Grateful Giving Fuels Mid-Pacific’s Future

By Linda Jameson Myers

For the first time in recent history, Mid-Pacific has initiated a planned giving program to strengthen the school’s endowment fund. These generous gifts will help to sustain the school’s future and provide invaluable resources for faculty professional development, facility improvements and student scholarships.

In early February 2019, members of Mid-Pacific’s Board of Trustees were recognized for their gracious commitment and formally welcomed into the Heritage Society. Former Board Chair Susanne Millard and Trustee James Kometani ’57 along with his wife Momi Kometani, generously identified Mid-Pacific in their estate plans. Mid-Pacific’s Heritage Society is comprised of individuals and families who have established endowed funds or identified the school in their estate plans. Family foundations can also identify Mid-Pacific as a charity of choice.

“We feel strongly about supporting the future of Mid-Pacific,” said Trustee Susanne Millard. “Many families years ago, supported Mid-Pacific’s mission, values and unique educational offerings; and my daughter benefited from those gifts when she attended Mid-Pacific in middle and high school. Like many of our trustees and loyal donors, our family is simply paying it forward.”

Millard’s daughter Dr. Carolyn Pearce ’07, received a Fulbright grant following her graduation from Johns Hopkins University in 2011. This opportunity allowed her to assist in the development of a cervical cancer screening program in rural Western Kenya. Dr. Pearce went

Mid-Pacific’s Motto “The Honor of My School is Mine” By Linda Jameson Myers

Deeply Rooted Within Tetsuro Ushijima ’43 and Fred Wong ’43

Friends for the past 80 years, 95-year-old Tetsuro Ushijima ’43 and 94-year-old Fred Wong ’43 first met as students at Mid-Pacific Institute in 1939. For the last eight years, the very active duo has been singing and performing at Kahala Nui for residents, many of whom are younger than themselves. Ushijima, a self-taught steel guitarist, and Wong, who is accomplished on both piano and ‘ukulele, have a repertoire of 300 plus Hawaiian songs. However, the men repeat the same ten songs every week to help the residents memorize the songs.
Giving is Good

There is momentum building in Mid-Pacific’s planned giving program and we are grateful to you for being a part of it. Since our last Legacy newsletter, we have launched our Estate Planning 101 seminars and created Heritage Society ceremonies to thank and welcome the alumni, grandparents, parents, faculty, administration, staff and friends of Mid-Pacific who have plans to leave a gift to this beautiful not-for-profit school. As I meet with the enthusiastic attendees of our Estate Planning seminars and read their surveys, we are thanked repeatedly for providing the complimentary workshops and for helping families navigate a tough discussion. We at Mid-Pacific are grateful to the alumni and seminar attendees who have identified the school as their charity of choice in their plans. Furthermore, the Office of Institutional Advancement is immensely grateful to members of our leadership team who have recently committed to a planned gift and for recognizing the immediate need to focus on our students’ future.

I am very grateful for my daughter Lauren’s ‘20 wonderful opportunities and creative learning experiences at Mid-Pacific. Following the first Estate Planning 101 seminar on campus, I took the time to get my life plans in place and I have committed a gift to Mid-Pacific for scholarships. Giving makes me feel good especially when my gift touches the life of a child.

Looking to the future at Mid-Pacific, this edition of Legacy also highlights the inspiration behind Kumu Hula Michael Lanakila Casupang’s giving to Mid-Pacific and the 30th anniversary of Pūpūkahi I Ke Alo O Nā Pua.

One of the goals within the Office of Institutional Advancement is to stay connected to our alumni when we are visiting an area and create gatherings. I had the opportunity to arrange a brunch for three alumni and a home visit with another in Southern California. You will hear what they remember most about Mid-Pacific. We are also encouraged by the thoughtful gift of Millie Ho who has created an endowment in honor of her late husband Edwin Ho ’51. Lastly, the smiles on 95-year-old Tetsuro Ushijima’s ’43 and Fred Wong’s ’43 faces should encourage you all to come home and take a tour of your campus. It was a delight to hear them reminisce about their days as students and to learn about their lifelong friendship.

