JUDGE MIKIO UCHIYAMA

MRS. HASEGAWA: Today is February 13, 1980. I, Yoshino Hasegawa, am privileged to interview Judge Uchiyama in his office on 313 East Merced in Fowler, California.

Please give us your full name, your date and place of birth, and your place of longest residence.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: My name is Mikio Uchiyama, born January 15, 1922, Sanger, California. And the longest place of residence would be Fowler, California. And I have been living here since after the war, 1945.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Shall we start with your family members first?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: All right. My father Shunsuke Uchiyama who died a couple three years ago, I guess in 1973, and my mother is still living (Toshi Uchiyama). And I have one brother Shigeru Uchiyama, and two sisters Jane Sumida and May Kimura.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, Kimura in Fresno. Are all the others in Fresno also?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Jane Sumida is in Visalia. They have the Roy's Drug Store in Visalia.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Your mother, who does your mother live with?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: She lives at home with my brother, the family home.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Is he the oldest son?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, I'm the oldest. My parents' home is right there, and my brother built a home right next to it in Fowler, so they are living on the same ranch.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did you say that was?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: In Fowler. 6247 South Leonard, Fowler.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: That has been our home since after the war, World War II.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Will you tell me a little bit about your father, where he came from in Japan, and what he did?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: My father, okay. He came here quite young. He was, I think, 20 or 21.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You started to tell me about your dad.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Okay. He came to the United States when he was about 20 or 21. He came as a laborer. He worked in the railroads.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: In Seattle, Washington. And he worked as a houseboy, and he later worked as a cowboy, too.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was that in Washington?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: It was down in the valley here.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Between Fresno, Parlier, and Sanger.

MRS. HASEGAWA: It's unusual for a Japanese to be a cowboy.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, uh-huh. Well, they were raising cows, and they were having some problems with cows, problems that cattle people have, and that's how I found out he was raising cows at the time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Your dad was raising cows?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Uh-huh.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did he come from in Japan?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yamaguchi Prefecture. And he was 90 when he died.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did he do?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Here in the United States? Well, his occupation was a farmer, so we had a farm down in the river bottom. Sanger river bottom. And at that time we had 300 acres of vineyard and orchards, so to speak. He also was interested in other things, so we had a group of people, Caucasian people as well as Japanese people, together they formed companies and an investment group. They went into mining, gold, and quicksilver. They went into oil, Cuyama Oil Company, Alhambra-Shumway Mines. Eventually, they bought land in Winnemucca, Nevada; 36,000 acres.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did they actually mine the gold?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, they invested in it, and they had people mine for gold. The employees mined it--not my parents.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Was that very successful?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: The Alhambra mine was one of the first gold mines, and they looked for quartz gold and hit a million- dollar pocket. So you know, stock was $10 at one time, then all of a sudden they were worth $100 a share.

MRS. HASEGAWA: My goodness!

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Then they couldn't find any more, so they went down to zero.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh. That's pretty interesting.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: And then in oil they struck in the Cuyama oil fields, and that was very successful, and they were getting dividends from that, too. Then they bought, what we call now Humboldt Farms. Bought a ranch

in Winnemucca, Nevada which is 36,000 acres. It's six miles wide and 13 miles long. Subsequent to that, we sold about two-thirds of it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then you still have some?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: About a third, yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, that's very interesting. Your father must have been a very wealthy man then.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, he liked business. He liked to invest and things in ventures, so that we were into all kinds of things; some very successful and some not so successful.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You haven't told me anything about your own family.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, my family consists of my wife, and then two boys Russell and Robert. Robert is living in Costa Mesa. He's married and he's living in Costa Mesa working down there for a Japanese auto firm. They buy cars here and then ship them to Japan, American-made cars. So he's working there. Russell, the other boy, is going to USC. He says he may go into law--he's taking political science.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Taking after his dad, huh?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: I don't know.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have any childhood recollections living in Sanger?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yeah, uh-huh. Well, the Sanger river bottom-- there's not too many people living around. The neighbors are about two or three miles away. The things that I remember is that going to grammar school that we used to walk to grammar school which was about three miles from home. I can remember starting grammar school, because my parents spoke more Japanese than English and the first few years I had some difficulty conveying my thoughts in English, because Japanese was more dominant.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you go to Centerville School?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, I went to Alameda Grammar School. That was on Goodfellow Avenue. It's no longer there any more, but it was a three-classroom grammar school. They call it Alameda Grammar School, because it was located near Alameda Ranch.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's not the Lindsay School?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, no. This was between Reedley and Sanger.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you remember what your happiest moment was as a child? Do you have any recollections of any really happy moments?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, we were pretty active in sports and things like that, so that when we would win games in sports or something like that. As far as childhood, during the summer, going fishing.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You were near the Kings River then?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, we were bordered on three sides by river—

