



**THE FIGHT CONTINUES:  
YURI KOCHIYAMA**





## Background:

Yuri Kochiyama, born Mary Yuriko Nakahara, was born in San Pedro, California May 19, 1921. Her father, Seiichi, was a fish and marine store supplier; her mother, Tsuyako, was regarded as a bit strange in their community: "She had a college degree. She smoked. She taught piano. At the same time, she took care of the house and children," (Elaine Woo, 2014). Her mother's atypical role for both a woman and an immigrant perhaps gave rise to Kochiyama's later straying off the beaten path later on. In 1941, following the bombing of Pearl Harbour her father was imprisoned, and died within six weeks due to a lack of medical care. The remainder of Kochiyama's family was forced into an internment camp in Arkansas shortly thereafter. Following WW2, Kochiyama married and moved to New York where she and her husband lived among mainly Black and Puerto Rican families in a housing project. They held open meetings in their apartments - Kochiyama's daughter later reflected "our house felt like a movement 24/7" (Hansi Lo Wang, 2014).







### Impacts on & Contributions to the AAPI Community:

Kochiyama, in many ways, began the unison of the Black and Asian American communities. She worked with famous Black activists including Malcom X, proving the need for mutual support amongst minority communities (Jones, 2017).

In doing so, she defied the subtly induced anti-blackness among AA by inspiring cross community work.

Kochiyama was also involved in Puerto Rican advocacy throughout her life. Her support and advocacy for many minority groups ultimately impacted the AAPI community as she acted as a bridge between the AAPI community and other minority communities (Widener, 2007). In truth, though, her spirit impacted far beyond just the AAPI community as her lifelong work inspired the unison of all minorities in the advocacy and demand for justice.

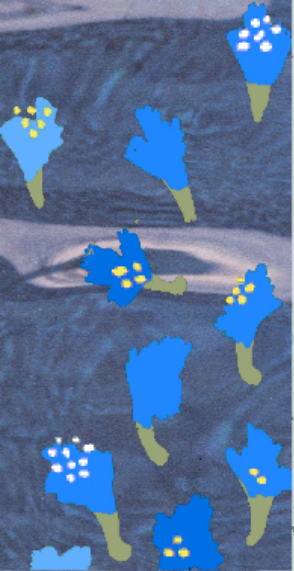




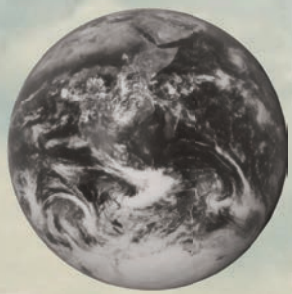


### Connection to themes:

- Intersectionality: Kochiyama faced dual pressures being a minority, an Asian American, and a woman
- Anti-Blackness in the AAPI community/civic engagement: Kochiyama, in many ways, symbolized combatting anti-Blackness in the AAPI community. Her work alongside Black activists, like Malcom X, inspired the unison of minority groups in the fight for justice and equality







## References.

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2. Hansi Lo Wang. (2014, June 2). Yuri Kochiyama, Activist And Former World War II Internee, Dies At 93. <https://www.wbur.org/npr/318072652/japanese-american-activist-and-malcolm-x-ally-dies-at-93>
3. Jones, J. C. (2017). The Black Panther Party and the Japanese Press. *Journal of African American Studies*, 21(1), 42-70. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12111-016-9337-1>
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5. Widener, D. (2007). Heartbeat of struggle: the revolutionary life of Yuri Kochiyama, and: Black, Brown, Yellow, and Left: Radical Activism in Los Angeles, and: Soul Power: Culture, Radicalism, and the Making of a U.S. Third World Left (review). *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 10(2), 199-205.