

General Information

Yudian He was honored with the Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award on November 16, 2006. Denver Mayor John Hickenlooper proclaimed this date as “Yudian He Day in Denver, Colorado.” At Yudian’s request, the \$2500 cash award was donated to the Great Wall Chinese Academy. The Great Wall Chinese Academy established the Yudian Community Service Award and will use the cash award to inspire students to join Yudian to make a difference in the community by their volunteer contributions and commitment to community service.

Beginning 2007, the award will be presented annually during the week of November 16th. The Selection Committee will oversee all the activities of the award including the selection process.



Procedure

- Schools including public, independent and heritage schools submit nominations by September 26, 2007. One school can submit up two nominations.
- Nomination includes completed Nomination Form and one recommendation letter
- The Award nominees will be judged on initiative and good work accomplished through community services. Decisions made by the judges are final.
- Notifications and invitations will be mailed out on Oct 20, 2007.
- The Award ceremony will be held on Saturday, November 17, 2007.

About Yudian He

At the annual recognition banquet on December 14, 2006, eleven (11) recipients of the award were honored following a special moving tribute to the Honorable Sherman G. Finesilver who has given 50 years of distinguished service, and is one of the founders of the Minoru Yasui Community Volunteer Award. He is also remembered by his life experience and his famous quote, “...life is a road with unpredictable forks and unexpected tomorrows. To take advantage of them, you can’t let yourself be destroyed by defeat, or let others set the limits on your ability to serve.”

Yudian was introduced as a volunteer for the November 2006 award and he is one of eleven (11) recipients who were recognized and called to the podium individually. All recipients received a rousing applause, but Yudian received a standing and sustained ovation. He did not stand to acknowledge the applause. In addition to being the youngest recipient of the Minoru Yasui Volunteer Award, Yudian received his medallion from Mayor Hickenlooper in his wheelchair.

Yudian was born in Sichuan, China. With his family, they moved to Japan in 1988 when he was 6 years old. Yudian was the first foreign student in the elementary school in Japan and was warmly received and welcomed. He moved back to China in 1977 as his mother accepted a position at the University of Colorado and was unable to join her. While adjusting to life in China, he departed for the United States in July of 1999 to join his mother in Colorado.

He was 11 years old when he attended Merrill Middle School that posed a huge challenge as he did not speak a word of English. However, after three years of determination and perseverance, he graduated from middle school. Yudian was the Gold Winner Student, Outstanding Academic Achievement, and Perfect Attendance award student. He was accepted to the International Baccalaureate program at George Washington High School and the Pre-Engineering Program at the Community College in Denver. “My experiences with diverse

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cultures and languages (speaks Japanese, Chinese and English) have given me a deep understanding of what is meant to be a minority student. It has also taught me to the importance of believing in myself, which was essential, considering what the future would bring.”

On June 24, 2004, Yudian was seriously injured in a car accident. He was airlifted to Swedish Hospital Intensive Care Unit, and spent three and a half months in Swedish and Craig Rehabilitation Hospital for surgery, recovery and rehabilitation. He suffered from severe brain and spinal cord injury, which rendered him as a quadriplegic. Defiantly, and triumphantly, Yudian gradually regained the use of his fingers and his hands to power his wheelchair. Two months after the accident, he started home school at Craig Rehabilitation Hospital. Six months after this life-changing event, Yudian returned to George Washington High School where he received straight A's in his first semester. Despite what he had been through, Yudian still found it in his heart to give back to those who had helped him through this grueling experience. He began visiting Craig Hospital, talking to the recently injured. He was invited by Great Wall Chinese Academy to be a voluntary assistant teacher. “Just because you are disabled, it doesn't mean you cannot contribute to society as a whole,” says Yudian.

Yudian graduated from George Washington High School on May 23, 2006, with honors, as a “Top Ten All Around Student.” He had received 17 awards for Outstanding Academic Achievement, High School Leadership, and Community Services since he was disabled. Today, he is a freshman at the University of California at Berkeley.