



NEWS

"Seaweed lady" Isabella Abbott dies

By **KEVIN HOWE** |

PUBLISHED: November 17, 2010 at 12:00 a.m. | UPDATED: September 11, 2018 at 12:00 a.m.



Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott, a world expert on sea algae who wrote more than 150 research papers and eight books on her specialty and was the Stanford University Biology Department's first woman and minority professor, died Oct. 28 in Honolulu. She was 91.

Known on the Monterey Peninsula as the "seaweed lady" during her years of research at Stanford's Hopkins Marine Station in Pacific Grove, she remained active as a scientist until this year.

Born in Hana, Maui, to a Chinese father and Hawaiian mother, she grew up in Honolulu and learned about edible seaweeds from her mother. She became the world's foremost expert on Central Pacific algae.

A 1937 graduate of Kamehameha School, she received a doctorate in botany from UC Berkeley in 1950. She was the first Kamehameha graduate and the first native Hawaiian to receive a doctorate in science.

In 1972, she became the first woman and first minority full professor in biological sciences at Stanford. During her time on the Peninsula, she published "Marine Algae of California."

Dr. Abbott retired from Hopkins in 1982 and moved to Hawaii, where she pursued a second career at the University of Hawaii as an ethnobotanist.

She received the Gilbert Morgan Smith Medal from the National Academy of Sciences for excellence

in published research on marine or freshwater algae and was named a Living Treasure by Honpa Hongwanji Hawaii, a Buddhist organization.

Dr. Abbott is survived by her daughter, Annie Abbott Foerster, and a granddaughter, Catherine Foerster, of Hawaii.

The University of Hawaii at Manoa Department of Botany has established a fund to honor Dr. Abbott by supporting graduate research in Hawaiian ethnobotany and marine botany.

Kevin Howe can be reached at 646-4416 or khowe@montereyherald.com.



Kevin Howe



SPONSORED CONTENT

If Your Dog Eats Grass (Do This Every Day) □

By Dr. Marty

dr. marty

If Your Dog Eats Grass (Do This Every Day)

More in News