

Renaming Jackson Park

Top 10 Names Background and References with Final 4 Name Recommendations to the Recreation and Parks Commission listed first.

December 2020

OHLONE

The Ohlone people are a group of approximately 50 villages and family groups who lived on the land that is now known as the San Francisco Bay Area before the Spanish invasion with at least eight dialects spoken. The Confederated Villages of Lisjan is one of a number of Ohlone tribes. The unceded territory of the Lisjan Ohlone people includes the City of Alameda. The name Ohlone originated in the 1960s and 1970s when people organized and renamed themselves Ohlone, inspired by the Black Power and American Indian Movements. There are thousands of Ohlone people living in the East Bay, however, the Ohlone are not recognized by the federal government and subsequently do not have access to the rights, services and protections of federal Indian law managed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Reference:

<https://soqoreate-landtrust.org/lisjan-history-and-territory>

CHOCHENYO

Chochenyo is the Ohlone language spoken by the Lisjan. The Lisjan Ohlone people lived on the land that is now known as the San Francisco East Bay and their unceded territory includes the City of Alameda.

MABEL TATUM

Mabel Tatum is a hidden hero in Alameda's history. Her story reveals many aspects of Alameda's hidden history: WWII housing projects on the Naval Base, fraudulent land deals, the Naval Base's role in the Vietnam War, and the tent-in at Franklin Park led by Tatum and other Estuary Project residents.

A little back story: In 1963, the Alameda Housing Authority (AHA) tried to kick residents out of the Estuary Project, a temporary housing project within the Alameda Naval Air Station. They offered no relocation program to the tenants even though State Housing Authority Law required that they do so. In early 1964, the Alameda branch of the NAACP formed the Citizen's Committee for Low-Income Housing "for the purpose of securing adequate low-cost housing for the tenants of Estuary." Mabel Tatum was their president.

After the committee's formation, the AHA began intimidating and harassing residents by removing mailboxes, garbage disposal units, and laundry services and closing down the nearby store. Their tactics worked: 400 families left the project, leaving only 100 to fight for their right to housing.

Led by Mrs. Mabel Tatum, President of the organization, the Citizen's Committee for Low-Income Housing staged a three-day school boycott and sit-in at the AHA office which resulted in a one-year delay in demolition.

In Winter 1965, a private company purchased the Estuary Project land by fronting as a fake church in order to get around the original Navy contract with the AHA that said the land could not be sold to a profit-making organization.

In June 1966, the Alameda Fire Department flooded the lawn at Franklin Park to try to dissuade families from the Estuary Project from pitching tents there in protest of the impending eviction of 18 families from the Estuary project. Mabel Tatum led a 200 person march through the surrounding, upper-middle class, white neighborhood. The Estuary project was hidden within Alameda's Naval Air Base, so many Alameda residents didn't know the project was there before the protest.

Here's a quote from Mrs. Mabel Tatum's speech titled What Kind of Country is This?

"Now I can't get a house no sooner than you can and my husband's in Vietnam...A beautiful world isn't it. Salute the flag. Justice for all. What kind of country is this we are fightin' for? What kind of a country is this, you can't even exercise your own rights to live where you want to live? What kind 'of country this is that we as a group of people can't protect our own rights whether it's legal or illegal? It's gotten to the point now where we've got to throw the legal part aside. I'm not sayin' out and grabbin' somebody and knockin' 'em down. You don't have to do it that way. You can do it systematically and win that way."

Source: <https://libraries.ucsd.edu/farmworkermovement/ufwarchives/sncc/15-July%201966.pdf>

JUSTICE

The definition is **the quality of being just, impartial, or fair**. It represents the law, righteousness, and correctness in the world. It stems from the latin word, *justus*, which means right or law. The first known use of the word was in 12th century England. It was also the Merriam-Webster Dictionary 2018 Word of the Year as it represents social, criminal, and economic reform in the world.

Fred Korematsu

Fred Korematsu was a Japanese American from Oakland who fought against the internment of his people in the west coast after the bombing of Pearl Harbor. He refused to be interned, went into hiding but was found, and arrested. He fought the internment in court was sent to Topaz, Utah, where he lived in a horse stall with a single light bulb for illumination.

