Robert Arden Wilson
History: Los Angeles
1910-1991
Professor Emeritus

Robert Arden Wilson, JLS 1943, who taught Japanese history at UCLA from 1949 to 1978, passed away on November 29, 1991. He was a member of the pioneering cohort of Japan scholars in the United States in the immediate post-World War II years. But Bob was more than a scholar. He was above all a modest and generous human being. As Gerhart Ladner, one of his UCLA history colleagues noted, “Bob was one of the most human and kindest persons whom I met during my academic life.” He is survived by his wife, Margaret, daughter, Ann, and two sons, Lee and Bruce.

Bob Wilson was born in Des Moines, Iowa, on July 17, 1910, and grew up in Gladstone, Oregon. As he once put it, he was the typical “youth of the depression.” Born into a poor family, he learned early to shift for himself. A stint as a merchant seaman was followed by employment on the Bonneville Dam as a framer, leading to an industrial accident that left him with a life-long disability. This also led to a shift of careers. Bob decided to build on his Japanese studies, begun at the university and from the Japanese American community. This led to a commission and to a tour of duty in the Pacific as a Navy intelligence officer from 1943-46.

With the war over, Bob returned to the University of Washington to complete his doctorate in Japanese history, receiving his Ph.D. in 1949. In the same year he joined the UCLA history department as its sole Japan specialist. Bob Wilson’s early writings on Japan, including his *Genesis of the Meiji Government in Japan* (U.C. Press, 1957) continue to be cited by contemporary scholars, and his mid-career shift into the field of Japanese American studies resulted in his major study, *East to America: A History of the Japanese in the United States*, which was co-authored with Bill Hosokawa in 1980. Bob’s earlier research on Japan was supported by the Fulbright Commission and by grants from the American Philosophical Society; his later work on Japanese Americans received support both from the university and from the Japanese American Citizen’s League.

*East to America* was the product of Bob’s growing involvement with Japanese-American matters and Japanese-American history. Bob served as an important early director of UCLA’s Japanese American Research Project, which was supported and funded by the JACL. He was joined in these efforts by men such as Joe Grant and Masaoka, who, like Bob, were convinced that UCLA should become a major depository for the historical documents of the Japanese American community. Both the community and the University are indebted to these men for the foresight and vision that made UCLA into the major center for the study of Japanese-Americans in the U.S. that it is today.

Among Bob’s best qualities was his dry sense of humor and the ability to laugh at himself as well as at others. He was remarkably unpretentious and could communicate easily with people from all walks of life. His earlier experiences taught him never to judge others too quickly. And living through the depression made him unfailingly generous. If there were two things that he particularly treasured, they were his family and trout fishing. As a fisherman he was a true genius and nowhere was he more in his element than on an Eastern Sierra trout stream, under the trees and the warm sun with his line flicking near some bank or pool. Few who went with him can remember a time when he did not catch his limit, often by noon. How he liked to clean and prepare those fish for a delicious campfire meal with the setting sun! To appreciate Bob one had to be there for such an outing. Here was the complete man: scholar, friend, teacher—and trout fisherman.

Robert Burr and Fred Notehefer
University of California
In Memoriam, 1994
pp. 251-252

CONVERSATION BETWEEN MARINES

Dear Aubrey [Farb]:

The CO at the Marine Barracks was Col. Kendall. He said I shouldn't seek quarters in DC because he was sending me to the President's Camp David about 60 miles into Maryland. At the camp I found two other 1st Lts, Carroll Rowe and Cloyd Hines, both senior to me by file numbers. Rowe was married and lived in the small town of Thurmont, at the foot of the Catoctin Mts. Hines was single and lived on post. A big central lodge in the Catoctin Mt Park was taken over by FDR in 1942 and made it his presidential retreat, calling it "Shangri-la." Eisenhower later renamed it Camp David, after his son. Near the lodge was what I was told had been a Girl Scouts' Camp and this was taken over to house the 100-odd Marines who would be needed to protect the
morning I was there when Truman popped out with his cane, ready for his morning walk. He bade me good morning. I saluted and returned his greeting. He bustled off on his walk. On weekends we ran a liberty bus into Hagerstown, about 16 miles away, to give the men a break from their sequestered lives at the Camp. Now and then the local law would phone us to retrieve some over-exuberant grenade from their pokey. [I remember calls like that when I was in]. We usually let them sit there until the next day.

After some months of this pleasant duty, I was called back to 8th and Eye. Col. Kendall told me I was being seconded to the State Department to go to Europe to augment their Diplomatic Courier Service, which was going to be overburdened during the Moscow Conference.

Next: Schlepping Diplomatic Bags. [RIP Glenn]  

Semper Fi  
Glenn Nelson  
JLS 1944

John Y. Toshiyuki  
Sensei? &  
Tomomas Yamazaki  
Sensei, USA MIS  
Died Serving during the Occupation

I am attempting to clarify/confirm the possibility that John Y. Toshiyuki was an instructor at the Japanese Language School at Boulder and Oklahoma A&M. His name does not appear in Jessica Arston's "Journey to Boulder".

