

Interview Transcript with Mr. Evan Goldberg

Interviewer: Hi Mr. Goldberg, this is Amy Paskiewicz following up with your email.

Goldberg: Hi Amy nice to meet you. Nice to hear your voice.

Interviewer: Nice to meet you too. First of all I just wanted to ask you how did *Korematsu v. United States* leave a lasting legacy on individual rights and how did it shape the balance between the role of the government and citizens?

Goldberg: The *Korematsu* case was a civil rights disaster. Not just for Japanese-Americans, but for all Americans. The case was not overturned, but instead was expunged at a lower court level through the use of an obscure legal strategy, *Coram Nobis* (which I believe means “An error before us.”) What this means is that *Korematsu v. United States* was not overturned at the Supreme Court level. This awful decision although disgraced still stands as precedent for future rulings and government decisions. Beyond that, *Korematsu v. United States* is an example of America’s strength. When Professor Irons found the “smoking gun” memo near the top of the files at the National Archives (someone seems to have planted this letter so it would be found in the future), a chain of events unfolded to expunging the conviction; clearing the names of Japanese-Americans; which led to reparations and a small degree of redemption. While we don’t always get things right the first time, I’m glad there is a deeper sense of justice that allows us to correct the errors of our ways. At least I hope. Finally, I believe that *Korematsu v. United States*, is part of a tapestry of civil rights issues and stories that should be studied in concert with each other. Our American ideals are contain high standards: “all men (and women) are created equal”, “give me your tired, your poor”, that no one shall be "deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law." When we don’t live up to our ideals, I believe there are lessons to be learned. A lot of groups have suffered as they have entered our country. We need to remember these lessons, so we treat our neighbors, classmates, and fellow residents with the respect that all human beings deserve.

Interviewer: How does the ruling effect the present and the future?

Goldberg: I remember the mayor talking. He was serving in President George W Bush’s cabinet at the time – September 11th. When September 11th happened, the mayor was in the room and looked at Bush squarely in the eyes. According to the memo Bush said “I know something we’re surely not doing.” It’s lives and the legacies of people who lived in the camps that remind us that we are a multicultural nation and even if we go to war with people around the world and those people live here, we are not at war with our own citizens. Our citizens who share genetic material with those people are still loyal Americans.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time!