

EVERYONE  
TOLD HER NO,  
SO SHE  
REWROTE  
THE RULES.



*Patsy Mink*  
AHEAD OF THE MAJORITY

a film by KIMBERLEE BASSFORD

WMM

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# Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority

A FILM BY KIMBERLEE BASSFORD

## SYNOPSIS



Photo Courtesy of Sandeep Bathala

**PATSY MINK: AHEAD OF THE MAJORITY** is the remarkable political journey of an Asian American woman who battled racism and sexism, shattered barriers and redefined American politics.

In 1965, Patsy Takemoto Mink became the first woman of color in the United States Congress. Seven years later, she ran for U.S. president and co-authored Title IX, the landmark legislation that opened up higher education and athletics to America's women.

The film goes beyond Mink's accomplishments to reveal a woman whose political journey was often lonely and tumultuous. Dispelling stereotypes of the compliant Japanese female, she encountered sexism within her own party, whose leaders disliked her independent style and openly maneuvered against her. Her liberal politics, particularly her vocal opposition to the Vietnam War, engendered intense criticism.

As Franklin Odo, director of the Smithsonian Asian Pacific American Program, says, "Patsy Mink offers a phenomenal political story, because she was so outside what you would expect of a woman, of a Japanese American and of a member of Congress." A woman of the people as well as a pioneer, a patriot and also an outcast, Patsy Mink's story proves endlessly intriguing, and is one that embodies the history, ideals and spirit of America.

## CREDITS

2009, 54 minutes, Color/B&W

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# Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority

A FILM BY KIMBERLEE BASSFORD

English

## PRODUCER/DIRECTOR/WRITER

& 14A44 0BB5A3

## EDITORS

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& 14A44 0BB5A3

## DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY

! 82704; 78

## COMPOSER

Joel Goodman

## NARRATOR

Jody Mishan

## EXECUTIVE PRODUCER

Marlene Booth

## ASSOCIATE PRODUCER

%>18 D=6

## PRODUCTION ASSISTANT

Margret Arakaki

## CREATIVE CONSULTANTS

Ellen Bruno

Sasha Khokha

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Mary Hawkesworth

Franklin Odo

Dana Takagi

Eric Yamamoto

## ACTORS

Jena Mukai

Kaitlyn Mukai

## SOUND

John McFadden

Paul Rusnak

## FESTIVALS & SCREENINGS

San Joaquin International Film Festival

**Winner - Spirit of Humanity Award,**

Nominated - Best Documentary Film

Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival

Nominated - Grand Jury Award for Best

Documentary

DisOrient Asian American Film Festival

**Winner - Grand Jury Prize for Best Feature**

00 8H\* >< 4=B 8< 4B8E0;

**Winner - Blue Magnolia Award for Best in**

**Festival, Winner - Bennett Spirit Award for**

**Most Positive Portrayal of a Woman, Winner**

**- Zora Neale Hurston Award for Best**

**Documentary Film**

San Francisco International Asian American  
Film Festival

**Winner - Comcast Audience Award for Best**

**Documentary Feature, Nominated - Best**

**Documentary Feature**

Honolulu International Film Festival

**Winner - Best Documentary, Winner - Best**

**Hawaiian Film, Winner - Gold Kahuna Award**

International \* >< 4=B 0H 8< 4B8E0;

Finalist - A>BB D;CA0; < 10BB03>A F0A3

Hawaii International Film Festival

**Winner - Audience Award for Favorite**

**Documentary, Nominated - Golden Orchid**

**Award for Best Documentary**

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## DIRECTOR BIO

**KIMBERLEE BASSFORD, DIRECTOR, PRODUCER, WRITER, and CO-EDITOR**, is an award-winning independent filmmaker from Hawai'i who has a passion for social issue and cultural stories. She was a producer on *UNNATURAL CAUSES* (2008), a four-hour national PBS documentary series and public engagement campaign that investigates our disturbing socioeconomic and racial disparities in health. She was also a producer on the three-hour PBS documentary series *THE MEANING OF FOOD* (2005), which explores the social significance of food in the United States.



Bassford had her directorial debut with *CHEERLEADER* (2003), a short documentary that follows a squad of young, bright-eyed California cheerleaders on its quest for the national cheerleading championships. The film aired on HBO Family and won the Student Academy Award in Documentary and CINE Golden Eagle. It also screened in film festivals in the U.S., Canada, Europe and New Zealand, including the Cannes Film Festival as part of the Kodak Emerging Filmmaker Showcase. The film has educational distribution through Documentary Educational Resources.

