

DAKIO SYNE, 1943-2002

Tribute to a Pohnpeiian Library Leader

By Iris Falcam

The need for greater library and information resources and services in the Western Pacific is both urgent and important. Mr. Dakio Syne was a pioneer who will be remembered for developing the Micronesia-Pacific Collection at the College of Micronesia in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia (COM-FSM), where he was the Director of the Learning Resources Center. His recent passing robbed Micronesia of a great leader in library and archival development and information services.

by the Congress of Micronesia in 1979. The law designated the Community College of Micronesia, and later its successor, COM-FSM, as “the depository for documents and other articles of historic or cultural significance.” Dakio was subsequently appointed by FSM President Tosiwo Nakayama as FSM Archives Liaison. Though materials from the Trust Territory archives in Saipan constituted the initial collection of the FSM National Archives, Dakio added a section for the preservation of the College’s administrative records as well.

When asked, “Where would we be today had we not had the good fortune to have known and worked with Dakio?”, several credited Dakio for allowing them to participate in training sessions and workshops. All agree that Dakio’s caring, influence, and desire to properly educate his staff to cope with future complexities and technologies were a gigantic step toward professional librarianship.

Dakio Syne died on November 14, 2002, in Pohnpei at the age of 58. He was a true leader who held fast to a vision: developing quality libraries across Micronesia. While a seemingly quiet and unassuming man, he cared deeply and worked tirelessly not only to create the best library, but to give the

strong direction and support that helped shape the present generation of librarians in Micronesia.

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▷ Dakio Syne

More About Dakio

Tributes to Micronesia’s Librarian: Dakio Syne 1943 – 2002 is available through COM-FSM. Profits go to the Dakio Syne Memorial Fund. To order this publication, send checks or money orders to PIALA Dakio Syne Memorial Fund (checks also in the same name), Iris Falcam, Pacific Librarian, COM-FSM, Learning Resources Center, Post Office Box 159, Kolonia, Pohnpei FSM 96941. Cost is \$63 for locations in the U.S. and U.S.-affiliated territories, \$68.00 for other locations (includes shipping and handling).

In 1974, Dakio received a master’s degree in Library Science from the State University of New York at Albany. In 1990, he was formally recognized by Lorenzo I. DeLeon Guerrero, Governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, as “Micronesia’s first and only Professional Librarian.” Dakio held this distinction until his death.

Dakio was so passionate about libraries that he lived and breathed librarianship. As a struggling young college student on summer break from Guam in the 1960s, Dakio started collecting Micronesian materials while at the former Micronesia Teacher Education Center, now COM-FSM. Dakio was a clerk then, but he already envisioned a research library with a Micronesian collection. He meticulously segregated materials from the Center’s meager holdings into a Micronesia-Pacific section. Today the Micronesia-Pacific Collection holds over 13,000 materials – the result of over 30 years of labor.

When the Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives and Museums (PIALA) first formed, Dakio was among its co-founders and the only Micronesian librarian. PIALA was the first regional library association. Its inception marked the beginning of library cooperation, collaboration, research- and resource-sharing, and above all, unity among librarians and institutions in the Western Pacific region. By acclamation Dakio became PIALA’s first president, serving from 1991 to 1994.

Equally important to Dakio was the development of the FSM National Archives by virtue of Public Law 1-48, passed



Research studies have established a connection between the availability of books and early reading literacy. Through classroom libraries like this one at Siliaga Elementary School in American Samoa, students have the opportunity to practice wide reading.