After he appealed and was released he continued to fight racism in Utah, and in 1983 he went to court again to have his name cleared. In 1998 President Bill Clinton awarded him the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

Peace

Peace is an idea of unity, harmony and therefore a lack of hostility and violence. It can also mean a lack of war, like “peacetime,” or it can be a mindset one has. With peace, people can work to improve the quality of life for themselves and others.

With the history of Alameda Naval Air Station so prominent in this city’s legacy, perhaps peace would call to mind what those soldiers fought for.

ALAMEDA

The word “Alameda” in Spanish means “grove of trees,” or “tree-lined avenue” which is a very apt description of the park.

When this became the first park in Alameda, it was referred to as Alameda Park.

MARY RUDGE

Mary Rudge (1925-2014) grew up in Texas and Oklahoma. She was the single parent of 7 children and advocated for children and social change. She travelled the world sharing poetry and became Alameda’s Poet Laureate. She wrote “Jack London’s Neighborhood,” and several other works. She also started Alameda’s poetry contest.

Yoshiko Uchida

Born: Alameda, 1922; Died: Berkeley, 1992 ([NYT obit](#), [wikipedia](#))

Quick summary:

- Author and illustrator of children's books
- Interned with her family and other Japanese Americans during WWII (at Tanforan Racetrack and then Topaz)
- Taught schoolchildren during and after the war
- Numerous books focused on her experiences as a Japanese American; sought to help children view those different from themselves with humanity and to counter/resist Asian or Japanese American stereotypes

Biography:

Uchida was an author and illustrator, mostly children's and young adult (YA) books, and most of which were related to her experiences as a Japanese American before and during World War II, including her experience in a US concentration camp during the war. She also wrote several collections of Japanese folk tales, after receiving a Ford Foundation research fellowship in 1952 that allowed her to travel to Japan.

In the midst of graduating with honors from UC Berkeley, she and her mother and sister were forcibly removed from their home to Tanforan Racetrack Relocation Center, due to President Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066. Her father, interned elsewhere initially, was reunited with his family before they were all relocated to Topaz Relocation Camp in Utah.

Yoshiko Uchida taught schoolchildren in the concentration camp, and did so after her release as well, earning a Masters in Education from Smith College.

She published over 40 written works, including:

[Journey to Topaz](#) (fiction; children)

[A Jar of Dreams](#) (fiction; children)

[The Bracelet](#) (fiction; children)

[The Dancing Kettle and Other Japanese Folk Tales](#) (folk tales; children)

[Picture Bride](#) (fiction; adult)

[Desert Exile: The Uprooting of a Japanese American Family](#) (non-fiction; adult)

Selected scholarship:

Harada, Violet H. "Caught Between Two Worlds: Themes of Family, Community, and Ethnic Identity in Yoshiko Uchida's Works for Children." *Children's Literature in Education* 29, no. 1 (March 1998): 19-30. ([linked](#))

Tang, Edward. "Teach Your Children Well: The Postwar Tales of Yoshiko Uchida." In *From Confinement to Containment : Japanese/American Arts During the Early Cold War*, 159-200. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2019. ([linked](#))

Archives:

[University of Oregon](#)

[UC Berkeley](#)

NIELSEN TAM

Nielsen Tam was a Chinese American administrator and helped many vulnerable communities in Alameda. The Alameda Unified School District's (AUSD) administrative building is named after him, the "Niel Tam Educational Center", family members still alive and involved in Alameda. He worked for AUSD for 38 years as a special education teacher, Vice Principal and Principal. After retirement, Neil was on the School Board and in 2013 served as President.

Neil was a trailblazer championing diversity, equity and access in the school district. He served on the boards of Girls Inc., Boys and Girls Club, Alameda Point Collaborative, Alameda Family Services, and the Alameda Food Bank. Neil was founder of the Multi-cultural Community Center and Organization of Alameda Asians. He received many awards and was honored with lifetime achievement awards from the City and County of Alameda. Neil also volunteered throughout the community and dedicated his life to public education, community services and support of all those in need.

Niel Tam received his undergraduate degree in Occupational Therapy from San Jose State University and was the first in his family to enter a Master's program. His parents were both immigrants from China, and his father died when he was 5 years old, so he was the youngest of four sons raised by a single mother. He earned a Master's Degree in Special Education from San Francisco State University and a Master's Degree in School Administration from St. Mary's College.

