



# KŪPONO

THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAI'I FOUNDATION NEWSLETTER

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## LOVELY LYON

Former UH faculty reunite  
at Lyon Arboretum and see  
what's in store for its next  
100 years [Page 4](#)

# Q&A with Christine Chee-Ruiter

*Dr. Christine Chee-Ruiter is the CFO and co-founder of Pronk Technologies, Inc. Pronk designs and manufactures vital signs simulators and other test equipment for medical devices, and has offices in Los Angeles and Honolulu.*

*Chee-Ruiter attended Punahou School and earned a BS in engineering from Harvey Mudd College in Claremont, California. She worked for the aerospace industry in integrated logistics support before transitioning into artificial intelligence.*

*She earned a PhD in computation and neural systems at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California. Her research focused on the biological basis for olfaction, and how animals use their sense of smell in search and navigation.*

*Chee-Ruiter also did post-doctoral research at Caltech in audio-visual integration in infant development.*

*A board member of the Women's Fund of Hawai'i, Chee-Ruiter's previous leadership roles include serving as a president of the South Pasadena Chinese-American Club and as chair of the South Pasadena Public Safety Commission.*

## **Q: What motivated you to join the UHF Board of Trustees?**

**A:** I did not attend UH myself, but growing up in Honolulu, I felt UH continually re-established and renewed itself as a cultural and academic hub for Hawai'i. I enjoy being around research and new ideas. I was



*Christine Chee-Ruiter, PhD*

excited to join the UHF board and to have an opportunity to learn more about UH and to contribute to its further renewal.

I haven't been on the board long, but I've found the energy and the intent of UHF is palpable. It's like jumping on board a fast-moving and well-run ship; the ship is going places, the navigators are alert, and everyone is scanning the horizon.

My "horizon" of interest is in technology and innovation – in evaluating projects with a critical eye, and in nurturing them without getting in the way of progress.

## **Q: In what ways do you think UH is important for Hawai'i?**

**A:** UH is vitally important to the State of Hawai'i, and to Hawai'i's residents. It provides local students an opportunity to attain a world-class education

here in the islands. The UH System attracts brilliant researchers and teachers from all over the world, who bring new ideas and techniques to integrate with established curricula.

In addition, studies of Hawaiian culture, traditions, and the natural history of the islands (subjects that are rooted in this place) continue to grow both broader and deeper under the auspices of UH.

There's a momentum to the intake of raw talent and intelligence, the tuning and crafting of hearts and minds, and the final product of discovery, knowledge and renewed spirit of Hawai'i that you can sense here.

## **Q: What did higher education teach you?**

**A:** Until graduate school, the educational system teaches kids how to "win": how to figure out what the teacher wants, how to get the most points to get the best grades.

Higher education is where you learn the internal process of how to think critically; you have to verify your sources of information, and learn there are some questions where no one knows the right answer.

Nevertheless, you can work to get pretty close to a good enough answer – and then you need to know when to stop.

**For the full list of UH Foundation Board members, please visit [uhfoundation.org/about/board](http://uhfoundation.org/about/board).**



# Endowments pay tribute to patriot parents

She was a committed patriot in Honolulu working against the occupation of her homeland.

He was a craftsman of fine furniture, whose creativity was imitated far beyond the islands.

Together, Hee Kyung Lee and Doin Kwon had big dreams as an immigrant couple. Their humble start in a rented one-room cottage led to a successful business in their adopted country. The country they left behind honored them posthumously as patriots of the Korean independence movement.

Now, more than 100 years after an ambitious young man and his picture bride began their story in America, their youngest child Esther Arinaga honors them with endowments in a tribute to their creativity, dedication and struggle on behalf of others.

## Hee Kyung Lee Kwon Endowment for the Enhancement of the Korean Literature Program

Hee Kyung Lee Kwon never wavered in her belief in the power of women to achieve justice and live their lives as strong, independent people.



Growing up in Korea, she had an insatiable love of learning. Her deep reverence for her native land fueled her desire to restore Korea's independence.