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: --so that we would go fishing every afternoon in the summer.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Does that--has it carried on? Do you still go fishing?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, I haven't. I haven't since I moved from there. My brother and father used to go fishing afterwards, too, but I didn't particularly care for it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How about high school?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: I went to Reedley High School. Actually, we lived on a border between Sanger High School and Reedley High School. There's a ditch, they call it Hanke Ditch. The ditch was a boundary, but where we lived was on the Reedley side. The other side was Sanger. So, consequently, it was about the farthest away from Reedley High, School. I went to Reedley High School. The bus used to come to pick us up. We had to walk about a mile to get to the bus.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When you were in high school, what did you do for summers?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: In summers we worked at the ranch in the early afternoon, after school, and on the weekend. I went to Japanese language schools on Saturdays; all day Saturday and half a day on Sunday, including going to Sunday School on Sunday. Our days during the school days were pretty busy. Our Japanese language started at 9 o'clock in the morning and ended up at 3:00 on Saturday afternoon. On Sundays we went to school until 12 o'clock noon, so the only time we were really off was during summer vacations.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you go away from home on vacations?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: The family used to every summer, because we had grapes and tree fruit. There was a break between tree fruit and grape seasons, because ours was wine grapes and we didn't start until August. So, we would take about one week off to the Pismo on the Pacific Ocean. The whole family would go.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's nice. What kind of tree fruit did you have?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, we had all kinds--nectarines, plums, peaches. I think they had about 15 or 16 different varieties.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What do you think about the nectarines now compared to the ones that you used to have as a child?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: It all depends on nectarines that were grown before. It seems to me that they were more tasty. Maybe not as good looking in color, but they were more tasty. Now the fruit looks better, prettier, and it's made to keep longer, so that the taste isn't there.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I think that's true. Your church--you were a Buddhist then from the time you were –

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes. I went to Sunday School from the time I was seven. I went to grammar school.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then because you're a Buddhist they observe more of the traditional Japanese holidays and the traditional Japanese things. Is there one that stands out most in your memory?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: One thing. We went to Parlier Japanese Language School because it was very strong. One of the things that my father and mother both insisted the children do was to study Japanese and be able to read and write Japanese even though at that time we thought why should we learn when we have no use for it. But they insisted that we learn Japanese language. That we would learn to read and write, and that's one of the reasons we went to Parlier Japanese Language School, because it was very strong and a very popular school at that time. The reason for that was, I guess, our parents wanted to instill into us some things that were good about the Japanese. I mean, the culture, habits, or whatever characteristics that they stressed, so that by going to Japanese language school I had to participate in all these speech contests in Japanese language. They had it all over California, and I had to participate, and a lot of the speeches were just memorized. Sometimes I wonder if I really knew what I was saying, because it was all memorized. We went all over the state making oratorical speeches, and half the time we don't know what we were talking about.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You have a good memory (laughter). Then you have really been steeped in the Japanese tradition.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, uh-huh.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, what traits do you feel that are necessary in order to be a good Japanese?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, one thing that we have been taught was that the relationship between children and parents, the respect for parents or older people, not particularly because they're parents but older people, because of their greater experience, and with their age more knowledge. Even though a person may not have gone to college or anything else, the fact that they were older than you were, you respected them because they were more experienced than you. So, consequently, even though you don't believe what they say, you respected them for their opinion and you sat there and listened to them. The other thing that they more or less instill in you, in Japanese they call "on" and "giri" in other words, you owe an obligation or you owe a duty to somebody or respect to somebody. Those kind of things they really stressed to us. In other words, they helped you so therefore you owe them an obligation--and then you don't forget their help, that kind of thing. That was instilled in us as we grew up.

