These are slightly edited transcriptions of interviews conducted by the Center for Oral History, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. The reader should be aware that an oral history document portrays information as recalled by the interviewee. Because of the spontaneous nature of this kind of document, it may contain statements and impressions which are not factual.

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Above, Newly appointed President Fujio Matsuda in front of Bachman Hall, 1974.
Above right, top, Fujio Matsuda, Emeritus Professor of English Literature Leon Edel, former President Laurence H. Snyder, at Fujio Matsuda inauguration, 1975.
Below left, AMFAC Chairman and CEO Henry Walker, Jr. presents Fujio Matsuda with check establishing endowed chair in the College of Business Administration, 1982.
Below right, Fujio Matsuda with the oldest surviving UH alumnus, William Meinecke, 75th anniversary of UH, 1982.

Above right, Fujio Matsuda congratulates doctoral degree recipient.

Left, Nihon University President and Mrs. Masaru Suzuki with President and Mrs. Fujio Matsuda at Fujio Matsuda’s testimonial dinner.

Bottom left, Fujio Matsuda, with interviewer Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto, in his office at PICHTR, 1996. (COH photo)

Bottom right, Fujio Matsuda, 1996. (COH photo)

All photos are from the University of Hawai‘i Office of University Relations, except as noted.
INTRODUCTION

The Center for Oral History (COH), a unit of the Social Science Research Institute at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, was established in 1976. The only state-supported center of its kind in the islands, COH’s major function is to research, conduct, transcribe, edit, and disseminate oral history interviews with persons possessing knowledge about Hawai‘i’s past. COH seeks to provide present and future researchers with first-person, primary-source documents with which to write history from a diversity of perspectives. Since its inception, COH has disseminated to repositories oral history interviews with approximately 500 interviewees, resulting in over 25,000 pages of transcripts.

COH also produces and provides educational materials and services (books, articles, brochures, lectures, etc.) based on the interviews, conducts classes and workshops on oral history methodology for individuals and community/educational groups, and serves as a clearinghouse for oral history research relating to Hawai‘i.

University of Hawai‘i Presidents Oral History Project Background and Methodology

This is one of a series of transcript volumes of oral history interviews with former presidents of the University of Hawai‘i. The idea for the interviews came from University of Hawai‘i president Kenneth P. Mortimer, whose office provided funding and general fiscal support. Former UH presidents Harlan Cleveland, Fujio Matsuda, and Albert J. Simone were initially apprised of the project and invited via letter by President Mortimer to participate in the interviews.

COH director Warren Nishimoto met with Special Assistant to the President Judith K. Inazu to discuss details and logistics of the oral history project then followed up President Mortimer’s letter with a telephone call to each former president to secure their commitment. Only formally-appointed presidents were to be interviewed; no acting presidents were included.

In order to place the UH presidency within the context of each president’s life experiences, socioeconomic background, family, community, education, and academic and professional career, the interviews followed a chronological, life-history format. Each was asked to comment in detail on his years as UH president, focusing on his ambitions, goals, accomplishments, and disappointments. Each was also asked questions about his relationships with individuals and institutions inside and outside the university (i.e., the governor, legislature, board of regents, business leaders, deans/directors, faculty/staff, and students). Other major topics discussed include: reasons for and circumstances surrounding Cleveland, Matsuda, and Simone accepting and leaving the post; the major issues confronted during each presidency; and the presidents’ roles and methods in dealing with issues. Finally, each former president was asked for an assessment of his strengths and weaknesses, his recommendations for the future of the University of Hawai‘i, and reflective thoughts on life and career in Hawai‘i and elsewhere.

Cleveland, Matsuda, and Simone were interviewed by Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto between January, 1996 and September, 1997. Most of the interviews were conducted in Hawai‘i, where Cleveland often vacations, Matsuda lives full time, and Simone was flown to by the UH president’s office to participate in the interviews. Additional interviews were conducted in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where Cleveland was president of the World Academy of Art and Science,
and Rochester, New York, where Simone works and resides as president of the Rochester Institute of Technology.

