government manipulation of evidence in the Japanese internment cases, offered to bring a challenge to Yasui and his fellow wartime defendants' convictions by means of a *coram nobis* petition. Yasui consented, and a legal team headed by Oregon attorney Peggy Nagae took up his case. Unlike in the case of Fred Korematsu, however, Yasui's petition failed to bring about a reconsideration of the official malfeasance involved in his prosecution. In 1984, district judge Robert C. Belloni issued an order vacating Yasui's conviction, in accordance with a motion by Justice Department officials anxious to dispose of the case, but declined to either grant Yasui's *coram nobis* petition or to make findings of fact regarding the record of official misconduct. Yasui and his lawyers appealed the ruling, but he died in November 1986, thereby mooting the case before the appeal could be decided.

Greg Robinson

See also Hirabayashi v. United States (1943); Japanese American Citizens League (JACL); *Korematsu v. United States* (1943); *Korematsu, Hirabayashi*, and *Yasui Coram Nobis* Cases

Reference

Yasui v. United States. 320 U.S. 115 (1943)

Yau, Shing-Tong (1949–)

Shing-Tung Yau is a leading mathematician in the world in the late-twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, especially in the area of differential geometry and partial differential equations, and, as a prominent Chinese American scientist, has played an active role in promoting U.S.-China scientific exchange and science and education in mainland China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan.

Shing-tung Yau (Qiu Chengtong in *pinyin*) was born in 1949 in Shantou, Guangdong, China, but grew up in Hong Kong where his father, Qiu Zhenying, was a college philosophy teacher. In the early 1960s, Yau attended the renowned Pei Ching (Peizheng) Middle School in Hong Kong and became intensely interested in plane geometry. His passion for mathematics was further reinforced when he read an autobiographical article by the eminent Chinese American mathematician Shiing-Shen Chern. In 1966, Yau entered the Chinese University of Hong Kong to study mathematics but moved three years later to the University of California at Berkeley to pursue graduate studies under Chern. At Berkeley, besides working with Chern in differential geometry, Yau also studied differential equations with other professors, believing that cross-fertilization was key to the future of mathematics. In-depth knowledge of both fields indeed proved to be crucial to his success as it helped lay the foundation for Yau's research in integrating the two. Yau received his PhD in 1971, after spending less than two years at Berkeley.

After graduation from Berkeley, Yau went to the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton where he ventured into yet another new field, topology, and did research on a number of important mathematical problems. A year later, he moved to the State University of New York, Stony Brook, to become an assistant professor of mathematics. There he came to know some of the well-known figures in differential geometry and learned much from them. Nevertheless he decided to leave Stony Brook after one year because he did not want to be influenced too much by their established views. He wanted rather to develop his own ideas, so he moved next to Stanford University, which offered him a professorship in 1973.

At Stanford Yau enjoyed a period of intense thinking and research on mathematical problems, especially on the relationship between differential geometry and differential equations. To Yau, Stanford offered an environment of relative isolation that allowed him to develop his own ideas. He was, however, able to find stimulation from young mathematicians there, such as Leon Simon and Richard Schoen, and keep in touch with his friends at Berkeley. Combining his expertise in both differential equations and differential geometry, Yau in 1976 solved the famous Calabi conjecture, a study that involved Chern classes. It was perhaps the most influential and most important work of Yau's mathematical career and gave rise to the so-called "Calabi-Yau spaces" that lie at the foundation of string theory, the "theory of everything" that physicists are trying to devise. At the same time Yau proved the positive mass conjecture, which was a major contribution

to both mathematics and Einstein's general theory of relativity in physics. He continued his phenomenal mathematical creative work after he moved back to Princeton to take up a professorship in mathematics at the Institute for Advanced Study in 1979.

Honors poured in for Yau following his Calabi work: In 1981 he won the Oswald Veblen prize of the American Mathematical Society as well as the John J. Carty Award for the Advancement of Science from the U.S. National Academy of Sciences. The next year, 1982, brought Yau the highest honor for a mathematician: The Fields Medal, named after Canadian mathematician J. C. Fields and awarded by the International Congress of Mathematicians every four years to as many as four mathematicians less than 40 years of age. It has been regarded by many as the equivalent of the Nobel Prize for Mathematics. The citation reads: "Made contributions in differential equations, also to the Calabi conjecture in algebraic geometry, to the positive mass conjecture of general relativity theory, and to real and complex Monge-Ampère equations." In 1994 Yau won the Crafoord Prize of the Royal Swedish Academy "for his development of non-linear techniques in differential geometry leading to the solution of several outstanding problems." Finally, in 1997, Yau was awarded the U.S. National Medal of Science, the highest honor from the federal government presented by President Bill Clinton.

In 1984 Yau crossed the continent again by coming to the University of California, San Diego, where he became professor and chair of the mathematics department. A year later, he was awarded the McArthur Grant, popularly known as the "genius award," from the MacArthur Foundation. When at San Diego he also took up visiting positions at University of Texas, Austin; Caltech; and SUNY Stony Brook. During this period he collaborated with another mathematician, Karen Uhlenbeck, and made a major contribution to the study of the Yang-Mills field theory, named after the Chinese American physicist Chen Ning Yang and Robert Mills. Then in 1987, Yau moved yet again, this time to Harvard University as a professor in mathematics while also holding visiting appointments at the National Tsinghua University in Taiwan and the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Yau was actively involved in U.S.-China political activism for a brief period in his Berkeley days in the early 1970s when he and many other Chinese students in the United States protested the American decision to turn over the Diaoyutai islets near Taiwan to Japan. Since the 1980s, Yau has participated actively in Chinese mathematics, founding three institutions: the Morningside Mathematics Center of the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing, the Center of Mathematical Science at Zhejiang University in Hangzhou, and the Institute of Mathematical Sciences of the Chinese University of Hong Kong. He has trained a number of Chinese students, promoted U.S.-China scientific exchange, served as editor-in-chief of the *Asian Journal of Mathematics*, frequently visited mathematical institutions on mainland China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, and, never shying from controversy, often spoken out on science and education policy in those places.

Zuoyue Wang

See also Chern, Shiing-Shen; Chinese Americans

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Yee Chiang (1903–1977)

When *The Silent Traveller in New York* was released in 1950, it won rave reviews. Readers in postwar America were fascinated with its refreshing style,