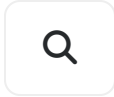


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Hawai'i

George Ariyoshi, State's Third Governor, Dies At Age 100

Ariyoshi, who was elected in 1974 and served as Hawai'i's governor until 1986, was the first Japanese-American elected governor in the U.S.

By Hawaii News Now / April 20,
2026

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George Ariyoshi, who served as Hawaii's third state governor, died Sunday night. He was 100 years old.

In a statement, his wife Jean said Ariyoshi died at home. He was surrounded by the former first lady, his daughter Lynn, and sons Ryoza and Donn.



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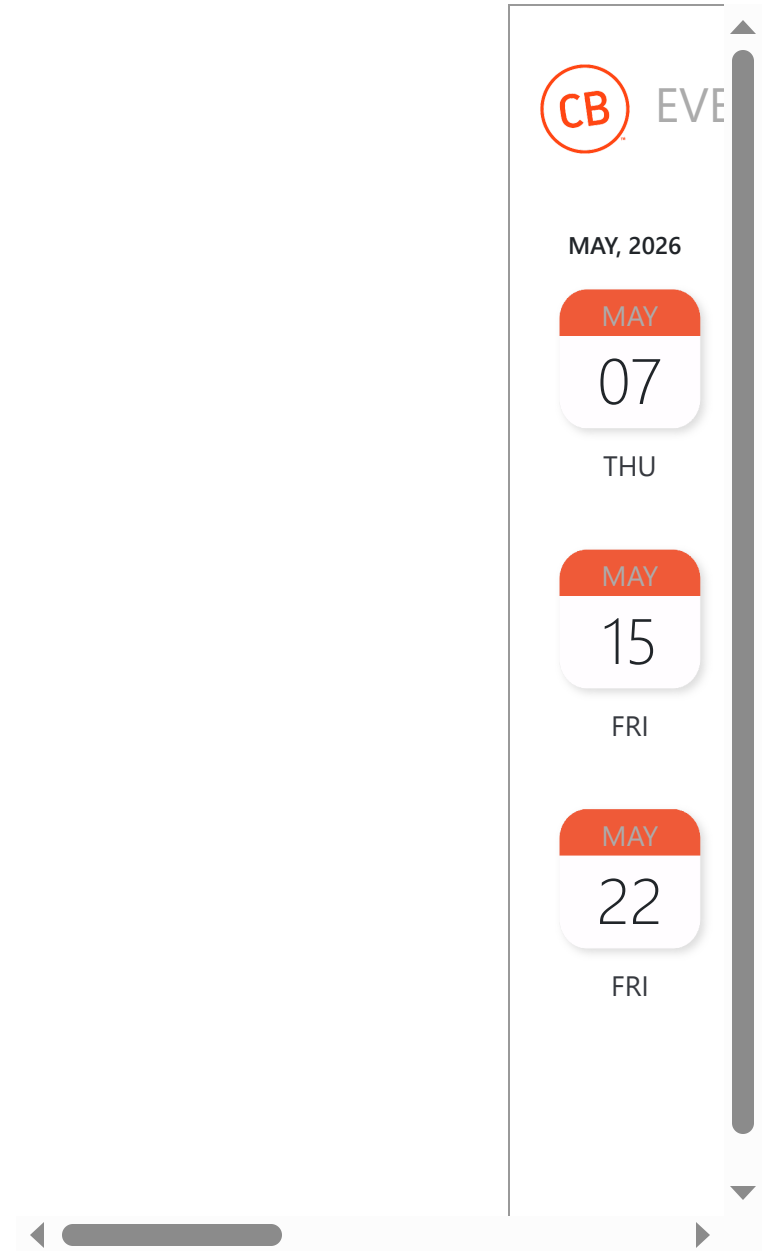


Jean Ariyoshi's statement said, "Governor sacrificed and worked hard for most of his life to build a better future for the State of Hawaii and its people. Governor Ariyoshi loves you all very much!"

Gov. Josh Green ordered U.S. and Hawaii state flags to be flown at half staff in Ariyoshi's honor at all state buildings, offices and agencies until sunset on the day of his memorial service, which is yet to be announced.



Former Governor George Ariyoshi and former first lady Jean Ariyoshi at ceremonies honoring the 175th anniversary of Washington Place in 2022. (Cory Lum/Civil Beat/2022)



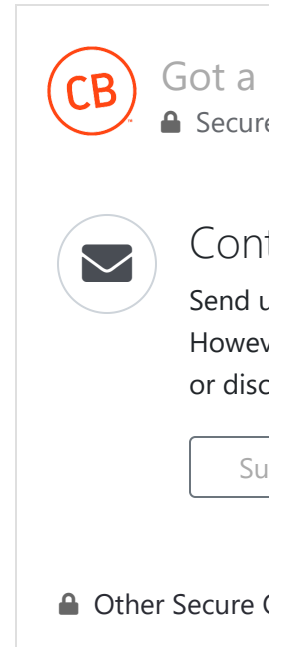
The governor's office said Ariyoshi served in the U.S. Army Military Intelligence Service during World War II as a Japanese-English interpreter. He went on to earn degrees from Michigan State University and the University of Michigan Law School.

He served in the territorial legislature and then was a state senator before being elected lieutenant governor.

Ariyoshi served as lieutenant governor under John A. Burns. He took over as acting governor in 1972 when Burns became ill with cancer.

Ariyoshi was then elected governor in 1974. He was re-elected to two more terms and was in office until 1986.

Hawaii governors are now limited to two consecutive terms.





Gov. George Ariyoshi in 1977. (Hawaii State Archives/Honolulu Star-Advertiser Collection)

Historians have said that including his time as acting governor, Ariyoshi was the state's longest-serving governor.

He was also the first Japanese-American elected governor in the U.S.

Gov. Ariyoshi's campaign, run by Bob Oshiro, used the campaign slogan "The Issue is Integrity. The Answer is Ariyoshi". The slogan could be seen on bumper stickers on cars of his supporters across the state.

He also had a reputation for quiet leadership, underscored by campaign ads with a song that said he was “working quietly and effectively for the State of Hawaii.”

In a statement, Green said, “Governor Ariyoshi devoted his life to Hawaii with humility, discipline and an unwavering sense of responsibility to the people he served.

Green added, “He led our state during a pivotal moment with quiet strength and integrity, and his legacy as a trailblazer and public servant will endure for generations. Our hearts are with his family and loved ones.”

Ariyoshi just celebrated his 100th birthday last month and had been the oldest living governor in the country.

Jean Ariyoshi said her husband worked hard to build a better future for Hawaii and its people.



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Mahalo Governor Ariyoshi for your love and commitment to your people of Hawai'i. Because of you our children thrived; because of you your Hawai'i people walked with their heads held high; because of you aloha lived! Mahalo, mahalo, mahalo! May you now rest in peace.

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