

Biographic Introduction for Ed Nakawatase:

I was born in Poston, Arizona, in one of the 10 internment camps for people of Japanese ancestry. I grew up in Seabrook, New Jersey, with many kids whose parents, like mine, had been interned. At age 20, I dropped out of Rutgers and had a seminal experience working in 1963-64 with the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) in Atlanta, Georgia. I began my direct connection with AFSC in 1965 in a summer program as a community organizer in rural South Jersey in the initial efforts with the support of the state of New Jersey, to establish local anti-poverty boards. My extended stint as national American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) staff began in 1972 as the first staff for the Third World Coalition (TWC), an institutional effort to address some of the programmatic concerns of people of color connected with the organization. Beginning in 1974, and for the next 31 years, I was the National Representative for Native American Affairs for AFSC, working within the Community Relations Division. (I used to note that whatever power or influence I did or didn't have, I most certainly had the longest job title of anyone I knew in AFSC.)