I sincerely thank you for supporting Mid-Pacific. Please join us at one of our upcoming seminars listed on page 7. Feel free to contact me with any suggestions you may have for Legacy.

E Kūlia Kākou,
Let's strive and aspire together

We are Honored to be a Member of Mid-Pacific’s Heritage Society

My wife and I were pleasantly surprised when we were asked to commit to a planned gift for Mid-Pacific. It was already a topic of discussion at our dinner table but when asked directly it solidified our decision. Leslie and I are pleased to share with you that we have identified Mid-Pacific in our estate plans and those funds will go toward professional development opportunities for our wonderful and talented teachers.

We wholeheartedly believe that the future of Mid-Pacific will be determined by our endowment and planned giving program as these will help to fuel the school’s long term goals. We also believe that it is our hardworking professionals on campus who are the face of the school and on the frontline educating more than 1,500 students. Our faculty and staff are providing our children the tools to succeed beyond their days of sitting in class.

Mid-Pacific’s $13M endowment pales in comparison with our neighboring competitors whose endowments are $400M and $200M. This means that our endowment income to support financial aid, operations and programming, that directly serve our faculty and students, is only a fraction of our peers’. Seven years ago, we recognized Mid-Pacific’s need to exponentially grow the endowment and we can achieve this in various ways. Planned gifts can have a significant impact and we are grateful each time we are notified of a thoughtful and generous gift.

This issue of Legacy showcases our new Heritage Society members of which Leslie and I were honored to be inducted into in June. We look forward to the day that we can celebrate your planned gift and appreciate its direct impact on the teachers and students of Mid-Pacific.

E Kūlia Kākou,
Let’s strive and aspire together

Linda Jameson Myers (Lauren ’20)
Major Gifts Officer and Planned Giving Director
Publisher

Paul Turnbull, Ph.D. (Gabrielle ’22)
President
Three Mid-Pacific Alumni Pursued Engineering Careers in California, Recalled their school days as the “very best.”

By Linda Jameson Myers

Bruce Nakamura ’66, Herbert Nakasone ’60 and Gordon Umemoto ’59 consider their years at Mid-Pacific Institute as their best years. Their alma mater was where they received more than a world-class education. It was a home away from home where friends and faculty were like family.

“The most valuable thing we got at Mid-Pacific was learning to live with our peers,” said Gordon Umemoto, a retired computer software engineer who worked for Boeing, Northrop Grumman and owned his own computer software business. “Since those days to now, we are best friends. We still get together.”

Bruce Nakamura, nicknamed “Coolidge” after a disc jockey, echoed Umemoto.

“Reunions are not about talking about what you did in life, it is about the school,” said Nakamura. “Mid-Pacific was the most carefree part of my life. I keep in touch with everybody, and there is no other chapter in my life that I stay connected with others.”

Herbert Nakasone, now also retired, devoted most of his professional career to serving his community as the Public Works Director for Orange County.

“I was on scholarship which meant I worked in the kitchen with fellow classmates, and I enjoyed it!” exclaimed Nakasone. “Dorm life was always fun. You had a lot of brothers you had to get along with. You learned to live with someone who was not family, but then they became like family. Those were the best years. We had some really good teachers who loved the atmosphere and camaraderie.”

The three alumni get together often though Nakamura, a retired electronic engineer who worked for Rockwell Collins, Northrup Grumman-Aviation and Boeing, lives in La Palma, California. These grateful gentlemen have each generously donated to Mid-Pacific over the years.


“I wanted to do something for her to be remembered and honored,” said Nakamura, whose mother grew up in Hilo, graduated from Mid-Pacific in 1932 and lived to 98. Mrs. Nakamura and her husband sent Bruce and their other son Norman ’62 to Mid-Pacific. “The scholarship makes me feel good because I know I am helping someone. I would rather give to the school than to the government. I do owe the school a lot,” said Nakamura.

Umemoto and his wife Ann Ibara ‘59 Umemoto raised their son Jason in Fountain Valley, California. As an adult, Jason returned to Hawai’i to raise his family. Umemoto’s legacy has continued with grandson Anthony Umemoto ’20 who currently attends Mid-Pacific, and grandson Gian Umemoto who graduated in 2015.

