



CHANCELLOR'S AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE

Norman Mineta

Former U.S. Secretary of Transportation (*under George W. Bush*)

Former U.S. Secretary of Commerce (*under President Bill Clinton*)

In the history of our nation, relatively few individuals have had the honor of serving as a member of a President's Cabinet. Norman Mineta has the distinction of serving in two cabinet posts, under two presidents.

Sitting as a cabinet member, capped a distinguished career as an elected public servant that encompassed 24 years.

Forging a successful career in our nation's capital probably was not the first thought that occurred to Mineta, who, at a young age, was interned with his family at Heart Mountain during World War II. The son of hard working Japanese immigrant parents, Mineta would exit the camp determined, and went on to earn a degree in Business Administration from UC Berkeley before enlisting in the U.S. Army and serving as an intelligence officer in Japan and Korea. He later joined his father in the Mineta Insurance Agency.

When public service called, he entered the fray with his trademark determination. After two years as a city councilman, he won the mayor's office in 1971, then made the jump to U.S. congressman in 1975. In Congress, he chaired several committees, pressed for FAA funding and civil liberties, and was the key author of the landmark 1991 transportation act.

As the U.S. Secretary of Commerce, Mineta was the first Asian American to hold the position. As U.S. Secretary of Transportation, he was the only Democrat in President Bush's cabinet. He was serving during the fateful day of 9/11 and ordered the grounding of all aviation as the nation was attacked by U.S. based commercial airline jets. In 2004, he received an award for his distinguished contributions to commercial air transportation, and continued to serve with distinction until stepping down in 2006. He was the longest serving Secretary of Transportation in over 40 years.

After returning to private life, Mineta continued to serve as a resource in national discussions, including the modernization of the U.S. Coast Guard, and to champion human rights. Here in Riverside, he has proven to be staunch advocate for the new Center for Social Justice & Civil Liberties, and was a featured speaker at the preview opening in June 2012. He is a recipient of the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the highest civilian honor in the United States.