



Michio Iwao

Michio Iwao was born July 12, 1922 to Kotama and Tomonosuke Iwao in Suisun City, California. He along with his parents and three brothers were relocated and held at the Gila River Internment Camp (Turlock) from 1942 to 1945 under the War Relocation Authority during World War II.

During his internment at Gila River, Arizona, he worked as a firefighter, played baseball, and learned to carve and paint birds generally using discarded materials found on the campgrounds. He resettled in Chicago in 1945 determined to see the Chicago Cubs play in a World Series.

Mr. Iwao went back to making bird pins after his retirement using many of the same tools that he made during his internment. He enjoys sharing his life story and artwork with the community. In November 2011, he was invited to conduct a live presentation at "The Art of Gaman" exhibit at the Illinois Holocaust Museum. **The Empress of Japan received one of his bird pins at a private showing of the exhibit in Japan.**

December 19, 2012

Mr. Michio Iwao
Chicago, IL

Dear Mich:

Thank you for generously donating the bird pins to give to the Empress of Japan. I chose to give her the Red Cardinal, which her Chamberlain emailed to say she would "cherish." I also gave one of your pins to Hiroko Kuniya, the NHK news anchorwoman. She was elated too. Your pins are very special.

I know that Karen Kanemoto said that you don't want any money for the birds, so I'd like to make this donation to your favorite charity – the Chicago Buddhist Temple.

I hope you have a wonderful holiday – and that good health and the bluebird of happiness stay with you throughout the coming years.

With warm best wishes,



Delphine Hirasuna



DELPHINE HIRASUNA



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