Though her dream of pursuing higher education in the U.S. was never realized, Kwon went on



*Esther Arinaga, her daughter Susan Li and son Paul Arinaga at an event on March 1 celebrating the endowments they, along with Esther's son Bruce Arinaga, created to honor her parents. "This marks the end of our family's long journey to find the best way to honor two remarkable people," she said.*

to mentor and organize Korean immigrant women in Hawai'i, playing a vital role in the Korean independence movement. She also taught them to become self-supporting entrepreneurs.

This fund will support the Korean literature program in UH Mānoa's Department of East Asian Languages and Literatures, giving preference to work focusing on modern Korean women writers and their traditions.

## Doin Kwon Design and Innovation Endowment Fund at the School of Architecture

Doin Kwon turned his creative ideas into inventions, useful objects and furniture, combining aesthetic appeal and function to make life easier.

Kwon was just a teenager at the turn of the 20th century, but already his passion for problem solving and innovation had been kindled. He would find creative expression in his design

work during the more than five decades he lived in America.



Kwon opened his first furniture store in 1929. Though it soon failed, he persevered and continued gaining

experience. He reopened his business as D. Kwon and Co. within a few years, and before long, Kwon was recognized as one of the leading furniture craftsmen in Honolulu.

A new industry began in Hawai'i from Kwon's idea of turning a bamboo roll-up shade upright. Once the vertical blind caught on, he secured a U.S. patent on the invention. Other successful patents followed.

This fund supports the School of Architecture in promoting the value of design and innovation for a positive impact in built and natural environments.





## UH Foundation

### Former Faculty Mahalo Celebration

LYON ARBORETUM • JUNE 6

Former UH faculty were treated to a day of discovery at Lyon Arboretum to thank them for their contributions to UH. Guests visited the new Micropropagation Lab, where Dr. Rakan Zahawi, Lyon Arboretum director, and Nellie Sugii, Hawaiian rare plants program manager, explained their conservation efforts for Hawai'i's indigenous and rare plants. Lyon's Liloa Dunn and Dr. Elizabeth Huppman gave a private tour of the Hawaiian Ethnobotany Garden.

This year Lyon Arboretum is celebrating its centennial anniversary. Join the festivities! For more information, visit [manoa.hawaii.edu/lyonarboretum](http://manoa.hawaii.edu/lyonarboretum).



## Investment Strategy & Endowment Management Presentation

UH CANCER CENTER • MAY 9



The UH Foundation's endowment is our most important financial asset, with a value over \$300 million. Our annual presentation to donors provides more information about our investment process.

This year's speakers included Jeff Mansukhani from Cambridge Associates LLC, Mike Scott from Pelican Energy Partners, and Dr. Carl Bonham from the UH Economic Research Organization, who gave an overview of Hawai'i's current economic environment.



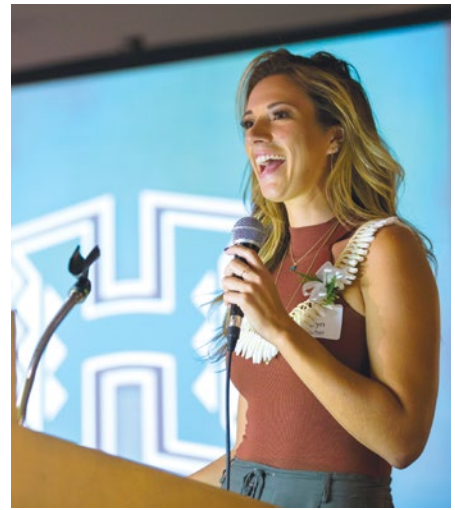


# Heritage Society Symposium

PRINCE WAIKIKI HOTEL • APRIL 13

The Heritage Society Symposium brings together alumni, faculty and friends who have made a will, trust, beneficiary designation or life-income gift to support UH. We are grateful for our more than 670 Heritage Society members. This year's program featured a variety of presentations by professors and

leaders from across the UH System. Break-out session topics included pharmacy research at UH Hilo, microbiomes, UH Cancer Center research and clinical trials, language translation for media, music and culture, UH culinary programs, and motivational stories from UH Athletics coaches.



