

2 FEB 2016

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

Dear President Obama:

*THOMAS A SCHWARTZ INC(TASI)* is honored and proud to support the nomination of Colonel Young Oak Kim for the 2016 Presidential Medal of Freedom. His honorable service in the United States Army and his compassionate acts of humanitarianism during peacetime deem him a meritorious American citizen.

I retired in 2002 as a four star general. My last position was as Commander United States Forces Korea, United Nations Command and Combined Forces Command. I served in Korea three times and have had the privilege to serve with numerous honorable Korean Americans. Simply put, Col Kim's life and legacy needs to be elevated to the highest level of recognition.

Colonel Young Oak Kim was a valiant Korean American war hero who fought for the United States Army during World War II and the Korean War. After his retirement from an exemplary military career in 1972, he dedicated his life to public service and developed several major non-profit organizations in communities throughout Southern California.

As a loyal American patriot, Kim served as the only Korean American in the famous Japanese American unit, the 100<sup>th</sup> Battalion/442<sup>nd</sup> Regimental Combat Team during World War II. His noteworthy career in the Army marked many military milestones for Asian Americans and other minorities. He earned two Silver Stars, two Bronze Stars, two Legions of Merit, and three Purple Hearts over the span of his career.

Kim's most famous military action during World War II was during a "suicide mission" in which he infiltrated German territory during the Battle of Anzio, which led to the liberation of Rome. This feat earned him the U.S. Distinguished Service Cross, the second-highest military award. He left the Army after World War II with a dishonorable discharge but returned at the outbreak of the Korean War to fight again on the front lines. As commander of the first Battalion, 31<sup>st</sup> Infantry Regiment during the Korean War, Kim became the first minority officer to command an Army battalion on the battlefield in U.S. history.

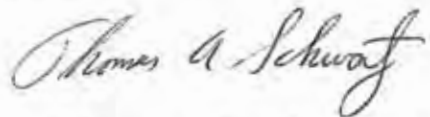
While in Seoul, Korea, he led his battalion in adopting an orphanage of over 500 children, who grew up to be successful innovators and leaders in the workforce. He later served in Korea as a U.S. military advisor to the Republic of Korea Army and revised their military plan, which included establishing the first missile battalion of Korea.

After retiring from the military with 80% disability, Young Oak Kim devoted the rest of his life to serving minorities, youth, and the poor in his native Southern California. He became a founding member of numerous non-profit service organizations in the region. 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 Memorial, and the Go For Broke Educational Fund.

Col. Kim passed away in 2005, but his legacy lives on through the lives he saved during his exceptional service in the U.S. Army and the humanitarian work of his organizations that allow future generations to prosper. At *TAJI*, we respect the sacrifices our veterans have made for our country and recognize Col. Kim's contributions as exemplary. Because of his valiant heroism in and out of uniform, Young Oak Kim is a worthy candidate for our nation's highest civilian award, the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Respectfully,



THOMAS A. SCHWARTZ

GENERAL (RET), US ARMY