Prior to taping, research was conducted and a list of topics determined. An untaped preliminary interview was conducted with each former president in order to establish rapport and obtain biographical information. Although no set questionnaire was used, the interviewers followed an outline of topics designed specifically for each interviewee. Each topic outline was constructed using biographical information from the preliminary interview, each president’s vita, and research in primary and secondary sources. The taped interviews were conducted on audio cassettes. Each president was interviewed for approximately sixteen hours, with each interview session lasting an average of 1½ hours.

The interviews were transcribed almost verbatim by COH-trained student transcribers. The transcripts were then audio-reviewed against the cassette tapes by the interviewer, then edited slightly for clarity and historical accuracy.

The transcripts were then sent to the interviewees for their review and approval. The interviewees were asked to verify names and dates and clarify statements where necessary. COH then incorporated the interviewees’ changes.

Prior to releasing their transcripts for publication, the interviewees read and signed a legal document releasing all rights, title, and interest to the edited transcripts to the University of Hawai‘i Center for Oral History for scholarly and educational use.

Fujio Matsuda

Named the University of Hawai‘i’s ninth president in 1974, succeeding Harlan Cleveland, Fujio “Fudge” Matsuda was the university’s first Hawai‘i-born president. Born and raised in the working-class section of Kaka‘ako, on the island of O‘ahu, Matsuda was the youngest child and only son of Yoshio Matsuda and Shimo Iwasaki Matsuda, immigrants from Yamaguchi Prefecture, Japan. The Matsudas owned and operated a modest saimin stand in Kaka‘ako, where Fujio helped make noodles when not attending elementary school or Japanese-language school.

He was educated at Pohukaina Elementary, Washington Intermediate, and McKinley High Schools. Following his graduation in 1942, he briefly attended the University of Hawai‘i before serving in the U.S. Army during World War II. He was attached to the 232nd Combat Engineer Company, part of the famed 442nd Regimental Combat Team and the 291st Field Artillery Observation Battalion.

After the war, Matsuda returned to classes at UH before transferring, with the help of the GI Bill of Rights, to Rose Polytechnic Institute (today known as Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology) in Terre Haute, Indiana, where he received a bachelor of science degree in civil engineering in 1949. He went on to receive his doctorate in civil engineering from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1952. Between 1952 and 1955, Matsuda was a researcher first at MIT, then the University of Illinois, before returning to UH where he later chaired the Department of Civil Engineering.

In 1963, newly elected Governor John A. Burns named Matsuda to his cabinet as director of the Hawai‘i State Department of Transportation. As DOT director, Matsuda was responsible for the new state’s highway, airport, and harbor systems.
In 1973, Matsuda was tapped by UH president Harlan Cleveland to become his vice president for business affairs, the third highest post in the university administration. A year later, after a national search, he was named by the University of Hawai‘i Board of Regents to be the university’s ninth president. He served ten years until 1984, when he left the presidency to become executive director of the Research Corporation of the University of Hawai‘i.

COH’s Warren Nishimoto and Michiko Kodama-Nishimoto conducted a preliminary interview with Matsuda at his office at the Japan-America Institute of Management Science, where he served as president until June of 1996. Subsequent recorded interviews, totalling fifteen sessions, were conducted at his office at The Pacific International Center for High Technology Research, where he served as chairman and CEO.

Matsuda was more than willing to be interviewed, responding to the interviewers’ questions carefully, methodically, and candidly, with humor and humility. He particularly wanted to preserve his life experiences for the benefit of his children and grandchildren.

Observers feel that Matsuda presided over one of the most difficult times in the University of Hawai‘i’s history, taking office as the state entered an economic downturn in the aftermath of the “boom” years of the Thomas H. Hamilton era and the transition years presided over by Harlan Cleveland. Named president in the midst of university and community urging for a “local-born” chief executive, Matsuda brought to office his significant administrative experience as state DOT director, and his academic background at MIT and at UH as department chair. Many observers view Matsuda as an effective, fiscally responsible leader who led the university through difficult economic times. Detractors characterize Matsuda as a political crony whose administration’s major agenda was to maintain the status quo and ensure that state rules were followed to the letter. Matsuda refutes this characterization in his interviews and focuses on the university’s growth in size, academic stature, and community relations while prioritizing and consolidating programs in the midst of economic recession.