See more photos from these and other UH Foundation events:  
[uhfoundation.org/news/photos](http://uhfoundation.org/news/photos)

# UH Hilo | Scholarship Reception

'IMILOA ASTRONOMY CENTER • APRIL 10



Scholarship recipients, donors and members of the UH Hilo 'ohana came together at the 'Imiloa Astronomy Center to celebrate the impact of scholarships and the people who are opening doors of opportunity for students from all backgrounds. We are immensely grateful to the many generous donors who are truly transforming students' futures.



# PaCES teaches high-schoolers to protect ‘āina

As part of its mission to support environmental science education, research and stewardship at Windward Community College, the Pacific Center for Environmental Studies (PaCES) offers a unique summer program for high-school juniors and seniors.

The intensive, hands-on, environmental science research program, conducted in partnership with the Hawai‘i Institute of Marine Biology (HIMB), teaches students the importance of caring for the environment.

“The quality of human life is dependent upon the quality of our environment,” said Dr. David Krupp, chair of the Windward CC Department of Natural Sciences.

Each summer, 24 students live a college-like existence for six weeks, with classroom,



*Dr. David Krupp, chair of Windward Community College's Department of Natural Sciences, works with students in the PaCES summer program.*

laboratory and field instruction provided at Windward CC and HIMB. A high GPA is not required for admission to the program, but enthusiasm and interest in the environment are.

“PaCES sends its students head-first into a battery of service projects,” said Jonathan Rosen, a 2011 PaCES intern who returned to mentor participants for the next two summers.

Students gain real-world environmental research experience through projects developed with the ridge-to-reef *ahupua‘a* (land divisions) in mind. Rosen said they learn *lo‘i* maintenance, native plant hillside restoration, invasive species removal, and Hawaiian fishpond maintenance.

“A lot of this fieldwork truly pushes students to get down into the mud, dive in among the coral reefs, and feel the dirt between their fingers,” Rosen said. “It simultaneously shatters their fears and discomfort toward

nature, and replaces it with love and respect for their environment.”

The PaCES summer program culminates with a symposium where students present their work. Participants earn four college science and lab credits and a \$1,000 scholarship. This encourages students to attend college who may not have considered it an option. They are motivated to learn, and grateful for the opportunity.

“Its influence on my life is still prevalent five years later, as I finish my BS in biology at UH Mānoa,” Rosen said. “That sense of environmental stewardship has followed me.”

Rosen is now looking forward to beginning his career in environmental conservation and outreach education.

“My time in the PaCES program has instilled in me a lasting appreciation for my environment, making me a more avid hiker, camper and community volunteer,” he said.

“I will devote my life to doing my part, no matter how small, in preserving this world for future generations.”

*Mahalo to the generous donors who support this program including the Minami Community Foundation, Omidyar ‘Ohana Fund at the Hawai‘i Community Foundation, Cultural Surveys Hawaii, Inc., HC@D, LLC, and the Garden Club of Honolulu.*



*Jonathan Rosen*



# OKADA SEES HER *young father* IN SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The scholarship honors the memory of my father and his career as much as it represents my acknowledgment of the major role both played in shaping my own values, life and career," said Marian Okada, founder of the Howard S. Okada Endowed Scholarship at UH Mānoa ROTC.

Okada, a federal employee who retired as a Japanese linguist with the U.S. Army in Japan, established the scholarship to support UH Mānoa Army ROTC students in honor of her father.

Chief Warrant Officer Howard Okada loved the Army. He expressed his admiration for its mission and for his fellow veterans through his service as an administrative assistant and protocol officer. He had exceptional organizational and Japanese language skills.

Howard was born in 1928 in Watsonville, California. Following the outbreak of World War II, his family was incarcerated in October 1942 at the Jerome War Relocation Center in Arkansas.

