

DISTINGUISHED LEADERSHIP AWARD  
2014



MARY LOU KOBAYASHI

Mary Lou Kobayashi’s distinguished career spans over 38 years of dedicated service. She began her career in 1975 in the Planning Division of the former Department of Planning and Economic Development (DPED). She has been in leadership roles as the state planning function evolved from DPED to the Office of State Planning in the Governor’s Office to her current position as the Planning Program Administrator in the Office of Planning (OP), attached to the Department of Business, Economic Development and Tourism (DBEDT).

Mary Lou’s creativity and vision was a vital part of the team that formulated the Hawai’i State Plan, a pivotal planning document that sets forth a long-range comprehensive plan for the state. Mary Lou’s contributions allowed Hawai’i to be the only state in the nation to enact a comprehensive state plan whose provisions were codified into state law.

As project manager, Mary Lou led the team to successfully complete the 1991 Five-Year State Land Use District Boundary Review. Mary Lou applied her planning and organizational skills in completing this daunting task that took approximately six years from the initiation of background studies, through two rounds of Statewide public informational meetings, to the subsequent adoption of boundary amendment petitions (1992-1995).

These are just a few of the many examples of Mary Lou’s outstanding leadership in planning. Mary Lou has earned not only the award for 2014 APA- Hawai’i Chapter Distinguished Leadership Award but also the respect and gratitude of those with whom she works and serves.

The jurors agree wholeheartedly that Mary Lou has been a solid and exemplary planner for many years. She has an excellent grasp and deep knowledge of the issues that affect Hawai’i and the role of planning to address those issues. Over the years, she has contributed to both the chapter and the planning profession in committees, organizing and supporting events. Beyond all that she has accomplished in her planning career, she has a sweet and patient disposition that makes it a joy for others to work with her. Mahalo nui loa, Mary Lou!

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