



## *Fred T. Korematsu*

### *American Civil Rights Activist*

Fred T. Korematsu was a World War II national civil rights hero. In 1942, he refused to go to the government's incarceration camps for Japanese Americans. After he was arrested and convicted, he appealed his case all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which ruled against him in 1944, but then vacated the decision in 1983.

Korematsu remained an activist throughout his life. In 1998, he received the Presidential Medal of Freedom -- the nation's highest civilian honor, from President Bill Clinton. In 2010, the State of California passed the Fred Korematsu Day bill, making January 30 the first in U.S. history named after an Asian-American.

To commemorate his journey as a civil rights activist, the "Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution" was observed for the first time on January 30, 2011, by the State of California.

Korematsu's legacy continues to inspire people of all ethnicities and demonstrates the importance of speaking up to fight injustice. His case changed legal history and resulted in an apology by our government for wrongdoings, as well as reparations to 120,000 living Japanese-Americans.

Other states like Hawaii, Utah, Illinois, and Georgia have officially commemorated Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution. Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Virginia still have related legislation pending.

Fred Korematsu is known to be the first Asian-American in U.S. history to have a statewide day named after him. The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has also urged the President and Congress to establish Fred Korematsu Day as a national holiday.

In 2010, the Governor of California signed the legislative bill establishing Fred Korematsu Day of Civil Liberties and the Constitution on January 30 in perpetuity. This is the first state-wide day in U.S. history named after an Asian-American. Korematsu's growing legacy continues to inspire people across diverse communities and demonstrates the importance of speaking up to fight injustice.

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