



MidWeek

This column by Senator Michelle Kidani was published in MidWeek's West Oahu VOICE section on Wednesday, July 8, 2015.

Celebrating Title IX – at UH and Waipahu High School

Each year, UH Associate Athletic Director Marilyn Moniz-Kahoohanohano convenes a workshop for her women's team coaches and staff to mark the anniversary of the passage of Title IX – the Patsy Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act. The event takes place on June 23 each year – the very day on which the amendment to federal law was passed in 1972, some 43 years ago.

How the nation has changed in those four decades! At the time, female students were not allowed to take certain courses, such as auto mechanics or criminal justice; male students could not take home economics. Most medical and law schools limited the number of women admitted to 15 or fewer per school, if they admitted women at all. Many colleges and universities required women to have higher test scores and better grades than male applicants to gain admission. After winning two gold medals in the 1964 Olympics, swimmer Donna de Varona could not obtain a college swimming scholarship. For women they did not exist.

The law was intended to level the academic playing field and, in fact, never even mentions athletics. Over the years, however, it was made clear that the law would level the *athletic* playing field as well, and organized women's athletic teams have proliferated and thrived as a result.

I was invited to speak at this year's anniversary workshop, along with **Hawaii Supreme Court Associate Justice Sabrina McKenna**, herself a benefactor of a Title IX basketball scholarship at UH Manoa, **Dr. Doris Ching, Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs at UH West Oahu**, and **Clinical Psychologist, Dr. Soo Jean Misailidis**. I came away newly inspired by the work of Title IX author, the late **Hawaii Congresswoman Patsy Mink**. Earlier in June, I had experienced other moments of inspiration at the annual year-end gathering of OIA coaches. I was so grateful to be able to present a Senate certificate to Waipahu High School girls varsity basketball coach **Nadine Villarmia** to recognize her twenty years as an OIA coach. The dozens and dozens of girls who have played on her teams in those two decades are all beneficiaries of Title IX.

During the month I was also able to recognize a young woman from the Waipahu High School Class of 2015 who distinguished herself in athletic competition. In her junior year, **Sabrina Hollins'** classmates suggested she join the Judo and Wrestling teams. With no previous experience in either sport, she won the State Judo title in her weight class that year, going even further with a national title over the summer at the U.S. Judo Federation Championships as a member of the team from Pearl City Hongwanji. And then again this year, Sabrina repeated as State Judo Champion and came in runner up in Wrestling at the State tournament.

In track and field events, Sabrina won the OIA shot put and discus titles as a sophomore and won both the OIA and State tournament shot put titles this year. She also came in second in discus at States this year. Sabrina is another athlete who has had opportunities because of Title IX, and for her accomplishments she has been inducted into the 2015 Hawaii High School Athletic Association Hall of Honor.

We applaud **WHS Athletic Director Stacie Nii, Coach Nadine Villarmia and Sabrina Hollins** for their parts in reinforcing the importance of Patsy Mink's legacy of creating equal opportunity for all.