“Mid-Pacific exceeds what it was when we were there,” said Umemoto. “Modernizing the school… that’s why my grandsons go there. It is worthwhile giving back because you get so much in academics. I see how happy my grandsons are at Mid-Pacific.”

“I think anybody who feels they got something out of the school will donate,” said Nakasone whose four siblings attended Mid-Pacific—the late Dale T. Nakasone ’68, Mae Nakasone ’70 Okawa, Grace Nakasone ’63 Toma and Joyce Nakasone ’62 Grunwald. “It is an individual choice but it is always good to give back.”

The Las Vegas reunion is an event all three men look forward to attending and encourage other alumni to go to the next one in 2021. They also encourage everyone to return to campus for the Mid-Pacific Alumni Association’s Pa’ina, which is taking place July 18, 2020 inside Mills Gym.

Jane “Sueko” Nakamura ’32 (center) continued the family legacy by sending her sons Bruce ’62 (left) and Norman ’62 (right) to her alma mater. >

Bruce Nakamura ’66 pictured with his sister Jonni Nakamura Morinaga, mother Jane “Sueko” Nakamura Marinaga, and brother Norman Nakamura ’62.

Mid-Pacific Celebrates Three Decades of Hula Under the Leadership of Kumu Hula Michael Lanakila Casupang

Mid-Pacific Institute is one of the few schools in Hawai‘i that offers Hula as a class within the school’s curriculum to provide students the opportunity to learn Hawaiian culture and traditions. The 9th to 12th grade class offerings are due to the commitment and passion of Kumu Hula Michael Lanakila Casupang combined with the school’s leadership team. Students have the opportunity to receive a pre-professional certificate in Hawaiian Cultural Studies by taking two of three Hawaiian focused courses — Hula, Hawaiian Studies, or Hawaiian Language culminating in a self-directed research or community service topic of the student’s choice.

On May 5, 2019, Mid-Pacific’s Pu-pu-kahi I Ke Alo O Nā Pua, (Pu-pu-kahi) the school’s Hālau Hula which translated means “United as One in the Presence of the Flowers,” celebrated 30 years of educating students on campus with a grand performance at Mills Gym. The finale was unprecedented and took place on the football field in Mānoa Valley bringing together 30 years of hula on campus with Pu-pu-kahi alumni and current dancers. Additionally, an endowment fund was officially created this year in the Hālau’s name and raised nearly $10,000 following the event. The goal is to reach at least $30,000 to ensure that the program with its beauty, rich culture, and values will live on into perpetuity. Kumu Lanakila is mesmerizing when he chants, dances, and teaches. He has had a profound impact on the lives of thousands of children. I have had parents tell me that through Kumu Lanakila’s teachings that their children “found themselves” and their voice.

Since the past three decades have been outstanding, as the Publisher of Legacy and the school’s Major Gifts Officer, I was curious as to what we can expect for Pu-pu-kahi over the next few decades.

LJM: How does 30 years of leading and guiding so many students make you feel?

MLC: This year makes me feel blessed to have this true privilege to share my passion for Hula and teaching, and to pass on those teachings, that my Kumu Robert Cazimero shared with me… to help shape, nurture and change the lives of the students who pass through the hālau doors.

I now have students who are children of students who I taught in the 1990s. Does this make me feel old? Certainly not. This makes me feel special. I have the joy of teaching their children and continuing to be a part of their lives. Am I old? No, I’m still maturing. I always feel young because I am around such youthful energy, and that gives me life. Can I move like I used to? Nah. I am just a little slower. I am not as low on my ‘aiha’a, so my body is telling me I am not as young as I used to be when I started teaching hula at the age of 25.

LJM: When you reflect on your career at Mid-Pacific, what stands out the most?

MLC: This is a great question. I think the ability to be in a place where I can be myself, where I can teach something that I truly enjoy, where I can be creative and where my students can trust and love me unconditionally. The ability to make a difference in peoples’ lives is so important to me.

LJM: You obviously believe in giving your all to your students. Why is it important to give back to Mid-Pacific?

