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Go For Broke National Education

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It's What We Do That Matters

This era is a generation of innovation, a generation of remembrance, a generation of change. It thrives on learning from the past and working toward the future. In that future, there is no room for discrimination. Discrimination has always challenged our society, as in the case of the Nisei veterans of the 442nd Battalion. These Japanese-American soldiers accomplished great things both during and after the war. The way they performed and the daring acts they accomplished went a long way to fighting the discrimination they experienced. Their legacy should not be allowed to fade into history because today's generation can learn that mankind should be judged not on their ethnicity or appearance, but on their actions and character.

In World War II, Nisei and their families went through extreme adversity because of their Japanese ancestry. Though the Nisei were American citizens—many of whom had not seen Japan in their lifetimes—they were marginalized and treated as Japanese nationals. Evicted from their homes, their families divided, and businesses refusing to hire them, the Nisei became second-class citizens. Withstanding racism, the Japanese-Americans worked hard and earned a reputation as loyal and valuable Americans both during and after the war.

Today, no one could doubt the patriotism and importance of the 442nd, but wholesale discrimination of this type has been a recurring problem in American society.

Other minority groups have had to push beyond stereotypes in order to bring change. African-Americans, inspired by people like Martin Luther King, Jr. and other black leaders, have distinguished themselves and moved away from other Americans' preconceptions. Some continue to fight discrimination today. Many Mexican-Americans have advanced to prestigious jobs, like working in the White House, Congress and the FBI. Even people who are of a different sexual orientation have walked and continued to walk the same road. Harvey Milk, though he was openly homosexual, was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. These groups, along with the Nisei soldiers, have been huge contributors to society through their actions, courage, and determination, despite being judged by their outward appearance and other irrelevant factors.

We want to learn from our past. We don't want to continue making the same mistakes. Born into a generation of unending change, we have the ability to shape the future for the better. The Nisei soldier experience is relevant to our society because it shows how wrong we can be when we jump to conclusions about our fellow man. Let's not let the accomplishments of the 442nd vanish quietly into history, but instead, use their experience to become wise about working together to strive to be the future innovators and changers of the world!