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EAST-WEST CENTER ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Bob Kiste Interview Narrative

4-30-2008 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Please cite as: Bob Kiste, interview by Terese Leber, April 30, 2008, interview narrative, East-West Center Oral History Project Collection, East-West Center, Honolulu Hawaii.

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The **East-West Center Oral History Project** strives to capture the Center's first 50 years as seen through the eyes of staff, alumni, and supporters who have contributed to its growth.

Co-coordinators: Terese Leber and Phyllis Tabusa

Narratives Editor: Susan Yim Griffin

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Bob Kiste

4-30-08 interview in Honolulu, Hawaii

Personal Background

My name is Bob Kiste. I grew up in Indiana and graduated from high school in 1954. I didn't have the money to go to college, so I joined the army to get the G.I. bill. I spent three years in the army and the last two of those were at Schofield Barracks in Hawai'i. That's where I initially became interested in Pacific people and islands. There were a number of Samoans and Hawaiians at Schofield.

After finishing the three years of military service, I went back to the mainland for college in 1957. I did a B.A. in anthropology at Indiana University and graduated Phi Beta Kappa in 1961. My entire four years of undergraduate work were financed by the G.I. Bill.

Life Before EWC

Pacific Islands Studies

I wanted to go to graduate school to do a doctorate in anthropology, and I chose the University of Oregon for two reasons. In the 1960s, the Department of Anthropology at Oregon had one of the strongest Pacific Island programs of any department in the nation. Secondly, I was interested in one particular member of the Oregon faculty, Homer G. Barnett. After World War II, Barnett had been an important figure in the American involvement with the U.S Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (USTTPI) in Micronesia. He was the first civilian anthropologist to head the program in applied anthropology in the territory. He had also conducted field work in Palau [*Belau*] after the war.

The decision to go to Oregon was the best I could have made. The department there had recently received several National Defense Education Act Scholarships that provided full support for

three years of graduate study leading to the doctorate. There were four of us in the program at the time, and since the emphasis was on doctoral studies, the department advised us to skip the M.A. degree and go straight for our Ph.D.'s.

There was another fortunate development. During my first year at Oregon, Barnett received the largest grant for anthropological research that was ever awarded by the National Science Foundation. It was to study 10 communities in the Pacific that had been moved from their ancestral homelands for one reason or another: drought, volcanic eruptions, nuclear testing, or overpopulation. Those 10 communities were arranged in five pairs of communities: two were moved because of volcanic operations, two because of nuclear testing, two because of drought, and so forth.

Barnett offered me the opportunity to work with the people of Bikini Atoll who had been relocated when their homeland was selected as a nuclear test site in the Marshall Islands in 1946. My wife, Valerie, and I began fieldwork in the Marshall Islands in 1963. Later I went on to work with the people of Enewetak Atoll, the second community in the Marshalls relocated because of nuclear testing. My real professional involvement in the Pacific began at Oregon, and I've been involved in the region ever since.

I completed my doctorate at Oregon in 1967, and my first job was at the University of Minnesota, a strange place, perhaps, for a Pacific anthropologist. However, Minnesota wanted to have every world area covered, and they had never had a Pacific specialist. We moved to Minnesota in early 1967, and we were there for 12 years, until 1978.

The Minnesota years were very good ones. The University of Minnesota is a tremendous university and is supportive of young faculty. I was provided with research money to go back to

the Pacific. I had a dozen Ph.D. students over the years, and three of them did their work in the Pacific.

Also on two occasions during the Minnesota years, I was a visiting professor in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Hawai'i (UH). The first was 1972-73 when I was on sabbatical leave from Minnesota. I spent that year here at the UH and wrote my first book which was a study of the Bikini people and the consequences of their relocation.

In 1976 I was asked to come back to UH as a visiting professor to teach for the fall semester. In 1978, the UH was looking for a director to take over what was then called the Pacific Islands Studies Program. The program had been founded in 1950. However, the program had never had more than minimal support, but that was very common for area study programs at the time.

