



AAUW California

The

Kindness of Color

January 10, 2023



Linking together for our mission.





The Kindness of Color

The Story of Two Families and
Mendez, et al. v. Westminster,
The 1947 Desegregation of
California Public Schools

Gonzalo & Felicitas Mendez

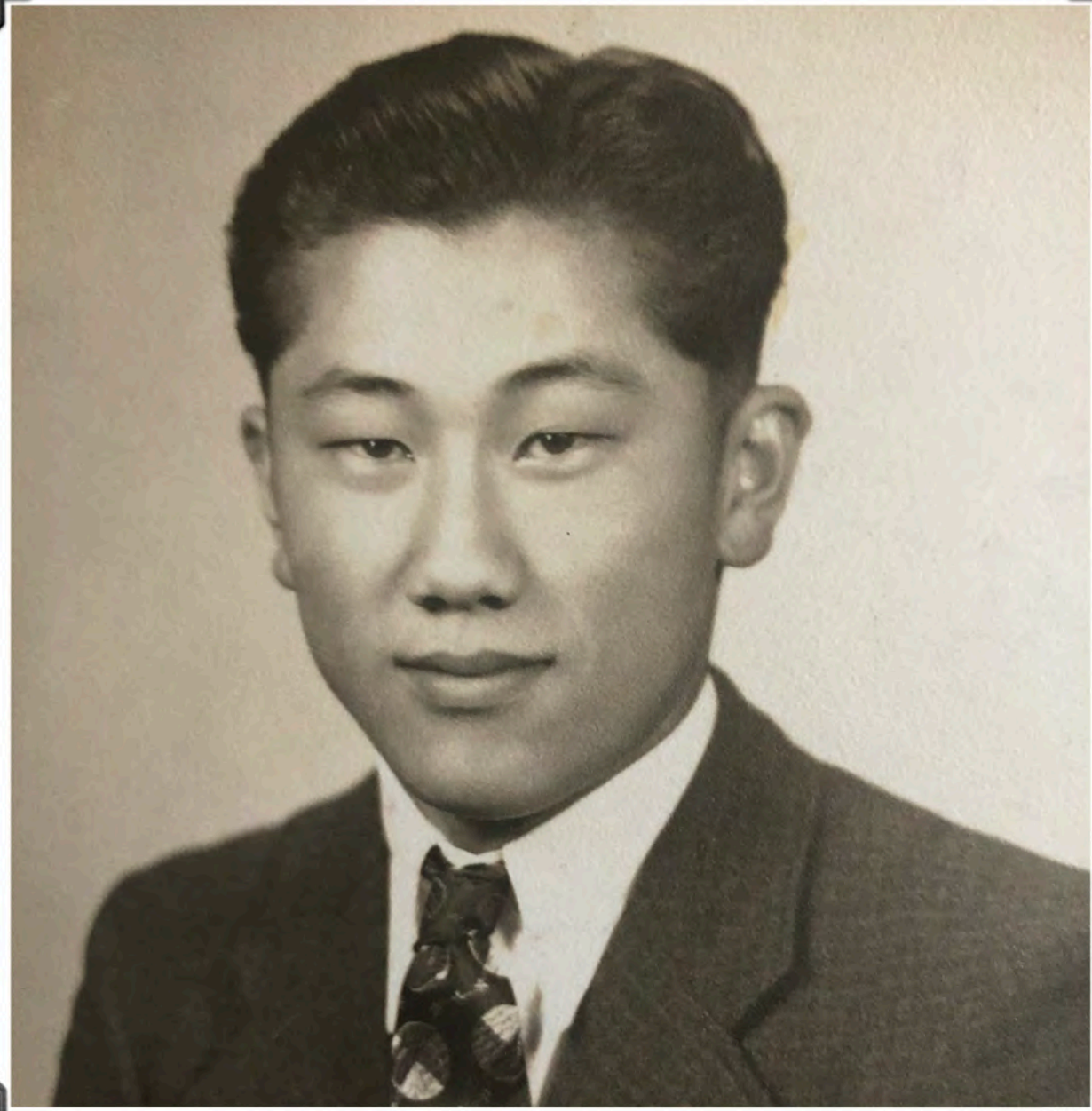


Seima & Masako Munemitsu



1930s
Farming in Westminster, CA





Seiko Lincoln Munemitsu - aka "Tad"
Struck by polio as a child & young land owner