MLC: There is a Hawaiian word, kahiau, which is the concept of giving freely without expecting anything in return. When we give to others in ways that we are able to, we are already receiving in that act of giving. We receive so much when we give and offer to others — and this is the premise from which I give of my time.
If I can support other programs financially, or with the talents I have been given, those are all ways to continue to give and support even after graduating from Mid-Pacific. I would encourage everyone to come back and make a difference in the lives of future students.

LJM: What do you see transpiring in the next decade of Pūpūkahi?

MLC: I hope to teach as long as I can, and continue to perpetuate the hula lineage of my Kumu Hula Robert Cazimero. Now that the Hawaiian language is offered to students, I am hopeful that their understanding of the poetry and language in hula will continue to grow exponentially through the efforts of Kumu Makana Kāne Kuahiwinui. I am also hopeful that students will find it easier to express their hula just by thinking in Hawaiian, not having to translate into English. That will be magnificent to witness as students’ progress in Hawaiian language classes. Perhaps a hula class taught only in Hawaiian?

**Perpetuate Pūpūkahi**

Pūpūkahi I Ke Alo O Nā Pu Endowment Fund was established in May 2019 in celebration of its 30th anniversary. The fund was created to support artistic excellence through our rigorous work in Hula, Hawaiian language and traditions. If you would like to support Pūpūkahi, log on to [www.midpac.edu/giving/](http://www.midpac.edu/giving/) then click “Endowments,” then “Give Now” in upper right hand corner. In the pull down menu “Please select a fund to designate your gift” select “Endowment” and in the notes section write Pūpūkahi I Ke Alo O Nā Pu Endowment Fund or simply Pūpūkahi. Mahalo for your support!

**SCUDDER DINING HALL**

**Awarded $250K Grant to Jumpstart Transformation**

By Linda Jameson Myers

Scudder Dining Hall brings up many memories for alumni, whether it be the hours cooking in the kitchen, cleaning-up, learning etiquette, or enjoying a warm meal while laughing and sharing stories with classmates. In 1950, when the dining hall was designed and built, Mid-Pacific was a high school for ninth through twelfth graders. Students lived on campus and ate three meals in the hall. Today, the cafeteria services more than 1,500 students and 300 faculty/staff members.

It may surprise you that it has been 30 years since the dining facility was last renovated. As a result, we sought funding this year in hopes of dramatically transforming the dining experience for students and faculty. Mid-Pacific is grateful for a local family foundation who has generously awarded a $250,000 grant to jumpstart the project which is still in its infant stages. It will likely take a few years to raise all the funding needed to update and modernize the hall. We wanted you, however, to be among the first to know about this special project.

More details about this important initiative will be announced later.

If you would like to share your Scudder Dining Hall experience, have lunch at Scudder, or make a donation toward this project to benefit Mid-Pacific’s students, please contact Gary Cordova at gcordova@midpac.edu or (808) 973-5016 or Linda Jameson Myers at lmyers@midpac.edu or (808) 973-5008.
Mildred “Millie” Ho describes meeting her late husband Edwin “Ed” Ho ’51 as “love at first sight.” Ho, who will tell you numerous times in the course of a conversation how much she loved her husband, said she could not think of a better way to remember and honor her late husband than creating the Edwin Ho ’51 Scholarship Endowment Fund.

“I feel that this is what Ed would have wanted,” said Ho. “He means the world to me and education was very important to his late parents. If I can’t have my husband, it gives me pleasure to do a scholarship. He always helped people and this scholarship will help worthy Mid-Pacific students.”

Ed Ho describes Edwin as her beloved husband and soulmate for 52 years. He sadly passed away at the age of 85 on December 31, 2018 after a long and distinguished career serving his country. Edwin’s accomplishments included serving in the U.S Air Force Reserve from 1969 to 1993 where many of his missions included aerial refueling of combat aircraft “bombers” at various bases and as a technician/navigator flying transport routes to Far East countries including Vietnam. He was promoted to Lt. Colonel in 1977. Millie Ho, who worked as a civilian on classified missions for the U.S. State Department, met Ed in 1966 when he was a Foreign Service Officer with the U.S. Department of State in Caracas, Venezuela.

