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Title: Thomas T. Noguchi Interview
Narrator: Thomas T. Noguchi
Interviewer: Naoko Wake
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<Begin Segment 4>

NW: Could you . . . Dr. Noguchi? Dr. Noguchi, could you please tell me a little more about your relationship to Japanese American communities of the '70s. Because I know that you probably had an interaction with people, uh, Japanese American Citizens League? I understand that they are the organization that eventually supported U.S. survivors group. So I'm wondering if you can kind of describe your role in kind of helping U.S. survivors to have support from JACL?

TN: In 1970 many, uh, prior to my teaching I learned that these survivors were alive by leadership of the Japanese American community. And warn others and you better be quiet and don't raise uh . . . don't raise the issues that Japan lost and then we were placed in the concentration camps. There was an admission [?] . . . not to be . . . not talk about it or make issue. That was the message at that time [?]. I felt there's a public education in radiation should be . . . uh should be known throughout the United States. We constantly deal with atomic energy. And then that's why . . . uh, but uh . . . I was uh, as I mentioned, I took no for answer. And I uh . . . applied but the area of selection, I met a Japanese American community leader. For example the chamber of commerce [?], the president and officers [?]. J . . . J, A . . . No that's not . . .

[Mrs. Noguchi is talking in the background]

TN: No, it's American Japa—Japanese . . . Japanese American leaders. And then it was late . . . and I . . . made effort. Japanese Americans for Tom Noguchi. They took to some [?] because there was other interest group for pushing for other candidates. And uh . . . because of that I was appointed.

NW: I see.

TN: But uh, the history around the '69 and the later '82—uh the way, perhaps, I do it, because I am uh, a highly visible person . . .

NW: Mhm.

TN: . . . and when you increase your visibility, you have a main [?] why you got attacked. And uh . . . I was this head and they came back at the civil service hearing and at the time again Japanese American community supported me and uh . . . so for me, working for Japanese Americans or any other community is my interest.

NW: I see. Thank you. So, do you remember any names of people from JACL that particularly were helpful for you during this time period?

TN: Uh . . . in [?] 1966. That's a long time ago. And uh . . . attorney, attorney by Kenji Ito.

NW: Kenji Ito.

TN: Kenji Ito. I-T-O. Is a past president and he was a . . . along with many leadership in the chamber of commerce such as Sumitomo bank and Tokyo bank and those are the many large groups of gardeners associations. They all felt that Tom Noguchi, I know him but uh, he seems to be extremely, thinks that they incensed [?] They raised the money and had many meetings and a lot of lobby and so forth. And it uh, just uh happened to be the beginning of a Japanese American community activism along with the young Sanseis, right? In those days, 1967 those upfront UCLA students. Demonstrations at UCLA. California State University assistanting student who were studying Asian studies. They also took calls [?] and assisted me and uh, many of them circulated petitions and so forth. So um . . . when the atomic bomb survivors approached me, yes I will help you. And uh, I set up a medical association for people to support. And people provided a place and we had a number of public hearing and resulted in state legislature interested in hearing it. And I think we also arranged for a congressional hearing.

NW: Exactly. Dr. Noguchi?

TN: . . . Conservatives and it's uh, difficult. Especially the budget that's involved. Uh . . . they're willing to do some ABCC-like survey. But they do not wish to take up any budget or care . . . yeah. But uh, a purpose for us is accomplished. And by that time 19—early 1980, uh Mrs. Suyeishi, Mrs. Okai might have passed away, I don't know. But this Mrs. Suyeishi, along with uh . . . her either relative or friend Kanji Kuramoto in Oakland organized the San Francisco chapter. And a number of our chapters started up. And uh . . . I think we might even went to a Chicago meeting with a JACL officers on some hearing. And that was along with, uh, '70s to about '80, '81.

NW: I see.

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