

ELMER EUGENE BOTSAI / 1928-2013

Dean of UH architecture school known for passion and expertise

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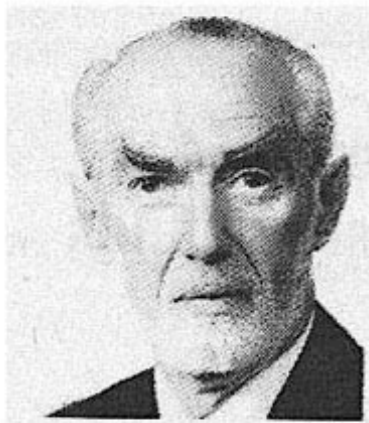
Elmer Eugene Botsai's life passion was architecture.

"He said he never felt like he worked a day in his life because that's what he loved to do," said step-daughter Kiana Hennington.

Botsai, founding dean of the University of Hawaii at Manoa's School of Architecture, died Wednesday. He was 85.

Born in St. Louis, Botsai earned a bachelor's degree from the University of California, Berkeley. He worked as an architect in San Francisco before he moved to Hawaii in January 1978 to serve as chairman of UH-Manoa's Department of Architecture. Botsai also served as national president of the American Institute of Architects in that same year.

In 1979, the department became the School of Architecture. Botsai was instrumental in the establishment of the school and



Elmer Eugene
Botsai

served as its first dean, from 1980 to 1990. He returned to teaching before he retired in 1998 and later became a consultant at Group 70 International. Botsai also earned a doctorate degree from the school's first doctoral class, said his wife, Sharon Kaiser-Botsai.

Kaiser-Botsai said her husband will be remembered for the standards he set for architects in Hawaii. "He was always for excellence," she said.

Many sought his expertise in architecture tied to hurricane-related issues and water infiltration.

Botsai received numer-

ous honors and awards, including the Medal of Honor by the AIA Hawaii State Council; the Ernest H. Hara, Fellow of the American Institute of Architects, Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Lifetime Service to the Profession of Architecture; and UH's Distinguished Alumni Award.

He also authored and co-authored several books that include "Wood as a Building Material: A Guide for Designers and Builders" and "Architects and Earthquakes."

Botsai is also survived by sons Donald and Kurt, and four grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at 4 p.m. Sept. 14 at Calvary By the Sea Lutheran Church in Aina Haina. His ashes will be scattered into the ocean following the service.

Contributions to the Elmer Botsai Professional Practice and Research Endowment Fund program at UH-Manoa's School of Architecture are requested in lieu of flowers.