“I returned to Venezuela from Washington, D.C. to work at the U.S. Embassy in Caracas and there is a little snack bar at the American Embassy that I sometimes would go to for dinner,” explained Ho with her bright blue eyes twinkling. “I saw this man sitting there and I didn’t see his face, only his back. He was wearing a fedora hat. I saw him three days in a row. It was like a magnet brought us to the same place at the same time. On the third day, he left his hat on the door knob, I believe he wanted me to know he was there. I asked him if he was going to the Marine Ball but he said no, he was going golfing.”

A few weeks passed and the two continued to talk building up to Ed inviting Millie to share Thanksgiving with him at the only American restaurant in Caracas.

“On our first date he asked me to be his chief cook and bottle washer!” said a smiling Ho. “I said, ‘Yes’ and we were married less than a month later on December 19, 1966 in Venezuela. Shortly after they were married, Ed Ho was transferred to Guayaquil, Ecuador then on to Montreal, Canada.

Their marriage included wonderful personal trips and exciting assignments with the U.S. Government. However, during Ed’s military service in Vietnam, Ed was exposed to Agent Orange and he was diagnosed with throat cancer in 2012, according to Millie.

“He passed away from the cancer’s side effects in 2018, and I thought I had many more years with him,” said Ho. “People called me after his passing telling me of all the nice things he had done for their families.”

Mid-Pacific classmate Ray Sekiya ’51 remembers Ed Ho fondly.

“We developed friendships in different ways because we dormed together,” said Sekiya. “When we had reunions in later years Ed and Millie would come. He was a very smart and likeable man. It is fantastic that Millie has established this endowment and I know Ed would be happy. It is a testament to how much Ed cared about his alma mater.”

“We are grateful to Millie Ho for honoring her late husband with an endowment that will benefit Mid-Pacific students,” said Gary Cordova, Vice President of Institutional Advancement. “Establishing an endowment is always a wonderful way to continue a family’s legacy.”

Mid-Pacific has established four family endowments recently and some of them are highlighted in the Mid-Pacific Today Fall 2019 edition.
It is Back to Class for Mid-Pacific Alumni, Faculty, Staff, Parents, Grandparents and Friends

By Linda Jameson Myers

There is nothing quite like being on a school campus especially if it is your alma mater and you get to sit in class inside the Harriet and Jeanette Weinberg Technology Plaza. Opened in 2003, the technology plaza is part of the Mike & Sandy Hartley Math-Science-Technology Complex at Mid-Pacific Institute. To complement Mid-Pacific’s planned giving program, the school teamed up with knowledgeable estate planners, Michelle Ogata, Esq. and Diane Agor, Esq. of the Estate Planning Group, to offer complimentary Estate Planning 101 seminars. Mid-Pacific hosted more than 100 adult students during the five seminars and for many of the students they were not only excited about the information they learned, but to be on campus to see the multi-media zone, 3D printers, virtual reality room, recording studio, and the school’s robust robotics program which are all within the technology plaza.

Future-minded alumni, parents, grandparents, faculty, staff and friends of Mid-Pacific learn during these highly practical and educational seminars that they can, and should, purposefully define their legacy. They also are taught the importance of organizing documents, at any age, to ensure their life unfolds in accordance to their wishes—financially, philanthropically and healthcare wise. More importantly, participants are encouraged to officially identify who they want involved in their future affairs, which may include the care of their children.

Walter Ozawa ’63 attended Mid-Pacific’s inaugural 2019 Estate Planning 101 seminar with his wife Gayle and expressed his appreciation for the information provided.

“Thanks Michelle Ogata and Diane Agor for using interesting examples and personal experiences to enhance our understanding that this is not only for us seniors, but this is for young adults, too!” said Ozawa.

JOIN US AND LEARN!
All seminars are held at Mid-Pacific Institute inside the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Technology Plaza within the Mike & Sandy Hartley Math-Science-Technology Complex

Estate Planning 101 Seminar
with Diane Agor, Esq.

• January 25 at 9:30 a.m.
• February 8 at 9:30 a.m.

If interested, please RSVP to Heidi Kim at hkim@midpac.edu or (808) 973-5022.