Many universities didn't know what to do with area studies. Such programs are multi-disciplinary in nature and universities didn't know where they fit in the academic world because most everyone thought mainly in terms of traditional academic disciplines.

The UH was in a mode similar to many other American universities at the time. There was also a resistance to area studies among traditional disciplines. The former were commonly viewed as unwanted interest groups competing for scarce resources. However, there were two men here at the UH who struggled for years to launch Pacific Islands studies in a serious way: Leonard Mason in the Department of Anthropology and Norman Meller in the Department of Political Science.

They made some gains, but it was a tough struggle, and the program never really got off the ground. In 1978, there was a crisis when the program was evaluated in the course of a routine review by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC), the national accrediting institution for schools and colleges in the Western United States. The WASC report described

the program as academically weak, without adequate support and recommended that the UH should either get serious about Pacific Studies or terminate the program.

After some debate, the decision was made to salvage the program and recruit a new director.

From my stints as a visiting professor, I knew people here, and a number encouraged me to apply for the position and take on the mission of building something of value. At best, it was a very shaky proposition and a risk.

The program had very little funding from the UH, but it did have federal funding from a grant that Meller had received in 1975. When I saw that the position of director was advertised as half-time, one year, and perhaps renewable, I couldn't take it seriously. I was tenured at Minnesota, and had recently been promoted to full professor.

When I saw how the position was advertised, it did not appear to be a real job. However, some faculty at UH got together and managed to get support to provide the other half-time for the position. At that point, I thought it was worth a try. I did not want to remain at a Midwestern university, and I wanted to be at Hawai'i. I thought the UH had the potential. There were more faculty here with Pacific interests than any other place in the nation. In fact, no place in the world could match it. Also the Pacific Collection at Hamilton Library at UH is the best of its kind anywhere. Researchers from all over the world come to Hawai'i just to use the library. Also the UH's location in the Pacific was certainly an attraction.

I thought that the potential was here, and I should give it a try. Fortunately the timing was right and could not have been any better. That was something I could not have planned or foreseen. It was a matter of luck. In 1978 there was a renewed interest in the Pacific for several reasons. The primary factor was the Soviet Union. The Cold War was at its height and the Soviet Union made approaches to several Pacific countries.

Yes, the Communist threat. The Soviets made an overture to the King of Tonga to help build an international airport, and they also wanted a fishing base in Tonga. The Soviets also approached other island countries about treaties of friendship and rights to fisheries in the region.

The United States interpreted the initiatives as a Communist/Soviet threat to gain a foothold in the Pacific. There was a prompt reaction from the U.S. Department of State. In fact there was an overreaction.

One would have thought that there was a Communist behind every coconut tree in the Pacific. In the late 1970s and early 1980s then, there was a Soviet attempt to get involved in the Pacific and there was a response from the United States, Australia, New Zealand to counter it. The most visible sign of the United States' new interest in the region was evident in 1978 when the U.S. Department of State created an Office for Pacific Island Affairs for the first time.

A career foreign service officer was appointed as director of the office. In July 1978, he began the first of his many visits to Hawai'i to consult with local political leaders, the large military establishment here, UH faculty and some segments of the private sector in Hawai'i.

Within a short time, two foreign service officers were assigned to take the M.A. program in Pacific Islands Studies. Several federal agencies volunteered to provide funding that I hadn't even asked for. Examples were student and faculty exchange programs with the University of the South Pacific and the University of Papua New Guinea, a training program for young diplomats in the island nations, and a mid-career development program for others in government service in the region.

The increased interest and attention to the Pacific certainly helped the Pacific Studies program at UH and helped create a greater interest in Hawai'i as a whole. This was evident by 1980 when three new organizations were created in Honolulu.