Bassford is a graduate of Punahou School and holds a B.A. in psychology from Harvard University and a master's journalism from the University of California, Berkeley. She owns Making Waves Films LLC, a documentary production company in Honolulu.

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## WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT PATSY MINK: AHEAD OF THE MAJORITY

"An inspiring documentary."

G. Allen Johnson

*San Francisco Chronicle*

"[Mink was] outside the mainstream, edgy, ahead of her time, a champion for democratic principles.... a must-see for anyone needing hope that some politicians stay true to their campaign promise... a close study of one of the USA's most revered politicians for egalitarian principles."

Rady Ananda

*OpEd News*

"Inspirational.... a pleasing tribute to the congresswoman."

Ryan Senaga

*Honolulu Weekly*

Bassford's treatment of Mink's life lives up to its title.... Someday, America will live up to Mink's version of the country.

Peter Wong

*BeyondChron*

## MORE INFO

**For press and exhibition booking requests please contact:**

Julie Whang, Sales & Marketing Manager

jwhang@wmm.com | 212.925.0606 x320

Hi-res photos are available for download on this film's web catalog page at [www.wmm.com](http://www.wmm.com).

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# Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority

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## Q&A

Kimberlee Bassford

"The more I learned about what [Patsy Mink] went through, the more emotionally connected I felt to it. I was offended by the discrimination she felt and inspired by the actions she took."

## Questions for Kimberlee Bassford

### Local documentarian takes a look at a legend

INTERVIEW BY  
RAGNAR CARLSON

*For a leader of unforgettable energy and commitment, Patsy Takemoto Mink has perhaps not yet been remembered as fully as she should be. The former Hawai'i Congresswoman's legacy is defined by her singular contribution to the sweeping gender-equity legislation known as Title IX, and she was a longtime champion of traditional Democratic causes. Now local filmmaker Kimberlee Bassford has tried to capture Mink's story in a new documentary. Honolulu Weekly caught up with Bassford as she prepared for an upcoming screening.*



#### How did you decide to do this film?

I was at the University of California-Berkeley in 2002 studying documentary film and working on *Cheerleader* when Patsy Mink passed away. I just began reading about her life story online, that she was the first woman of color to serve in the Congress, that she had been instrumental in the enactment of Title IX.

#### Had you known that before?

No, I hadn't, which is amazing. I knew about Title IX, obviously, but I had no idea she was a co-author. She was instrumental in passing legislation that had a huge impact on my life.

#### In your own life?

Yes. I was in grad school at the time, and Title IX was intended as an academic program. It allowed women equal opportunity to get in to graduate school, law school and medical school. That was the real intent—most people think of it as athletic, but Mink's intention was to further academic opportunities for women. So I just thought, "Here I am in grad school, and this person was responsible for helping me to get here through something she did 30 years ago."

I really had an emotional reaction to her story. The more I dug and the more I learned about what she went through, the more emotionally connected I felt to it. I was

offended by the discrimination she felt and inspired by the actions she took. I was interested and I thought other people might be too, so I felt it would make a good story.

#### What kinds of discrimination did she face?

She always wanted to be a doctor, ever since she was a little girl growing up on a Maui plantation. She was valedictorian of Maui High, she went to college and did a pre-med program. She applied to more than a dozen medical schools and didn't get into a single one, because she was a woman. She ended up trying to find a job using her pre-med background, but couldn't find anything. Even-

tually she took a job as a typist. In those days, if you were a woman, you could be a typist. So she ended up applying to law school and attended the University of Chicago. But even then, none of the Chicago firms would hire her. She was a woman, a married woman with a child, and that didn't fly. She moved home to Hawai'i and was told that here, she couldn't even sit for the bar exam, because at that time married women were considered residents of the same state of her husband, and John Mink was a resident of Pennsylvania at that time.

And that's kind of why she became involved in politics. She couldn't get hired at any law firms here either, so she opened up her own practice, but she wasn't very busy, and she got swept up in the Democratic movement of the 1960s and thought, "Maybe this is where I can make a difference."

#### Where did the funding come from?

I fundraised for two years before we began production. We met with [daughter] Gwendolyn and John Mink in 2004. I had just moved back to Hawai'i and her story kept popping up. I asked them if they were supportive of the project, and they said yes, and I started raising money. The first funds were from the Hawai'i Council for the Humanities. The biggest grant was from the State of Hawai'i, and I have funding from a couple of PBS-related entities, including the Center for Asian American Media. And then mostly family members and individuals. One donor I got was Billy Jean King. She's a huge Title IX advocate. I was in Washington in February 2006, doing research at the Library of Congress. It happened to be National Girls and Women in Sports Day. There were all these people at the Capitol lobbying and I just walked up to her and told her I was doing this film, and she said, "Oh, I loved Patsy Mink." So she was my highest-profile donor. The [film is intended for a] national PBS broadcast.

