

HKCC HONORS CHRISTINE CAMP: ENTREPRENEUR OF THE YEAR

The Hawaii Korean Chamber of Commerce Entrepreneur of the Year is real estate developer, community leader, marathon runner and mother of one, **Christine Hyun Hee Camp**. As founder, President and CEO of **Avalon Development Company, LLC**, multi-tasking and working hard is a part of her daily regimen. Since 1984, Christine Camp has



distinguished herself as one of the few women who have been successful in Hawaii's real estate development, an industry typically dominated by men. She started her development company in 1999 as a one-woman operation. Ten years later, Avalon Development boasts a team of 14 who have developed a 15-acre industrial park, a single-family housing project, three condominium projects, built an office complex and three retail centers on Maui, the Big Island, and Oahu. Christine Camp has received recognition for her leadership numerous times and her influential leadership has made a difference in our community. "Christine is perhaps one of the best examples of what an individual can do with a dream, plan, and hard work," says Taeyong Kim, a Korean community member. "The results of her hard work and leadership are found throughout the community. She certainly has made Hawaii a better place to live."

The Hawaii Korean Chamber of Commerce proudly salutes 2010 Entrepreneur of the Year, Christine Camp for her leadership and excellence in business.

Q. How would you describe your company?

Avalon Group is a consortium of three operating companies. Avalon Development Company develops shopping centers, industrial parks, condominiums, residential homes and other commercial real estate for sale and for lease. Avalon Commercial is a commercial brokerage that provides leasing, sales and management of investment, retail and office properties. Avalon Realty is a residential brokerage. We also provide consulting and project management services for landowners and investors worldwide.

Q. How is your business unique?

We believe that the key to successful real estate development and management is local expertise. The local knowledge we offer is unlike most real estate services companies because we provide a vertically-integrated service. Originally, we were a development company that owned properties and an investment advisory firm for real estate. As we grew, we realized that our expertise about ownership requirements was very valuable and could be leveraged. That distinctive has proven to be our key to cultivating client loyalty and made us recession-proof.

Q. What motivated you to start your own business?

Coming from a family of entrepreneurs (I believe most Korean Americans are entrepreneurs at heart), I welcomed the idea of having my own business. I decided to focus all of my efforts toward learning as much as possible about the real estate business, worked at being an entrepreneur for 5 years learning about running a small real estate office. Then I expanded my experience by working with Castle & Cooke, the largest landowner on Oahu, to learn about large corporate development. Alexander and Baldwin, the largest landowners on Maui and Kauai, provided me an avenue to learn outer-island development and real estate. I worked 5 years with every company to ensure a well-rounded

experience. Once I had that, I opened my own business with all three previous employers signing on as my first paying clients.

Q. What are some of the challenges you have faced and overcome?

Starting a real estate development company without any capital was very difficult. It forced me to build a services business to fund the acquisitions. It also necessitated becoming creative, finding partners and giving up a big share of the project. This helped me learn that you can't do everything on your own. You really have to find sponsors who believe in your abilities.

Q. How does your business contribute to the community?

We are active members of advocacy groups who voice concerns of small businesses. Company employees also contribute leadership on board memberships and we make financial contributions averaging up to 5% of the company's profits each year.

Q. How has your Korean ancestry played a role in your business?

Most Korean Americans that I know have the mentality that anything is possible if one works hard. Instead of the victim mentality, Korean Americans believe in self-reliance. I learned this by watching my family and other Koreans who are here in Hawaii, and I feel strongly that these beliefs had a strong influence in all my business-related decision-making.

The Hawaii Korean Chamber of Commerce initiated the Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 1997. Eligible nominees must have conducted business for at least 3 years, be at least 50% Korean ethnicity and their company must demonstrate a pattern of business and employee growth under the nominee's direction and leadership. Nominees must also be active in community projects and organizations.



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