East-West Center Oral History Project: Ricky Kubota

Ricky Kubota, Director of Administration, is responsible for the offices of Finance, Information Technology, Human Resources, and Facilities – everything from personnel to koi ponds, budgets to dorms, computer networks to conference center. Born and educated on Oahu, Kubota was working in the UH system's budget office in 1984 when he was offered his first position here as EWC budget analyst by Vice-President Wesley Park. In his interview Kubota talks about his management philosophy, much of which he developed working with Park, Raleigh Awaya, Myrna Nip, Kenji Sumida and others. He soberly recounts the 1995 reduction-in-force and the streamlining process that followed. He lauds the EWC Washington, D.C. office as an important advocate for the Center in our nation's capital. Kubota credits his Center experience with changing how he views the news media: “Facts are facts, but viewpoints are different. You just need to look at the whole picture.”

Read Kubota's interview narrative (see separate pdf)

- Personal Background
- Life Before EWC - UH Campus, ‘70s and Early ‘80s
- Life at EWC - Joining EWC Staff - Li Presidency - Budget Analyst
- Institutional Transitions - Budget Officer, RIF - Sumida Presidency - Director of Administration - IT System - Price Waterhouse Study - Management Philosophy
- EWC’s Impact - Best Memories - Programs for Journalists, Teachers - EWC Washington - On Career, Perspective - EWC Mission - Personal Legacy
Interview Quotes
"Again, my philosophy … is you hire good people, and you get out of their way. They'll naturally do a good job, and the worst you can do as a boss is to micro-manage, and I try not to do that. My mantra is basically, it's your shop, you handle it. If there's a problem you don't think you can handle, come talk to me. But other than that, I trust your judgment."

"One of the programs that I think exemplifies the East-West Center is our work with teachers, as well as our work with journalists. If we can just influence, or at least open these gatekeepers’ eyes, they have the power to then do a multiplier effect to all their readers, or listeners."

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 06/05/2020)
https://www.eastwestcenter.org/research/research-information-services/oral-history-project/ricky-kubota