In 1970, he chose to work with the Alameda Unified School District after being offered positions in San Jose and Napa. He had done his student teaching in Alameda.

Niel worked in the area of special education for 28 years. He had classes at 11 of the schools ranging from elementary to middle and high school. He was the first to teach a preschool class that partnered with the local Head Start program. During the four years that he held that position, he was awarded a number of honors recognizing the innovation and creativity to start and fund the project.

He was a pioneer and champion of a program to mainstream Special Ed students into the classroom, working closely with the administration and teachers at school sites to ensure the program's success. His goal, though, was to move into administration as a school principal. But ... there were barriers to overcome in crossing from Special Education to regular education as well as the challenge of diversity within the City and School District.

He was persistent and became a trailblazer in the district championing diversity, equity, and access. It ultimately took him 16 years of perseverance and hard work to succeed. During the 16 years, he was both in Special Education and also served as an Administrative Designee or Vice Principal at the same time. In 1997, he finally became Principal of Miller School, serving the Coast Guard community and the West End of Alameda. He stayed in the position for 9 years. He also was in charge of the Woodstock Child Development Center ultimately raising the funds to keep the facility going and raising the awareness necessary to value and embrace the program. He was able to successfully secure funds from foundations, the county, and other private sources to create enrichment programs for the school which had experienced a high level of turnover in administrators over the years. He made a commitment to stay at the school for more than just a few years, and make a difference.

In 2006, he became Principal of Washington School (now Maya Lin) and served for two years before retiring. At Washington he created support programs for immigrant families who were not English speakers. He also provided support to the students and families through other programs.

At each of those schools, he built teams of teachers who would ultimately improve test scores by 25 percent, created enrichment programs to help students be successful, and built partnerships with other school communities. To name a few of his achievements—he raised \$350,000 for the playground at Miller School, after the School District was unable to provide funds, partnered with the Golden State Warriors to add the basketball court at Washington School, and created a bridge program with East and West end schools.

When he retired from AUSD, after 38 years, he immediately ran for the Alameda Unified District School Board and was successfully elected in a landslide victory. He ran for a second term in 2012 and was reelected. In 2013, he was President of the School Board where he continued to champion for Alameda's children and families and for equity in the schools.

His community leadership was recognized by the San Francisco Foundation's Koshland Civic Unity Award in 2002—a five-year program to support the West End of Alameda. He was a Coro Northern California Community Leadership Fellow in 2006. He served on the Boards of Girls, Inc., Boys and Girls Club, Alameda Point Collaborative, Alameda Family Services, and the Alameda Food Bank to name a few. He was also appointed to the Alameda City Traffic and Disabilities Commissions. He was a founder of the Multi-Cultural Community Center and Organization of Alameda Asians.

He was honored by the Asian Pacific Islander Democratic Caucus with a State Assembly Proclamation and Commendation for his civic volunteerism and his commitment to diversity, mentorship, and leadership in the Asian community in 2015. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Alameda City Social Services Human Relations Board in 2015. He received an Alameda County Commendation and Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015.

Throughout his civic and community activities, he made volunteerism a priority. He coached and refereed boys' soccer for nine years, was President of the Alameda Soccer League, and donated his time throughout Alameda. He touched the lives of many as a mentor, colleague, leader, and someone everyone could count on. He was a master in Reiki, taught Tai Chi classes, tutored children, and worked tirelessly to help children and families receive the quality education that he believed everyone deserved. He served as a leader on church committees with the Buena Vista United Methodist Church, and was also a role model for everyone.

Niel Tam passed away in May of 2015. He had dedicated his life to public education, community service, and support of all those in need.

- 1) 39 years at AUSD
- 2) 12 years principal low income communities
- 3) Boards - Girls Inc., Alameda family services, Alameda Point Collaborative, Alameda Multi Cultural Center, Organization of Alameda Asians, and more.
- 4) Coro Fellow, Koshland - SF Foundation grantee,

Information provided by Chris Tam, son of Niel Tam

These resources support information gathered by Chris both in the interview and in his email.

Passages: Nielsen Tam, 1945-2015-[LINK](#)

AUSD Board of Education Trustee Nielsen Tam Dies at Age 69-[LINK](#)

District Set to Name Headquarters for Tam - [LINK](#)