Parking is available on campus and a complimentary breakfast will be provided. We look forward to meeting you!
on to complete her medical training at Loma Linda University School of Medicine. She is currently in her second year of residency at Ventura County Medical Center.

Like Millard, former Trustee and M-Club Hall of Fame recipient James Kometani and Momi Kometani are dedicated to Mid-Pacific and passionate about helping to grow the school’s endowment fund.

“My most treasured memories growing up were during the years I was educated and lived at Mid-Pacific,” recalled James Kometani. “Mid-Pacific is like home to me so there was no doubt in my mind that my wife and I would be giving to my alma mater. Mid-Pacific has a long way to go to enhance its endowment so our hope is that our gift will make a difference for future generations.”

James Kometani has served in a leadership role at Mid-Pacific since 1957 and as of July 31, 2019 stepped down as a Trustee, marking 62 years of giving generously of his time and service to his alma mater.

“We are so grateful for Jim’s more than 60 years of dedicated service to Mid-Pacific and appreciative of his commitment and Momi’s to enhance our endowment through their generous planned gift,” said President Paul Turnbull.

Mid-Pacific alumni and current students run deep within the Kometani family who include James’ father Katsumi Kometani 1925, DDS (dec), uncle Harold Kometani ’36 (dec), sister Carol Kometani Smith ’59 (dec), son Douglas ’83, nephew Laurence ’81, son-in-law Robin Oura ’74, Kometani cousins Kathleen Kometani Nakayama ’62, Joyce Ironside ’63, John P. Kometani ’67, Isiah Kiner-Falefa ’13, Lekaleka M. Kiner-Falefa ’16, Kikukawa cousins Arthur ’40 (dec) and Lorraine Tengan ’53, Momi’s son David Nalu Akaka ’90, and grandchildren Keoni Hall ’17, Kekoa Hall ’20, Jake Akaka ’24, and Taylor Akaka ’26.

The number of Mid-Pacific legacy families grows every year. A legacy student has a parent, grandparent or great grandparent who graduated from Mid-Pacific. During the 2018-2019 school year, the number of legacy families hit a historic high of 222 students with lineal descent on campus.

“It should be the alumni who help meet the school’s needs,” said honorary and former Trustee Emily Fujii ’47. “I, my late husband Clarence ’47, my late father Ray Hino ’23 and my husband’s siblings attended Mid-Pacific. I worked at a not-for-profit organization for 20 years so I know how hard it is to raise funds,” said Fujii. “I know how critical it is for Mid-Pacific to enhance its endowment and I understand the need for additional funds. I am happy I could help.”

The planned giving momentum continued through the summer when incoming Board Chair Denis Isono and his wife Ella committed to a planned gift for the school that educated their two sons.

“Ella and I are pleased Mid-Pacific is focused on planned giving and we are honored to make the school a priority in our estate plans,” said Isono. “It is our hope is that our gift will have a ripple effect by encouraging others to give. Mid-Pacific is a special place that has provided our children a world-class education.”

The Isonos’ sons Travis ’03 and Tyler ’98, and Denis’ brothers’ children graduated from Mid-Pacific—Shane Isono ’18, Jordan Isono ’14, Ashley Isono ’02 and Ryan Isono ’99.

“We are incredibly grateful to the past and present leaders of Mid-Pacific for remembering how they can make a difference and help the school through their estate planning,” said President Paul Turnbull.

Is Mid-Pacific a part of your estate plan? If so, we would like to properly thank you and welcome you into our Heritage Society. Please contact Linda Jameson Myers at (808) 973-5008 or lmyers@midpac.edu. Is your child, grandchild or great-grandchild interested in continuing the family legacy of attending Mid-Pacific? If so, contact Admissions Director Ella Browning at (808) 441-3757 or ebrowning@midpac.edu.
By Linda Jameson Myers

When a friendship sparks so does the desire to find common passions especially when one has ties to beautiful Mid-Pacific Institute. Lillian Yajima and Hazel Theodore met each other at the 2019 Mid-Pacific Athletic Banquet. Theodore was being recognized for generously and thoughtfully donating $40,000 to support the Choy-Laird Athletic Fund and $10,000 to support the girls softball program. Yajima attended the banquet because her father was alumnus and M-Club Hall of Fame honoree Gikaku “Steere” Noda who graduated in 1911 from the Mills Institute/Mid-Pacific Institute.