The first of these was the Pacific Telecommunications Council (PTC) that Richard Barber was instrumental in founding. The organization began with the first Pacific Telecommunications Conference in 1980. That conference created the council and became an annual event in itself. I believe that about 60 countries now belong to the council, and it is a major player in Asia and Pacific telecommunications.

The second organization that was launched in 1980 was the Pacific Basin Development Council (PBDC). With startup funding from the U.S. Department of Commerce, PBDC was founded by the governors of the four American flag islands: American Samoa, Guam, Hawai'i, and the Northern Marianas for the purpose of promoting cooperation in support of economic development. If I recall correctly, Governor George Ariyoshi of Hawai'i was the first chairman of the PBDC.

Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP)

It was also in 1980 that the EWC had its conference, its first Pacific Islands Conference of Leaders. After that conference there was the question of what should the EWC do with regard to the Pacific.

The EWC president at the time was Everett Kleinjans. He felt that the EWC had not paid enough attention to the Pacific and wanted the conference to produce something tangible, but was uncertain as to what. A committee of faculty and staff at both the UH and the EWC was formed to decide what the latter might do in terms of developing some kind of Pacific program.

The Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) was the result.

The leaders liked the idea of the conference. The conference was somewhat unique because it included every leader of every Pacific country. It didn't matter whether they were from a French territory, or a dependency of Britain or New Zealand, or an American territory. Every country

was included. The leaders liked it, the response was very positive. It was initially planned that the conference would meet every five years.

That went on for a couple of meetings, when the leaders decided they'd like it more often. At some point it was changed to every third year.

So the conference is a well-established institution and PIDP has been in operation since 1980. It's almost 30 years old. So that's how it all got started.

What was PIDP and the conference supposed to do? Well, I believe there is a general idea that both initiatives are to promote better relations with the United States, promote a dialogue among island leaders, and attempt to play a constructive role in the region in a very broad sense.

Over the years PIDP has had a variety of different programs. In the early years a lot of research was done with regard to economic development, and it has always played a significant role in providing educational and other training for people from the region.

Partnerships and Networks

Pacific Islands Development Program (PIDP) & Center for Pacific Islands Studies (CPIS)

The EWC has always had scholarships available for students from America, Asia and the Pacific. It has played a significant role in the education of people who have returned to their home countries and played significant leadership roles.

Students have been funded by the EWC through different fellowships and scholarships at different times.

But the EWC, as you know, is not a degree-granting institution. Students sponsored by the EWC take their degrees at UH, and as a consequence, there has always been a close relationship between the two institutions. In fact, in its early years, the EWC functioned as part of the UH. It may have been part of UH in those years.

One of those people who was very much involved in the development of Pacific Studies at the UH was Norman Meller. He was a political scientist, and in its early years, he served as deputy director for the EWC for a short time.

So there has been a close relationship for a long time. I don't remember when the two institutions officially went their separate ways. *[In 1975, the EWC separated from the UH.]*

However, because the UH and EWC have been so closely connected and are located on the same campus, there has always been a confusion on the part of many about the relationship between the two.

I mean people don't know, and they often assume we are both part of the same package or same institution.

I was always connected with both the UH program and PIDP. As indicated, I came to Hawaii in 1978, and by 1980 the Pacific was attracting a lot of interest. From the very beginning I was drawn into the East-West Center's programs and efforts to develop PIDP here. So my involvement with the EWC began then because I was new, trying to develop the Center for Pacific Islands Studies (CPIS) at the UH, and the EWC was trying to get PIDP launched or trying to find what to do after the first conference.

Many faculty, researchers and other staff at both UH and the EWC have always been involved in programs in both institutions.

And the EWC was certainly involved and interested in what was going on with Pacific Studies at UH.

Also a good number of the same students were involved in both institutions and there were also researchers with mutual interests in both places. CPIS and PIDP have always had a very close working relationship. It was one in which I always worked with the directors of the PIDP, and it

was always supportive about what we were doing at UH. It has been one of the best cooperative relationships between any two units on the Manoa campus.

