A core educational mission of the Minidoka National Historic Site is stated in the park’s General Management Plan: “[Minidoka] is a compelling venue for engaging in a dialogue concerning the violation of civil and constitutional rights...” To fulfill this mission the National Park Service, the Friends of Minidoka, and the College of Southern Idaho will present the fifth annual symposium on civil liberties and constitutional rights. This year’s event will explore the role that art plays in periods of conflict over civil liberties and will utilize several perspectives, including the long and continuing struggle for civil rights. Japanese Americans in camps like Minidoka used art in various ways to cope with their incarceration and to make statements about that experience and this will be a focus of the conference. Artists have continued to revisit this period and continue to inform us about its significance in the continuing struggle for justice. All facets of artistic expression will be examined, including photography, literature, painting, film, and music. The symposium will feature a presentation by Roger Shimomura, the pre-eminent artist of the Japanese American experience.

~Dr. Bob Sims~

“I hate injustice. I guess that’s about the only thing that I really do hate... and I hope I will go on hating it all my life.” - Artist Ben Shahn (1898-1969)
Speakers:

Greg Robinson
Dr. Greg Robinson will be lecturing on his book *Mine Okubo: Following her own Road* (University of Washington Press 2008). The book is a wide-range anthology on the life and career of the Nisei artist/writer Mine Okubo, who defied conventional assumptions about women, Japanese Americans and creative artists during a career that spanned nearly seven decades, and it represents a companion volume to Okubo’s renowned memoir of her camp experience, *Citizen 13660*. The book is a wide-range anthology on the life and career of the Nisei artist/writer Mine Okubo, who defied conventional assumptions about women, Japanese Americans and creative artists during a career that spanned nearly seven decades, and it represents a companion volume to Okubo’s renowned memoir of her camp experience, *Citizen 13660*. Robinson is also the author of *By the Order of the President: FDR and the Internment of Japanese Americans* (Harvard University Press, 2001) that is an in-depth history of the decisions behind the government’s mass removal and confinement of West Coast Japanese Americans during World War II, one which centers on the role of the President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Robinson is an Associate Professor of History at l’Université du Québec A Montreal, a French-language institution in Montreal, Canada, and a board member of that university’s Center for United States Studies. A specialist in North American Ethnic Studies and U.S. Political History, Robinson teaches courses on African American history, Twentieth-Century U.S. Foreign Policy, American Immigration History, and visible minorities/racial groups, among others.

Roger Shimomura
Dr. Roger Shimomura will be giving a lecture on his exhibition, “An American Diary.” His is a retired professor at the University of Kansas after teaching there for 35 years. He has had over 125 solo exhibitions of paintings and prints, as well as his experimental theater pieces at such venues as the Franklin Furnace, New York City, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and The Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. He is a specialist in Asian American history, and university and community settings. In 2006, Jeanne Wakatsuki-Houston received the Award of Excellence for her contributions to society from the Japanese American National Museum.

Jeanne Wakatsuki-Houston
She will be giving a lecture on her experiences in camp and on her book, the acclaimed *Farewell to Manzanar*. Published in 1972, the book is based on what her family went through before, during, and after the war. It has become a part of many school curricula to teach students about the Japanese American experience during World War II. It was made into a made-for-television movie in 1976 that won a Humanitas Prize and was nominated for an Emmy in the category of Outstanding Writing in a Drama. She also provides lectures in both university and community settings. In 2006, Jeanne Wakatsuki-Houston received the Award of Excellence for her contributions to society from the Japanese American National Museum.

Larry Matsuda
Dr. Larry Matsuda will read from his book *A Cold Wind in Idaho*. He was born in the Minidoka Idaho War Relocation Center during World War II. Matsuda has a Ph.D. in education and was recently a visiting professor at Seattle University. He studied poetry under the late professor Nelson Bentley at the University of Washington and has participated in the Castilla Poetry Reading Series there. He has read his poetry at numerous events in Washington, Oregon, and Idaho, including the famous Kobo at Higo’s venue in Seattle’s International District with his mentor, Tess Gallagher. His poems appear in The Raven Chronicles and the International Examiner newspaper.

Bob Sims
Emeritus Historian, Boise State University
Bob Sims has been at BSU since 1970 and served as dean of the College of Social Sciences and Public Affairs for nine years. He is a contributor to World Book Encyclopedia and the Encyclopedia of Western History. He has served on the Executive Committee of the Idaho Humanities Council and is a board member of the Idaho Humanities Foundation. He has also served as a consultant to the Four River Cultural Center, stationed in Ontario, Oregon, developing a Japanese American museum. He is currently preparing a manuscript on Minidoka, the World War II Japanese American camp located in Idaho.

Megumi (Grace Fleming)
Megumi (legal name: Grace Fleming) was born in Illinois, but raised in Japan for 7 years. She received her B.A. in Oriental Languages at University of California, Berkeley in 1981 and her M.S. in Clinical Psychology at San Francisco State University in 1984. She worked as a bilingual counselor and hypnotherapist for 10 years in the United States and Japan before becoming a storyteller. Megumi is passionate about telling World War II Japanese American Internment Camp Stories based on dozens of interviews she has conducted with former internees. She has been presenting the Japanese American Detention Stories of Strength and Hope since 1996 at schools, conferences, theaters, and pilgrimages.

Additional Presentations

Portland Taiko
Established in 1994, Portland Taiko aspires to create *taiko* (the Japanese word for drum and the name of the art form) performance of the highest artistic quality to touch the universal in all of us and to provide a strong and beautiful voice for Asian America.