In April 1959, Murray Turnbull (then Acting Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at UHM) headed a faculty committee which, in three days, wrote a proposal for a new International College of Cultural Affairs. The proposal, based on one Turnbull had written in February of that year, was accepted by University President Laurence Snyder. It served as a basis for a Hawai‘i State Legislature bill, passed in July 1959, supporting planning and development of the East-West Center. On May 14, 1960, discussions and study involving Congress, the State Department, the state, and the university resulted in the passage of a Congressional bill providing for the establishment of the East-West Center. Turnbull served as the Center's Interim Director from July 1959, supervising more than 60 "interim" employees, and then as the Center's Acting Chancellor from 1960 to January 1962. Turnbull then returned to the UHM’s Art Department, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1985.

Read Turnbull's interview narrative (see separate pdf)

- Personal Background
- Birth of the EWC - Governor John Burns/LBJ role - Setting up Infrastructure, Staff - UH President Snyder’s Role - Reaction to Creation of EWC - Ground-Breaking Ceremonies with LBJ - Selecting Program Areas
- Institutional Transitions - EWC/UH Influences - Separation from UH - Naming of Buildings
- Life After EWC
- EWC’s Impact - The Mission
**Interview and Related Quotes**

"The East-West Center has been conceived and established not to erase differences between people, but to make possible respect for the ways in which we are unlike and the recognition and acknowledgment of our similarities, that we may join in the construction of a dynamic and fruitful but peaceful life for all." (speech at the Center's groundbreaking ceremony, May 9, 1961)

“We set up a committee of about six. We started at ground zero. We started at 8 o'clock in the morning ... And there was no prepoliticking or anything like that on our part...And we went to work for three days, all day long... We were just totally absorbed in it, and we felt we had to get it done immediately.”

“And [Governor] Bill Quinn set up this special committee with himself as chairman, myself as vice chairman, and again, to promote and develop and to involve other agencies in the State, ... with the kinds of speeches that were made around the State, and with the press we were getting, and with Hawai‘i becoming a state -- there was a lot of local enthusiasm of all kinds sort of bubbling over. And a lot of it came out as support for the Center...So it was an ideal time, all the various factors. Five years earlier, it probably would never have gotten off the ground. Ten years later, with the Vietnam War on, it probably would have never gotten off the ground. So it was a propitious moment, no doubt of that.”

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/murray-turnbull