



A History of **THE MOANALUA GARDENS COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION**

Land Development of Moanalua Gardens

Our community was born when **Samuel Richard Damon** of Damon Estate announced the sale of 1,000 acres of its Moanalua lands for \$9,650,000 on January 13, 1957. The Damon Estate lands were an "ahupua'a" (land from the mountains to the sea) granted to **Samuel Mills Damon** (d. 1924) by **Bernice Pauahi Bishop** in 1884 for his services as finance minister to the Kingdom of Hawaii.

The original subdivision was developed by **Clarence T.C. Ching** of City Realty, acting on behalf of a group of local investors. The land included the area mauka of Moanalua Highway and on each side of Tripler Hospital and the Salt Lake area. The lake, which was valued at \$150,000, was considered a potential park site. Moanalua Gardens Park and the Moanalua Golf Course remained the property of the Damon Estate, as well as the community center and shopping center area known as Mapunapuna. The sale was the biggest real estate transaction by an island estate for development of fee simple homes. Lots ranged in price from \$10,000 to \$12,000.

The historic Samuel Mills Damon homesite, high on a Moanalua knoll, was added to the Moanalua Gardens subdivision in 1964 after the death of his daughter, **Mary Mills Damon** in the summer of 1963. **Herbert Horita**, Realtor, subdivided the property. The tract of land west of Jarrett White Road was the last increment to be developed. Referred to as the Ujimori Tract, it was bought by **Jack Ujimori**, Realtor, from Clarence T.C. Ching in 1965. By the end of 1969 all 163 lots were sold. The total residential population of the Moanalua Gardens subdivision is over 1,000 households.

The Formation of the Moanalua Gardens Community Association

The first unit of the Moanalua Gardens Community Association was started by Hawaiian Telephone Company employees who were members of a carpool who formulated the plans while riding back and forth to work. The first officers elected in May 1960 were **K.C. Kam**, President; **Eloise Monsarrat**, Secretary; **Bob Tom**, Treasurer; **Kosei Yamane** and **Albert Hamamoto**, Board Members. The second MGCA President was **Alfred Coelho**. Meetings were held in the garages of residents. With the help of City & County Supervisor **Richard Kageyama**, Ala Nolonolu was closed to traffic so Bob Tom's garage could be the stage for holiday events.

In April of 1961, the Tripler-Moanalua Community Association with 178 residential lots, was organized with **Henry Ng** as its first President. Soon after, the residents on upper Mahiole and Onipaa Streets (Unit IV) and the residents of upper Ala Amoamo Street (Unit V) started organizing their own association.

After a year or two of functioning as separate entities, the leaders of the three groups met in early 1962 and decided to form a single association, to eliminate duplicate functions, programs and expenses. A united group carried a stronger and more effective voice serving the needs and welfare of the people and more specifically, serving the community's legislative and political concerns. The first President of the united organization, **Albert Hamamoto**, was elected in 1962. One of their initial actions was to appear before the Honolulu City Council to request the construction of a temporary 4-acre playground and comfort station on the present site of Moanalua Intermediate. A request for a lighted playcourt and ballfield followed shortly thereafter.

A chronology of events in the history of Moanalua Gardens

- 1960** The MGCA Bulletin was started by **Katsumi Onishi**, and delivered by the Boy Scouts. This duty was later taken over by volunteers.
- 1961** The first service organization, the **Moanalua Lions Club**, is formed under the leadership of **William Furtado**, with forty community men as charter members.
- 1961** **Moanalua Gardens Missionary Church** opens with the **Reverend Don Rohrs** as pastor.
- 1961** **Moanalua Elementary School** welcomes students. Its first Principal is **Alexander Parker**. The cafetorium serves the Association and the community as a center for meetings and functions.
- 1966** **MGCA** is very instrumental in stopping a land use change from conservation to urban for 600 acres of hillside land proposed for a 1200 unit residential development above Onipaa Street.
- 1967** **Moanalua Intermediate School** opens. MGCA effectively lobbies and works with elected officials to accelerate construction of the school. **Richard Akiyama** serves as its first Principal.
- 1960s** The Ujimori Tract and Horita's Lalamilo Street Development are the final additions to the neighborhood, making a total of approximately 1,000 units.