#### Is there a national broadcast set?

I just submitted it last month to national PBS and am waiting to hear back. My hope is that it will air nationally sometime in 2009.

#### Patsy Mink is not quite as well-remembered as one might expect. Why do you think that is?

She wasn't the kind of person who tooted her own horn. She was much more focused on the issues. She wasn't very self-promoting, in a way that kind of hurt her. If she had been a little more that way, maybe she would have won the Senate race (in 1990). For the national media she was so far off the radar because she was a woman of color from Hawai'i. Also, she wasn't really part of the Hawai'i Democratic Leadership. Back in the [former Gov. John] Burns days, she was kind of on the outs with that faction, and they maneuvered against her a little bit. She always wasn't really warm in her interviews. It's probably a little bit of everything. But she's certainly not well known.

#### Whatever happened to the effort to rename Title IX after Mink?

It has been renamed for her. Congress passed it and Bush signed it in to law, but of course everyone still refers to it as Title IX. [Gwendolyn] Mink just told me the Congress has just passed a fellowship in her name.

#### Did you learn anything about Mink that surprised you? What was she like on a personal level?

She was really funny. When you talk to people who worked with her and with her family, they often talk about her laugh. She had a great laugh. She could also be very charming, she could get people to do things with a smile and a wink. But also that she was tough and hard-working, she read her own letters and drafted her own responses to letters. She could use her charm and was respected by Republican members, because they knew whatever she was saying came from very grounded places. Even later on, after Congress became more partisan, people still had a lot of respect for her. Her cousin told me a story that when she came back to the House in 1990, doors opened for her and everyone knew her name and was glad to see her back. She was very at home there.

*Dole Theater, Sat 10/18, 3PM,  
\$10. Local broadcast on KHET,  
Thu 10/30, 8:30PM.*

Honolulu Weekly, October 15, 2008

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# Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority

A FILM BY KIMBERLEE BASSFORD

## Q&A with Kimberlee Bassford

October 17, 2008

(Director of PATSY MINK: AHEAD OF THE MAJORITY)  
BY JASON SOEDA

**JASON SOEDA:** Aloha, Kimberlee! Can you tell us what initially attracted you to filmmaking?

**KIMBERLEE BASSFORD:** I ventured into documentary filmmaking as a way to educate people while also engaging my creative side. I always loved that feeling that came over me after seeing a film that revealed the world in a different way or that sparked discussion and posed thoughtful questions. I wanted to be a catalyst for making others feel the same.

**JS:** What was your inspiration for AHEAD OF THE MAJORITY?

**KB:** I was in graduate school at the University of California Berkeley when Patsy Mink died in September 2002. I knew she was our longtime Congresswoman, but I was surprised to learn that she was the first woman of color in Congress as well as the co-author of Title IX, legislation that I directly benefited from. Upon reading about her life, I had an emotional reaction. I was offended by the discrimination she faced and inspired by her courage and dogged determination. Moreover, her politics excited me. Unlike most politicians driven by ambition and power, Patsy Mink seemed to truly want to serve and make life better for people – and I found that utterly refreshing.

When I moved back home to Honolulu in 2004, I started thinking more about Patsy's story and how it would be a powerful way to look at politics differently – and to look at history through new eyes. As an Asian-American woman, I've always been aware that we have little representation in the media – and that when we are included, we're usually depicted as victims of circumstance and events beyond our control. Patsy Mink shattered this stereotype by showing a Japanese-American woman who actively shaped her own destiny. For me, her story is really about having the courage to stand up against

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- Kimberlee Bassford Interview
- Just For Fun: HIFF Survey

### PATSY MINK Screenings

- Sun, Oct 12 – 7:00PM  
Regal Dole Cannery
- Sat, Oct 18 – 3:00PM  
Regal Dole Cannery
- More Film Info



Kimberlee Bassford



MORNING  
COMES SO  
SOON

Set in the beautiful central pacific country of the Marshall Islands, MORNING COMES SO SOON is the story of Leban, a Marshallese high school student who falls in love with Mei-Lin, a Chinese girl who is new to the island. What begins as a typical teenage love story quickly becomes a bizarre tragedy as the opposition they must face from family and friends becomes unbearable. This film deals with the issues of suicide and racism which are two of the biggest problems facing youth living in the Marshall Islands. In fact, the RMI has one of the leading suicide rates in the world. The issue of racism has become more serious recently as more and more foreigners have moved to the islands. » More