Noda was a star track athlete and baseball player. In 1905 at the age of 13, Noda founded the Asahi Nissei Baseball Team. He was first baseman, captain, and general manager of the team. Years later, Noda served as a member of the Territorial House of Representatives from 1948 to 1958 then in 1959 began serving the Hawai‘i State Senate.

Yajima speaks annually at the banquet to present an award to an outstanding student-athlete at the Mid-Pacific Athletic Banquet in honor of her father. The two women sat next to each other, exchanged phone numbers and realized they both share a passion for arts and crafts. They committed to a plan for Yajima to teach a class at Arcadia, a retirement community where several Mid-Pacific alumni live and gather frequently.

Please contact Linda Jameson Myers or Alumni Relations Director Heidi Bow if you have an exciting event bringing together alumni and friends of Mid-Pacific.
I learned of the dynamic friendship last September when Ushijima visited the campus. Ushijima wanted to see the site of his old boys’ dormitory, Wilcox Hall. I gave him a tour of that corner of campus which is now our preschool and elementary school.

“It brought back a lot of wonderful memories for me because this is a special place,” said Tetsuro Ushijima. “My alma mater reflects my life when I lived there. I was 15 years old from Waianae when I started at Mid-Pacific and loved the beautiful campus, the food, my friends and the faculty. I met people from all of the Hawaiian Islands and different countries. I played ‘ukulele and guitar during my free time in our dorm or the social hall, then eventually I moved on to steel guitar. I could play with my eyes closed!”

Ushijima is from a family of seven siblings. He was the only one who attended private school and went on to college. “I was on scholarship and I washed dishes after breakfast, lunch and dinner,” said Ushijima. “I didn’t resent it. I enjoyed it because there were four of us in the kitchen and we had fun. When you are young, nothing can hold you back. Tuition, room and board back then was $300.”

“A good fry cook would make a good air traffic controller—they have to handle four things at once,” exclaimed Fred Wong who complimented his friend for handling the kitchen so well. Wong agreed that Mid-Pacific prepared him for life and an exciting career. “Mid-Pacific gave me a huge foundation in so many areas—socially, academically, and eventually professionally. Education at Mid-Pacific was superior back then as it is today.”

While attending Mid-Pacific, Ushijima and Wong were members of the prestigious Senior Hi-Y, a service club for students of outstanding scholastic achievement and character. Among their vivid memories was Sunday, December 7, 1941 at 7:55 a.m.

“After breakfast, we heard Pearl Harbor was bombed. We saw that an airplane dropped a bomb at McCully Street and King Street.”

Ushijima chimed in, “The pilot made a miscalculation.”

Wong added, “We were not prepared because radios were not allowed in the dormitory because they were a possible fire hazard. There was a black out. Everything had to be turned off. We didn’t know to be scared.”

Ushijima excitedly added, “We didn’t know a war was going on. No alarms. No Civil Defense. We had to leave our dormitory because there were so many casualties. The government used our dormitory to treat the injured.”

Wong and Ushijima were 15 at the time. When school eventually resumed, their Mondays were no longer about learning in a classroom. Their days were spent learning in pineapple fields several miles away. Hawaiian Pineapple Company lost most of their employees to the draft, thus a Hawaiian Pineapple Company truck would come to Mid-Pacific once a week, but not to deliver pineapples.

“The truck picked up all the boys and girls from the school to go to the pineapple fields of Wahiawa,” said an animated Ushijima. “We were prepared because part of the program at school was to produce food crops. However, pineapple leaves are sharp and would puncture our hands. It was dusty with lots of red dirt. When we came back to school, we were a mess!”

“I never told my mother as I did not want her to worry,” said Wong. “We had to work in the pineapple fields for several months from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m.”

