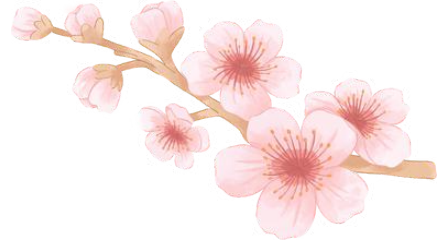


PRESS KIT



LOGLINE

The life of Francis Uyematsu, from his journey creating a successful flower nursery in America to his time at the Manzanar Internment Camp.

SYNOPSIS

The story of Francis Uyematsu, a Japanese immigrant, told through the words of his granddaughter, Mary Uyematsu Kao, and Chuck Currier, a local historian and former teacher. Uyematsu created a booming flower nursery, owning 120 acres of land in Manhattan Beach until the Japanese-American Internment during World War II, where he was forced to sell his land. Entire neighborhoods now sit on his former land, including hundreds of homes and two high schools. And the flowers he created are no longer his.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

I was inspired to make this film when I saw a plaque honoring Francis Uyematsu on my high school campus. I did some research into his life and was shocked to learn that he owned all of the land that Mira Costa High School sat on, along with other areas of Manhattan Beach and his incredibly successful flower nursery. Uyematsu had an immense impact on his community, which continues to quietly grace these areas to this day, yet he hasn't been given the recognition he deserves. This motivated me to make a documentary to spread awareness of Francis' legacy and impact in the United States. He overcame significant adversity and still achieved great success in spite of a country that was pitted against him. Francis' story is important and inspiring, not just for Asian Americans, but for all Americans.



CAST & CREW

MADDOX CHEN - DIRECTOR

Maddox Chen is a filmmaker, animator and actor originally from New York City. Currently, he lives in Los Angeles where he is a high school senior. His work has been published in the New York Times and its corresponding book, *Coming of Age in 2020*. His films have been featured in and garnered numerous awards from film festivals and competitions, including YoungArts and IndieFEST. As an actor, he has been featured in several national commercials. This fall, Maddox will be pursuing a major in Film and Television Production at New York University.

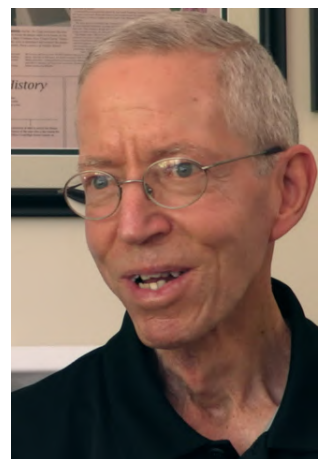


MARY UYEMATSU KAO - SUBJECT EXPERT

Born in the Los Angeles suburb of Altadena, Mary Uyematsu Kao, the granddaughter of Francis Uyematsu, attended UCLA during the struggle to establish Asian American Studies on campus. Kao worked for 30 years at Asian American Studies Center at UCLA before retiring in 2018 and she is known for her graphic design work for AASC Press publications, especially *Amerasia Journal*. Recognized for her role as an activist as well as a photographer documenting Asian American community events in southern California and far beyond, *ROCHIN' THE BOAT* (UCLA AASC, 2020) is her first published photographic collection.

CHUCK CURRIER - SUBJECT EXPERT

As a teacher, coach, and historian, Chuck Currier worked at Mira Costa High School for nearly 40 years. He is well-known in the community for having served as the freshman football coach and a steadfast leader on the football field. However, his greatest passion has been the Mira Costa History Project, which he spearheaded in 2015. It was during his extensive research of the Mira Costa property that he unearthed the history of the Uyematsu family. Currier located Uyematsu family members and led an effort to erect a monument to the family on campus, as well as writing the book *The History of Mira Costa High School - The First Decade*.



PRESS & LAURELS



"'Grandpa Cherry Blossom' could easily be expanded into a full-length documentary feature - and an award-winning one, too. Maddox Chen deftly uses one man's story of internment and runaway business success in Los Angeles to illustrate just how much this city owes to its Japanese immigrants... The film simultaneously celebrates the crucial contributions the Japanese have made to Los Angeles, and holds the rest of us accountable for how we treated them. The whole story is handled with the lightest of touches, careful editing, and gorgeous, sweeping shots of LA's signature flora."

- Katlyn Minard, *Producer and Author*

Such a well made short doc. I was so impressed by the seamless use of archival material with the interviews and b-roll. The film is edited so thoughtfully and skillfully. Really wise choice of subject and you really balanced the history and the present; the factual and the emotional. I'm tremendously impressed.

- Liz Yale Marsh, *Emmy-Winning Documentary Producer*

"Fantastic and informative. This doc really illustrates one man's loss through an ugly part of American history that we often don't hear personal stories about."

- Jack Stovitz, *Television Writer*



TECHNICAL ASPECTS

RUNNING TIME

7.44

ASPECT RATIO

16x9



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