

University of Hawai'i  
**Regents Candidate Advisory Council**

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February 9, 2011

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie  
Governor, State of Hawai'i  
Executive Chambers  
Hawai'i State Capitol  
Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813

Dear Governor Abercrombie:

On behalf of the Regents Candidate Advisory Council (RCAC) and in conformity with the provisions of Act 56, 2007 Session Laws of the State of Hawai'i, Act 9, 2008 Session Laws of Hawai'i, and Act 58, 2010 Session Laws of Hawai'i, the following candidates are presented to you to fill the following seats, currently occupied by regents whose terms will end on June 30, 2011. Additionally, we are presenting you with the names of candidates for a Maui County seat, which is currently filled by Regent James Haynes, whose term ended on June 30 of this year but was held over by Governor Lingle.

City and County of Honolulu Seat (two (2) vacancies for term beginning July 1, 2011)

1. Terri T. Fujii
2. Mark H. Fukunaga
3. Coralie C. Matayoshi
4. Dale F. Saito
5. Jan N. Sullivan
6. Keith M. Vieira

Hawai'i County Seat (one (1) vacancy for term beginning July 1, 2011)

1. Carl A. Carlson, Jr.
2. Sandra W. Scarr

Maui County Seat (one (1) vacancy for term beginning immediately upon Senate consent and confirmation)

1. Sherrilee K. Dodson
2. Georgia K. McMillen
3. Saedene K. Ota

To make these candidate presentations, the RCAC complied with the statutory requirements and assessed candidates in a fair, independent, and nonpartisan manner. All candidates, as required by law, were asked to disclose any existing or anticipated contracts or financial transactions with the University of Hawai'i. Finally, with the assistance of a nationally-recognized firm, the RCAC had background checks performed on each candidate being presented. Based on the background checks, the RCAC concluded that there were no findings to indicate that any of the candidates being presented would not be able to discharge the responsibilities as a member of the Board of Regents.

The Honorable Neil Abercrombie  
February 9, 2011  
Page 2

Brief biographies drafted by the candidates are attached. Simultaneous with this presentation of candidates to you, the RCAC, as required by law, is making the same information publicly available through the University of Hawai'i. The candidates have authorized the public release of their respective biographies to the media.

We respectfully request that you submit to the Regents Candidate Advisory Council, in writing, the terms of each nominee upon confirmation by the Senate.

Should you have any questions, please call 692-1218 or email at [borapp@hawaii.edu](mailto:borapp@hawaii.edu).

Sincerely,



Karl Fujii, Chairman  
Regents Candidate Advisory Council

Attachments

- c: Members, Regents Candidate Advisory Council
- Senator Shan Tsutsui, Senate President
- Representative Calvin Say, House Speaker
- Senator Jill Tokuda, Chair, Senate Committee on Education
- Representative Scott Nishimoto, Chair, House Committee on Higher Education
- Regent Howard Karr, Chair, Board of Regents
- President M.R.C. Greenwood, University of Hawai'i

**PRESENTATION OF CANDIDATES  
FOR THE UNIVERSITY OF HAWAII  
BOARD OF REGENTS  
TO GOVERNOR NEIL ABERCROMBIE**

**February 9, 2011**

**Regents Candidate Advisory Council  
Medical Education Bldg., John A. Burns School of Medicine  
651 Ilalo Street, Room 401K  
Honolulu, HI 96813**

**City & County of Honolulu (2 seats)**

Terri T. Fujii  
Mark H. Fukunaga  
Coralie C. Matayoshi  
Dale F. Saito  
Jan N. Sullivan  
Keith M. Vieira

## **Terri T. Fujii**

Terri T. Fujii is the Office Managing Partner of the Honolulu office of Ernst & Young LLP. In addition to overseeing the operations of the Honolulu office, Fujii is also an assurance partner leading the healthcare and not-for-profit practice in the Honolulu office. In her 25 years with Ernst & Young LLP, Fujii has led audit engagements in Hawai'i in a range of industries including healthcare, not-for-profits, higher education, airlines, retail, hospitality, real estate, insurance and state government. In those 25 years, Fujii spent 10 years as part of Ernst & Young LLP's consulting practice leading engagements in financial analysis, financial modeling, feasibility studies, organizational planning, operational reviews, corporate compliance and internal audit. The clients that Fujii has served include a number of notable companies and organizations in Hawai'i such as the State of Hawai'i Department of Transportation, Harbors Division; Hawai'i Pacific University; Hawai'i Pacific Health; Rehabilitation Hospital of the Pacific; Waianae Coast Comprehensive Health Center; Wahiawa Hospital Association; The Queen's Health Systems; Hawai'i Dental Service; and Hawaiian Airlines.

