

## **Daigo Togami**

**By: Ciarra Matthias and Sofie Merrigan**

Daigo Togami was born on February 22nd, 1923<sup>5</sup>. He lived on Maury Island on a vegetable farm run by his parents<sup>5</sup>. Daigo had three younger siblings, his brothers Takohiko (1926) and Kazumi (1927), and his sister Chizu (1931)<sup>5</sup>. Daigo attended the Vashon Grammar School for the first half of his schooling. In September of 1938, he enrolled in Vashon High School.

Daigo participated in countless activities at high school; he played basketball sophomore year, football junior and senior year, track sophomore - senior year, lettermen's club junior and senior year, Hi-Y (a club affiliated with the YMCA to create, maintain and extend the high standards of Christian character throughout the home, school, and community) junior and senior year, honors society sophomore - senior year (he was secretary during his junior year), baseball all four years and was advisor senior year<sup>8,10</sup>. On top of all of these activities, Daigo was valedictorian and top of his class<sup>8,10</sup>. He was scheduled to graduate on May 29th with the VHS class of 1942 but due to the Japanese internment, they were forced to hold an early, unofficial, celebration. Daigo's last day of school was Thursday, May 14th, 1942<sup>3,4,11</sup>.

On May 16th, 1942, Daigo along with his family were part of the second group of Japanese Americans from Vashon Island to be relocated<sup>4</sup>. The Togami family, along with most other families in the surrounding area, were sent to the Pinedale Assembly Center located in Fresno, California<sup>7</sup>. The Pinedale camp was unique in that most of the internees were from Washington and other surrounding states and it was only open for a short 78 days. About a month after arriving at Pinedale, Daigo enlisted in the military<sup>2</sup>. The rest of his family stayed in Pinedale until it closed two and a half months later, then were sent to Tule Lake in Northern California for just over a year. On September 30th, 1943, they were sent to Minidoka in Idaho<sup>6</sup>. The information on Daigo's time in the military is limited and it is unknown if he ever saw action and fought in the war.

After he finished his time in the military, Daigo moved to Santa Clara, California<sup>5</sup>. His parents and siblings also stayed in California<sup>5</sup>. Daigo, along with a few other high school seniors who were interned before they could graduate, had a graduation ceremony in California where he was presented with his valedictorian address<sup>1,3,4</sup>. He married Toki Sakamoto although there is very little information on her and it is unknown if they had any children<sup>5</sup>. On August 16th, 2000, Daigo died in Fullerton, California<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> Shepherd, Elizabeth. "May Brings Poetry, Plant Sale and Remembrance to Mukai: Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber." Vashon. Vashon-Maury Island Beachcomber, May 6, 2021. <https://www.vashonbeachcomber.com/news/may-brings-poetry-plant-sale-and-remembrance-to-mukai/>.

<sup>2</sup> "Customer Login." Ancestry Login. Accessed February 7, 2022. [https://www.ancestryclassroom.com/discoveryui-content/view/37232937:2238?tid=&pid=&queryId=3c8a48573bea3c7e95a711a6fd52a127&\\_phsrc=pJu1&\\_phstart=successSource](https://www.ancestryclassroom.com/discoveryui-content/view/37232937:2238?tid=&pid=&queryId=3c8a48573bea3c7e95a711a6fd52a127&_phsrc=pJu1&_phstart=successSource).

<sup>3</sup> "Timeline." Newspaper Summary 1928. Accessed February 8, 2022. [https://vashonhistory.com/Vashon%20History/Newspaaper/newspaper\\_1942.htm](https://vashonhistory.com/Vashon%20History/Newspaaper/newspaper_1942.htm).

<sup>4</sup> "Timeline." Transformation 1920 - 1945. Accessed February 8, 2022. <https://www.vashonhistory.com/Vashon%20History/Timeline/transformations.htm>.

<sup>5</sup> "Customer Login." Ancestry Login. Accessed February 8, 2022. [https://www.ancestryclassroom.com/family-tree/person/tree/76271182/person/34340675740/facts?ssrc=&queryId=c0dc89eaf95cc103f3fd084e368d06b1&ml\\_rpos=1](https://www.ancestryclassroom.com/family-tree/person/tree/76271182/person/34340675740/facts?ssrc=&queryId=c0dc89eaf95cc103f3fd084e368d06b1&ml_rpos=1).

<sup>6</sup> "Customer Login." Ancestry Login. Accessed February 8, 2022. [https://www.ancestryclassroom.com/imageviewer/collections/2982/images/40915\\_294011-00242?pId=49800](https://www.ancestryclassroom.com/imageviewer/collections/2982/images/40915_294011-00242?pId=49800).

<sup>7</sup> "Pinedale (Detention Facility)." Pinedale (detention facility) | Densho Encyclopedia. Accessed February 8, 2022. [https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Pinedale\\_\(detention\\_facility\)/](https://encyclopedia.densho.org/Pinedale_(detention_facility)/).

<sup>8</sup> "Japanese Presence Project." Vashon Maury Island Heritage Museum, n.d. Accessed February 7, 2022.

<sup>9</sup> *Joy and Heartache: Vashon's 120 Year Japanese Legacy*. Vashon, WA: Vashon Maury Island Heritage Museum, 2018.

<sup>10</sup> Vashon Island High School, *Vashonian* (Vashon, WA: 1942), Vashon Maury Island Heritage Museum.

<sup>11</sup> Vashon Island High School Record.