

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Remembering Sen. Spark Matsunaga

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Posted On August 25, 2011 [English](#), [Columnists](#)

(First published in The Rafu Shimpo on August 24, 2011.)

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Dear Editor,

In the run-up to the Heart Mountain opening, former Sen. Alan Simpson said some embarrassingly good things about me and my role in redress to a Wyoming newspaper.

This was all very nice, but on the Senate floor in the spring of 1988, Simpson voted for an amendment to strip individual payments out of our bill, saying "the money sticks in my craw." Had that amendment passed, and it had more support than anyone suspected, redress would have meant nothing. Nor can Simpson name a single senator he persuaded to vote for S. 1053.

The only real Senate redress hero is the now forgotten Sen. Spark Matsunaga (1916-1990), who after three years of intense work, nailed down 71 of the 72 co-sponsors of the Senate bill—an achievement celebrated by Sen. Dan Inouye in a floor speech on the day of passage.

Japanese Americans should remember what Spark Matsunaga did for our community and our place in American history. That great and gentle man should not be someone forgotten among us nor among scholars of redress to come.

Grant Ujifusa

JACL-LEC (Legislative Education Committee) Strategy Chair, 1983-93
Chappaqua, N.Y.

2 Comments

1.



Grant Ujifusa on [February 18, 2013 12:06 pm](#)

Shortly before his death, Senator Daniel Inouye said this in the Hawaii Herald:

“The man who should take nearly all of the credit for the passage of the redress bill is Sen. Sparky Matsunaga. He is the one who sponsored the bill and organized the vote on that in the Senate. If Sen. Matsunaga’s efforts were to be weighted at 10, mine would be one.”

This means, as I more than suggested in my letter, that the the Cub Scout (Norman Mineta)-Boy Scout (Alan Simpson) story of how redress got through the House and Senate has no factual basis.

Grant Ujifusa

JACL Legislative Strategy Chair

Chappaqua, New York



[Pierre Moulin](#) on [November 24, 2014 11:27 am](#)

Thank you Grant for remembering Sparky who was one of the greatest men I have met in my life. I give him a special treatment in my books American Samurais in Europe and in the Pacific. Again Mahalo.
Pierre Moulin

Ben Sliney ordered the planes down on 9/11:
[Real Heroes, Fake Stories - The New York Times](#)

Scroll down to the Conclusion and see bullet point 5:
[Norman Mineta - 911myths](#)

The 9/11 Commission found his testimony about ordering the planes down "untruthful" and refused to include it in the Commission's *Final Report*.