Transcript Usage
This volume of transcripts contains a glossary of all non-English and Hawai‘i Creole English (HCE) words (which are italicized in the transcripts) and a detailed subject/name index.

There is a series of numbers at the beginning of each transcript. This series includes, in order: a project number, audio cassette number, session number, and year the interview was conducted. For example, 25-15-1-96 identifies COH project number 25, cassette number 15, recorded interview session 1, and the year 1996.

The interviewee read the transcripts and was asked to make any deletions or additions he considered necessary before releasing the transcripts for publication. Interviewee additions/changes are indicated by parentheses ( ). Minor editing for clarification and historical accuracy was done by the COH staff. In editing every attempt was made to preserve the flavor and authenticity of the interviews. COH staff additions are noted by brackets [ ]. A three-dot ellipsis indicates an interruption; a four-dot ellipsis indicates a trail-off by a speaker. Three dashes indicate a false start.

These transcripts represent statements the interviewee wishes to leave for the public record. After reviewing and approving publication of the transcripts, the interviewee signed the following agreement:
In order to preserve and make available the history of Hawai‘i for present and future generations, I hereby give and grant to the University of Hawai‘i Center for Oral History as a donation for such scholarly and educational purposes as the Center Director shall determine, all my rights, title, and interest to the tapes and edited transcripts of interviews.

Transcript Availability
These transcripts are the primary documents presently available for research purposes. The audio cassettes are in storage and not available for use, unless written permission is obtained from the Center for Oral History.

Copies of this transcript volume are available at the following locations:

**Hawai‘i**
- Hawai‘i Public Library (Hilo)
- Kailua-Kona Public Library
- Kealakekua Community Library
- Hawai‘i Community College Library
- University of Hawai‘i at Hilo Library

**Kaua‘i**
- Līhu‘e Public Library
- Kaua‘i Community College Library

**Lāna‘i**
- Lāna‘i Public and School Library

**Maui**
- Maui Public Library (Wailuku)
- Maui Community College Library

**Moloka‘i**
- Moloka‘i Public Library

**COH publications include:**

Transcript collections
- Waialua and Hale‘iwa: The People Tell Their Story (1977)
- Life Histories of Native Hawaiians (1978)
- Waipi‘o: Māno Wai (Source of Life) (1978)
- The 1924 Filipino Strike on Kaua‘i (1979)
- Women Workers in Hawai‘i’s Pineapple Industry (1979)
- Stores and Storekeepers of Pā‘ia and Pu‘unēnē, Maui (1980)
- A Social History of Kona (1981)
- Five Life Histories (1983)
Kalihi: Place of Transition (1984)
Ka Po‘e Kau Lei: An Oral History of Hawai‘i’s Lei Sellers (1986)
Perspectives on Hawai‘i’s Statehood (1986)
Oral Histories of African Americans (1990)
Public Education in Hawai‘i: Oral Histories (1991)
An Era of Change: Oral Histories of Civilians in World War II Hawai‘i (1994)
Hawai‘i Political History Documentation Project (1996)

Books
Uchinanchu: A History of Okinawans in Hawai‘i. Published in cooperation with the United Okinawan Association (1981)

Finding Aids
Catalog of Oral History Collections in Hawai‘i (1981)

Other Publications
Oral History Recorder newsletter (1984–)

The staff of the Center for Oral History, Social Science Research Institute, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, believes that researching, recording, and disseminating the experiences of Hawai‘i’s people will stimulate further research and foster a better understanding of our islands’ history. COH is responsible for any errors in representing or interpreting the statements of the interviewee.

Honolulu, Hawai‘i
July 1998