Another thing was being modest. The thing is don't boast, don't brag. People know your worth, you don't have to tell them how good you are. They'll know if you are good. If you aren't good, they're not going to believe you anyway, so those kind of things.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you teach this to your children, too?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, I think they get it naturally, too. They lived

with their grandparents for some length of time, and my wife is from Japan, too. So that she speaks a lot of the time in Japanese, so the children understand Japanese. Maybe they don't speak it very well, but they do understand what is said. They've shown that they know what the characteristics are, their interest and so on. One thing that happened in our family was that from the time I can remember, that every supper was more or less like a session. Everybody waited until everybody was ready to eat supper. So sometime it would be real dark, maybe 8:00, 9 o'clock in the evening before we would have supper, because of the fact that maybe my father was out there working, irrigating, or did something and had not come home. Or one of the kids had to go someplace and was going to be late home. But everybody waited for everybody to have supper. Then we would have a whole, like a history session. My father would lecture to us every night about different things in reference to Japanese history or Japanese characteristics, and what they referred to. They call it shushin, but it's a kind of a code, a Japanese code, and he would lecture different kinds of stories that were taught in refer- ence to honesty, and apply it to you, these kind of things. This was done when we were so small that we more or less accepted that this is going to happen, and all the kids grew up that way.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I think that's a wonderful way to raise children. It's a wonderful way to instill in them something without actually lecturing.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, right. It's an osmosis process, I guess. You get that information all the time. Pretty soon you more or less accept it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Now were your children living with your folks at the time?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, my oldest one was already 2 1/2 before we came home, but with both of them we were living at home for some time. And then we are close to grandparents' home anyway, so they're always going over there for something.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You have very close relationships -

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, the family is very close.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's wonderful. I hope that it continues. Then it seems to me that your children will probably carry on the Japanese tradition.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: They do, yes. We send them to Japanese language school, too. I guess their attitude is the same as ours when we went to Japanese language school. Not until after they finished high school and started going to college, then they one by one they were taking Japanese language courses together with their other courses. It's important to them. And then they take interest as to what Japanese objects are, what different kinds of art objects are, and they're always asking their mother what does this mean or that mean. So they show an interest.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Wonderful! Now let's get to the questions that we have prepared. After you finished high school, then what was your camp experience? What happened in 1941 when Pearl Harbor was bombed?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: In 1940, I went to Cal and started my freshman year. In 1940-41, I was at Cal. In '41 on December 7th, I was a second-year

student at University of California, and my major was political science and economics. It was with the idea of becoming a lawyer, so when Pearl Harbor broke out then I continued to go to school there. And then there was a cutoff time that everybody Japanese was going to have to leave. We had to leave the Bay Area by a certain time. If you didn't leave, they said you were going to be sent to an assembly center from there. But it came so close to time that I could get my two-year credentials that one of my teachers told me, why don't you stick it out and go as far as you can. Maybe you will get your full credit for that, too. So I did, and they said after this thing was over they'll let us go out and meet our families, because we were minors, anyway, at that time. So I stuck it out clear until the finals, but I didn't get to take the finals because they made an order that all of us had to get out by this time. So we had a special pass from the provost marshal to get out. That was shortly before the finals, but they indicated to me at that time that because I had gone up to the finals that they would give me a grade based on what records I had at midterm and everything else. As an end result, I did get my two years completed.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see. How were you treated? You were at school after Pearl Harbor?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: What happened. One of the things that really remains in my mind was that we had a political science teacher, I forgot his name, but all of his students--in fact, the whole student body--was called together when Pearl Harbor broke out, and at that time the president, I think Gordon Sproul--anyway, all of the students were told that there were Japanese-American citizens among the students that were attending University of California, and that they're not to be blamed for what was going on, and that they're American citizens like anybody else. And, consequently, they're going to have to be treated that way. So this was announced at the assembly, and we were kind of uncomfortable, too. We had blackouts and like that, so at nighttime we never went anyplace. We stayed at the dormitory and then went to class regularly during the day. There were some people that would harass us, but then it's like anyplace else at that time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: About how many Japanese were there?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: There were quite a few. I don't know the exact number of students that were there, but there were quite a few because they had a Nisei Club. I didn't belong to the Nisei Club, but within our own group, ourselves, I think there were 20 or 30 living in a boardinghouse right off the campus. And the reason I know is that we boarded at one particular place and there were about 20 of us there. We were from all over California, and there were a lot more--there must have been maybe 150 to 200 students all together. So then they had a first cutoff date that everybody had to move out, and most of them went back home. In fact, my friends all came back home except myself. There was one or two of us left.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then after, did your folks leave before you came back?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, we came back because we lived in Zone Two.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Zone Two.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Two, I guess it is. That's why we didn't have to move