SAILFISH

Set against the social turmoil of China's Cultural Revolution, SAILFISH is the story of 12-year-old champion swimmer Yue Haiyang. His father, a kindhearted intellectual, always encouraged the young boy's dream of becoming China's greatest swimmer. However, his dreams are abruptly shattered when his father is killed, his house is confiscated and he and his mother are forced into the countryside for reeducation. Six years later, with the help of his childhood friend, Gao Ming, and the love of his life, Bai Ling, he is able to rejoin the swimming team. Does he still have what it takes to win? In a

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# Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority

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injustice, to act on your conscience, to redefine the rules and to initiate change.

**JS: We hear that your production company, Making Waves Films, produced this film with support from the state of Hawaii. Did you feel a great deal of reassurance knowing the state had your back?**

**KB:** I feel so blessed to have had the state's support, particularly given the subject matter. Patsy Mink served the people of Hawaii for more than three decades, and in many ways, her personal story reflects the greater story of Hawaii in the twentieth century – from the plantation era to World War II to statehood and beyond. And so it was very comforting to know that the state believed in the value of Patsy's story and in the project.

**JS: What was your biggest challenge in the production of the movie, be it principal photography or post-production?**

**KB:** When I set out on the project, Patsy Mink had already passed away and thus I always knew one of the greatest challenges in making the film would be finding the necessary visual archival materials to help tell her story. While we were able to find a lot of amazing photographs and print materials, it was much harder to find film or video footage of her. There was no footage at all of Patsy as a child or young adult and really just snippets of her from her early years in Congress (nearly all of which made it into the final film). In some ways, the spotty film/video archival record was a blessing in that it forced us to be more creative. For instance, we ended up shooting our own evocative imagery and used general archival footage of the times in suggestive ways.

Fortunately, we were able to find more footage of Patsy from her later years – and we also found a long-format interview of her from the 1990s that helped anchor her story. In the final film, we have archival materials (film, video, photographs, newspaper articles, etc.) from more than 60 different sources. Beyond just finding all of these materials, it was a challenge to manage all of them and then negotiate their licensing from the various sources. While we were able to use some archival materials at no charge, some footage cost upward of \$90/second. I had to fundraise quite a bit just to cover the archival licensing costs for the film.

**JS: Will you continue to seek Hawaii-based projects?**

**KB:** Hawaii is my home and where my roots are, so I would definitely like to work on projects that not only keep me here but that bring important Hawaii stories to national and international audiences.

**JS: Is there any filmmaker or actor you dream of collaborating with?**

**KB:** Sofia Coppola and Jon Stewart.

**JS: What's next for you?**

**KB:** I'm hoping a little down time, and then it's time to brainstorm (and fundraise) the next project.

quest to fulfill a lifelong dream, friendship and loyalty are tested as the three friends wade through the waters of personal struggle and political unrest. » [More](#)

28<sup>th</sup> Annual Hawaii International Film Festival, 10/17/2008

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8 FEBRUARY 19-25, 2009

• ASIAN AMER

## BREAKING BARRIERS

### Patsy Takemoto Mink, Co-Author of Title IX

By HEATHER HORIUCHI  
Nichi Bei Times

From the plantation days on Maui, to the halls of Congress where she was the nation's first woman of color elected to the U.S. House of Representatives, Patsy Takemoto Mink's life was neither easy nor ordinary.

Award-winning independent filmmaker Kimberlee Bassford's "Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority" highlights the life of Mink in an hour-long documentary.

Bassford was a journalism graduate student at UC Berkeley when then-Congresswoman Patsy Mink (D-Hawaii) died in September 2002.

In 2004 Bassford contacted and met with Mink's husband John and their daughter Gwendolyn to discuss possibly doing the film, which premiered at the 2008 Hawaii International Film Festival.

Bassford, who produced, directed and wrote the documentary, spent hours talking to John and sifting through Mink's Congressional papers and photos before filming in 2007.

Rep. Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii) told the *Nichi Bei Times* that she had helped connect Bassford with people who might be supportive of the film in honor of Mink, whom she considered a "friend and inspiration."

#### Struggled to Find Employment

Born in Paia, Maui, in 1927, Mink

was 14 when the Japanese bombed Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941.

