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Title: Jane Kaihatsu Interview  
Narrator: Jane Kaihatsu  
Interviewer: Anna Takada  
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<Begin Segment 9>

- AT: 00:38:19 Oh, so it sounds like your, your family is very involved with, you know, the greater Japanese American community in the city, at that time. Um, a lot of this was happening while you were, you all were living in Park Ridge?
- JK: 00:38:36 Yes, mhm.
- AT: 00:38:38 And so would you be commuting to different places in the city?
- JK: 00:38:43 Yes, um, Monday through Friday we were Park Ridge people going to school and Saturdays in the evenings, Saturdays and Sundays we were in the city going to church, going to these sporting events. Um, one reason I think that was responsible for the Kaihatsu kids getting, um, spread around different places. My father, Omar ran an insurance agency. He had his own insurance agency, so he insured just about everybody and everything. And that's how he got to know people, not from just Tri-C, but the Buddhist temples and the other Christian churches, as well. And uh he also had another side business, the Japanese cinema, which he ran at Francis Parker school. Um, he rented the auditorium on Saturday and Sunday to bring, uh, films from Japan, um, which at that time, the only place you could probably see it was at an art movie house. And even then they weren't showing Japanese films very much. It was mostly from Europe and, um, but he would show a modern film, a contemporary film and uh, the called chanbara or a period film, samurai film. Each time there would be three showings, a Saturday night, uh, Sunday matinee, a Sunday evening show. And at first it was mostly community, but then as word got out, we have all kinds of film lovers. And my mother took the tickets and we also served ah Japanese tea and rice crackers uh free of charge at intermission. But my mother said that she remembers, um, she called him a fat kid with glasses coming in and to watch movies. And we think it was probably Roger Ebert. Cause eventually Roger Ebert called Omar and he wrote a story

about, you know, this guy showing, uh, Japanese films. And later, um, I ran into Roger Ebert maybe about 15 years ago and he was so funny. I said, hi Roger, you know, my father used to run a Japanese films I wanted to thank you for, and he goes, "Wait, wait! Don't tell me, Omar Kaihatsu!" Like that. And he just said. Oh, I just wanted to say thank you for the publicity. But he, he was telling the guy who's there from facets, multimedia. He said her dad was a voice in the wilderness showing foreign films when nobody else would touch it. So we were grateful to Roger Ebert for that. And then when John Belushi on Saturday Night Live, had his samurai gig, my mom remembered him coming in to watch the movie. Second City was not far away from Francis Parker and he must've sat in those horrible. His character we believe is Toshiro Mifunae, um, and my dad loved Toshiro Mifunae and we should probably just about every film that Mifunae ever made. So I think that's where that samurai, um, character comes from. So again, another reinforcement of Japanese culture that's, you know, very unusual that I'm sure other Japanese American kids did not get. Um, so in one sense I, I didn't feel shame about being Japanese American well, I loved the culture, but yet I, I did do want to fit into that Park Ridge culture, community life style. And I always did feel different. So in my own personal case, I feel I've always been an outsider. I've been an outsider in the mainstream world because I was Japanese, but within, in my own Japanese American community, I felt like an outsider too. So it's just maybe why I went to Japan for nine years.

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