In attempting to trace relatives of a KIA in WWII named Shigeo Tabuchi, the name of John Y. Toshiyuki came up as a decorated instructor of the Navy. I am a gofer for the Echoes of Silence of AJA memorial alliance trying to finalize the KIA. But in so doing we run into other interesting tangents.

I kind of got lost reading some of the memories by the sensei of the Japanese Language School and their relatives in The Interpreter.

Tomomasa Yamazaki is on the list of sensei at Boulder. Ruth Yamazaki, wife of Tomomasa, was also a sensei at Boulder. Because the parents of Tom Yamazaki had been proprietors of a oriental art goods store in San Francisco. They chose to return to Japan rather than be interned.

Tom attended the University of California and worked on the editorial staff of a Japanese newspaper in San Francisco and Los Angeles and married Ruth who was on the staff of the California Daily News in L. A.

After serving the JLS, Tom enlisted in the Army as a private, taking a cut in pay. Tom was in the class 45-09 A-14 at the Army Intelligence School Fort Snelling. Tom re-enlisted to serve in Japan in June 1946.

While on a routine flight from Itami Army Base near Osaka to Fukuoka, in Kyushu on December 10, 1946, T/Sgt Yamazaki was killed when the air transport he was on crashed two minutes after take off from Itami. Twenty-two of the twenty-three occupants died in the crash.

Included were: Shigeru Mori of Sandy, Utah; Daniel Ota from Topaz Internment Center in Utah, and Frederick M. Hirano, formerly of Granada. I do not have any data whether Tom was able to see his parents or siblings in Japan.

Tomomasa is buried at the Los Angeles National Cemetery.

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After the war, Mr. Levine entered the family business, Towers Motor Parts Corporation, in Lowell, MA. He retired in 1998. Mr. Levine was active in many Civic Organizations to include the Greater Lowell Chamber of Commerce, United Fund for Greater Lowell, Greater Lowell Council of Social Agencies, Harvard Club of Lowell, Harvard Club of Boston, Harvard Alumni Association, Vesper Country Club and the Automotive Service Industry Association.

He also served on the Boards of Merrimack River Savings Bank, which merged into Lowell Five Cent Savings Bank, and Saint John's Medical Center. In Albuquerque, Mr. Levine served as treasurer of the Bernalillo County Democratic Party and as a board member of the Albuquerque Committee of Foreign Affairs. Mr. Levine was a member of Temple Beth El, in Lowell, MA from 1945 to 2005 where he served as a Trustee, Assistant Treasurer, President, and Chairman of various committees. He also served as Board Member and Chairman of the Cemetery Committee for Congregation Albert in Albuquerque.

He is survived by his children, Erica Levine Powers of Newburgh, NY and John B. Levine, M.D., of Cambridge, MA; grandson, Llewellyn A. Powers of Oakland, CA; brother, Morey Levine of Lexington, MA; cousin, Joan B. Pinck of Cambridge, MA; the children of Carol N. Kinney, Tom Roberts and wife, Leah Albers, Margaret Roberts, M.D., Shelley Roberts and husband, Duane Moore, all of Albuquerque.

Mr. Levine was preceded in death by his wife, Pearl S. Levine and by Carol N. Kinney.

Reprise on Tad Van Brunt

This is a note to add to the Tad Van Brunt story that was in the last issue of The Interpreter, Issue #129, November 1, 2008. I was in Boulder after Tad had left there and I did not meet him until we were both recalled to active duty in the Marine Corps in July 1950 (not 1948 as reported in your story). Both of us were attached to the First Marine Division Intelligence Section and we traveled together on a ship to Kobe to stage for the landing at Inchon, Korea in September 1950. Tad possessed an engaging personality, always a bright smile and fun to be around and in a short period we became close friends.

When we landed in Kobe he was met by a bevy of friends he had not seen since he left eleven years earlier. Included among the greeters was his former Japanese nanny who embraced him and broke into a torrent of tears. Also in the group were several gaijin, principally of Italian descent, including a stunning woman of our age with whom Tad had gone to school before his departure from Japan in 1939. The chemistry between them was instant. It was a combination of his fascination with this charming Italian woman and alcohol that nearly cost him a court martial within ten days after our arrival. I would like to claim that my skill as an attorney saved him from this calamity but it probably was due more to the urgency of our division's mission that our commanding officer limited punishment to a severe admonition.

Before deployment from Kobe to Korea Tad and I were temporarily assigned to regimental staffs, he to the 7th Marines and I to Chesty Puller's 1st Marines. After our assignment I never saw Tad again.

Perhaps one or two years ago a story appeared in The Old Breed, the magazine of the 1st Marine Division, that related that during the Chinese intervention in the Chosin Reservoir (Nov. 1950) that a U.S. Army unit on the east side of the reservoir had been driven by the Chinese onto the frozen lake and that the soldiers tried to reach the western shore protected by the 7th Marines. Once on the barren frozen ice they were "sitting ducks" for the Chinese and many were wounded, killed, or frozen to death. A group of Marines, including Tad, disregarding their own safety, made several forays onto the ice to rescue wounded and half-frozen soldiers. The narrator in this piece was a participant and he stated that Lt. Van Brunt exhibited extraordinary bravery in this action. I seem to recall, but am not sure, that Tad was decorated for his heroic deeds.