Mink enrolled at the University of Nebraska, where she was required to live in the "international" dormitory. Her childhood dream of becoming a doctor ended after numerous schools rejected her.

The *Nikkei* however was accepted to the University of Chicago Law School. She was one of two Asian Americans and one of two women in a class of 90, the film states. It was there that she met graduate student John Francis Mink and within a few months they were married.

Despite her law degree, Mink struggled to find employment; she accepted odd jobs like modeling, and worked at the Law School's library. When their daughter was born, the Minks moved to Honolulu.

#### Creating Change

Eager to practice law, Patsy Mink learned that local firms primarily controlled by whites did not hire Asians. She decided that change was needed, and her foray into public office began in 1956 in the territorial legislature, where she authored an "equal pay for equal work" law.

Mediator/arbitrator Marie Milks, a legislative aide for Mink from 1966-68, said that the film might have presented a more "intimate" portrayal of Mink, and focused less on her former

staffers. Milks, a retired Hawai'i state judge who appeared in the film, described her former boss as "the ultimate public servant and the purest of politicians."

In 1965 Mink became the first female minority in the U.S. House of Representatives. Perhaps her most significant political accomplishment was co-authoring Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 — later renamed the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act — which prohibited gender discrimination by educational institutions receiving federal funds.

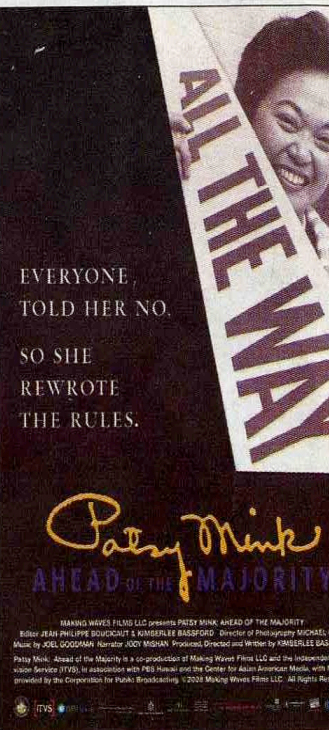
The impact of the legislation is significant, having profoundly increased the educational and professional opportunities for women, as well as leading to the rise of girls and women's athletics. The film points out that of the "medical degrees awarded to women" in 1972, nine percent were given to females; in 2006, it was up to 49 percent. As for law degrees awarded to women, seven percent were given to females in 1972 as opposed to 48 percent in 2006.

The legislation, however, also had its detractors. Some continue to criticize it for diminishing funds previously allocated for male-dominated sports.

The *Nikkei* lost many campaigns throughout her career: bids for mayor, governor and U.S. Senate, as well

'PATSY MINK: AHEAD OF THE MAJORITY' — will be screened as part of the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival on March 15 at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas; Wednesday, March 18 at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas and Saturday, March 21 at the Camera 12 Cinema.

photo courtesy of Making Waves Films LLC



as her fight for welfare reform. After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Mink was one of a handful to vote against the Patriot Act.

Unfortunately, this trailblazer's life came to an abrupt end. After being diagnosed with chicken pox, followed by pneumonia, Patsy Takemoto Mink died on Sept. 28, 2002.

Mink's many colleagues, constituents, friends and advocates have spoken about her tireless pursuit of equity for all, regardless of race, gender or class, and the determination with which she broke numerous barriers.

"She had her own identity, I think was superior to most every I've ever met," Milks said. "She had act to follow."

"Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority," will be screened as part of the San Francisco International Asian American Film Festival March 15 at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas; Wednesday, March 18 at the Sundance Kabuki Cinemas and Saturday, March 21 at the Camera 12 Cinema. See schedule for times.

*Nichi Bei Times*, February 19-25, 2009

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# Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority

A FILM BY KIMBERLEE BASSFORD

## When Everyone Told Her No, She Rewrote the Rules

Kimberlee Bassford shines a light on the late Congresswoman Patsy Mink's life and legacy in a new documentary.

By LYNDALIN  
Assistant Editor

"I like to say before Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama, there was Patsy Mink," said filmmaker Kimberlee Bassford about the little girl from Hawaii who grew up to become the first woman of color in Congress.

In history books, the sum of Mink's 12-term career in the House of Representatives stretches past page margins. The late Congresswoman was a history making elected official, the driving force behind Title IX legislation, and most of all a woman who took the answer "no" as a challenge of a lifetime.