until August of 1942, so I came back and helped them harvest the crop and everything else before we had to go to camp.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Where did you go?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Camp. We went to Gila River in Arizona.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You didn't go with the Fresno people then?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No. The Fresno people went to Poston. There were some people who went to Poston, and some other people from Sanger area. Parlier area went to Gila River; I think it was Zone Two people.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What did you do in camp?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: The first few months I worked on a farm driving a caterpillar. I think I worked for Mr. Matsumoto who was one of the foremen and maybe Omata at one time, but then after that I worked in cost-accounting department in transportation.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did they raise all their vegetables, or how –

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, we raised vegetables there, horseradish and everything else, like here on the farm that were shipped out to other camps. We had big, big farms out there and had two or three sections of farmland.

MRS. HASEGAWA: After that, then when did you come back?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: While I was in camp, I think it was 1943, we went to camp in '42, and then we sent my brother out to go to school. He went to the University of Texas. He went to engineering. Then my sister went out to attend high school in Austin.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Did you have someone there that helped you relocate?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, my brother went there first, and then the Baptist minister's family –

MRS. HASEGAWA: Japanese?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, a Caucasian minister's family said that they would help, and that she could stay with them. Through a friend, my brother's friend who was a minister, so that she could stay with the family, the preacher's family and go to school, go to high school and take care of the children after school. Then after those two, my brother and sister, went out, then I went to the University of Texas after that.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's why you went to the University of Texas, I see.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Because that was the only place that was open. I was admitted to go to the Columbia University in New York, but that was closed because it was too close to the East Coast and the Army wouldn't let us go. They said either you go –I think it was Bismark, Dakota. . . Iowa. I guess maybe it was Iowa. Iowa was open and that University of Missouri was open and University of Texas was open. My brother was already at the University of Texas.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see. Then you went to Harvard Law School.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: See, what happened to me was that I had two years of college, and then when I went to the University of Texas, I went directly into the law school and went two years. Ordinarily, you're supposed to go four years to college before you go into law school. They let us go in after two years. Then we went to the University of Texas Law School, and the University of Texas Law School was on a 12-month basis crash program so that instead of having any vacations, we went completely through a year so that in two years we were able to complete three years. So I finished University of Texas Law School and finished in law and took the bar there, and then I came back to California to see if I could get a job here. I was still eligible for the draft so I came back and Mr. Nielsen, Iener Nielsen, was my father's good friend –

MRS. HASEGAWA: In Fowler?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: In Fowler. He was a lawyer. So I went to talk to him, and I was only--at that time maybe 21 or 22 years old. He thought I was too young to be practicing law and said that I should go back to school some more and that's why I decided to go back to do something. He recommended I go into taxation, federal taxation, income tax, and stuff like that. So I got hold of the dean of the law of the University of Texas and asked that to see if I could get into Harvard Law School. Harvard Law School accepted me, so I went there as a special student because I wasn't going for any master's degree or anything. I was going just to take taxation for a year or so. I already had finished law school, I already had the license to practice in Texas, but I had no license to practice in California. So I went back to Harvard and started going to school there. And then by the time I was in the process of trying to complete the year, then I got drafted in the Army.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Then you didn't complete your year at Harvard?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, I didn't. It was just more or less attending as a special student. I wouldn't be getting a degree or anything.

MRS. HASEGAWA: It was some experience, though, wasn't it? Your military experience is unique. Would you elaborate on your special assignments during 1946 and in 1948?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: What happened to me when I got drafted in the Army when I was in Harvard, then they shipped me to basic training in San Antonio, Texas. Then after I finished my basic training, they sent me to CIC School in Holabird, Maryland, a counterintelligence school. And then they put you through a crash program of learning about--well, first of all, you had to learn Japanese language and then you had to learn about Japanese politics. It was a FBI training; how to pick locks, break safes, take fingerprints, photography and OSS type of work. Cloak and dagger operations. So we went to school in Holabird, Maryland for, I think, about two months. Then I got shipped overseas to Japan. Then I went to school another month in Japan, learning about Japanese politics, Japanese organizations, military organizations, political organizations, and things like that. And then we were sent out to Saitama as a CIC agent to gather information, more or less, about extremist right and extremist left groups and movements as we were, having problems with ultra-militarist and the communists. I was in CIC for about two years. I got discharged in Japan from the Army, and then I worked as a Department

of Army civilian. And I started out as a Department of Army civilian with war crimes in Yokohama which was a Class B trial. Tokyo International Tribunal was Call A trial, and Class B was in Yokohama with the 8th Army. Those trials concerned enforcement or crimes charged in violation of the rules of land warfare in regard to prisoner of war treatment, and the like.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was that besides treatment of –

