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*For Immediate Release*

73 Years After Pearl Harbor, Woodbury University Bestows Honorary Degree on Fashion Design Student from Class of ‘42

***Her Studies Interrupted by War, Sadako Alison Yamanaka (Watanabe) Awarded BFA,***

***Realizing Lifelong Dream; Degree Presented During Ceremony at State Capitol***

HONOLOLU (November 15, 2014) – Appreciation doesn’t diminish with the passage of time.

For [Woodbury University](http://www.woodbury.edu) and one of its Fashion Design students -- Sadako Alison Yamanaka (Watanabe), now 93 -- the appreciation is mutual. In ceremonies Friday at the Hawaii State Capitol, Woodbury awarded an honorary Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Fashion Design to Mrs. Yamanaka, who would have graduated with the Class of 1942.  Among those making the presentation: Dr. Luís María R. Calingo, Woodbury President, and Rep. Joseph M. Souki, Speaker of the Hawaii House of Representatives and a graduate of Woodbury’s Class of 1954.

Alison Watanabe left her home on Maui to enter Woodbury College in September 1940, majoring in Executive Fashion Arts. In the wake of the December 7, 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor, she made the decision to leave California and move to Colorado.  Alison was just six months shy of graduating, but, owing to the disruption of the war, never earned her degree.

“I am so grateful to Woodbury University for presenting me the diploma, which I was unable to obtain due to World War II,”Mrs**.** Yamanaka said. “I really never expected to receive anything once the events after December 1941 took place. What a special honor this is, beyond anything I dreamt. My granddaughter Cheryl began pursuing this without me knowing. It has taken me by surprise and I can’t express my gratitude enough to everyone involved. At my age, I simply try to keep life quiet and appreciate the nicer things that happen.”

“I knew it as Woodbury College back in the ‘40s but they have always had such marvelous faculty and leadership,” she added. “It was a privilege to attend back then and it is obviously still top-notch. I hope all people seeking education persevere and reach their goals. Education is important and so is family. Today, I have both.”

“Sadako made the bold decision to leave the familiar comforts of her Maui home to advance her education and fulfill her dreams,” said Rep. Souki. “Her remarkable determination to pursue her education and her dedication to family is what we are celebrating today. I am proud that we share two special things in common: we are both from Maui and attended Woodbury University in California. I would like to congratulate Alison and her family, and thank Woodbury University for recognizing her accomplishments.”

“On behalf of my daughter and our entire family, we are extremely grateful to the university for making this happen,” said Bill Yamanaka, her son, who described editing and publishing three short booklets based on her informal recollections: "To My Diary: Memoirs of My Parents," focused on her parents' immigration to Hawaii from Japan, then her growing-up years on Maui. The second booklet, "Me the Journee," describes her memories coming of age amid the simple island life of Hawaii and travelling to the mainland during WWII; included in that volume are her experiences attending then-Woodbury College and the subsequent interruption by the war. The third booklet, "Kazoku (Family)" deals with the value of family and, in Yamanaka’s words, “how she cherishes those of us who are still left.”

“A member of the Nisei community of second-generation Japanese-Americans whose lives were disrupted during World War II, Alison has shown tremendous perseverance,” said Dr. Calingo.  “All of Woodbury salutes her and joins with me in welcoming her again to our community.”

**About Woodbury University**

Founded in 1884, Woodbury University is one of the oldest institutions of higher education in Southern California.  Woodbury offers bachelor's degrees from the School of Architecture, School of Business, School of Media, Culture & Design, and College of Transdisciplinarity, along with a Master of Arts (MA) in Media for Social Justice, Master of Architecture (MArch), Master of Interior Architecture (MIA), Master of Science in Architecture (MSArch), and Master of Leadership.  The San Diego campus offers Bachelor of Architecture and Master of Architecture degrees, as well as an MSArch degree with concentrations in Real Estate Development and Landscape + Urbanism.  Woodbury ranks 15th among the nation’s “25 Colleges That Add the Most Value,” according to *Money Magazine****.***Visit [www.woodbury.edu](http://www.woodbury.edu/) for more information.

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