As difficult as the work was, Ushijima added, “It was fun because it was different than going to school.”
In the pineapple fields and beyond, the young friends learned the importance of serving their country during a time of need, confronting life’s challenges with grace and enthusiasm. Upon graduation from Mid-Pacific, Wong served nine years in the United States Air Force and 22 years of federal service as an electrical engineer. During this time, he supervised field installations of air navigational radio facilities throughout the Pacific region. In 1977, Wong was recognized and honored by then first lady Rosalyn Carter as “Outstanding Federal Employee of the Year” for the region, and was also congratulated by U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye.

In 1978, Wong’s career with the government came to a halt due to a brain tumor. The surgery to remove the brain tumor involved cutting nerves that permanently paralyzed part of Wong’s face, requiring him to retire early. Wong reinvented himself as an orchid farmer in Waimanalo. He credits his second career opportunity and success to the many lessons he learned in the pineapple fields and growing crops on campus.

Ushijima’s face brightened while sharing his journey beyond Mid-Pacific. After graduating from the University of Hawai’i in 1947, Ushijima worked for a year with the City Parks and Recreation at McCully. “Don’t spend. Earn!” said Ushijima who followed his own advice. He saved $1,000 and traveled from Oakland, California to Halifax, Canada, then to London, Denmark, Paris, and Switzerland. When his money ran out, he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force. Following his basic training in Germany, he was assigned to the U.S. Air Force Hospital in Wiesbaden, Germany for nearly four years. He was re-assigned for six months to Luke Air Base in Phoenix, Arizona and discharged in 1952 in Honolulu. He married his “sweetheart” Helen Iwamoto a few months later. They raised four children, two girls and fraternal twin boys. Ushijima was busy with his family and his career as an agent for Prudential Insurance Company of America for a decade followed by an executive position for 26 years as the administrator for the construction electricians of IBEW Local Union 1186. Ushijima oversaw the fringe benefits for hundreds of members.

Since retiring in 1988, Ushijima enjoys quality time with his daughter, two sons and four grandchildren, swims twice a day, and plays music with his Mid-Pacific buddy. Ushijima insisted that his first grandson, Reyn Tetsuro Wakabayashi ’05, attend Mid-Pacific. Today, Reyn has a successful career as a mechanical engineer at Applied Materials in Santa Clara, California.

Whether it be reciting the alma mater or performing at Kahala Nui, Ushijima and Wong continue to build on their 80 year friendship. The two friends wish to reconnect with other classmates at a Mid-Pacific-hosted reunion luncheon. If you would like to join this celebratory gathering, please contact Linda Jameson Myers at lmyers@midpac.edu or (808) 973-5008. We look forward to hearing from you!

A special thank you to Mid-Pacific parent and supporter Gloria Gainsley for introducing me to Mr. Ushijima.
Why Estate Planning is Important

“Everyone has been so gracious, helpful and appreciative of the information Estate Planning Group has presented through its seminars at Mid-Pacific Institute. We are truly honored that Mid-Pacific Institute has included Estate Planning Group in its efforts to educate its community on the importance and benefits of estate planning.”

– Diane Agor, Esq

If you missed the opportunity to attend one of our educational sessions Diane Agor, Esq has provided Legacy some key information:

**Defining an Estate Plan**
Essentially, estate planning is executing certain documents which set forth your wishes concerning:
1. distribution of your assets upon your passing,
2. management of your assets during your incapacity,
3. guardianship for your minor children during your incapacity and after your passing, and
4. decisions concerning your health-care upon your incapacity.

There are five main documents that make up an estate plan: (1) Trust, (2) Will, (3) Power of Attorney, (4) Advance Health-Care Directive, and (5) HIPAA Authorization. Depending on your particular situation and what it is you are trying to accomplish, you may or may not need all five documents.

**Inform Charity**
Informing a charity that it is a beneficiary of your estate plan is important because it provides the charity with the information necessary to ensure that after your passing, the charity receives your gift and can assist in the smooth distribution of your gift to the charity.

Present day gifts like cash donations and gifts of stock, are common ways to make a donation to a charity. Present day gifts are simple and benefit the charity immediately.

You can also incorporate charitable giving in your estate plan by naming a charity as a beneficiary in your trust or will.

The seminars cover all five main documents and Estate Planning Group will provide you a free consultation.