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Treatment of prisoners of war. In other words, the Japanese military treating our prisoners of war, violations of the rules of land warfare. There was a League of Nations violation, international law violation. But because I was a lawyer already, I worked as a counsel for counsel, which means I worked with the Japanese attorneys who were defendants' attorneys and war criminals' attorneys, and then I would write the appeal briefs in their behalf. If they had grounds, then I would write the appeal briefs for them. But initially, I worked as a defense counsel helping the Japanese defense counsel and the American defense counsel coordinate the defense for the defendants on trial. The real sad part of the war crimes trials and the international tribunal was the same way, was that the war criminal defendants were tried on affidavits. In other words, people were accused of crimes by people who made affidavits and were not there as witnesses, so there was no way you could cross-examine or question these witnesses, because they were not there. So you had to rely on the affidavits that said on a certain date this person did certain things. That's what they would contend. Then we would try to defend against them, but then there's no way we can cross-examine them. And that was the thing that was unfair about the whole crimes trial that you never had a chance to cross-examine, which is contrary to our way of practicing law. So I was with 8th Army, I guess, until 1947, 1948. After the 8th Army war crimes were over, then I went to work for the Government Section under General Whitney. He was the military government advisor to General MacArthur, so our headquarters wason the fifth floor in the Dai Ichi Building, same as MacArthur's. MacArthur's room was in the front part of the building and General Whitney's was right next to it, because he was a military advisor to MacArthur. He was always going back and forth to MacArthur, and so we were on that same floor. And my job was branch chief for public administration. That was the enforcement of the purge program. We had purged government officials--militaristic officials and economic officials because of their ultra-nationalistic activities. Then the other was the other extreme of being leftist. The enforcement of a purge and abolishment of certain militaristic organizations and ultra-nationalistic organizations, and my job was to get them to stay out of politics and economics. Mitsui, Mitsubishi and other Zaibatsu and big official who were considered ultra-nationalistic. They were eliminated, and to keep them eliminated out of politics and economics was part of my job. Some of the other part of the job was to abolish organizations that were ultra-nationalistic organizations and prohibit any reemergence of them, and to enforce that. That's how I was involved in both the extreme right and left. So it was very interesting in the sense that you had to know politics--Japanese politics. You had to know who the bosses were, who was behind the scenes, how Japanese politics works, going back to Oyabun-Kobun philosophy. We had some really nice heart-to-heart talks with even the gangsters.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You must have made good friends, but you must have made some enemies, too.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Oh, yes, I did. We made quite a few enemies, because we had to purge people. We had to purge persons like Hatoyama Ichiro who became prime minister later. When he was first trying to become prime minister, we purged him. And another one was Nishio Suehiro who was a socialist candidate for prime minister, and we had to charge him with violation of the purge ordinance. In fact, in that case, I had to have it appealed to the Supreme Court of Japan to overrule the decision of the district court. And so there was a lot of things that we had to do that maybe were not necessarily friendly, but that was part of the job as occupation policy orders and directives. And our job was, more or less--I mean, we were caught in the middle in the sense that we were told that certain directives had to be followed, which came from the War Department or SCAP directives or allied powers. And then our job was to try to negotiate with the Japanese government so that it could be implemented with the least amount of resistance or objection on their part. So a lot of times we made a lot of good friends.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Are you on friendly terms with these people now?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, uh-huh. Every so often these people come from Japan. These people are known, they're cabinet secretaries or they have been in the cabinet. They're members of the House of Counselors and Upper House. In fact, we're good friends with the chief of police in Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, National Rural Police Department, and the Japanese Imperial Guards. Other people I worked with were secretary general to the Japanese Supreme Court, chief justice of the supreme court, attorney general, and all those people who we met that worked on the implementation of our directives.