I believe that our mutual interest in the Pacific has simply overridden any kind of institutional differences.

Why is it important for the Pacific people to have connections here? With PIDP and CPIS there has always been a sustained interest and commitment to the Pacific. In contrast, interest in the Pacific in Washington, D.C., waxes and wanes at different times mainly because of changes in American strategic interests. For example, after the Soviet threat was gone, Washington by and large lost interest in the Pacific.

PIDP and the CPIS became a link between the United States and the Pacific. Leaders from the Pacific would come here to Honolulu, meet with us, and they say, "You're our connection with the Pacific."

It certainly worked to our advantage. (laughter)

As I mentioned Norman Meller, who was director of the Pacific program at the UH in the 1970s received the first grant from the U.S. Department of Education in support for Pacific Islands at the UH. The National Defense Education Act (NDEA) was part of the United States response to the Soviet launch of the Sputnik satellite in the late 1950s. It was feared that America was falling behind in the sciences, and the NDEA included funding for doctoral studies in the sciences (including anthropology) and area studies programs.

In 1975, Meller secured the first three-year grant in support for Pacific Islands studies. At the time, the grant had to be renewed every third year (it is now every fourth year) and funding has been continuous ever since. The competition among universities for funding in support of area studies today is fierce.

So there's been that positive relationship between PIDP and the UH program and it has resulted from the kind of events we've talked about.

I was director of CPIS for 24 years, from 1978 to 2002 when I retired from the UH. My job was to build the program. But again, I came in at the right time because of all of the interest, nationally, in the Pacific. There is no doubt that the Pacific was neglected at the UH, and I happened to benefit from the same wave of interest that created the Pacific Basin Development Council, the Pacific Telecommunications Council and PIDP.

The relationship [*between PIDP and CPIS*] is as strong as it's ever been because there's a good number of students financed here. And a number of them are taking the master's degree in Pacific Islands studies.

People here at PIDP have helped teach some of the courses at UH. Tarcisius [*Kabutaulaka*] right now is co-teaching a course with Terence Wesley-Smith over at CPIS. And we sponsor joint seminars, our noontime Seminar Series on Pacific topics, and they originate at either PIDP or CPIS, or both, and they're usually held here at the EWC. So it's a joint effort. People at PIDP and the larger EWC serve on student committees not only at CPIS but also other degree programs at UH.

There are always EWC staff and researchers who are on the graduate student committees throughout the entire UH. That's really an important tie, the UH continually draws up talent at the EWC. EWC personnel also benefit when they are engaged with colleagues from their own disciplines at UH. It makes for a mutually beneficial relationship. I don't know of any president of the UH or EWC who has done anything but suggest that the two institutions should work together.

I have always been involved with both institutions, and to me, it has been a constructive collective enterprise.

Intellectual Innovations

PIDP Leadership

At the time of the first conference of leaders in 1980, Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara was the prime minister of Fiji, and he was the most well-known and influential of all Pacific leaders. Mara was a striking figure himself -- he was a very tall man, 6 feet 4 inches or 6 feet 5 inches, maybe taller, and very handsome. He came from the highest level of paramount chiefs in Fiji. Mara was also educated in New Zealand and at Oxford University in England. He came from a very aristocratic background and was groomed by the British to be the first prime minister of Fiji upon the nation's independence in 1970. He was one of the most self-confident men I have ever met.

Mara was a member of the EWC's Board of Governors when PIDP was founded. He saw PIDP as one of his creations and he was tremendously supportive of the program. If you had Mara's support, it was as if you were holding a royal flush. Also, Michael Somare, the first prime minister of Papua New Guinea was a good friend of Mara's. They saw eye to eye on most matters, and Somare was firmly behind the initiative here. Somare headed the largest nation in the Pacific, and Fiji was the second largest. The two men were the powerhouses of the region, and both were behind the developments here at the EWC.

