

THEN THEY CAME FOR ME.

INCARCERATION OF JAPANESE AMERICANS
DURING WWII AND THE DEMISE OF CIVIL LIBERTIES

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ALPHAWOOD GALLERY PRESENTS
AN EVENING WITH GEORGE TAKEI
AT ATHENAEUM THEATRE, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 7



**RENOWNED ACTOR & ACTIVIST TO SHARE FIRST-HAND STORIES OF EXPERIENCE
AT JAPANESE INCARCERATION CAMPS**

(CHICAGO) July 31, 2017— In conjunction with its first original exhibition - *Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties* - Alphawood Gallery proudly presents **An Evening with George Takei** at the Athenaeum Theatre (2936 N. Southport Avenue, Chicago), [Thursday, September 7, at 7pm](#). In a one-night-only presentation, actor and social justice activist **George Takei** shares the story of his Japanese American family's forced imprisonment during World War II. **This program is open to the public; \$15 tickets can be purchased by visiting www.AlphawoodGallery.org/Takei-Tickets. More than \$10 of each ticket purchased will be donated to the Japanese American Service Committee.**

When he was incarcerated as a child with his family, Takei lived the story told by *Then They Came for Me*, which examines a difficult and painful episode in the history of the United States when the federal government forcibly removed and imprisoned thousands of American citizens without due process simply for being born Japanese American.

"George Takei is a role model who speaks to the very audiences we hope to reach with *Then They Came for Me*," said **Jim McDonough**, Alphawood Foundation Executive Director. "His personal story of his incarceration and his lifelong commitment to social justice and LGBT rights make him a powerful messenger. We know that he will inspire our Chicago audience and remind us all how important it is to never forget the injustice of the incarceration of Americans simply because of their race."

With a career spanning five decades, George Takei is known around the world for his founding role in the acclaimed television series *Star Trek*, in which he played Hikaru Sulu, helmsman of the Starship Enterprise. But Takei's story goes where few stories have gone before. With an uncanny eloquence and signature wit, Takei shares his poignant story: a childhood spent with his family wrongfully imprisoned in a Japanese American incarceration camp during WWII; his rise to celebrity as a sci-fi icon; his remarkable journey as social media mega-power; and his passionate fight for LGBTQ rights and marriage equality in America—empowering others to beat the odds and make a difference.

In 2015, Takei made his Broadway debut in the premiere of his first musical, ***Allegiance***, with music and lyrics by Jay Kuo and a book by Kuo, Lorenzo Thione and Marc Acito. Inspired by Takei's true-life experience, ***Allegiance*** follows one family's extraordinary journey in an untold American story of forgiveness, joy, and the redemptive power of love. *The evening will include brief selections from the musical, performed by Chicago actors and arranged by Robert Ollis, music director of Pride Films & Plays.*

In May 2017, Takei returned to the New York stage to star in a revival of Stephen Sondheim's ***Pacific Overtures***, directed by John Doyle at Classic Stage Company.

THE EXHIBITION

Alphawood Gallery has partnered with Chicago's Japanese American Service Committee (JASC) to produce the Gallery's first original exhibition, *Then They Came for Me: Incarceration of Japanese Americans during WWII and the Demise of Civil Liberties*. In the name of national security, the government incarcerated 120,000 citizens and legal residents during World War II without constitutional protections to which they were entitled. Executive Order 9066, signed by President Franklin D. Roosevelt on February 19, 1942, set in motion the forced removal and imprisonment of all people of Japanese ancestry living on or near the West Coast.

Then They Came for Me presents this historical event from multiple perspectives. Drawing upon the powerful images culled from the book *Un-American: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans During World War II* by Chicago-based photo historians Richard Cahan and Michael Williams, the exhibition features works by renowned American photographers **Dorothea Lange**, **Ansel Adams** and others documenting the eviction of Japanese Americans from their homes and their subsequent lives in incarceration camps. In addition, the exhibition presents views of the incarceration by Japanese American artists **Toyo Miyatake** and **Miné Okubo**, and other powerful photographs, art, objects, documents and historical materials that provide glimpses into the personal experiences of those who were incarcerated. Highlights include ID cards and tags, anti-Japanese propaganda, suitcases, diaries, handmade furniture, wood carvings and other works of art, high school yearbooks and newsletters produced by camp inmates, military accoutrements, indefinite leave clearances, materials related to resettlement in Chicago and eventual redress and reparation. Specially compiled video testimonies by former inmates, their family members and community leaders are installed throughout the exhibition.

Then They Came for Me was organized by Alphawood Gallery in collaboration with the Japanese American Service Committee.

ABOUT ALPHAWOOD FOUNDATION CHICAGO

Alphawood Foundation Chicago is a grant-making private foundation working for an equitable, just and humane society. It awards grants to more than 200 organizations annually, primarily in the areas of the arts and arts education, advocacy, architecture and preservation, domestic violence prevention, the

environment, promotion and protection of the rights of LGBT citizens and people living with HIV/AIDS, and other human and civil rights.

ABOUT ALPHAWOOD GALLERY

Alphawood Gallery is supported by Alphawood Foundation Chicago. It was created to serve as a venue for exhibitions furthering the Foundation's charitable mission. The 12,000-square-foot space first served this purpose for the Chicago presentation of the groundbreaking national touring exhibition, *Art AIDS America*, which was on display from December 1, 2016 to April 2, 2017. Alphawood Gallery is open Wednesdays and Thursdays from 11am-8pm, and Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 11am-6pm. Admission to Alphawood Gallery is free and open to the public.

The Gallery is conveniently located at 2401 North Halsted Street in Chicago near the CTA Fullerton 'L' stop, as well as several CTA bus routes. Limited free parking is available in an adjacent parking lot, along with more plentiful metered street parking and garage parking nearby.

Arrangements for the appearance of George Takei have been made through Greater Talent Network, Inc., New York, NY. For more information and updates on *Then They Came for Me* and the George Takei presentation September 7, please visit us at www.alphawoodgallery.org as well as on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), and [Instagram](#).

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