As to my experience in Japan, a lot of people would never get the opportunity in their whole lifetime to experience what I did, and did it in maybe five years. Of course, I was only 24, 25. These Japanese government officials were 40, 45 years old. They're in the prime of their life. Yet, because we were representing the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers that we had more authority than they did. I am sure that they must have thought, at times, what does this young punk think he is trying to tell us how to run their affairs.

MRS. HASEGAWA: But they had no choice.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: A lot of times they didn't, true.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, that's most interesting.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: And one of the reasons why I decided to leave and go home prior to the peace treaty being signed, I was to be back home because there were a lot of enemies. We created a lot of enemies, so that when Japan became independent what had been done would be criticized. The higher the position you held, more unpopular decisions were made so that General Ridgeway and Section Chief of our government section felt that those of us that were doing this kind of work should be returning to the United States of America. So, for these reasons, I came back and went to Stanford Law School.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, I see. So that's the reason why you came back to California.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, my folks lived in California. I was born and raised in California, so I have no other place than California. Really, it's my home.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see. Then, according to your resume you serve in the city of Fowler as a city attorney. Was this an appointive or elective position?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: It's appointive by the city council.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, I see.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: The city council is the one that appoints the city attorney.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What was distinctive about being a small town city attorney as opposed to being a large town?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: The only thing is that whether it is small city and large city, each have the same kinds of problems. But it's different in the magnitude of the problem. The small city doesn't have so often that much problem, and is only on occasions. In other words, a lot of the time a problem will come up and they'll come in to talk to you, but you would attend their city council meeting which was only twice a month. In large cities, council will meet maybe every week day, but the city of Fowler only met twice a month. We would be present at the city council meeting, and if they have a legal problem then I would make recommendations. They could consult me if there was a contract, and things like that. The same kind of problems were involved, but it didn't require fulltime, and then the magnitude of the problem is much smaller, too--a lot easier to handle.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You were then appointed judge of the Fowler-Caruthers judicial district. Now who -

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: That was up to the Board of Supervisors. At that time, Fowler was one judicial district and Caruthers was another judicial district. So that when Fowler Judge Scane died, there was a vacancy. So then it was up to the Board of Supervisors to appoint another person to be a judge. I happened to be practicing in Fowler, and I was a city attorney in Fowler, and they knew me, so the Board of Supervisor from this area--he was from Kingsburg--nominated me, and the Board of Supervisors appointed me to the position for the unexpired term.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What is a term?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: It's a six-year term. The last one was 1978, so it won't be until 1984.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And then will you run again?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes. As far as I know now.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How many other lawyers are here in Fowler?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Fowler? There's Howard Renge, who's an attorney; and then Simon Marootian, he lives in Fowler, too, but he is a judge of the Superior Court.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What are your duties as a judicial judge?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: A justice court judge is the same as a municipal court judge in Fresno. You have misdemeanor criminal matters and then civil matters up to, well, actually our jurisdiction is up to $5,000 for civil matters, small claims up to $750. Misdemeanors and having preliminary hearings on felony matters. What we do and what the municipal court judges do is about the same.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see. What are some of your more memorable occasions of serving as judge here?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Sometimes judges get really put on the spot. One of the things were that one of the school teachers was being harassed by a bunch of young kids. The school teacher fired a shotgun at a vehicle that was involved. It went to trial and the question was who was guilty, whether they were guilty, and how to handle it. Tempers on both sides were pretty high. I had to decide what's fair in a situation like this, because there was provocation on one side, and the other side was using excess force to combat that kind of provocation. As a result the case was declared a misdemeanor and the case was settled.

Then we had a double murder case involving a motel owner of Chinese people who were murdered by an individual. So that hearings were involved. When you do that the judges get put on the spot, because you've got to be sure the rulings are right. And there's the occasion having your friends come before you. You've got to be more rough with them than people you don't know.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's pretty trying. Now I see that you maintain your private law practice in Fresno. In your practice, are there certain areas in which you specialize?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Mostly business, corporations, and farming. Civil matters mostly and probate. I stay away from criminal cases, because most of the cases I hear as judge are criminal matters.

In law practice you gradually get more and more specialized. But because we are in a farming community, most of the legal work is in connection with farming, leasing, and things like that.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You've been especially active in civic affairs. You've given lots of years of service to both the Lion's Club and the JACL. How did you choose to be part of a service organization as Lion's Club?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Being a lawyer in a community and a city attorney, too, you run into people and you start finding out what the needs of the community are. And you try to figure out well, what organization is really trying to help these kinds of needs. And it appeared to me that the Lion's Club was doing it, so they asked me to become a member, and I joined.