The first three directors of PIDP were prominent Fijians hand-picked by Mara. The first was a man named James Makasiale, and he served from 1980 to 1983. Macu Salato was named acting director for several months in 1983. He was a very good friend of mine, and I became his biographer. Salato was followed by Filipe Bole from late 1983 to 1985. Bole is an important political figure in Fiji yet today.

With Fijians at the helm during PIDP's first half dozen years, there was some sentiment and joking in the region that PIDP was becoming a Fijian enterprise. (laughing)

People joked about "that's a Fijian club up there." There was a need to select a director from elsewhere, and Teo Fairbairn, a distinguished economist from Samoa was placed at the helm in 1985. He was followed by Charles Lepani, an experienced government official from Papua New Guinea who headed PIDP from 1986 to 1990. He is now Papua New Guinea's High Commissioner to Australia. Lepani was replaced by Sitiveni Halapua, an economist from Tonga, who has been director since 1990.

PIDP Research/Projects

Yes, the [*Pacific*] leaders certainly suggested areas that they wanted to have some research done or projects they would like to see implemented. In the early years, PIDP basically had a core of researchers here, a good number of researchers funded by different sources, doing different research that related to development in the islands, and funded by different sources. That was the thrust for quite a while. There was a lot of publication at that time. Many of those publications are displayed in the cases on the third floor of Burns Hall. They reflect that era. PIDP was a product of all of the forces and interests at that time. During his tenure as chair of PIDP, Mara certainly had great influence over what was done.

There have been and are other kinds of programs. Education, training and the Joint Commercial Commission was launched as another initiative. But research remains a main element yet today.

PIDP/"Talanoa"

Sitiveni Halapua has tried to launch something that wasn't done at PIDP before. But it should be remembered that one point of PIDP was to provide a ground for all Pacific leaders to come

together, and have discussions at their conference every third year. It's a chance where they can come together, talk to each other, and without any other agency trying to affect the agenda.

Sure, the EWC can suggest, but the aim is to promote discussion among the leaders.

Sitiveni's innovation has been the *Talanoa* initiative. There are many problems facing Pacific nations today, and many are not being resolved. A primary reason in many cases is that people don't communicate well enough among themselves in their own country. This would especially be true where populations are heterogeneous. Also there often is not enough dialogue among different countries.

If I understand Sitiveni correctly, he wants to promote constructive dialog wherever needed. He has been very active in Fiji and has attempted to facilitate productive communication between the different interest groups in Fiji to resolve some of the nation's problems. Sitiveni and a couple of colleagues have also led a *Talanoa* initiative in the Solomon Islands.

Talanoa is used to resolve whatever problems a country may have. Whether it's political, economic, whatever.

Fiji has a large range of problems: political, economic and social. And people don't talk. And then different churches have different agendas.

The Methodist church is very strong in Fiji, but there's the Anglican and Catholic churches as well. You then add the great divide between peoples of Indian descent and Fijian descent. There are a lot of diverse interests there.

“*Talanoa*” means to talk, talk story. And that means sitting down and talking to each other, facilitating communication between people who are not solving -- or who are having difficulty talking to each other and understanding each other.

Research Fellow at EWC/Pacific Islands Policy Series

I retired from the UH after 24 years, and now I have an appointment as an Adjunct Senior Research Fellow with PIDP.

All during my entire tenure at the UH, whenever I had some leave time, I was always invited to join PIDP and be provided with an office. There's one time at Moore Hall, where CPIS is located, when there was asbestos removal, and we had to vacate the building. PIDP and the EWC provided CPIS with office space for more than a semester to administer the program out of Burns Hall.

Well, I continue to work with the program here and some students whether they're EWC grantees and/or students at UH. I occasionally serve on graduate student committees. I have been doing some of my own writing. I am also working with Jerry Finin. Last year, we founded and now serve as co-editors for PIDP's new *Pacific Islands Policy* series.