Born and raised in Hawai'i Fujii earned a Bachelor's in Business Administration degree, with honors, majoring in accounting, from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa in May 1984 and a Masters in Accounting degree, with distinction, from the University of Hawai'i in December 1985. Fujii is one of the founders of the Fujii and Rodriguez Endowed Scholarship Fund which provides scholarships to students attending the University of Hawai'i Shidler College of Business School of Accountancy.

Fujii is very active in the community with not-for-profit and professional organizations. Fujii is a Past President of the Hawai'i Chapter of the Healthcare Financial Management Association, Past President of the Honolulu Chapter of the American Society of Women Accountants, Past Treasurer of the Honolulu Zoological Society, Past Board Chair of Easter Seals Hawai'i and Past Board Chair of Easter Seals Hawai'i Foundation. Fujii is currently a member of the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, Vice President of the Hawai'i Society of Certified Public Accountants, Treasurer of Hospice Hawai'i, Finance and Audit Committee member of Easter Seals Hawai'i, board member of Hawai'i Theatre, board member of Catholic Charities Hawai'i and board member of American Red Cross - Hawai'i State Chapter. In June 2009, Fujii completed an eight year term on the Statewide Health Coordinating Council of the Hawai'i State Health Planning and Development Agency.

Fujii is also very active with the University of Hawai'i Shidler College of Business. Fujii has served as a guest lecturer for accounting courses, is a member of the Shidler College of Business Advisory Council and is a member of the Shidler College of Business School of Accountancy Advisory Board.

In 2007, Fujii was inducted into the University of Hawai'i Shidler College of Business Hall of Honor. In 2007, Fujii was also a finalist in Pacific Business News' Women Who Mean Business recognition program.

## **Mark H. Fukunaga**

Mark Fukunaga is the Chairman and CEO of Servco Pacific Inc., which is a Hawai'i-based, diversified corporation with annual revenues of \$700 million. Servco's businesses are in automotive retailing and distribution in Hawai'i and Australia, commercial insurance services in Hawai'i and Washington, and appliance and home products distribution in Hawai'i and the Pacific. Servco also has an investment portfolio that currently includes holdings in Fender Musical Instruments, Trans China Automotive, Tissue Genesis, Nippon Golden Network and other businesses.

Mark sits on a number of boards of companies (Fender Musical Instruments, Nippon Golden Network and Outrigger Enterprises) and of schools and other nonprofit organizations (including KCAA Preschools, Pomona College, Punahou School and the University of Hawai'i System). He has also lectured on business organizations at Chaminade University, Hawai'i Pacific University, Punahou School and University of Hawai'i.

Prior to joining Servco in 1988, he was a corporate attorney with the New York office of Cleary, Gottlieb, Steen & Hamilton, and, before that, worked in the Washington, D.C. office of Senator Daniel Inouye.

He earned a B.A. from Pomona College and a J.D. from The University of Chicago.

## **Coralie Chun Matayoshi**

Coralie Chun Matayoshi is an attorney who has served as CEO of the American Red Cross, Hawai'i State Chapter since 2003. Born and raised in Hawai'i, she graduated from Punahou School and attended the University of Hawai'i for 2-1/2 years before graduating *magna cum laude* with a political science degree from the University of California, Berkeley. She received her *juris doctor* degree from the University of California, Hastings College of the Law in 1981.

Matayoshi has served as a Trial Attorney for the United States Department of Justice Antitrust Division and Special Assistant United States Attorney in Washington D.C., attorney with Chun Kerr & Dodd, and Chief Policy Analyst for the State Senate Committee on Business Development & Pacific Relations.

