

EWC Launches 50th Anniversary Celebrations at Dinner Honoring the Founders



More than 750 dignitaries, EWC staff, students, alumni and numerous community leaders gathered in Honolulu in early January to attend a dinner honoring the “visionary founders” of the East-West Center and launching the Center’s 50th anniversary celebrations.

Speaking at the dinner were: Lynda Johnson Robb, daughter of President Lyndon Johnson; Senator Daniel K. Inouye; Governor George R. Ariyoshi; and first sister Maya Soetoro-Ng. Each speaker shared personal stories and reflections on the founders and key figures in the Center’s history.



At the dinner honoring EWC founding leaders and launching the Center’s 50th Anniversary, Maya Soetoro-Ng, sister to President Obama and daughter of EWC alumni Ann Dunham and Lolo Soetoro, speaks about the Center’s importance to her family.

View video excerpts from speeches at the Center’s 50th anniversary dinner, visit:

vimeo.com/1212516

“When my father came here as vice president 50 years ago, to participate in the dedication of this magnificent monument to hope, it was a relatively quiet time in his life. The only future on his mind that day was the one he saw shaping here, a future with a promise of developing understanding and cooperation between and amongst the people and the governments of the East and Western worlds. And in those 50 years, those who had followed that dream have gone far in its pursuit. We have come together, we of so many nations, to be and know each other and understand the problems that separate us and to value those that unite us.”

Lynda Johnson Robb

Daughter of Former U.S. President Lyndon Baines Johnson

“In 1960, we began the process with one student, the first one from Pakistan. Today, we have over 57,000 participants who have taken part in the activities of the East-West Center. Of all the interchange programs in the American agenda, I can safely say that this is the most respected in the world. For example, when Pakistan and India were fighting, grantees from both nations were sitting together (at the Center) discussing the future of their countries. The East-West Center has served its purpose and will continue to do so.”

U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye

“The East-West Center has become even more important now; their mission is more important, and they have more work to do. As we set focus on the Asia Pacific region, the people who live in this area will have a better understanding and feel for Americans as well as vice versa due to the efforts of the Center.”

Former Governor George Ariyoshi

“Our mother and my father were both East-West Center grantees. I grew up, as did my brother, going to the East-West Center festivals, watching dance performances on the lawn....I would like to thank the Center for the very important role that it has in shaping our world’s future. The truth is that as an educator I know that the services that the Center provides, the skills it will cultivate in so many, are indispensable in making our islands, our nation, our world, kinder and more peaceful.”

Maya Soetoro-Ng

EWC Education Specialist and sister of President Barack Obama



Lynda Johnson Robb, daughter of former president, vice president and senate majority leader, Lyndon Baines Johnson, speaks on her father’s legacy in helping to establish the East-West Center.



U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye shares reflections on the origins of the Center:



Former Governor George Ariyoshi delivers an impassioned appeal for increased support of the East-West Center.



Maya Soetoro-Ng, sister to President Barack Obama and daughter to EWC alumni Ann Dunham and Lolo Soetoro, speaks about her family’s ties to the East-West Center.