



SA'EU L. SCANLAN
COLLEGE PRESIDENT

"Have no fear because you'll be working for a ('gutsy') woman president. . . ," said a college administrator to a potential college teacher. He was referring, of course, to Dr. Sa'euteuga Le'au Scanlan, the first Samoan woman to hold the position of President of the American Samoa Community College (ASCC), the first Samoan to rise to that level in higher education in the Pacific territories.

Born on March 21, 1937, to Saipele S. Le'au and his devoted, gentle wife, Suluama Lea'ai, both of the village of Fagatogo, American Samoa, Sa'eu had an exciting and eventful childhood, the fourth in a family of 12 children.

After earning a Bachelor's degree from San Francisco State College, Sa'eu returned to American Samoa to teach. In 1961, she married Morris Scanlan of the village of Pago Pago. He is a prominent businessman in the community, and they have two children -- a boy in college and a girl still in her elementary school years. In her determination to do the best for the young people of her country, she managed to continue her education and earned a Master's degree from the University of Hawaii and a Ph.D. from Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

In 1970, Dr. Scanlan helped launch the American Samoa Community College, which had its meager beginnings in old Navy worn-out living quarters and broken-down Marine barracks buildings. She became the vice president of the college in July of 1978, and in January of 1979, 6 months later, Dr. Sa'euteuga Le'au Scanlan became the third president of the American Samoa Community College.

Dr. Scanlan approached her new challenge with the organized energy of a professional. With clear vision and integrity she proceeded to steer the development of the still infant learning institute, the only institute of higher learning in the territory, vital to the territory's social, economic, and political development. Her appointment to the college presidency was hailed by a number of her colleagues as an answer to the college's need for firm and honest leadership.

Because education was a high priority in American Samoa, it was inevitable that this developing educational institute would come under the constant scrutiny of its community, the political leaders in particular. With unrestrained stamina to carry on, Sa'e'u Scanlan persevered and continued to build the American Samoa Community College to respectable status, now one of the finest of its type in the Pacific Basin. A visiting professor from a large mainland university reportedly had thought of the American Samoa Community College, prior to his arrival on the scene, as nothing but "back-woods." It was not a surprise to find him quickly do a turn-around in his thoughts as he confessed, "What I was not prepared for (coming here to teach in the ASCC) was the high level of your community college." He added, "The great job you are doing surprised me completely."

The ASCC, with its now spacious and beautiful lush-green campus located on the western side of the main island (Tutuila), has become the pride of its clientele as it has continued to grow steadily under the competent leadership of its "gutsy" woman president, Dr. Sa'e'u Scanlan. Several new buildings were constructed to accommodate the expanded curriculum and course offerings and an increasing student enrollment.

The college faculty, selected carefully by Scanlan to ensure that their aims were parallel to the college's aims as she sees them, also grew, in size as well as in advanced professional preparation and experience. The faculty has grown from less than 20 in 1979 to approximately 70 in 1984. Class offerings have been carefully planned and expanded to include courses that lead to the Associate of Arts degree, the Associate of Science degree, and credits in a variety of areas that earn Certificates of Proficiency after a year of special training. Working diligently to help qualify the American Samoa Community College for Land Grant funds, Dr. Scanlan succeeded in 1982 to acquire Land Grant status, thus enabling the college to support offerings in agriculture and home economics. Already in the college catalog were course offerings in journalism, computer training, nursing and a highly popular music program. Dr. Scanlan also introduced a course offering in career counseling.

By nature, Sa'e'u Scanlan is modest and gentle like her mother. She is, however, a determined individual with a strong sense of her own self-worth. As one of the college administrators describes her, "She comes through in a crisis. She studies the situation with infinite care, looking at all angles. Then she makes up her mind and she does not back down." Her strength lies partly in the fact that while she asserts her authority she shows respect for her colleagues and co-workers.

"Scanlan has the ability to bring out the best in both students and faculty," says one of her associates at the college. She tells her faculty and staff, "Each student (at the college) is an individual entity, a being with his (her) own wants, feelings, ambitions, desires. We must help all of them. Direct them. Show them. Lead them." She continues:

Samoan students have great potential. They must realize it by being serious about their (college) education, applying

themselves to the utmost. . . . We must instill a strong feeling for personal advancement in every student. Every student must have drive, a desire to learn. That is our aim. That is the aim of the American Samoa Community College.

Once she has clarified her aim and instilled into her faculty and staff her dreams of making the college superior, Sa'eu Scanlan delegates authority with sensitivity, allows her "leaders to lead," thus giving herself more freedom to plan, think, and be creative. Her door has always been open, however, to student and faculty alike, and she always has been ready to counsel and to help with problems and/or difficulties that arise.

During her tenure as president, the American Samoa Community College became fully accredited by the Western Accrediting Association of Schools and Colleges.

Sa'eu Scanlan is active in other affairs of government both on the local and international scenes, a pillar of strength in her church affairs and an active participant in community affairs and in the distinguished women's associations of which she is a member. She is currently president of the newly formed American Samoa National Women's Association.