



Shinye Gima

was born in 1925 at Pu'uloa, Ewa Plantation and grew up on Maui, the second of ten children - of Shinyu and Ushi (Mitsuko) Gima, immigrants from Tamagusuku-son, Okinawa.

In 1933, Shinye's younger brother, Noboru, went to Okinawa to live with his grandparents at the age of five years, allowing Shinye to stay back in Hawaii.

Shinye was a junior in the Baldwin High School band - on December 7, 1941. After graduating in 1943, Shinye enrolled at the UH. Late in the year, recruiters for the Military Intelligence Service visited the campus to seek AJA volunteers. Shinye took the MIS test and was accepted.

In late January 1944, he and about 300 other volunteers from Hawaii left Honolulu for the MIS Language School at Camp Savage, Minnesota.

Shinye, now part of the 308th Intelligence Detachment, arrived at *Yomitan*, Okinawa on April 29, 1945 and was sent to *Kumejima*, about 50 miles west of Okinawa, in July, 1945, where a hold-out Japanese naval detachment under the command of a dihard Master Sergeant named Kayama was terrorizing the populace.

Kayama killed at least 20 *Kumejima* residents, who were suspected of helping the Americans. Kayama finally surrendered his 30-man garrison in September, 1945.

Shinye returned to Okinawa island and was able to search for his relatives. He learned that the *Tamagusuku* people had relocated to an evacuation center in *Toki*, where they were living in grass huts on the slopes of a ravine. He met his grandmother there.

Eventually, his grandparents returned to their home in *Oyakebaru*.

Shinye kept searching for his kid brother. "At a POW camp, while looking through their card file of POWs, I came across Noboru's picture. I notified my parents and Noboru was freed in 1946 and allowed to rejoin his family on Maui."



Shinye returned to Hawaii for discharge in the spring of 1946 and earned a teaching degree from the University of Hawaii. After 20 years of teaching in Hawaii public schools, he earned a Ph.D. in Educational Psychology and taught at the UH College of Education. He retired after 39 years of service to the state.

While at the UH, Shinye began producing video documentaries for the United Okinawa Association, including the first Okinawa Festival in 1983 at Ala Moana Park, McCoy Pavilion. His cameraman was Ed Yonamine.

He recalls that the conditions were primitive back then, with a borrowed video camera from the UH and editing at the Oceanic's Community Programming (now Ōlelo) in Kaka'ako. The shows aired as part of Oceanic's line-up. "Compared to today's 'Hawaii Okinawa Today' shows, our shows were of lower quality, but our pioneering spirit and joy of our efforts were reflected in the show."



His goal for producing the Okinawa Festival videos was to show the strong sense of unity, the love of and the joy of being Okinawan and to share this with all of Hawaii.



Shinye married Pauline (Sylva) Fernandes in 1995; a second marriage for both. They spent their honeymoon in Funchal, Madeira and Lisbon, Portugal. "Being with family and friends and travel to Europe, Japan and the Bay Area kept us hopping," Shinye said. To his sorrow, Pauline died in January, 2017 of a sudden illness.

In his retirement years, Shinye developed a clear sense of a simple creed: "The more you give, the more you get back." On being Okinawan: The war-time tragedy and poor economic history of Okinawa plus the unique music and dance have created strong bonds among *Uchinanchu*. Today this legacy is being carried on vigorously by the HUOA and the younger generation.

