

**News from the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance**

**For Immediate Release**

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**Hawai'i Conservation Week 2007 and the 15<sup>th</sup> Hawai'i Conservation Conference**

## **Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott receives prestigious HCA Distinguished Service Award**

August 2, 2007

Each year since 1997 the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance has recognized persons reaching the highest esteem within the conservation community. These persons are nominated by their peers and voted upon by the partners of the Hawai'i Conservation Alliance.

This year's HCA Distinguished Service Award has been presented to Dr. Isabella Abbott for her more than 60 years of research, publications, and mentorship on limu and ethnobotany. The award honors exceptional service, personal effort and unselfish interest, embodying long-term dedication and tenacity in environmental conservation for the Hawaiian Islands.

Dr. Abbott has received many accolades over her 88 years. In 2005 she was a recipient of the Living Treasures of Hawai'i award, and the David Marlo award amongst many others.

This wonderful researcher and author of more than 150 scientific papers and eight books is regarded as one of the world's foremost experts on marine algae, or limu, in the Pacific region.

Dr. Abbott was born in Hana, Maui. She attended Kamehameha School for Girls. Abbott achieved many notable firsts. She was the first Native Hawaiian to earn a doctorate, the first woman faculty member in the Department of Biological Sciences at Stanford University. She has been a University of Hawai'i professor for more than 21 years.

Her plant knowledge has played a key role in the revival of Hawaiian culture through her ethnobotanical publications, television and movies appearances, such as in Edgy Lee's "The Hawaiians – Reflecting Spirit". Dr. Abbott is keenly interested in the protection of traditional plants and perpetuation of ancient knowledge about their cultivation and use.

Dr. Abbott is a commissioner for Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission working for the revitalization and revegetation of Kaho'olawe. This has led to the continuing restoration of plant life on the island since its demilitarization and partial clearing of unexploded munitions in the 1990s.

After 60 years she still is an active researcher at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, and can be found there virtually six days a week. She is an active participant in marine issues with the Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources,

Department of Agriculture, NOAA National Marine Sanctuaries Program and Papahānaumokuākea National Marine Monument, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the State Legislature, and Bishop Museum, where she serves on the board of directors.

### **Past Distinguished Service Award Winners**

Descriptions are available online at: <http://www.hawaiiconservation.org/awards.html>

- 2006: Dieter Mueller-Dombois, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
- 2005a: David Woodside, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- 2005b: Tim Tunison, Hawai‘i Volcanoes National Park
- 2004: Bryan Harry, Director of the National Park Service Pacific West Region
- 2003: Kenneth Kaneshiro, Director, Center for Conservation Research and Training, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
- 2002: Sheila Conant, Professor of Zoology, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
- 2001: Nancy Glover, Former Senior Program Officer, Secretariat for Conservation Biology
- 2000: Lloyd Loope, Research Scientist, USGS, Haleakalā Field Station, Haleakalā National Park
- 1999: Charles H. Lamoureux, Former Professor of Botany, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa, and Director of the Lyon Arboretum
- 1998: Don Reeser, Superintendent of Haleakalā National Park
- 1997: Clifford Smith, Director of the National Parks Service Study Unit, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

Fifteen organizations currently make up the HCA: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration National Marine Sanctuaries Program, National Park Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Forestry Service, U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Department of Defense U.S. Army Garrison Hawai‘i Natural Resource Program, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Ecological Services, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Wildlife Refuge Complex, U.S. Geological Survey Biological Resource Discipline, Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Aquatic Resources, Hawai‘i Department of Land and Natural Resources Division of Forestry and Wildlife, University of Hawai‘i at Hilo College of Agriculture, Forestry, and Natural Resource Management, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa Center for Conservation Research and Training, Kamehameha Schools, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and The Nature Conservancy Hawai‘i.