



## **KAREN KNUDSEN**

Adjunct Senior Fellow  
Office of the President  
East-West Center



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Karen Knudsen has spent four decades professionally involved with the Asia-Pacific region, including 30 years at the East-West Center. As EWC's director of the Office of External Affairs, she managed the Center's public engagement and public affairs activities, including international conferences, working with government leaders, diplomats, the media, and the Hawaii community. She oversaw the EWC Arts Program, Office of Alumni Affairs, served as vice president of the East-West Center Foundation, and was the Center's military liaison and specialist on Burma/Myanmar.

Upon retiring from the East-West Center, she continues her affiliation as an adjunct senior fellow and serves on the EWC Foundation Board of Directors and Executive Committee of the EWC Association (alumni).

Her current community and professional involvements include:

- Japan-America Society of Hawaii – Chair of the Board of Directors
- Pacific Forum's International Advisory Council – member
- American Red Cross - Pacific Islands Region, Board of Directors – member (The ARC - Pacific Islands Region serves Hawaii, American Samoa, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands, and new programs for US veterans from COFA nations.)
- Consular Corps of Hawaii – associate member
- Yushinkai Hawaii – member (Yushinkai is a women's Japanese Tea Ceremony group founded by Former First Lady Jean Ariyoshi to promote peace and cultural understanding.)
- Public Diplomacy Council of America (Washington, DC) – member

Previously, Karen served as an elected member of the Hawaii State Board of Education for 20 years and is a former member of Chaminade University's Board of Regents. She was a founding member of the Suu Foundation, a non-profit established on behalf of Nobel Peace Prize recipient and de facto leader of Burma/Myanmar Aung San Suu Kyi, to provide educational training support in Burma. Early in her career, she worked at the Pacific and Asian Affairs Council (PAAC) and as outreach coordinator for the University of Hawaii's Center for Pacific Islands Studies. She also worked in Public Affairs at the Hawaii State Judiciary and at Milici Valenti Advertising (now MVNP Advertising and Public Relations).

Karen and her husband, , served as Peace Corps Volunteers in Chuuk, Federated States of Micronesia. She holds an MA in Pacific Islands Studies from the University of Hawaii and a BA in Communication from the University of Nebraska at Omaha.