

Norman Y. Mineta

San José Civic Leader and
United States Secretary of Transportation



Norman Y. Mineta is the aviation-minded former mayor of San José who served three decades in the U.S. House of Representatives and as U.S. Secretary of Commerce and U.S. Secretary of Transportation. He brought great political support to development of San José's airport.

Mineta was born in 1931 in San José to Japanese immigrants. During World War II, the family was forcibly relocated to an internment camp in Wyoming for Japanese Americans.

After the war, the family returned to San José. Mineta graduated from the University of California at Berkeley, served as an army intelligence officer, then joined his father's insurance agency in San José.

Mineta was appointed to fill a mid-term vacancy on the San José City Council. He later won the seat outright, defeating all other candidates in the primary election, and went on to become vice mayor and the city council's liaison to the airport commission. Mineta was elected mayor in 1970, winning 60% of the vote over 14 other candidates, to become the first Asian American to hold such a post in a major U.S. city.

Four years later, Mineta was elected to Congress representing Silicon Valley. He chaired the House Aviation Subcommittee, the Surface Transportation Subcommittee and the House Public Works and Transportation Committee. He was instrumental in obtaining vital federal funds for San José's airport as well as Santa Clara County's public transportation system.

Mineta was a key author of the Civil Liberties Act of 1988, which officially apologized for the injustices suffered by Japanese Americans during World War II.

In 1995, Mineta resigned from the House of Representatives and took a key position at aerospace giant Lockheed Martin Corporation.

Five years later, President Bill Clinton appointed Mineta U.S. Secretary of Commerce. The following year, President George W. Bush named Mineta U.S. Secretary of Transportation, serving until 2006.

The San José City Council in 2001 named this airport "Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport" in his honor.

- 1931** Born in San José.
- 1942** Mineta family relocated to internment camp during World War II.
- 1953** Graduates from UC Berkeley. Serves in U.S. Army; returns to San José to join father's insurance agency.
- 1967** Appointed to vacant seat on San José City Council.
- 1969** Elected to a full term on city council, becomes vice mayor.
- 1970** Elected 59th mayor of San José. First Asian American to serve as mayor of major U.S. city.
- 1974** Elected to U.S. House of Representatives. Chairs House Aviation Subcommittee 1981 to 1988. Chairs House Surface Transportation Subcommittee 1989-1991. Chairs House Public Works and Transportation Committee 1992-1994.
- 1995** Resigns from Congress, becomes a vice president of Lockheed Martin Corporation.
- 2000** Appointed U.S. Secretary of Commerce.
- 2001** Appointed U.S. Secretary of Transportation and serves until 2006. During the 9-11-2001 terrorist attacks, orders a temporary grounding of all civilian aircraft for security reasons for the first time in history.
- 2001** San José City Council names airport "Norman Y. Mineta San José International Airport" in his honor.