



## *Esther Yorimi Matsubuchi*

Esther Mastubuchi is a Sansei, a second-generation Japanese Canadian, who was dispossessed, uprooted, and incarcerated during World War II at the age of five. She spent her early years cooking, cleaning, sewing, and cutting hair to support her parents and five brothers—first while imprisoned in Slocan, British Columbia, and later on Ontario tobacco farms, as Japanese Canadians were barred from returning to the BC coast until 1949. Despite these hardships, she pursued her education and became part of the University of Toronto's second-ever graduating class of dental hygienists.

A lifelong volunteer, Esther has contributed to her community in many ways, including as a French Immersion classroom helper, hospital chapel assistant, and cook for the National Japanese Centre. She is also an outspoken social activist, advocating for justice for survivors of clergy sexual abuse, including her own brothers. Now 88 and a breast cancer survivor, Esther continues to inspire others as an "Original" with Abreast in a Boat, demonstrating "that there is a full and active life after breast cancer." She has paddled in North America, South America, Europe, New Zealand, and Asia, embodying resilience and strength.