MRS. HASEGAWA: That's a good reason. Your JACL career has been long-reaching from president of the Fowler Chapter to vice-president on the national level. As an officer of this organization through the years, do you feel that you have made any personal contributions to any changes that have taken place within the organization?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Like every other organization, it's a long process so that the change is not that significant. There's changes. There's no question there's changes in JACL 25 years ago and JACL now. There were a lot of changes. But these changes were so gradual, I don't think you can say that any individual has caused a major change in the organization. There are ups and downs. There was a critical time especially after the Watergate incident. All these national organizations, their officers were challenged in regard to, well, because of maybe Watergate syndrome. Everybody was suspicious of everybody else, and we had criticism, things like that. Becuase I was a judge at the time, too, so that part of my job was to sit and hear these things and try to mediate between opposing forces. When a national direction was in trouble, we had a hearing to determine what was to be done. I was on the national board at that time, too, so we sat down and worked it out. JACL is a "voluntary"organization of volunteers. People volunteer their time, effort, money, and products and everything else to help the organi- zation and then to be subjected to criticism is kind of hard to take. This is what we try to put across. It's all right to criticize, but let's be constructive about it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You served as director and legal counselor for the Fowler Buddhist Church in 1966.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Since that time to present.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, ever since. I see.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: More or less I have been the legal advisor to the group.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see. Now what is the position of the Buddhist Church in the Fowler Community?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, as far as a religious organization, the membership in the Buddhist Church, I think, has been highly respected. The opinions of JACL or the opinions of the Buddhist Church or Christian Church here, are all taken into careful consideration by the community. And the community more or less looks to them for some leadership. And we intend to participate in what goes on.

MRS. HASEGAWA: A lot of Japanese families in Fowler?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: There's quite a few. As far as the Buddhist Church in Fowler is concerned, we have a hundred families, or thereabouts.

MRS. HASEGAWA: The Buddhist Church, it seems to me, they are active.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, it is. It's active in the sense because we have organizations starting from the junior YBA which is a younger group to senior YBA in adult group. And then the Buddhist Church women's group, and then the Boy Scout group, so that there's quite a bit of activity all the time.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Would you compare it to the Mormon Church?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: No, we're not that well organized. Again, the Buddhist Church is a voluntary membership so that we have our problems. Fowler

Buddhist Church is a member of the Buddhist Churches of America but are not like the Mormons and its hierarchy.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, I was thinking of the Mormon Church in terms of family and closeness.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, yes, that's there because the Japanese family like the Buddhist Church, you'll find that Fowler, when something is going on like a community program, everybody helps and participates and everybody's equal.

MRS. HASEGAWA: What percentage of the Japanese in Fowler would you say are Buddhist?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Maybe 90 percent.

MRS. HASEGAWA: When did they start the Buddhist Church there?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Oh, this was before the war, just before the war.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Now, you've been active and have had a lot of interest in the athletic area. Can you relate your initial interest in the art of judo and give us your views of judo?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: I started judo when I was in grammar school. We were about 12 or 13. We did judo until--in fact, I had judo in University of Californiaand was a member of Cal's judo teams.

MRS. HASEGAWA: And where did you go?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: To the University of California. I went to Berkeley and took judo, too. So that judo's been just like a regular sport for us. So my brother and I, we're both black belts. So, that returning after the war we started studying judo, so we can stay healthy.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Has it helped you?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: I think it helps you physically when you're young, and then mentally as you start to get older.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How do you mean it helps you mentally?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, the thing is, you get some confidence. You learn in judo that it necessarily isn't just size or brute force that's going to help you. You can be small and yet be able to compete so that you don't get bullied around. So that it gives you some confidence. You do things, and some of the habits that you learn in judo are so automatic now that when you fall down, you fall a certain way so as you don't hurt yourself. Or you have an accident and you just, by habit, do certain things that protect you from getting seriously injured.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Instinctively—

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Because you'll find--and football coaches say that, too-- that boys learning judo in football are more likely not to get hurt or injured in sports.

MRS. HASEGAWA: I see there are a lot of judo, lots of young people.