The *Pacific Islands Policy (PIP)* series is a publication program of papers on different policy issues in the Pacific. The first two came out last year, another one is just coming out right now, and about three more are in the pipeline. When I was at the UH, CPIS launched the *Pacific Islands Monograph* series, and a journal called the *Contemporary Pacific: A Journal of Island Affairs*. I remain on the editorial boards of both. They are published by the UH Press [UHP]. I always worked closely with the Press. It was one of the most rewarding experiences I had at the UH and I was a member of the UHP board for 20 years.

I have always been very much involved in publishing. So I am now involved with the EWC's publishing program.

The first paper in the PIP series was by Francis Hezel, a Jesuit priest, who has been involved in the Pacific since the early 1960s in Micronesia. He is the director of the Micronesia Seminar, a

think-tank educational program based on Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia. It plays a very important role in Micronesia. His paper was on economic development in two Micronesian nations.

The second one was by Terence Wesley-Smith, a political scientist at CPIS, and is about the two Chinas and their competition for influence in the Pacific today.

The third was authored by a young woman, Rosita McDonald, who was here at the EWC until recently. She is now at the Asia Foundation in Washington, D.C. Her paper is an analysis of law and justice in Papua New Guinea today. So that's the publishing agenda here with PIDP. We have a few other papers in the pipeline.

Pacific Islands Report

I am not directly involved with the *Pacific Islands Report*, but it has had a huge impact as an important source for news on the Pacific. *PIR* is important for anyone interested in the Pacific.

As far as visibility for PIDP and the EWC, there could not have been a better move.

People all over the Pacific and elsewhere in the world now read it each weekday. Formerly, Pacific news was always hard to get, but *PIR* changed that.

At one time, there was a news magazine called the *Pacific Islands Monthly*, which was started in the '30s, and died maybe 10 years ago. It has now been replaced by *Islands Business* published monthly in Fiji. The name is a misnomer. Formerly, it was a business magazine for Fiji, but it has now replaced *Pacific Islands Monthly* as the leading monthly news magazine for the region.

Another magazine called the *Pacific* is published locally, and it has been around for a long time. Initially, focused on the American islands but it is somewhat broader today.

Until *PIR* was established, daily news on the Pacific region was never available in any significant way. Al Hulsen started *PIR* here several years ago. Al had a long career with public

radio, both in Hawaii and elsewhere. Al was with PIDP for a while and he started the *Pacific Islands Report*. It was a rather modest initiative in the beginning, but it quickly caught on. If something happens and *PIR* doesn't appear on a given day, we receive emails immediately asking, "Where is it?!"

There was a time, an interim, when Al left to return to Hawaii Public Radio and there was a lapse before he was replaced. A rumor circulated that *PIR* had been discontinued. PIDP was flooded by e-mail after e-mail.

Peter Wagner replaced Al, and he can tell you how many hits *PIR* receives each day. Peter has also brought *PIR* to a higher level of performance. The productivity is incredible. Its impact is not just on the Pacific Islands. People in Australia, New Zealand, any university that's connected to the Pacific, any government agency, any place in the world that's interested in the Pacific.

There's strong interest in several places in Europe in Pacific Studies. In France particularly, and in Britain. And they read *PIR* every day.

There's nothing else like it. *PIR* is unique. It's worth every penny ever spent on it. I would encourage the EWC to put more resources into *PIR* because one of the things that Wagner is trying to do is work with young Islanders to become professional journalists in the region. He had tremendous success with a young Palauan woman who worked with him for a while. She's gone now. She had to go back to Palau.

And he would like to have support for internships for Islanders to do more of that. It could be a significant contribution to the region. In any event, *PIR* has had a major impact.

PIDP/CPIS Publications

With one exception, CPIS and PIDP have never co-published. The exception was Ratu Mara's *The Pacific Way: A Memoir [published in 1997]*.