Over the past 23 years, she has successfully led three statewide nonprofit organizations with volunteer Boards:

- As Executive Director of the Hawai'i Institute for Continuing Legal Education, she used her innate sense of creativity, entrepreneurship, and financial savvy to create a well respected, financially successful organization by creating partnerships with other organizations in the community and inspiring volunteer lawyers and judges to spend thousands of hours teaching classes and writing practice manuals to improve the competency of the legal profession.
- As Executive Director of the Hawai'i State Bar Association for 13 years, she led the sweeping transition from a voluntary organization to a Supreme Court-mandated bar which required drafting new Supreme Court rules and bar association bylaws and policies; taking on oversight of the Office of Disciplinary Counsel, Client Security Fund, and Attorney & Judges Assistance Program; collecting member dues and fees for the Supreme Court; working with a Board of Directors, Young Lawyers Division, 20 Committees, 18 practice Sections, publishing a monthly magazine, and running 50 programs and projects.
- As CEO of the American Red Cross for the past 7 years, she oversees the statewide delivery of humanitarian services through 9 offices, 90 full and part-time employees, 4,000 volunteers, and a \$5 million budget. She works with a volunteer Board of Directors, 4 neighbor island Advisory Councils, community leaders, military, government, schools, and peer agencies to raise funds, market, staff, and operate programs to fulfill the Red Cross mission of saving lives and giving hope to those in need.

Matayoshi has been a volunteer all of her life, starting with church youth projects, high school Service Club, and Hawai'i School for the Deaf & Blind. She has served as a mediator and Board member of the Neighborhood Justice Center, KHON-TV 2 Action Line Board member, Hawai'i Bar Journal editor, AUW non-profit sector Campaign Chair, Diamond Head Theater Advisory Board member, and Hastings Law School Alumni Association Board of Governors.

She was recently named 2010 PBN Businesswoman of the Year (nonprofit), has received awards from the U.S. Department of Justice, Hawai'i State Bar Association, Hawai'i Visitors Bureau, and represented Hawai'i as 1976 Narcissus Queen.

Matayoshi has worked with thousands of volunteers over the past 25 years and has dedicated her life to public service.

## Dale F. Saito

Dale Saito is a retired partner of both KPMG LLP and its independent consulting company, BearingPoint, Inc. Upon admission to the KPMG partnership in 1988, he set a personal goal – to devote the last 10 years of his professional career to public service, which he can proudly say he is accomplishing.

Saito retired as the Chief Administrative Officer for BearingPoint's Asia Pacific Region after 25 years with KPMG/BearingPoint. He managed all administrative functions of the rapidly expanding consulting business which spanned 21 offices in 10 countries. His multi-cultural, multi-lingual staff was located in countries from New Zealand to India, and responsibilities included finance, human resources, information technology, marketing, real estate, legal, and risk management. Saito was a key member of the team that acquired and integrated the former Andersen Consulting businesses in Australia, Singapore, China, Korea and Japan. Saito also oversaw the opening of new offices as BearingPoint expanded in China and India.

One of Saito's first assignments as a KPMG partner was to audit the University of Hawai'i. Saito also assisted the University with a comprehensive risk control study and later in implementing a new financial management system. These projects gave him a strong understanding of the University and a true appreciation for its complexity.

Saito recently completed a two year term as president of the Hawai'i Children's Cancer Foundation (HCCF), a not for profit whose sole purpose is to support children with cancer and their families. HCCF provides emotional, educational and critical financial support to families as they try to cope with this devastating disease. Prior to his term as president, he served as president-elect and as treasurer. 2011 is his ninth year on the board of directors of this very worthwhile cause.

Saito and his family are part of the founding members of New Hope Diamond Head, a vibrant church in East Honolulu. Saito is currently serving his third term on the church council and leads several ministries. As the church's first treasurer, he led the effort to become the first church in Hawai'i certified by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA).

Saito has continually served on not for profit boards for the past 25 years including the Hawai'i Society of CPA's, the Association of Government Accountants, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation and the Hawai'i International Film Festival.

In addition to volunteering at not for profits, Saito is currently the primary fraud investigator and forensic accountant for the local and nationally-recognized law firm, Galihier DeRobertis Ono. He has investigated dozens of suspected fraud cases perpetrated by contractors and suppliers against our Federal government. These cases, brought in Federal court on behalf of clients known as whistleblowers, are one of the most effective means of fighting fraud against our government and its citizens.

Born and raised in Honolulu, Saito graduated from Kaimuki High School and earned a BBA from the University of Hawai'i with a major in accounting. He became a Certified Public Accountant in 1977 and a Certified Fraud Examiner in 2006.



## **Jan Naoe Sullivan**

Jan Naoe Sullivan has been the Chief Operating Officer at Oceanit for the last ten years. Oceanit is a diverse engineering, technology and science company with a staff of 160+ and offices on Oahu, Maui and Kauai. Ms. Sullivan is responsible for overseeing and managing all of the company's operational and business units. During her tenure, the company has grown at a rapid pace, and in addition, has also spun-out multiple stand-alone companies.