They were held there until June 1945, when the camp finally closed. Shortly thereafter they returned to their home in Fresno, California.



*Marian Okada meets with two recipients of the UH Mānoa ROTC scholarship she created to honor her father – Cadet Brock Balmoja, MSIII, and Cadet Haley Delos Santos, MSII – along with LTC Kate Conkey, professor of military science and post commander.*

With the onset of the Korean conflict, Howard was drafted into the U.S. Army. More than 30 years on active duty took him around the world, through two wars, and eventually to Hawai'i. Here he served as executive director of the Hawai'i Army Museum Society.

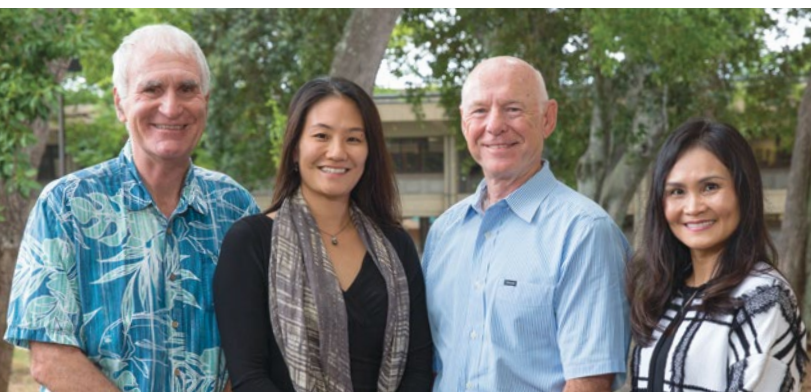
Howard died on Memorial Day in 2016, after honoring his fallen brothers in arms alongside fellow surviving veterans.

"Meeting many of his veteran friends and attending military related events, I came to appreciate what he considered important: honor, duty, loyalty and patriotism," Marian said.

Marian remembers her father's values and lifetime of service through the scholarship she funded with a five-year pledge and a bequest intention.

The scholarship helps selected UH Mānoa Army ROTC cadets to pursue studies in Far East Asian languages and culture. It helps cover the cost of attendance for these future servicemen and servicewomen.

Marian recently met with ROTC recipients of her father's award. "I felt as if I was meeting the younger version of my father: they are achievers, as my father was," she said. "He would be very pleased with them."



If you would like more information about including the UH Foundation in your will, trust or other gift plan to benefit the University of Hawai'i, please contact us!

## Office of Estate & Gift Planning

808-956-8034 • [giftplanning@uhfoundation.org](mailto:giftplanning@uhfoundation.org)

[www.UHFLegacyGift.org](http://www.UHFLegacyGift.org)

## American Savings Bank builds on 40-year tradition

Building on its longtime support of education in Hawai'i, American Savings Bank (ASB) donated \$65,000 to the American Savings Bank Endowed Scholarship Fund. The company established this scholarship at UH in 1978, and it has been awarded 55 times over the last 40 years.

"This contribution to our scholarship fund enables us to help even more students achieve their dreams of higher education in Hawai'i," said Rich Wacker, ASB president and CEO.

"We are proud to increase our endowment with the University of Hawai'i, which ultimately supports a stronger workforce for our state."

The ASB Endowed Scholarship supports full-time undergraduate students enrolled at any of the 10 UH System campuses who have a minimum 3.0 GPA and are in need of financial assistance. Preference is given to students from ASB's "Bank for Education Ohana Schools."

"We are tremendously grateful to ASB for all the impactful ways they support our university and our students statewide," said Donna Vuchinich, UH Foundation president and CEO.

"From scholarships to program support, ASB is helping to ensure that our students receive a high quality, relevant education that prepares them for our dynamic workforce," she said.



L-R: ASB's Rich Wacker, president & CEO, and Michelle Bartell, first vice president, director of communications & community advancement, with UH Foundation's Laurie Komatsu, director of corporate & foundation relations, and Donna Vuchinich, president & CEO.