

# MAY IS ASIAN PACIFIC AMERICAN HERITAGE MONTH

Asian Pacific American Heritage Month (APAHM) is celebrated in May to commemorate the contributions of people of Asian and Pacific Islander descent in the U.S. May was chosen to commemorate the arrival of the first Japanese immigrants to America on May 7, 1843, and to mark the anniversary of the completion of the transcontinental railroad (by many Chinese laborers) on May 10, 1869. In June 1977, Reps. Frank Horton of New York and Norman Y. Mineta of California introduced a House Resolution that called upon the president to proclaim the first ten days of May as Asian Pacific Heritage Week. The following month, Senators Daniel Inouye and Spark Matsunaga introduced a similar bill in the Senate. Both were passed. On October 5, 1978, President Jimmy Carter signed a Joint Resolution designating the annual celebration. Twelve years later, President George Bush signed an extension making it into a month-long celebration. In 1992, the official designation of May as APAHM was signed into law.

## 2011 THEME: Diversity, Leadership, Empowerment and Beyond

*"When the late Senator Spark Matsunaga and I started Asian Pacific Heritage Month 33 years ago, we envisioned an era when the Asian Pacific American community would collaborate to help our current and future leaders." Daniel K. Inouye, U.S. Senator from Hawaii (1963 to present). From Federal Asian Pacific American Council (FAPAC) 2010 conference program book.*

**Daniel K. Inouye** is the most senior member of the U.S. Senate and the President pro tempore, making him the highest-ranking Asian American politician in American history. He was elected to the Senate in 1962 and has been serving ever since, with his most recent re-election for a 9th term in 2010. He was appointed as Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations in 2009.



Inouye was born on September 7, 1924, in Honolulu, Hawaii, the son of Kame and Hyotaro Inouye. He is Nisei, second generation Japanese-American, and grew up in the Bingham Tract, a Chinese-American enclave within the predominantly Japanese-American community of Mo'ili'ili in Honolulu.

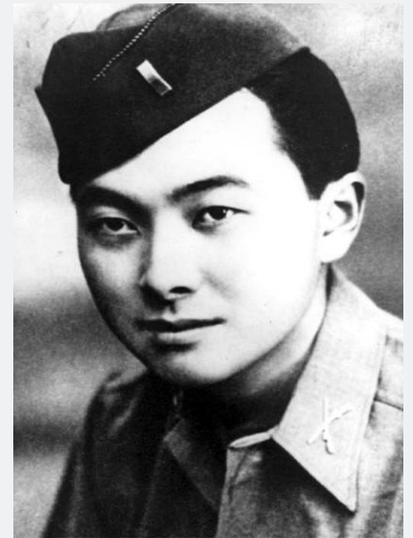
He was at the Pearl Harbor attack in 1941 as a medical volunteer. In 1943, he curtailed his premedical studies at the University of Hawaii and enlisted in the Army. He was assigned to the Nisei 442nd Regimental Combat Team, which became the most-highly decorated unit in the history of the Army. During the World War II campaign in Europe, he

received the Bronze Star, the Purple Heart, and the Distinguished Service Cross, which was upgraded by President Clinton in June 2000 to the Medal of Honor.

Working for Hawaii, some of Inouye's accomplishments have included support of Papa Ola Lokahi - Native Hawaiian Healthcare; and science educational programs including Women in Technology Project and Science Education Pilot Program that supported NOAA's efforts to continue the implementation of an integrated system-wide science education pilot program for Hawaii's schools that can be replicated nationwide.

Inouye graduated from the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1950 with a Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, under the GI Bill, and earned his law degree from The George Washington University Law School in Washington, D.C. in 1953. Soon afterward he was elected to the territorial legislature, of which he was a member until shortly before Hawaii achieved statehood in 1959. He won a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives as Hawaii's first full Member, and took office on August 21, 1959, the same date Hawaii became a state; he was re-elected in 1960.

Source: <http://inouye.senate.gov>



Inouye as a Lieutenant in the U.S. Army