Prior to managing Oceanit, Ms. Sullivan was the Director of the Department of Land Utilization, as well as the Department of Planning and Permitting for the City and County of Honolulu, and was the first woman planning director to serve in this capacity. Ms. Sullivan managed and oversaw an unprecedented reorganization that consolidated functions and staff from three existing departments into one 300+ person department. She embarked on a modernization program for the reorganized department, and established the first computerized permit tracking system in the State of Hawai'i.

Ms. Sullivan has been active in the community. She served as the Chair of the Hawai'i Community Development Authority (HCDA) board, and was a member of the Charter Commission for the City and County of Honolulu. She worked on multiple pro bono cases, and also sat on numerous boards including Homeless Aloha, Parents and Children Together (PACT), the Girl Scouts of Hawaii, and is currently serving as Vice Chair of the Hawai'i Nature Center, and as a founding Board member of the non-profit Mutual Housing Association.

After spending years of her career in the land use development and permitting fields, Ms. Sullivan made a career change over ten years ago to move into the technology sector. She views this sector as playing a critical role in creating good jobs for local kids, and as being the best hope for Hawai'i's future. To this end, she has helped to manage and support Oceanit's intern program, which has taken in hundreds of local kids over the years, and has helped to eventually bring local professionals back home.

Ms. Sullivan is a product of the public school system. She was born and raised on Oahu, and attended the University Lab School. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology from the University of Colorado, and returned home to obtain a Juris Doctor degree from the William S. Richardson School of Law, where she served as a law review editor.

Ms. Sullivan is married to her husband Patrick, who serves as the CEO of Oceanit. They miraculously manage to work together well, and their greatest accomplishment has been raising their two children, Matthew and Tarah.

## **Keith M. Vieira**

Keith Vieira is senior vice president, director of operations, Hawai'i and French Polynesia for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. He has regional responsibility for Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide, Inc. - Hawai'i and French Polynesia that encompasses overseeing the operations for Starwood's eleven properties in Hawai'i under the brands of Sheraton, Westin, Luxury Collection and St. Regis, in addition to three properties in French Polynesia. He has been with the company for 29+ years and was previously director of travel services handling the wholesale and retail travel, director of communications for Sheraton Hotels in Hawai'i, vice president-director of development and assistant to the director of operations for Sheraton Hawai'i/Japan Division, vice president-director of marketing for ITT Sheraton Hotels in Hawai'i responsible for the largest private marketing budget in the state and area manager for the islands of Kauai and Hawai'i.

Vieira has worked in the visitor industry for over thirty-five years. Born and raised in Hilo, Vieira graduated from the University of Hawai'i-College of Business Administration with a degree in personnel and industrial relations.

He has served two terms as a member of the Hawai'i Tourism Authority. Prior to his appointment to the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, he served for many years on the Hawai'i Visitors & Convention Bureau, the O'ahu Visitors Bureau and the advisory board of the Hawaii Convention Park Council and YMCA of Hawai'i. He currently serves as a board member of the Blood Bank of Hawai'i, Hawai'i Business Roundtable, the University of Hawai'i Shidler College of Business, Catholic Charities Hawai'i, Ahahui Koa Anuenue, Friends of Hawai'i Charities, chair of the Ho'okako'o Corporation and school board chair for Kualapu'u School, Waimea Middle School and Kamaile Academy. He has worked with Kapiolani Community College and Leeward Community College in an advisory capacity.

He served as chairman for the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation's 2003 fundraising campaign and the Aloha United Way's 2000 campaign fundraiser. He was also named the 2003 Salesperson of the Year by Sales and Marketing Executives of Honolulu.

He is a key member of many travel industry organizations including Hawai'i Hotel & Lodging Association, American Society of Travel Agents, Hotel Sales & Marketing Association International, Japan Association of Travel Agents and Travel Industry Association of America.

**Hawai'i County (1 Seat)**

Carl A. Carlson, Jr.

Sandra W. Scarr

## **Carl A Carlson, Jr.**

Mr. Carlson is the founder of Hu'ehu'e Ventures, LLC, a firm providing real estate consulting and agricultural property management in the state of Hawai'i. He has over 40 years of experience in the real estate, ranching and agricultural sectors in Hawai'i. His real estate background includes experience in development, sales and acquisition of resort and ranch properties. Among his clients are Kuki'o, Hualalai Resort and the Kohala Preserve.

