



FRED T.
KOREMATSU
INSTITUTE

June 23, 2016

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Obama:

As the daughter of Fred T. Korematsu, who received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1998, and the founder and executive director of the organization honoring his legacy, I am proud to support the nomination of the late Colonel Young Kim for the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom on behalf of the Fred T. Korematsu Institute. Kim's heroic service in the United States Army and his pioneering leadership in underserved communities exemplify the achievements the Medal of Freedom seeks to recognize.

The Fred T. Korematsu Institute was founded in 2009 to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the reversal of Fred Korematsu's conviction for defying the U.S. military's unjust orders to incarcerate Japanese Americans during World War II. Honoring Fred's lifelong fight to protect civil liberties and constitutional rights for all people, the Fred T. Korematsu Institute educates about the importance of remembering the Japanese American incarceration and applying its lessons to stand up for equality and justice in times of emerging challenges facing diverse communities.

Kim's story, like that of my father, is an important part of the major contributions Asian Americans have made toward advancing inclusion and equality for Asian Americans and other underserved groups. National recognition for Kim's unsung heroism is well-deserved.

Born in 1919 to immigrant parents, Kim was a valiant war hero who served in the United States Army during World War II and the Korean War. During World War II, Kim was the only Korean American in the famous Japanese American unit, the 100th Battalion/442nd Regimental Combat Team. The Army offered him a transfer due to fears of ethnic conflict, but he refused, declaring, "There is no Japanese or Korean here. We're all Americans and we're fighting for the same cause." This spirit of unity and bridge-building became a theme throughout his life, and it also stands in sharp contrast to the exclusion thousands of Japanese Americans were facing at the time and the challenges Kim himself encountered in his early life as a Korean American and Asian American.

After his retirement from an exemplary and highly decorated military career in 1972, Kim dedicated his life to serving minorities, youth, and the poor in his native Southern California. He was active in working with Special Services for Groups, a non-profit service organization that promoted equal opportunities for vulnerable minorities. He became a founding member of numerous non-profit organizations in the region, including the Korean American Museum; the Korean American Coalition; and the Korean Health, Education, Information and Research Center. When he was on

the board of the United Way Los Angeles Chapter, he added the organization's programs for the Japanese, Filipino, Vietnamese, and Korean American communities. Kim was also chairman of the Center for Asian Pacific Families, which, under his leadership, became the largest women's shelter in Southern California in the 1990's. He was also dedicated to preserving the history of contributions of the Japanese American military units of World War II. He helped to establish the Japanese American National Museum, the Go For Broke Monument, and the Go For Broke Educational Foundation.

Kim passed away in 2005, but his legacy lives on through the work of his organizations, the lives he impacted, and the shared visions of others—like the Fred T. Korematsu Institute—that are committed to justice, equality, and opportunity for Americans of all backgrounds. In our pursuit to uplift the diversity of America, we honor Kim as a positive role model to this generation and to future generations. Kim's courage, leadership, and exemplary public service are deserving of this nation's highest honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Korematsu". The signature is fluid and elegant, with the first and last names being the most prominent.

Karen Korematsu
Founder and Executive Director