“Kindness is... taking time to help others,
no matter how young they are.” pg.54

Life Before World War II



SEVENTH AND FOURTH ARMY
CIVIL CONTROL ADMINISTRATION
Presidio of San Francisco, California
April 1, 1942

INSTRUCTIONS TO ALL PERSONS OF JAPANESE ANCESTRY

Living in the Following Area:

All that portion of the City and County of San Francisco, State of California, lying generally west of the north-south line established by Junipero Serra Boulevard, Worcester Avenue, and Nineteenth Avenue, and lying generally north of the east-west line established by California Street, to the intersection of Market Street, and thence on Market Street to San Francisco Bay.

All Japanese persons, both alien and non-alien, will be evacuated from the above designated area by 12:00 o'clock noon Tuesday, April 7, 1942.

No Japanese person will be permitted to enter or leave the above described area after 8:00 a. m., Thursday, April 2, 1942, without obtaining special permission from the Provost Marshal at the Civil Control Station located at:

1701 Van Ness Avenue
San Francisco, California

The Civil Control Station is equipped to assist the Japanese population affected by this evacuation in the following ways:

1. Give advice and instructions on the evacuation.
2. Provide services with respect to the management, leasing, sale, storage or other disposition of most kinds of property including: real estate, business and professional equipment, buildings, household goods, boats, automobiles, livestock, etc.
3. Provide temporary residence elsewhere for all Japanese in family groups.
4. Transport persons and a limited amount of clothing and equipment to their new residence, as specified below.

The Following Instructions Must Be Observed:

- Dec. 7, 1941: Pearl Harbor Bombed
- Feb. 19, 1942 :
Executive Order #9066 Signed by
President Franklin Roosevelt



May 14, 1942
Seima arrested by the FBI - accused of spy activity



May 17, 1942
Left Westminster for
Poston, AZ

A “Brave” Photo for Seima

Family #24132 &
#20344 A&B,
Poston, AZ

120,000 West Coast Japanese American Residents Lost Their Freedom

THIS LEASE Made this 20th day of December, 1944, between

SEIKO L. MUNEMITSU,

herein called lessor,

and

GONZALO MANDEZ,

herein called lessee,

WITNESSETH: That lessor, in consideration of agreements herein contained, does hereby lease that property in the County of Orange, State of California, as follows, to-wit:

A portion of the Northeast Southwest quarter of Section Three, Township Five South, Range Eleven West, S. B. & M., as beginning at the center of said section Three, running at the center of said section Three, thence South 20 chains; thence West 20 chains; thence North 49 $\frac{1}{2}$ ^o East 8.34 chains; thence to the point of beginning; excepting therefrom a strip 12 feet 7 inches off

together with the appurtenances, the improvements thereon, and also the use, as herein provided, of the farm tools, equipment, machineries, and automobile stake body 4-cylinder Ford truck #P9419, Engine # AA 4105835. All tools, equipment and machineries shall remain to his own name during the term of this lease. The lessee shall insure said vehicle against all risks with a board company of interest of the lessee and the same shall be returned to said lessor when the lease shall always remain with the lessor.

