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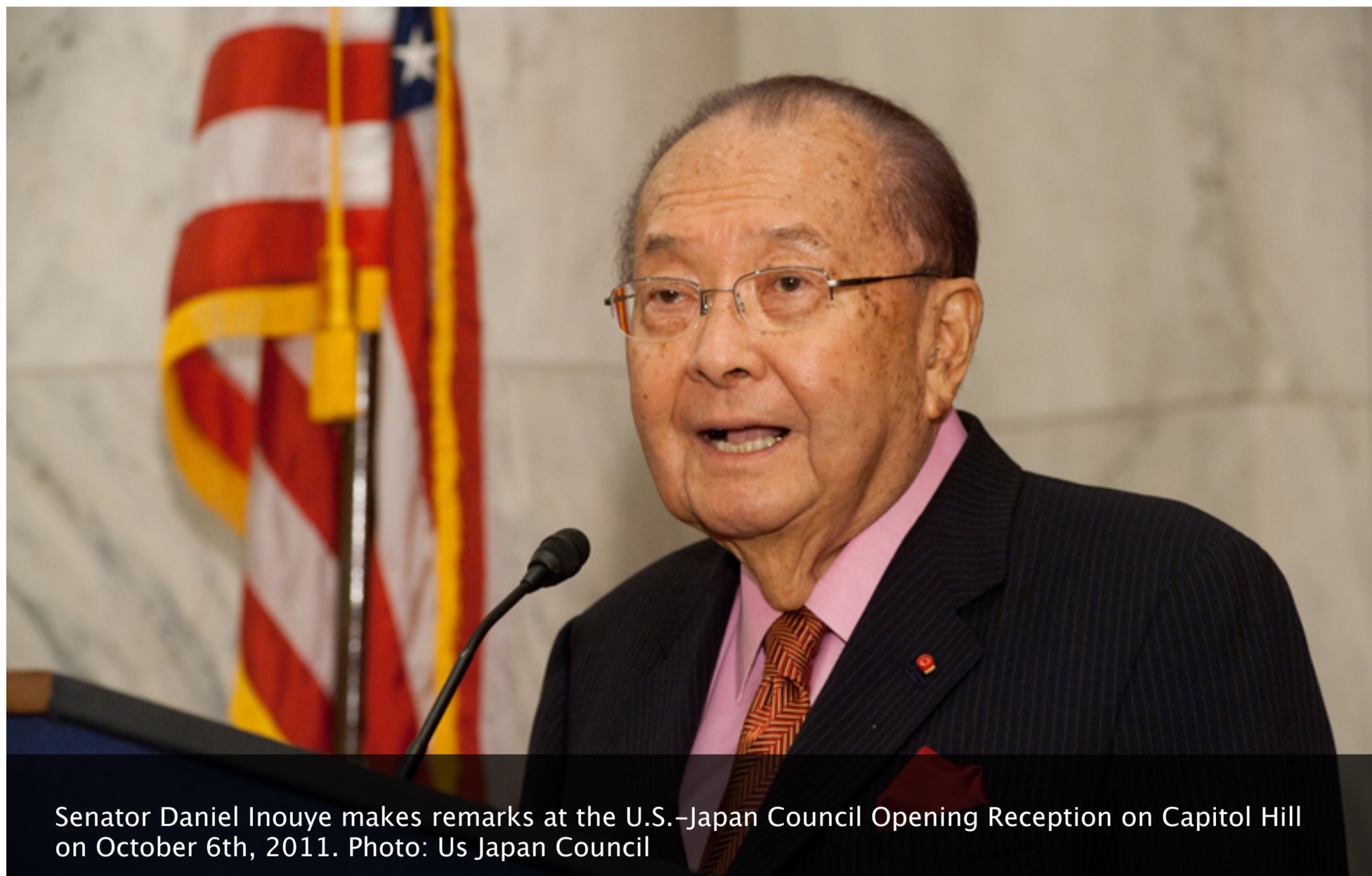
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Sen. Daniel Inouye: A Hero to the Ocean, a Hero to Our Country

Posted On December 18, 2012 by [Janis Searles Jones](#)



Senator Daniel Inouye makes remarks at the U.S.-Japan Council Opening Reception on Capitol Hill on October 6th, 2011. Photo: Us Japan Council

Late yesterday evening, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid took to the Senate floor to announce [the loss of Sen. Daniel Inouye, D-Hawaii, one of the ocean's true legislative champions](#). Inouye passed away last night as the second longest serving senator in history – leaving a long legacy of good works for the ocean.

As a senator and former representative from the country's only island state, [Inouye championed the causes of the ocean that surrounded and helped sustain the culture and economy of Hawaii](#). As one of Capitol Hill's true bipartisan senators, he wielded his influence

to work across the aisle and help pass landmark legislation for ocean health.

Inouye was an early champion in the fight against ocean trash, serving as a lead sponsor to introduce and eventually pass the Marine Debris Act. [He also led and co-sponsored the most recent reauthorization of the bill.](#)

As the ranking member of the Senate Commerce Committee, Inouye played a key role in the most recent reauthorization of [the Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Management Act](#), which set hard deadlines for ending overfishing. He worked closely and in a bipartisan fashion with former Sen. Ted Stevens, R-Alaska, to pass the reauthorization and the bill may not have happened without this tireless work.

As senators from the 49th and 50th states, Inouye and Stevens shared a special bond and often worked closely on a host of ocean issues.

Inouye also sponsored legislation to create and reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act – legislation to protect the beautiful ecosystems so crucial to the Hawaiian way of life.

As chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, he was a champion for ocean funding and was a co-sponsor of the National Endowment for the Oceans.

Throughout his long career in the Senate, Inouye was a servant to his state, country and the ocean.

But he was not only a hero to the ocean; he was also a hero to his country. Inouye served valiantly in World War II and received the nation's highest military award for valor, the Medal of Honor, for his service. He was also the first Japanese American elected to the Senate and a champion of civil rights in Hawaii and across the country.

While Inouye was not always the most high-profile member of the Senate, often shunning the spotlight to work behind closed doors and across the aisle to pass meaningful legislation, those who worked with him will remember him as a passionate and effective leader.

In a time when political gamesmanship too often trumps bipartisan and pragmatic solutions, our country – and our ocean – will miss the quiet leadership of Sen. Daniel Inouye.

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About Janis Searles Jones

Janis Searles Jones is Ocean Conservancy's CEO. A respected expert in the marine conservation field, Janis has provided Congressional testimony and is a frequent speaker at conferences all over the United States. She also authored chapters on sustainable use of ocean resources in "Ocean and Coastal Law and Policy" and "Ecosystem-based Management for the Oceans."

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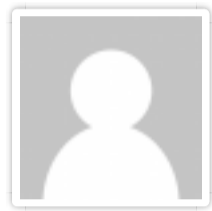
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