

Press Release
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In Pursuit of Justice for Grace Watanabe

The Asian American community and the public at-large have a substantial and continuing interest in the case of Grace Watanabe, a 97-year-old Japanese American. During Ms. Watanabe's stay at Symphony Residences of Lincoln Park, its employees and others allegedly stole in excess of \$750,000 from her bank accounts.

During World War II, Ms. Watanabe was among 120,000 Japanese Americans confined in American concentration camps. In 1942, Grace Watanabe was targeted amidst a tide of racism and government hostility. At Symphony Residences, where its employees should have provided care and protection, Ms. Watanabe was targeted again because she was no longer capable of handling her personal finances.

We ask for accountability on the part of Symphony Residences for financial restitution and responsibility for their employees' actions.

We await the filing of criminal charges by State's Attorney Kim Foxx against the individuals responsible for the theft of Ms. Watanabe's financial assets. We also ask to work with the State's Attorney's office to ensure that the criminal justice process protects elders like Ms. Watanabe and acknowledges wrong-doing and not necessarily seeking incarceration.

Finally, we call on our representatives to work in the state legislature to ensure that Illinois is a safe home as residents age.

We commend the Cook County Public Guardian's Office efforts to seek justice for Grace Watanabe by filing civil charges against Symphony Residences and its employees. The next court date is 10:00 AM Friday, September 13th, before Judge Aicha McCarthy, 1810 Daley Center.

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