The term of this lease shall be from November 20, 1944,

* F A R M L E A S E *

THIS LEASE, Made this 31st day of August, A. D., 1945, between SEIKO L. MUNEMITSU, herein called lessor,

GONZALO MENDEZ, herein called lessee,

WITNESSETH: That lessor, in consideration of the covenants and agreements herein contained, does hereby lease to the lessee all that property in the County of Orange, State of California, described as follows, to-wit:

A portion of the Northeast quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section Three, Township Five South, Range Eleven West, S. B. & M., described as beginning at the center of said section Three, running at the center of said section Three, thence South 20 chains; thence West 20 chains; thence North 49 $\frac{1}{2}$ ^o East 8.34 chains; thence East 13.66 chains to the point of beginning; excepting therefrom a strip 12 feet 7 inches off West side.

together with certain appurtenances and certain buildings and improvements thereon, but reserve others as hereinafter stated and granting certain uses as hereinafter restricted, of the farm tools, equipments, machineries now on the premises. All tools, equipment, machineries and the stake body 4-cylinder Ford truck as used are to be used only on the farm land herein leased or in direct business related to the farming of said land. The farm tools, equipment, machineries and truck shall be kept on the demised premises, and the lessee uses the truck, he shall first change the registration of said truck to his own name during the term of the lease, and the lessee shall keep said vehicle insured against loss arising from all public liabilities with a board company. If the lessee shall be resold to the lessor, the interest of the lessee in the truck shall be resold to the lessor and the registration be returned to the lessor.

Thanks to Frank Monroe:
A Dream to Farm,
A Home Secured.

“Kindness is...collaboration
and building trusted
friendships.” pg. 63

Questions



Fall 1944: "Separate is not Equal."



From Westminster to a Federal Class Action Lawsuit!

- **Mendez** hires Attorney David Marcus with profits from the asparagus crop.
- The **Palomino, Ramirez, Estrada, and Guzman** Families join the effort.
- Marcus' Key Case Decisions:
 - Filed in US District Federal Court - not California State Court
 - Citizens unequally treated - White vs. Mexican American students
 - Violates the Equal Protection Clause in 14th Amendment.

“Kindness is...
courage to stand for what is fair and just for all.” pg. 141

- March 2, 1945: Marcus filed case at US District Court, Los Angeles.
- July 5-11, 1945: Trial with Judge Paul McCormick.

“Kindness is...collaborating together for a win-win solution.” pg.129



Finally...the Federal Court Decision in 1946!

February 18, 1946: Judge McCormick **ruled in favor of the families!**

“ A paramount requisite in the American system
of public education is social equality.
It must be open to all children...regardless of lineage.”

Sylvia, Gonzalo, and Jerome go to Seventeenth Street School in Westminster!

