

The Women's Caucus This Year Is Honoring Pat Saiki

By

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Representative Colleen Meyer, Former Congress woman Pat Saiki, Representative Barbara Marumoto, Cynthia Thielen and Marilyn Lee

"When I ran for the House back in 1968, there were only two women in office. So I had to run on the campaign slogan of, "This district needs a woman in the House," said Pat Saiki.

After the Equal Right Amendment passed the U.S. Congress, Pat acted immediately and had Hawai'i become the first state to ratify the amendment. She introduced bills that called for the Equal Right Amendment, which now is part of our State Constitution. There are approximately twenty-five bills on women rights that become law from 1972 to 1975 and all were part of Saiki's Equal Right Package. Some included:

- Allowing women to have the right to own credit cards in their own names
- Allowing women to have their own mortgages in their own names
- Allowing women to have the right to choose which surname they use
- Changed the Equal Pay for Equal Work laws so that the wage rates of female employees are no longer determined by the lowest rate paid to a male worker

Patricia "PAT" Fukuda ("Pat") Saiki is a pioneer in women's issues. In 1968, she ran successfully for a seat in the Hawai'i State House of Representatives. In 1974, she moved to the Hawai'i State Senate where she served her district for two terms. Saiki served as a Republican in Congress from 1987 to 1991, representing Hawai'i as the second woman to be elected from the state. She was part of a broad coalition concerned about Japanese Americans interned during World War II. And it was Pat who helped convince President Reagan to sign legislation reaffirming us as a nation of integrity and fairness. President George Herbert Walker Bush appointed Pat Administrator of the Small Business Administration. Pat Saiki is the only Republican to ever hold a House seat from the state of Hawai'i and one of only two Republican Congress people to represent the state since statehood.

Born in Hilo, Hawai`i, Pat Saiki attended Hilo High School than this bright Japanese-American woman pursued a bachelor's degree from the University of Hawai'i at Manoa; and upon graduating she became a school teacher in Hilo Hawai`i. She married the late Stanley M. Saiki, MD, an OB/GYN, who was chief of Staff of Kapiolaoni and with Richard Davi, CEO of the Hospital Pat helped to create the state funding for the Spouse Abuse Center at Kapiolaoni Hospital. She is the mother of five children, Stanley, Jr., MD, Sandra Williams, MD, Margaret, DVM, Laura and Stuart. And many gradchildren.

A few years ago, this bipartisan Women's Caucus supported and the Hawaii Legislature enacted a measure requiring all felons submit DNA for the database. Currently, Representatives Barbara Marumoto, Corinne Ching, Kymberly Pine and Cynthia Thielen are among the primary introducers of House Bill 2773, which requires DNA collection from those arrested on felony charges.