A chronology of events in the history of Moanalua Gardens

(continued)

- 1970s** The **Recreation Center, tennis courts, the Puuloa interchange** are constructed and the Moanalua Highway is improved.
MGCA's programs are expanded to include an orchid club, golf club, tennis club, dance classes, senior citizens' activities, and annual picnic, Christmas party, Halloween night, fun night, etc.
A welfare committee is also established, and a scholarship committee to provide monetary assistance to high school seniors to continue their education.
- 1972** **Moanalua High School** opens. **James Kim** serves as its first Principal.
- 1981** **Judy Kishimoto** took over publication of MGCA Bulletin and served until her retirement from that post in 2006.
- 1982** The **Neighborhood Security Watch** program is started, about the sixth neighborhood on Oahu to organize. The main coordinator is **Mary Tom**.
- 1995** With the help of **Senator Rey Graulty's** office By-Laws of the MGCA are adopted & Articles of Incorporation are filed with the state. **Neighborhood Security Watch seminars** begun, headed by **Ronald E. Jones**.
- 1997** MGCA applies for tax-exempt status and IRS determination letter dated Dec. 11, 1997, received under IRS code Section 501(c)(4).
Miles Takahashi volunteers for third consecutive term as President.
- 2000** A new millenium and a new directory is printed. **Ronald E. Jones** starts his third consecutive term as President, along with other members of the Executive Board.
- 2003** As part of Mayor Jeremy Harris's Vision Team No. 37, **President Ron Jones** and Committee Chair **Dan Takamatsu**, have Silver Buttonwood trees planted for the re-greening of Ala Mahamoe Street.
Cullen Hayashida heads a grant funded study of the needs of the aged in Moanalua Gardens and compiles and prints a Resource Directory.
- 2004** In February, the first City & County off-leash park for dogs opens at Moanalua Gardens. **Betty and Clayton Kamida** chair MGCA's 3 year effort.
Pres. Ron Jones' Vision Team helps the Moanalua Seniors get a new comfort station built at the park and funds the expansion of the Recreation Center.
- 2006** On August 24th, **Judy Kishimoto** is honored at a Honolulu Country Club dinner for 25 years of service as MGCA Bulletin editor, ably succeeded by **Irene Moreland**.
On December 29, 2006, the 22-acre Moanalua Gardens Park is purchased by **John Philip "JP" Damon**, great-grandson of Samuel Mills Damon, for \$5.05 million as the Damon Estate is dissolved. He intends to keep the former home of Prince Lot (later King Kamehameha V) open to the public.
- 2007** MGCA **President Ronald E. Jones** appointed to Moanalua Gardens Foundation Board of Directors.
Moanalua Off Leash Dog Park is adopted by the **Pearl Harbor Chief Petty Officer Association**.
- 2008** The MGCA Membership Directory 2008 is printed and distributed by Boy Scouts. A new MGCA service, Refrigerator Magnets, is introduced by President Ron Jones, with emergency phone numbers, recycling information & other vital numbers and is distributed to all homes in the Gardens, courtesy of **Senators Norman Sakamoto & Donna Mercado Kim** and **Representative Lynn Finnegan**.
- 2009** **Puuloa Road** renovations completed after 20 years of budget battles and design changes, widening it to 4 lanes, with turnout lanes, sidewalks, and parking areas.
- 2010** Full recycling comes to the Gardens. Grey, blue, and green receptacles issued by City & County in full compliance with island wide effort to reduce waste and landfill usage.
- 2011** **State Representatives Aaron Ling Johanson** and **Linda Ichiyama** are elected to office for the Moanalua Gardens area. Both are products of Moanalua area school systems.
Jason Tamura takes over as MGCA Bulletin Editor, replacing **Irene Moreland** who did an outstanding job for 5 years.
MGCA Director Toddi Nakagawa designs and sets up MGCA's website – www.mymgca.com
- 2012** The MGCA Membership Directory 2012 is again revised and published under leadership of **President Ron Jones**, and the Refrigerator Magnet is updated and distributed, courtesy of **Senator Donna Mercado Kim, Representatives Aaron Ling Johanson** and **Linda Ichiyama**. **President Ron Jones** retires as President of the MGCA due to health reasons after holding that post for almost 16 years.

Sources: Historic Committee Report, Rusty T. Kawamura, Chairman, Albert Hamamoto, Co-Chairman.
MGCA Bulletin, August 1986, Vol. VI, No. 1., History of the Neighborhood Watch Program by Mary Tom