But it was one little known fact about the late Congresswoman that grabbed Bassford's attention. In 1972, Mink ran for president as the first woman to seek the nation's highest office. Before Sen. Clinton and Gov. Sarah Palin, Mink was knocking down the thickest of glass ceilings. The irony isn't lost on Bassford, 31, whose documentary, "Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority," premieres at the Hawaii International Film Festival.

Even a Hawaii native like Bassford only knew snippets of Mink's legacy — a fact that was a little embarrassing at first, she admits with a laugh. But then the real question arises: why don't more women know about Mink's bid for presidency?

"She didn't toot her own horn," said Bassford, whose previous work includes "Unnatural Causes," a PBS series investigating socioeconomic and racial disparities in health. But also because the media mostly counted Mink out as a severe underdog. Back then, Mink drew the same *ah-shucks* attitude that continues to plague women today. She's running for president? *Isn't that sweet?*

It was a reoccurring theme in Mink's career — she fought for equality that many take for granted today.

"Women no longer have qualms about career choices. But there are still barriers. We saw that in this presidential race when Hillary Clinton was treated poorly," said Bassford.

Sexism still exists, even if we don't always acknowledge it.

"That was a motivation behind working on this documentary," said Bassford, "to educate people and keep fighting."

### Finding Inspiration

"I was born after Title IX, so I grew up thinking I could become anything I set my mind to do, whether it's go to law school or become a documentary filmmaker," said Bassford, who is of Chinese and Filipino descent.

Growing up, she was always passionate about artistic expression. She danced and became a cheerleader at Punahou School, Obama's alma mater. Then she went to earn her bachelor's degree in psychology at Harvard University and plunged into a period of self-reflection. What was she going to do with her life?

Bassford enjoyed teaching, but she didn't want to be confined to a classroom, so she enrolled in the graduate journalism program at the University of California, Berkeley and embarked on a career as a documentary filmmaker.

While Bassford was in graduate school in 2002, Mink passed away. The filmmaker

started researching.

"So many things surprised me," said Bassford.

When Mink arrived in Washington, D.C., she became the nation's novelty. In news articles, she was constantly described as "pretty." She appeared on TV shows to endure questions about her ethnicity and gender. In rare news footage, Mink is seen frolicking in the snow with Hubert Humphrey. On another show, she even performed the hula — something very un-Congress like, said Bassford.

"She was always cast as the 'other,' both as a minority and as a woman."

To research, Bassford read everything she could find about Mink and talked to people who knew her best, including daughter Gwendolyn Mink, now a Woman Studies professor at Smith College.

Mink's widow, John, supported the documentary, but passed away before Bassford could interview him. Production began in October 2006 for the \$500,000 film, which was funded through grants and personal donations including one from tennis legend Billie Jean King.

Bassford met King in D.C. on "National Girls and Women in Sports Day." She was researching at the Library of Congress, but when she saw the tennis icon, she couldn't resist.

"I went up to her and said, 'Hi, Ms. King. I'm making a documentary on Patsy Mink.'"

### The Boy's Club

"She was the first Asian American woman from Hawaii in Congress taking on this old boy's club," said Bassford.

In Hawaii, the "boys" were JA men with household names like Inouye and Matsunaga.

In 1959 after Hawaii gained statehood, Mink decided to run for the House of Representatives. Daniel K. Inouye was going to run for the Senate. But Democratic Party leaders thought the Senate seats should be reserved for the party elders, so Inouye was encouraged to run for the House seat instead — against Mink.

"The machine bosses never wanted Patsy in power, maybe because she was too independent; maybe because she was a woman," said Bassford.

Mink ran over 20 campaigns in her life. She lost many, but always bounced back like a daruma doll.

"To me, she exemplifies what I want all my politicians to be. She had an ego. But to her politics wasn't about power. She really wanted to be a servant of the people."

Recently, Bassford held a small preview screening of the documentary for Mink's family, including Gwendolyn and Patsy's brother Eugene Takemoto.

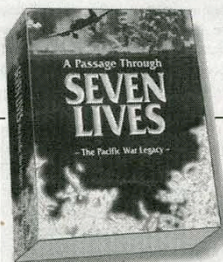
After the film ended, the room was quiet.

"I got nervous. Was this a good thing?" said Bassford. It was a silence heavy with emotions for an extraordinary woman.

"They were all crying." ■

### WATCH IT

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"To me, she exemplifies what I want all my politicians to be."

— Filmmaker  
**Kimberlee Bassford**,  
31, (left), about the  
late Patsy Mink (top).

Pacific Citizen, October 17-November 6, 2008

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