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## Obituary: Bob Uyeyama often spoke of internment

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Bob Uyeyama, a retired civil servant who spoke out to raise awareness about the internment of Japanese Americans during during [World War II](#), has died at age 75.

He collapsed and died last Saturday of a [heart attack](#) while speaking to members of the Japanese American Citizens League on a tour of the Manzanar internment camp in Lone Pine, said his son, Jason.

Mr. Uyeyama spent 36 years working for the Sacramento County clerk's office and the Superior Court. He officiated at more than 500 marriages as a deputy marriage commissioner and retired in 1998 after six years as administrator for the south county court.

After a career behind the scenes, he stepped out in public to promote understanding of a dark and painful chapter in American history. As a leader in the Florin JACL, he spent his retirement educating young people about the U.S. government's internment of more than 120,000 people of Japanese ancestry from 1942 to 1945.

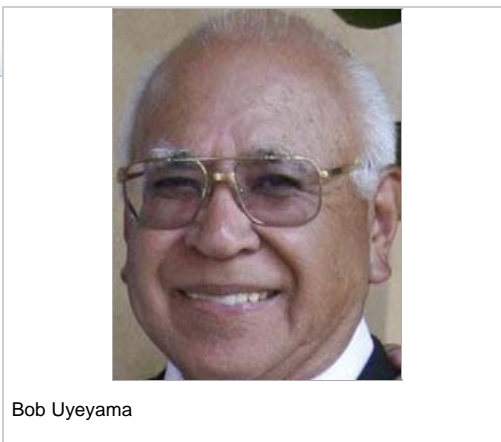
"It is a story that has to be told over and over again, lest we forget," he told The Bee in 2007.

For several weeks each year, Mr. Uyeyama gave his first-hand account as a volunteer docent for students visiting an exhibition on the Japanese American internment experience at the California Museum in Sacramento. He also spoke at schools in Arkansas, where his family was sent to camps in Jerome and Rohwer.

He attended the Florin JACL's annual trips to Manzanar. He and other former internees told their stories for a videotape recorded by the Elk Grove Unified School District.

"He realized that he had a chance to influence future generations," said Marielle Tsukamoto, Florin JACL president.

Bob Minoru Uyeyama was born in 1935 in Sheldon and grew up on his family's strawberry farm



Bob Uyeyama

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in Florin. One of 10 children born to Miyasumi and Uto Uyeyama, he was 7 years old when his family was ordered to leave home.

He captivated audiences with poignant stories of a childhood in prison. He told about playing with his brothers inside barbed-wire fencing around the camp. He recalled reciting the Pledge of Allegiance – with its promise of "liberty and justice for all" – while armed guards stood outside the classroom door.

"He was an eloquent speaker, so outgoing and friendly with people," said Andy Noguchi of the Florin JACL. "He touched thousands of students every year."

Mr. Uyeyama graduated from Lodi Academy, attended Pacific Union College and served three years in the [Air Force](#). He married his wife, Masako, in 1967.

He sang in a barbershop quartet with his brothers and in the choir at Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church. He served as organist, pianist and head usher at All Nations Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Elk Grove.

An avid golfer, he celebrated a 2007 hole-in-one at Bradshaw Ranch Golf Course. He enjoyed concert performances by his son, a noted violinist who plays with the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

"He was a simple, happy man," Jason Uyeyama said. "He got along with everybody."

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