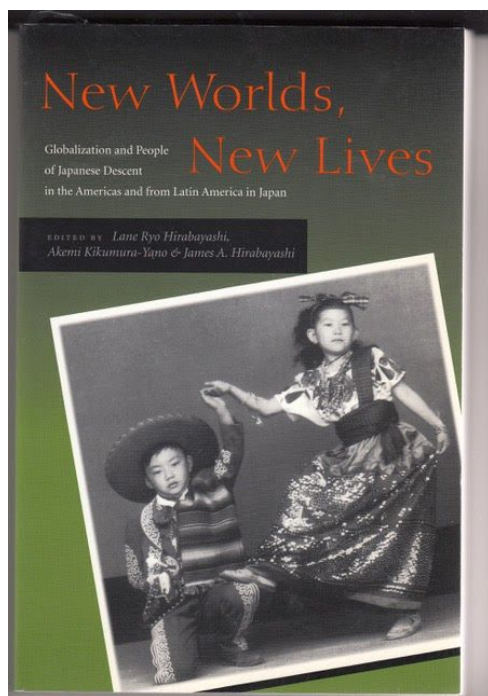


(from left to right) Marilyn Alquizola (Lane's wife), Lane Ryo Hirabayashi, Jim A. Hirabayashi (seated), Akemi Kikumura Yano (Santiago, Chile, circa 1999).

My first objective as the Project Director was to develop an international team of scholars and community institutions in each of the respective Nikkei communities, while Lane's main role as the Lead Scholar was to develop the Project's theoretical research framework. Jim Hirabayashi

played an invaluable part as the Project's Chief Advisor, checking our implicit assumptions and sharing his years of fieldwork experiences and expertise in Japanese American culture and community-building.

The project ultimately produced several groundbreaking works, including ***New Worlds, New Lives; Globalization & People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America in Japan*** (Stanford University Press 2002) for which Lane was the lead editor, the publication winning awards and recognition for groundbreaking global Nikkei research. Other project works included ***Common Ground; The Japanese American National Museum and the Culture of Collaboration*** (University Press of Colorado, 2005); ***The Encyclopedia of Japanese Descendants the Americas*** (Altamira Press, 2002); and the creation of JANM's **DISCOVER NIKKEI Website** that continues to-date to build connections with Nikkei worldwide.



New, New Lives; Globalization and People of Japanese Descent in the Americas and from Latin America in Japan (Stanford University, 2002)

A Lasting Legacy

Lane retired from his UCLA post in 2017 but remained active working on multiple research projects and writing assignments. One of his latest works which he co-edited with others, included ***NCRR: The Grassroots Struggle for Japanese American Redress and Reparations*** (UCLA Asian American Studies Center Press, 2018). Though pressed with deadlines, he was available to answer queries and requests from students, colleagues, and community members/groups. He was a "truth-seeker" who dug deep to uncover the buried and forgotten past, always willing to share his knowledge, references, and resources.

Personal Note

My husband (Gary Yano) and I will miss his friendship and his intellectual curiosity and creativity that enlivened our late-night dinner conversations and jam sessions that we enjoyed with him and his wife Marilyn. He was a gifted musician (guitarist) whose passion for music surely helped to fuel his lifelong commitment to share and make known the history and culture of the Japanese American community. He will be forever treasured and never forgotten.