East-West Center Oral History Project: Lyn Flanigan

Lyn Flanigan came to EWC from Indiana as an Asian Studies major in the 1960’s. After obtaining her master’s degree in 1968 and a short stint as head resident in Hale Kuahine, she lived in Asia for several years and then returned to the Center where she worked as a program officer for 12 years with Sumi Makey and Rose Nakamura. During this time, which she calls her “most memorable period at the Center,” she and her family hosted many EWC students in their home. While working, she obtained her law degree at UH and then worked as an attorney in Honolulu. She was appointed to the EWC Board of Governors in 1992 at a time when EWC was struggling for survival. In the next nine years on the Board she and other board members strived to rekindle the Center’s relationship with alumni, instituted an alumni association board member position, and hired the current president, Charles Morrison.

Read Flanigan’s interview narrative (see separate pdf).

- **Personal Background** - Leaving the Midwest
- **Life at EWC** - Impact on UH, Mid- ’60s - Student Life as a Grantee - Field Studies - EWC Program Officer - Friendships with Students - Students in ’60s and ‘70s
- **Institutional Transitions** - Introduction of the Institutes - Law School
- **Life After EWC** - Board of Governors - Strengthening Alumni Ties
- **Impact of EWC** - On Career, On Perspectives
- **EWC’s Mission**
- **Ties that Last** - EWC’s 50th Anniversary

**Interview Quotes**
"…I distinctly remember my children as they grew into toddlers, playing with their friends from Indonesia and Afghanistan and all over. And I know one time my parents came to visit from Indiana, and they were just sort of amazed at all this diversity. Friends from Afghanistan left
their little boy with us for overnight, while they went to the hospital for the second child to be born -- and the kids were playing with a toy cash register, and they were saying, “Let’s use Indonesian money, no Afghan money, no let’s use Chinese money.” I could see that my parents were just amazed that these children were so young, and they were so aware of different cultures, and different kinds of money. They were playing at a very elementary level, but it brought back to me the exposure that children of East-West Center staff and students were getting indirectly from the East-West Center experience."

"About ten years later, I was asked to be a member of the Board of Governors, and I was so happy. I was delighted to come back. I served on the Board of Governors for nine years. It was a very challenging time for the Center, because we had lost much of our federal funding... I think at that point, the Hawai'i appointees became very strong within the Board because we recognized the importance of the Center."

These narratives, which reflect interviewees’ personal perceptions, opinions and memories, may contain errors of fact. They do not reflect positions or versions of history officially approved by the East-West Center.

LINK (as of 06/12/2020)
https://www.eastwestcenter.org/research/research-information-services/oral-history-project/lyn-flanigan