At one time the EWC was connected with the UH Press. But it now has its own enterprise in collaboration with Stanford University.

As I mentioned, one of the things I really enjoyed during my career at the UH was being involved with the UH Press. A university press reflects and says much about the quality of the institution. The UH Press is a world leader in Pacific and Asian Studies. I was very pleased to start the *Pacific Islands Monograph* series and the journal.

In my early years at UH, I wrote a monthly column for the *Pacific Islands Monthly* for about three years. Writing a monthly column for an Australian news magazine made me aware of one thing. I realized there wasn't an academic journal that dealt with the contemporary Pacific.

There was the *Journal of Pacific History* at Australian National University and other journals focused on the Pacific, but there was not a journal, an academic journal, that focused on the contemporary Pacific. It seemed there was a big vacuum there.

The *Pacific Islands Monograph* series has been successful, but the journal is more important because it is unique and filled a void. When you consider that the journal [*Contemporary Pacific*] and *PIR* are produced on the same campus, it certainly gives us great visibility with regard to issues concerning the Pacific Islands today.

There's no other place in the world that has the combination we have here. And we should always be aware of the value of the Pacific Collection [*at UHM Hamilton Library*]. Well, all of this reminds me that I couldn't have asked for a better place to enjoy a professional career.

Life After EWC

I'll always be interested in the Pacific, but for the immediate future, I'll do what I'm doing now, but I will see a time when I'll probably withdraw to do other things.

I don't have anything in mind right now. My wife and I have been doing a good bit of travel.

I'm the Smithsonian's lecturer for its annual trip in the Pacific each year.

The trips are part of several travel packages that are designed for people who want to have some in-depth exposure to the region they are visiting. I've been doing the Smithsonian trips for about 20 years. My wife and I do one once each year, but we're doing other travel to places on the mainland that we have never visited. We've also traveled to the Amazon, Machu Picchu, and we plan to go to Patagonia and Terra del Fuego early next year. We have been to Europe a couple times and plan to do some more travel there.

Reflections on Career, Pacific Leaders

One of the most rewarding things of being involved with the EWC and UH has been the people I met. I have interacted with people from all over the Pacific during the three decades we have been in Hawaii. We have actually been involved much longer in the Pacific since we first went to the Marshalls in 1963. But after being at the UH and EWC since 1978 especially, I have met and worked with a great many interesting people from many and varied walks of life.

Jim Makasiale was a physically big and well-built man, but I would say he was a very laid-back guy. He was very calm and quiet, and very efficient as a director. Among other things, he was a government agriculturalist in Fiji. He died as a relatively young man, not long after he left here.

He was very well-respected at home.

Macu Salato

One of the most valued friendships I ever had in my life was Macu Salato, the man whose biography I wrote. As mentioned, Salato was PIDP's interim director between Makasiale and Bole. Salato was born as a commoner on a remote island in Fiji and spoke no English at age 11.

By chance, he got into the school for chief's sons and he met Ratu Mara [*Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara*] there.

Salato went on to become the director of the South Pacific Commission, the major regional organization at the time. Earlier, he went to Fiji Medical School and was second in command of the Fiji's medical service. He studied medicine and public health in London during two separate years, and became director of public health education for all of Fiji.

Late in his professional career, Ratu Mara appointed him as Fiji's acting High Commissioner to London. For a man who was born as a commoner in a very hierarchical society, his accomplishments were nothing short of remarkable.

Many people described him as “a gentleman of the old school” - meaning an English gentleman who is courteous in manner and dignified. He was one of the most considerate people I ever met. Salato always encouraged people to do the very best that they can and make the most of their talents. He worked well with people and always tried to bring out the best in them. He was very low-key, was quiet in demeanor and had a great sense of humor.