Best regards,
Elmer J. Stone
JLS 1945

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Marines: Cross, Van Brunt & Pratt

Just as I was about to email you about two items, your email re: Chuck Cross, sadly brought a third. Within a week, I will send you some comments on that outstanding JLS friend. We not only started together, at the beginning, in the "very famous" July 1943 graduating class, joined the 4th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, participated in all 4 battles of the 4th MarDiv, were practicing written and spoken Japanese language at JICPOA at Pearl Harbor when V-J Day occurred, but were two of the three Boulder Marines (Dave Anderson was the third) sent to join the USMC III Corps in North China (to take the surrender of the Japanese in Beijing, Tianjin, and Qingdao, and "protect" the soon to arrive Chinese Nationalist troops from the Communist 9th Route Army roaming round the region), because of our years of China residence and familiarity with the Chinese language.

The other two items were some more comments about the memorable and unique Tad Van Brunt of our Boulder class, which I will send to you, and to ask if you have seen the October 2008 USMC magazine article about longer service Marine and later Boulder JLS grad, Harry Pratt, whose command of the Japanese language made him a valued prosecution team member at the Manila trials of Japanese generals deemed responsible for wartime atrocities [COL Pratt sent us that issue of The Leatherneck].

Do you have any details of Chuck's passing? [Not at this 11/6/08 writing?] Having Gerry Hoeck's email address from your message, I will contact him, as a longtime Seattle member (and also Boulder USMC) of our less numerous survivors, unfortunately.

Dan S. Williams
JLS 1943

[Ed. Note: When I heard that Charles T. Cross had passed away, I immediately emailed those former veterans of the 4th MARDIV with whom he had served. Ambassador Cross had been a generous supporter of the USN JLS/OLS Archival Project. I met Mr. and Mrs. Cross at the 60th JLS/OLS Anniversary Reunion at CU in 2002. We will miss him. We will look forward to more stories by Dan Williams.]

G. William Skinner
1925-2008
OLS 1944-45, Chinese

G. William Skinner, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Anthropology, University of California-Davis, died peacefully at home on October 26, 2008. The cause of death was cancer. He was 83. Educated at Deep Springs College and Cornell University, where he received his Ph.D. in anthropology in 1954, he began his scholarly career as Field Director for the Cornell’s Southeast Asia Program, serving in Bangkok, Thailand, from 1951 to 1955. After teaching at Columbia and Cornell, in 1965 he moved to Stanford, where he was appointed Barbara K. Borrowing Professor of Humanities and Sciences in 1987. From 1990 until his retirement in 2005, he taught at the University of California-Davis. He was a member of the National Academy of Sciences, a past president of the Association for Asian Studies. G. William Skinner was one of the world’s leading scholars of Chinese culture, working in many disciplinary fields from geographic information systems (GIS) and regional analysis to the study of family systems. His earliest published work on the overseas Chinese in Thailand and Indonesia was followed by studies of marketing and social structure in rural China and analyses of China’s spatial history. At the time of his death he was engaged in comparative research projects applying spatial analysis and family systems.
who worked as truck farmers. She was raised in the small town of Centerville, which is today part of the city of Fremont.

She earned her famous nickname because her non-Japanese friends found pronouncing the "Tsu" in her name difficult. She was called "Socko" and other variations before it was shortened to "Sox."

The simple life gave way to a loss of innocence with the aftermath of the Dec. 7, 1941 bombing of Pearl Harbor.

Kitashima was 23 when she and some 120,000 persons of Japanese descent were forcibly relocated from the West Coast to wartime concentration camps, an experience that would later both define and motivate her community activism.

After four months in the Tanforan Assembly Center "a temporary camp at a horse race track in San Bruno, Calif." she was sent along with others to the Topaz (Central Utah) concentration camp.

She married Tom Kitashima on Aug. 11, 1945 in Salt Lake City after a nine-year courtship. They had one child, son Alan, in 1949.

Kitashima worked at the local VA Hospital until forced to retire in 1981, and then devoted herself to community work.

Because she wanted to be a part of the struggle to right the wrong done upon the Japanese American community, Kitashima joined the National Coalition for Redress and Reparations in 1980, the year it was founded.

"I wanted most of all to educate the general public about the truth of what happened during the war, even though each time I spoke about my experience, it brought back dark memories," she wrote.

Inspired by the determination and commitment by the younger Sansei, Kitashima decided to testify at the San Francisco hearings of the Commission on Wartime Relocation and Intemment of Civilians, held on Aug. 11-13, 1981.

"I spoke about the humiliation of being fed discolored cold cuts, overcooked Swiss chard and moldy bread," she wrote. "I told of my brother's losses as a farmer, the horror of being placed in a horse stall with manure on the floor, hay-filled mattresses that served as our beds, the lack of privacy, the terrible sanitation, and the irony of holding memorial services for our Japanese American soldiers while behind barred wire fences." (to be cont'd)

Kenji G. Taguma
Nichi Bei Times
January 12, 2006