Everyone is learning judo.Do you think that will keep going?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes. One thing about judo, is that in addition to being a sport, it teaches discipline. And a lot of Caucasian parents that we have now, specifically send their kids to judo programs and judo clubs because of the fact that it not only is a sport but they're going to get discipline. Because a lot of parents are really concerned about their kids not having discipline and in judo we expect this. There is always somebody stronger than you. As long as we keep that thought in mind (discipline), together with the sport of judo, I think judo will continue. But if judo becomes just another sport, I think it will become less popular.

MRS. HASEGAWA: You must have a judo class here, then.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have Caucasians in it?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes. In our club now, 50 percent are Caucasians.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How old do they start there?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, supposedly we wait until they're 9 years old. Some start older, but you have to be at least 9. But there are some kids that start at 7 and 8, because their older brothers are judo students.

MRS. HASEGAWA: About how many kids to you have?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: We have about 25 kids.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Oh, that many.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: It's up and down to sometimes 10 or 12, but it all depends on how active people are.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How often do they meet?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: They have practice twice a week in the evening from 7:00 to 9:00 on Wednesday evenings; mostly Wednesday evenings and Sunday evenings. Other classes would be on Tuesday and Thursday.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Do you have other ethnic group people in it, too?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes. There was a colored boy in it for a while. And we have children of all nationalities.

MRS. HASEGAWA: In 1972 and 1973, you served as president of the Central California Amateur Athletic Union. Can you give us a brief description of the AAU?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: The Central California Amateur Athletic Union was representative for the AAU amateur sports and that takes in swimming, diving, track and field, basketball, boxing, judo, karate, all sports. And AAU is charged with registration of these athletes to make sure that they have amateur standing, so that they don't compete for prizes or money or anything like that. And then we keep records for them. As a result, our jurisdiction is from Merced all the way down to Bakersfield.

MRS. HASEGAWA: As president of the Fresno County Judges' Association, what were your major responsibilities?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Well, that's the one that's kind of a liaison office for Justice Court Judges. It was a justice court judges' association, so that all the justice court judges meet once a month and talk over our problem and how some of us or all of us should cope with it.

MRS. HASEGAWA: This is of interest. Your served as a member of the Wendy Yoshimura Fair Trial Friends Committee. What were your personal reactions to her trial and her subsequent sentencing?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: There were a few of us involved in the Wendy Yoshimura Fair Trial. And the reason we were involved was that Wendy was picked up just about the time Patty Hearst was picked up and because there was so much publicity given to Patty Hearst, we felt that Wendy Yoshimura should be given a fair trial. In other words, publicity should be given to her trial as well as anybody else, and she should be treated like anybody else. We wanted to be sure that if she didn't have enough money that the people would raise money so that she would be able to obtain an attorney and make the investigation so to have a fair trial so that her side could be presented. And we were not taking a position as to whether she was guilty or not guilty or she was being picked on. All we said was that we wanted her to have a fair trial. However that ended up, then that was to be.

MRS. HASEGAWA: How did you feel about it personally?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: The result of this trial? Well, the way it turned out, I think she got the short end of the stick. If she was Patty Hearst, I think she would have done better.

MRS. HASEGAWA: Now, besides being a member of the Wendy Yoshimura Committee, you're also a member of the committee of the different bar associations. What are they, and what's the difference between American Bar and Federal Bar?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Federal Bar Association is people that work for the government, and I worked as a government attorney in Japan as a Department of the Army civilian. So, therefore, I was also working for the federal government. The Federal Bar Association is government attorneys association. American Bar Association is for all the attorneys in the United States and is a national organizations. California Bar Association is the state organization. I guess it's just like any other profession. If you're a teacher you belong to state, national -

MRS. HASEGAWA: Well, it seems to me that we covered quite a bit here.

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: Yes, uh-huh.

MRS. HASEGAWA: If someone 50 years from now or 100 years from now listened to this tape, what message would you have for all future Japanese-Americans. If there are still Japanese-Americans listening to this tape?

JUDGE UCHIYAMA: If things are as they are right now, what you could be or what you want to be is really what you strive for. I don't think we

should have a hang-up and say that because we're the Japanese-Americans we're only going to be in a certain place. I think you have to go after everything. There's nothing to be afraid of. So you get turned down at one time, you go at it again. The only way, really, we're going to make a nick or get to where we want to go is to fight for it. And I think everybody else knows that, and that's just the American way of doing it. And the more persistent you are in trying to get something done, the people will start recognizing the fact that, okay, we should be doing it. We must keep trying until we accomplish what we set out to do.