I always valued my relationship with him. I first met him during my early months at the UH when I attended my first meeting of the South Pacific Commission in Noumea, New Caledonia. At the time, Salato was in his last year as Secretary-General. Don Topping, a faculty member at UH, knew Salato and suggested that I arrange to bring him to Hawaii in some visiting capacity. A Fulbright scholar-in-residence award was arranged for the 1980-81 academic year and Salato was given visiting status at both the UH and PIDP. He served as a resource person for faculty and students, gave guest lectures and participated in seminars for graduate students.

We brought Salato back in early 1982 with the hope that he would write his autobiography. He was interested and gave it a try. He made notes, drafted outlines and wrote sections of some

chapters. However, the distractions in Honolulu were too great. He and his wife were very popular on the local social scene, and he became involved in what was then the EWC's diplomat-in-residence program.

I always marveled at my relationship with Salato. He was old enough to have been my father, and we came from entirely different worlds. I came from the American Midwest, and he was from a small and very remote island in Fiji, but we became great friends. There was a good chemistry between us from the time we first met, and I think that it was our common interest and commitment to the Pacific that helped make the connection. I really loved that man.

[Editor's note: Kiste wrote a biography of Salato entitled, He served : a biography of Macu Salato.]

As I described in that biography, I took what he did, went through his papers, and interviewed 30 people from many different places in the Pacific. For a period of five years, I arranged my travel in the region to meet the people I needed to interview. If I needed to see somebody in Fiji, the Solomon Islands, New Zealand, New Caledonia, or wherever, I had arranged my travel to get to the needed destination. Everyone I asked wanted to be interviewed. They were anxious to talk about the man.

I believe that I mentioned that he was always self-effacing. A very accomplished man, but modest. He was gracious. He always had a sense of humor.

One time I had been at Australian National University for a while. I came back through New Zealand where he happened to be at the time, and I had dinner with Macu and his wife. He asked me how I had liked Australia. I replied that I had been in Australia long enough on that occasion to get a better feel for Australian English. Salato looked at me and said, "Bob, you know, that's really Kangaroo English." (laughter) And then he paused and said "You know, you

Yanks speak Hopalong Cassidy English." He spoke Oxford English and even had the idioms right. To hear Salato speak and not see him, you would have thought that he was a cultured, English gentleman.

So we had a Fijian man speaking to me in Oxford English telling me about Americans speaking Hopalong Cassidy English and the Australians speaking Kangaroo English.

Everybody I interviewed had good things to say about him. It was certainly the most enjoyable piece of research I have ever done.

One of the most interesting interviews about Salato that I had was with Ratu Mara. The last interview that I did for the biography was an hour with Mara. Mara and Salato were not only schoolboys together, Mara played a major role in shaping Salato's career. As I mention at the end of the biography, a comment made by Mara suggested the title for the book.

The last question I asked Mara, "Was there any one thing above all other things that should be included in Salato's biography?" After a brief pause, Ratu Mara replied: "Macu Salato could have worn the motto of the Prince of Wales: Ich dien (I served). I entitled the book: *He Served: A Biography of Macu Salato*. I discuss that in the latter pages of the book.

I was fortunate to have an hour with Mara. He didn't give freely of his time. Another thing resulted from the interview with Mara. Sir Robert Sanders, a long-term career officer in the British colonial service in Fiji joined us for the interview.

He had been one of Mara's right-hand men for many years and he had also known Salato for much of his career. After the interview, Sir Robert and I adjourned to another room in Government House in Suva, and he informed me that he was assisting Mara with his own memoir and asked if we in Hawaii might be interested in publishing it. I jumped at the chance, and that's how we got it.

These kind of things are what have made working in the Pacific so rich in personal experience.

As I worked and traveled in the Pacific, I often asked myself: "Do I really get paid to do this?"

(laughter)

A lot of people working in the Pacific feel that way. They're engaged in something they want to be engaged in, they're totally involved and committed to it, and they get paid to do it.