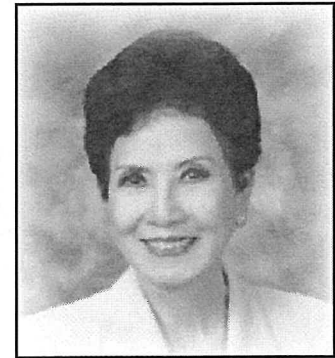

*Honoring
Margaret Oda
Distinguished Alumnus*



Dr. Margaret Y. Oda's life is one of "firsts." Born in Wailea, Hakalau, the youngest daughter of the late Mr. and Mrs. Satoru Kurisu, Dr. Oda graduated from Hilo High School in 1943 and received her bachelor's from Michigan State University. She holds the distinction of being the first graduate in the Doctoral Program at the University of Hawaii College of Education. She also received a fellowship to Yale University in 1972, as one of nine outstanding educators across the nation to study issues and problems in American education.

Since starting her teaching career in 1951, Dr. Oda served in many capacities in the public school system. She was a vice principal of Hilo Intermediate School, principal of Kaiser High School, Director of General Education for the State Department of Education, Honolulu District Superintendent, and State Deputy Superintendent.

In her many roles, she is credited for a number of innovations. She authored the State Foundation Program for the State Department of Education, instituted Learning Centers for all high schools in the Honolulu District, and implemented the Middle School Concept in all the Honolulu District schools. The Middle School concept and curriculum was subsequently adopted statewide by the State Department of Education. She is proud to be named "Mother of Middle Schools" by the Hawaii Association of Middle Schools.

Dr. Oda has been active in community boards and organizations. She was the first woman chairperson of the Board of Directors of Kuakini Health System, serving in 1990-1992, and again in 2000-2006. She was also the first woman chairperson for the Los Angeles-based Japanese American National Museum (JANM), serving from 2003-2005. During her chairmanship, the Museum conducted its first international symposium in Tokyo with members of the Keidanren, an organization of Japan's leading corporations. Dr. Oda also spearheaded the exhibition, "From Bento to Mixed Plate," about the Japanese in Hawaii. The exhibit was shown in Honolulu, Hilo, Maui, and Kauai, and traveled to JANM in Los Angeles, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D. C., and subsequently toured Japan, with showings in Okinawa, Hiroshima, Osaka and Niigata.

Dr. Oda's other leadership roles include: Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Japan-America Society of Hawaii, President of the Japanese Women's Society of Honolulu, and President of the Japanese Women's Society Foundation. Currently, she serves as President of Omotesenke Domonkai Hawaii, a tea organization.

In 2000, at the request of the Bishop of the Honpa Hongwanji Mission, Dr. Oda spearheaded a committee to develop a high school affiliated with the Buddhist church. The school opened in 2003.

Currently, she serves as trustee of the Honolulu Academy of Arts, the Prince Akihito Scholarship Foundation, and the Pacific Buddhist Academy. She has also served in the past as trustee of the USS Missouri Memorial Association, the Lyman Museum, the National Japanese American Memorial Foundation in Washington D.C., Hawaii
