

# Senator Michelle Kidani

Twenty-eighth Hawaii State Legislature

*(D) Senate District 18 – Serving Mililani Town, Waipio Gentry, Waikele, Village Park, Royal Kunia*



Chair, Committee on Education

Vice Chair, Committee on  
Commerce, Consumer Protection,  
and Health

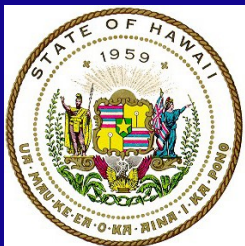
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Aloha Friends and Neighbors,

Something a little different this month . . .

With support from the State Legislature and literally hundreds of large and small corporate and individual contributions, Hawaii's Public Broadcasting System TV station - PBS Hawaii - has now relocated from the UH Manoa campus to a wonderful new facility on Sand Island Road. During the years I oversaw the Senate's construction budget as Vice Chair of the Committee on Ways and Means, we appropriated a total of \$6.5 million in state support for the new building. I mention this because it was at the dedication and open house for the new facility a few weeks ago that I first heard an inspiring story about a retired public school teacher and **Waipahu native** who played a part in finishing the building.

Here's the heartwarming story as told by PBS Hawaii President Leslie Wilcox, pictured below with a photo of **Karen Sueko Okada Watanabe**.

Karen was the youngest of a half-dozen children and was raised in Waipahu where her father was a watchmaker and her mother was a homemaker. Money was limited and traditionally girls in the family did not continue their education. But Karen's only brother asked that she be allowed to attend the University of Hawaii and the family sacrificed to send her off to college.



She graduated from the UH College of Education and taught in public elementary schools in Central Oahu and on Hawaii Island, spending the last 15 years of her career at Manoa Elementary.

Karen married a fellow teacher who was teaching at **Waipahu High School**. They had no children; Karen was a devoted caregiver to her husband as he was treated for cancer. In retirement, she lived in a small Nuuanu condo where she tended to things that were important to her - personal finance, personal independence and lifelong education. She loved studying stocks and bonds and amassed a myriad of financial assets. She did her own income taxes and was very precise, a perfectionist. She did not drive a car, instead walking, or catching TheBus or a taxi everywhere she needed to go. She took pride in the fact that she could take care of herself. PBS Hawaii was by far her favorite TV station.

Karen died last fall at age 89. She left bequests to several nonprofit organizations, including PBS Hawaii. Her gift of \$650,000 to the TV station took us over the top to surpass the \$30 million fundraising goal.

Hawaii small-town values, nurtured by a big-picture perspective on the world, and a teacher committed to her community. Karen Watanabe's legacy will be remembered and celebrated for a long time.

Me ke Aloha Pumehana,

*Michelle*

## Sports Report

- Congratulations to the **Waipahu Marauders Varsity Football Team and coach Bryson Carvalho**, playing for the OIA Division 2 Championship against Waialua on Friday night at Aloha Stadium!
- Congratulations to the **Mililani Trojan Varsity Football Team and coach Rod York**, looking forward to the D-1 state championship tournament quarterfinal game v. Baldwin on Maui on Friday, November 4!
- Congratulations to the **Mililani High School Girls Varsity Volleyball Team and coach Val Crabbe**, undefeated in the regular season and runner-up in the OIA D-1 tournament, wrapping up with 12 wins and just 2 losses!

***Mahalo to everyone for hard fought victories in the spirit of teamwork and good sportsmanship!***

## ***Celebrating Excellence in Teaching***

Washington Middle School teacher Sung Man Park has been named Hawaii's 2017 State Teacher of the Year. Park received the state's top teaching award from Governor David Ige and Hawaii State Department of Education Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi during a ceremony held at Washington Place this month. The honor is presented annually to a classroom teacher selected from more than 11,000 educators within the DOE. Park was one of seven District Teachers of the Year and one Charter School Teacher of the Year so honored. The Legislature will be recognizing these teachers, other outstanding educators and students during the **2017 Education Week at the Capitol** in March.



***Front row, First Lady Dawn and Governor David Ige, Luane Higuchi, Leeward District, Tracey Idica, Central District, Kristi Kusunoki, Windward District, Jennifer Suzuki, Maui District, Laurie Ann O'Brien, Hawaii Island District; back row, Kay Beech, Public Charter Schools, Dan Mireles, Kauai District, Sung Man Park, Honolulu District, DOE Superintendent Kathryn Matayoshi.***



***At the WIS celebration, Senators Clarence Nishihara, myself, and Mike Gabbard; former WIS principal Gary Takaki, current Principal Randell Dunn; Representative Roy Takumi.***

## ***Celebrating a golden anniversary***

We joined staff and students at Waipahu Intermediate School last week to celebrate the school's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

WIS is now the largest single track intermediate / middle school in the islands, academic home to 1,300 proud students each year.

Congratulations to dedicated campus leadership and teachers who work hard to live up to the WIS vision statement:

***We inspire success - every time . . . everywhere . . . everyone!***



## **2016 General Election voting now underway**

- ◆ Early walk-in voting locations opened this week at Kapolei Hale and Honolulu Hale. Registered voters may cast their ballots Monday through Friday 8 am – 4 pm until Friday, November 5.
- ◆ ***If you are not yet registered to vote, it's not too late. Effective this year, qualified Hawaii residents may register in-person at walk-in voting sites.***
- ◆ Mail-in ballots were sent last week to voters who requested them. It's still possible to request a mail-in ballot until Tuesday, November 1.
- ◆ On Tuesday, November 8 – General Election Day – polling places are open statewide from 7 am – 6 pm.
- ◆ ***Call 453-VOTE (453-8683) or check online at [elections.hawaii.gov](http://elections.hawaii.gov) for more information.***