Business interests include being a Member Manager of Kohala Aina Partners, LLC, Member Manager of Kohala Preserve Conservation Trust, LLC and a Member of Hualalai Investors, LLC. For ten years, Mr. Carlson served as a Trustee of the Parker Ranch Foundation Trust (PRFT), a charitable trust with the mission of providing support for health care, education and charity through four designated charitable beneficiaries in the community of Waimea on the island of Hawai'i. The PRFT was founded upon the death of Parker Ranch owner Richard Smart in 1992.

Prior to service as a Trustee of the PRFT, Mr. Carlson was the owner and President of Kona Livestock and Land Management, Ltd and General Manager of Hu'ehu'e Ranch. Former business directorships included Hawai'i Meat Company, Kahua Beef Sales, Hue Hue Corp., and Island Commodities, Corp. While at Parker Ranch he served as President of Parker Ranch, Inc., President of Waimea Wastewater, Inc and sat on the boards of those companies.

Mr. Carlson currently serves as a Member of the University of Hawai'i Board of Regents and formerly served as a member of the State of Hawai'i Board of Agriculture. He serves a Board Member of the Historic Hawai'i Foundation and is a former member of the Hawai'i Chapter of the Nature Conservancy. He is the Chair of the Board of Advisors for the Kuki'o Community Fund, a charitable fund under the umbrella of the Hawai'i Community Foundation. Until recently and from its inception, he served as the vice-president of the Kohala Center. He previously served as a member of the County of Hawai'i Board of Ethics and was its Chairman.

Mr. Carlson has twice served as Chairman of the Hawai'i Leeward Planning Conference and has twice been a Board Member of the Kona Kohala Chamber of Commerce. He is a Full Member of the Urban Land Institute and serves on its Recreational Development Council. He is a member of the National Cattlemen's Beef Association and the Hawai'i Cattlemen's Council and has been a member of the University of Hawai'i Na Koa Booster Club for years.

Mr. Carlson was born in Wailuku, raised in Waikapu and graduated from Henry Perrine Baldwin High School in 1963. He obtained a Bachelors of Science Degree from California State Polytechnic University, San Luis Obispo, California in 1967. He and his wife Christine have lived in West Hawai'i since 1969. They had formerly lived on Maui and on Kauai. They have four children and four grand children. Hobbies include family, paddling, snow skiing, hiking, traveling, running, golf, horse back riding and other outdoor activities.

## Sandra Wood Scarr

Sandra Wood Scarr is Commonwealth Professor of Psychology *emerita*, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, where she was on the faculty from 1983 to 1995 and chaired the department from 1984 to 1989. From 1977 to 1983, Scarr was Professor of Psychology at Yale University and, from 1971 to 1977, Associate Professor to Professor of Child Psychology at the University of Minnesota.

From 1990 to 1999, Dr. Scarr served on the Board of Directors of KinderCare Learning Centers, Inc., the largest child care company in the United States. From 1995 to 1997, she was CEO and Chairman of the Board.

She was educated at Vassar College and Harvard University, where she earned the Ph.D. in Psychology and Social Relations in 1965.

Her research was published in more than 200 articles and four books on intelligence, childcare, and family issues. In 1985, she won the National Book Award of the American Psychological Association for *Mother Care/Other Care*. She received four awards for distinguished research contributions from the American Psychological Association, 1989; Association for Psychological Science, 1993; Behavior Genetics Association, 2004; and a Festschrift volume from the Association for Psychological Science, 2008.

She was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the American Psychological Society, and the Association for Psychological Science.

Since retiring to Hawai'i in 1997, she served on Boards of Directors of the Kona Outdoor Circle (President, 2007), Kona Coffee Council (President, 2005), Kona Coffee Farmers Association, and the Kona Orchid Society. Scarr served on the Hawai'i County Water Board (2001-2005).

Her family consists of four children, who range in age from 36 to 47, and six delightful grandchildren. In 2000, she moved to a coffee farm in Holualoa ([DailyFixCoffee.com](http://DailyFixCoffee.com)) and sells 100% Kona coffee. She began to breed Labrador retrievers in 2004 ([AlohaLabradors.com](http://AlohaLabradors.com)) and standard Poodles in 2010 ([KonaPoodles.com](http://KonaPoodles.com)). She raises and sells health-certified AKC puppies throughout the State. She coordinates a pet food co-op ([KonaRaw.org](http://KonaRaw.org)) in Kona.

