

800 Alumni from 35 Countries Celebrate EWC's 50th Anniversary

EWCA Executive Board Members and Chapter Leaders
gather at the 2010 International Conference in Honolulu.



“We alumni are essential building blocks for the EWC’s future stability. It is up to all of us to carry the torch forward, spreading the East-West Center fire of hope among our colleagues and contacts in our personal and professional lives.”

Puongpun Sananikone, (EWC Student Fellow 1964-68) Board of Governors, EWC Chairman



More than 800 alumni and guests from 35 countries celebrated the Center’s contributions to the region over five decades at the EWC/EWCA 50th Anniversary Conference in Honolulu, July 2 to 5.

In his opening address, EWC President Charles E. Morrison spoke of the many contributions EWC alumni have made toward the dramatic transformation of the region over the past half century. “As the region has made enormous strides in improving health, education, living standards, gender relationships and governance,” he said, “East-West Center alumni have played critical roles.”

He spoke of the unprecedented pace of change and the increased need for Asia Pacific and American leaders of tomorrow well trained in the issues of the region and in a global setting. “Gazing toward the future of enhanced needs in U.S.-Asia Pacific research, education and exchange, a challenging but rewarding agenda lies ahead,” he said. “We have, we can and we will make a difference.”

At the opening ceremony, Maya Soetoro-Ng, daughter of two EWC grantees and an education specialist at the Center, conveyed a message of welcome from her brother, President Barack Obama. “My brother is grateful to all of you for your important contribution over the last 50 years in building bridges and working collaboratively throughout the countries of the Asia Pacific region,” she said. “He thanks you for all the grassroots diplomacy you do so well, and that makes his job much easier.”

EWC Board of Governors Chairman Puongpun Sananikone, a Center alumnus from the 1960s, called the conference “a great homecoming for the worldwide EWC ‘ohana (family).” “As alumni, we have a responsibility to tell the East-West Center’s story and share its lessons and its legacy with the world,” he added.

“With its accomplishments and progress, EWCA is now an indispensable partner in the Center’s mission to build a peaceful, prosperous and just Asia Pacific Community,” he said. “Alumni are the most important asset of the East-West Center. They are the foot soldiers of the East-West Center mission. It is through the alumni network that the East-West Center mission continues to be carried out.”

Hawai‘i Governor Linda Lingle called the Center “an essential institution of our world going forward” and an integral part of bringing the APEC summit meeting to Honolulu in November 2011.

The 2010 conference, at the Hawai‘i Convention Center, included panel discussions featuring alumni with expertise on key regional issues, including climate change, U.S. foreign policy, education and governance.

Participants, many of whom had not seen each other or returned to Hawai‘i since they were students at the Center, revisited the EWC campus in Mānoa. They also attended a series of events, including a dinner honoring Hawai‘i Senator Daniel K. Inouye with the East-West Center Association’s Makana Award; a luncheon recognizing distinguished alumni and exceptional volunteers and alumni chapters; and a 4th of July U.S. Independence Day reception.



EWC President Charles E. Morrison (left) and EWCA Executive Board President Lyn Flanigan (center) with Distinguished Alumni Award recipients (L to R): Ambassador Shankar Sharma, Delia Rodriguez-Amaya, and Maya Soetoro-Ng, on behalf of her mother Ann Dunham Soetoro.



EWC’s Pacific Islands Development Program Director Sitiveni Halapua (right) speaks on the conference panel addressing “Governance for Human Development: Emerging Issues in Asia and the Pacific.”

To view photos, video, transcripts, and other materials from the 2010 EWC/EWCA International Conference, visit:

 EastWestCenter.org/go/150