

Finding Aid to

JUDGE BENJAMIN M. TASHIRO
1932-1987

Kauai Historical Society
Lihue, Kauai, Hawaii

MS 88

MS 88**Title:** Judge Benjamin M. Tashiro**Extent:** 2 boxes and 1 oversize scrapbook

Abstract: This collection contains materials relating to the life and career of Judge Benjamin M. Tashiro. It contains newspaper articles and correspondence related to his judgeship, numerous speeches made at various gatherings between 1957 and 1987, and work that Tashiro did for various clubs and organizations. The collection also includes several photographs of Judge Tashiro and his family as well as a more in-depth biographical sketch prepared by Benjamin Tashiro himself.

Biographical Sketch:

Benjamin Masaru Tashiro was born on May 23, 1904 on the island of Kauai. He graduated from the Japanese High School "Hawaii Chuugakko" and Territorial Normal & Training School (1917-1921). He went on to attend Coe College in Cedar Rapids, Iowa from 1925-1927 and then UCLA in 1929. He studied law at Hastings College of Law at the University of California in San Francisco from 1929-1932.

From 1921-1925 Benjamin Tashiro worked as an elementary school teacher. He then engaged in private law practice in Lihue after being admitted to practice law in all courts of Hawaii in November of 1932. This made him the first American of Japanese ancestry to open a law practice on Kauai. In 1943 he volunteered and enlisted in the Military Intelligence Service Branch of the United States Army, serving at the Language School at Camp Savage and Fort Snelling, Minnesota. He rose to the rank of Master Sergeant and was honorably discharged in December of 1945.

After returning to Hawaii he was eventually appointed as a Judge of the Fifth Circuit Court of the Territory of Hawaii in 1955. This appointment lasted for a 4-year term and in 1959 he was reappointed for a 6-year term. He was appointed again in 1965 and served until his retirement in 1969. During his career Tashiro held membership in numerous community and charitable organizations including the United Japanese Society of Kauai, the MIS (Military Intelligence Service) Veterans Club of Kauai, the Kukuiofono Community Association and many others. He served in leadership roles for several of these organizations and did a

considerable amount of legal work for these and other clubs and organizations on Kauai.

Acquisition Information: These records came to the historical society on May 5, 2018, deposited by Mitzi M. Tashiro (aka Mimi) and Lynn Harmer.

Accession Number: 2018.023

Processed in 2021 by Emily Threlkeld and in 2023 by Daniel WU

Container List

Box 1

Folders

1. Deed of gift and finding aid
2. Biographical sketch prepared by Benjamin M. Tashiro
3. List of graduates of Japanese High School
News Articles related to Normal School class of 1921
Notice of admission to the bar
4. Correspondence relating to 1955 appointment to 5th Circuit Court of Kauai and related materials
5. News articles and correspondence relating to 1959 appointment
Photos of swearing in ceremony and related materials
6. News articles related to 1965 reappointment and related materials
7. Constitution and by-laws drawn up for various clubs and organizations (27)
8. Other work done for clubs and organizations
9. Speeches and addresses 1957-1960
10. Speeches and addresses 1961-1987
11. Correspondence for mass burial services of war dead and related documents
12. Miscellaneous Photographs: 7 photos of Judge Tashiro and his family at swearing in ceremony, 6 photos of a flood on the island, followed by 4 unidentified photos
13. Newspaper articles related to Benjamin Tashiro's judgeship

Box 2 (oversize)

Letters from officials and peers and newspaper clippings celebrating Tashiro's legal career

Box 3

Folders

1. Committee to Welcome Emperor and Empress of Japan, October 1975
2. West Kauai Merchants Association
3. Kauai AJA Baseball Association
4. Kauai AJA Baseball Association, Mainichi Orion Series, March 1951

5. Kauai AJA Baseball Association, Inter-Island Series 1952
6. Kauai AJA Baseball Association, Meeting Minutes, 1951-1952

1 Rolled up undated photo of Tashiro at a celebration surrounded by people

1 Photobook

- Contents begin at 1973
- Follow 1st to 6th Testimonial for Koreisha sponsored by Kauai Kumamoto Kenjin Yuushikai

3 Boards with Garden Island newspaper clipping taped on

- 1 clipping titled "Former Kumamoto residents feted" from March 12, 1985 covering the 6th Annual Testimonial for Kumamoto Kenjin
- 2 duplicate clippings titled "Ohana" from April 2, 1986 covering the 7th Annual Testimonial for Kumamoto Kenjin