**Maui County (1 Seat)**

Sherrilee K. Dodson  
Georgia K. McMillen  
Saedene K. Ota

## **Sherrilee (Sherri) K. Dodson**

Sherri K. Dodson graduated from the University of Hawai'i with a B.A. in Political Science. She then continued her education at Western State Law School and graduated with a J.D. in 1986.

In 1990 she was appointed Vice Chairman of the 1990 Maui County Charter Commission and in 2003 she was appointed Vice Chairman of the State Salary Commission. She served on the Governor's Task Force on Barriers to Affordable Housing in 2007. She continues to volunteer for the National Kidney Foundation and Hawai'i Organ Donor Center and is a certified Mediator with Mediation Services of Maui.

Prior to joining Habitat for Humanity Maui as its first Executive Director, Ms. Dodson worked with the Law Offices of Jan K. Apo for 12 years and then practiced Immigration Law as a sole practitioner.

She is a graduate of the Weinberg Fellows Program and the Hawai'i Community Foundation's PONO program. She received on behalf of her affiliate the Pioneer in Excellence Award from Habitat for Humanity International.

She currently is on the Hawai'i Public Housing Authority. Sherri also serves as the treasurer for the Maui Non-Profit Director's Association

Personal: Born on Oahu and a 34 year resident of Maui.



## **Georgia K. McMillen**

Georgia K. McMillen is an attorney with extensive experience serving the indigent in criminal matters and appellate litigation. Her office on Maui serves clients locally and across the nation. With many of her clients among society's most disenfranchised, her work highlights the need for accessible educational opportunities and underscores her commitment to maintaining and growing a great public university system like the University of Hawai`i.

She provides pro bono legal services through the Volunteer Legal Services of Hawai`i. She is a longtime member of the Outreach Program at Maui's Keawala`i Congregational Church, which provides financial assistance to those in need. In addition to her legal practice, she has served as adjunct faculty at Hawai`i Pacific University and University of Hawai`i Maui College.

She is a graduate of the Kamehameha Schools and the University of Hawai`i. She attended New York Law School and graduated in 1987. She practiced law at two leading law firms in New York and New Jersey in the areas of commercial, environmental insurance and bankruptcy litigation. In 1998 she returned home to Hawai`i.

Her legal memberships and affiliations include: the Hawai`i State Bar Association; the American Bar Association; Board of Directors, Native Hawaiian Bar Association; Criminal Justice Act Panel, U.S. District Court Hawai`i and the U.S. District Court for Southern California; Appellate Lawyer Representative to the U.S. Court of Appeals, Ninth Circuit. She is a fellow of the American Bar Foundation.

She lives on Maui with her family.



## Saedene Ota

Born and raised in Hawai'i, Saedene Ota worked in Northern California and Chicago, Illinois before pursuing her lifelong dream of establishing a graphic design firm back home in the islands. Ms. Ota is the Owner & Creative Director of Sae Design a 6 employee graphics firm focusing on branding, packaging, web design and strategic marketing. In only a decade of business, Ms. Ota has garnered a bevy of creative awards including 2 Hawai'i Advertising Federation Pele Best of Show recognitions and Advertising Women of the Year, 18 Pele Awards and 44 Pele Recognitions, as well as receiving national recognition for projects completed in the hospitality and food industries. In 2005 she was honored with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Small Business Advocate of the Year "Women in Business Champion." Her clients range from hospitality to education and banking to non-profits.

She is also the owner of Maui Thing, a lifestyle apparel retail located in Wailuku. Custom designs focus on messages and concepts that are "good" for the environment, personal development and local themes. Besides supervising overall operations of the company she also oversees social marketing, community events and public relations.

Ms. Ota's community activities include board involvement with the Maui Board of Economic Development, American Institute of Graphic Arts, Hawai'i State Art Museum, Maui Young Business Round Table, Maui Memorial Medical Center Foundation, and A Keiki's Dream. Her commitment to Maui is also expressed through non-profit work and pro-bono design services for organizations such as the Department of Education, Hale Makua Health Services, Kidney Foundation Hawaii Chapter, Lanakila - Meals on Wheels, Maui Youth & Family Services, Maui Chamber of Commerce, Maui Coastal Land Trust, Maui Community College, Maui County Farm Bureau, Maui Equal Opportunity, Maui Farm and the Wailuku Community Association.

Ms. Ota studied Graphic Design and Packaging at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, California State Northridge and Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California. She resides in Wailuku, Maui with her husband and two children.