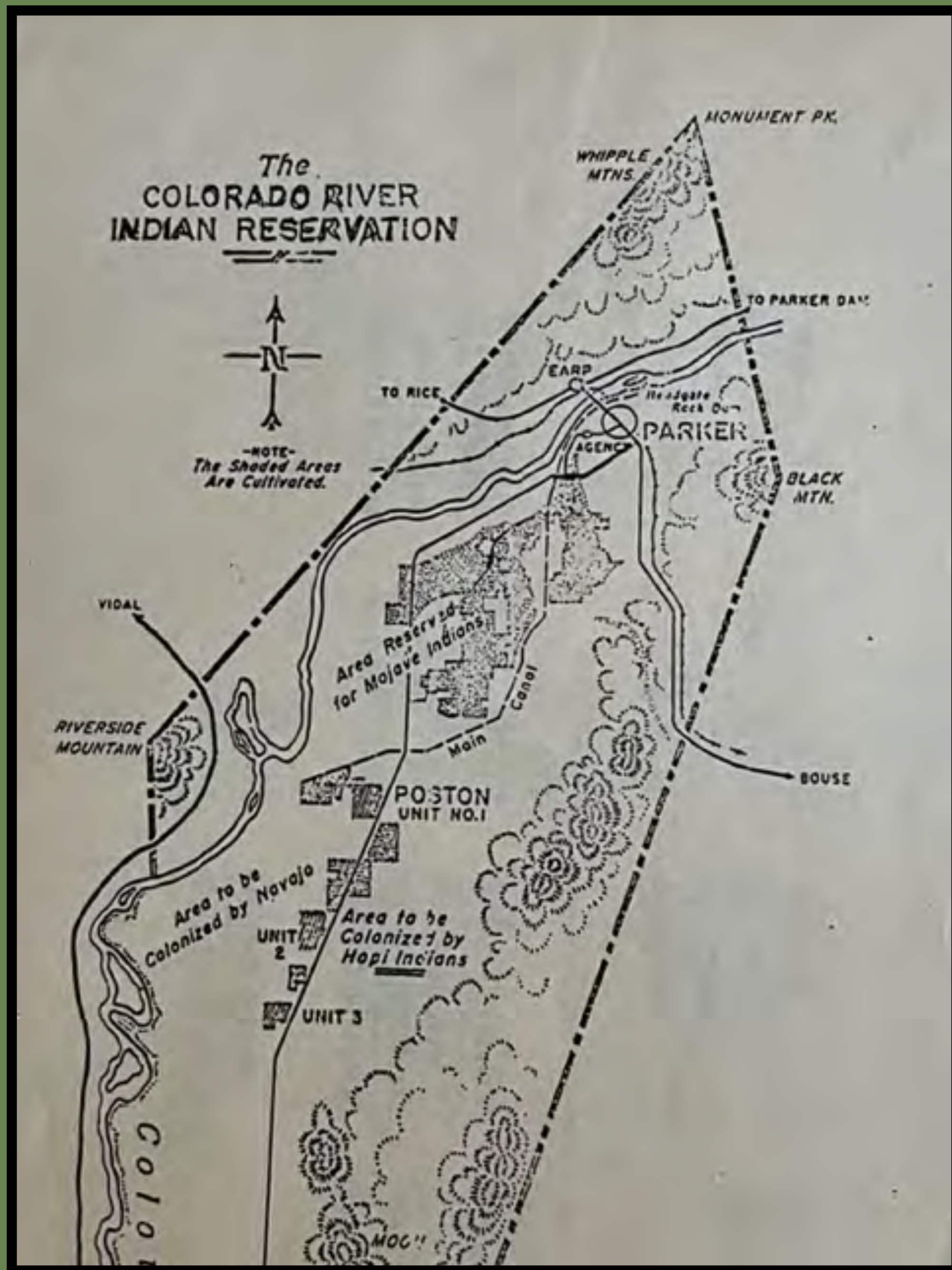
BUT...Ruling appealed by the other 3 School Districts.



- December 1946: Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals trial.
- **April 14, 1947**: Upholds Judge Paul McCormick's ruling for the Families!
- June 1947: Anderson Bill introduced/passed by State Assembly & State Senate.
- Calif. Gov. Earl Warren -> US Supreme Court Chief Justice and rules on Brown v. Board of Education 1954 at a National level.

The Mendez Family





Poston "Camp" 1942-1945

Population: 17, 814

“Kindness is...remembering what others have suffered with compassion and hospitality, even when you have suffered far worse.” pg. 159

Poston Memorial Monument Est. 1992



“Kindness is...sacrificing for the good of others.” pg. 144

- Japanese - Americans incarcerated, yet served & fought for America in WWII.
- Mexican - American families denied, yet fought for equal education.
- A White Banker rose against racism to serve his customers of color.
- A Jewish Attorney fights for and Catholic Judge upholds the equal protection clause for all citizens, even young students.
- Black Attorneys/NAACP Robert Carter & Thurgood Marshall gave support.
- Colorado River Indian Tribe & Japanese Americans jointly hold the Poston story.

A Grateful Arigato to Orange County, CA May 1970



“Kindness is...
respecting our differences,
celebrating shared history, and
moving forward as one humanity.”

pg. 161

www.thekindnessofcolor.com



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