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Title: Geri Handa Interview
Narrator: Geri Handa
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 5>

GH: And so that was kind of an exciting time, too, because it was all the time, too, the larger ethnic communities were trying to find their role and changing what was available in terms of education about all the different ethnic groups, you know.

NW: Uh-huh. Yeah.

GH: And, so, all that was kind of all working together at that time in the '70s, and so . . .

NW: Was it all like a, sort of awareness meeting going on campus at that time?

GH: Well, there was awareness in terms of, you know, becoming more involved with your ethnic communities.

NW: Right.

GH: And identity. And the school I was going to, the UCLA School of Social Welfare . . .

NW: Right.

GH: . . . at that time, recruited actually more ethnic students, and so the, the ethnic students were in the majority and the white students were in the minority.

NW: Right.

GH: And so then that's when our school went on strike, and there was a possibility of the school losing its accreditation if, you know, we continued to do the strike.

NW: Oh, God.

GH: And we had certain demands that we wanted the school to meet in terms of more ethnic diversity, in terms of educational materials, you know, practicum, you know, experience. So they did all that, you know.

NW: So you made some important accomplishments on that front as well . . .

GH: Well, you know at that time, it was a period of time when all that was going on elsewhere too.

NW: . . . changing education is very significant. Right, right, yeah.

GH: And so, that was a part of my experience there in LA, Los Angeles.

NW: So it must have certainly inspired you to do something more to, let's say, working with seniors and so forth.

GH: Oh yeah. Well, I was, even before I went to Los Angeles for school, I was involved in helping with a group called Asians for Community Action in San Jose.

NW: Ah, right, right.

GH: And this was working with young students from the college, San José State, and Asian American Studies.

NW: Ah, I see.

GH: So, they would do community service work, and one of the areas that they were, wanted to do was community organizing in the, um, Japantown area, and so they came up with, you know, senior services and things like that, you know. So I was involved in . . . because I was from San Jose, and because I was involved in a lot of different things, I was kind of like introducing some of the key leaders to, to the group, Asians for Community Action.

NW: Right, right. So you were sort of a resource person to make connections.

GH: And that was, yeah. Yeah.

NW: Yeah.

GH: That was it. And I was just kind of in a supportive role, but that was before I left. And so, after I left, they'd started doing a lot of different things and out of their involvement came Yu-Ai Kai, which is the Japanese American senior center.

NW: Right.

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