

## A Symbol of Japanese-Canadian Internment to Be Saved

Award-winning author Joy Kogawa's Vancouver home, which served as the literary backdrop for her 1981 novel *Obasan*—the first book to deal with Japanese-Canadian internment—was facing demolition.

"The Kogawa house is a very important part of British Columbia's heritage and we are determined to see it protected," said Bill Turner, executive director of The Land Conservancy of B.C. The conservancy led a national campaign to save the 93-year-old bungalow. It is hoping to raise \$1.25 million to buy and restore the wood-frame building so it can be used to house writers in residence. Support has come from such organizations as the Writers' Union of Canada, the Writers' Trust and PEN Canada.

A committee led by a number of prominent authors and supported by members of parliament, senators and numerous organizations, sent a formal request to federal Heritage Minister Bev Oda—a Japanese-Canadian herself—asking for an emergency grant of \$350,000 toward the house's \$700,000 price tag. In March, the request was turned down.

"The house is a symbol and a reminder of a time when ordinary Canadians were removed from their homes and interned. We want to save this house as a reminder of that. We want to save this house so it can become a place of happiness again, a symbol of peace, hope and reconciliation," said Mr. Turner at a Toronto fundraiser.

Donations can be made through The Land Conservancy website or by calling (604) 733-2313.

**Editor's Note:** *Although only \$230,000 has been raised to date, the Land Conservancy has decided to purchase the house. Raising the remaining funds is more urgent than ever if a future sale is to be avoided.*

Times-Colonist, *Victoria, B.C.*, 03/02/06; Prince George Citizen, *Prince George, B.C.*, 02/20/06; CBC Arts, 05/01/06; and *The Land Conservancy of B.C.*

<http://www.conservancy.bc.ca/sectioncontent.php?sectionid=179>