At the beginning of the month, Alice Walters retired after a long and dedicated career with Outrigger and OHANA Hotels & Resorts. She was hired about 35 years ago and first worked for my mother, Estelle Kelley. The reservations office was located in a covered lanai in the Edgewater Hotel in Waikiki. In those days, before the availability of Wide Area Telephone Service (WATS) to Hawaii, almost all reservations were handled by a personalized letter. The goal was to respond to each reservation request the day it was received. Remembering that time, Alice says, “We were young, worked hard and long hours, but we grew with the company along the way.”

Alice moved to the mainland for a while, and when she returned, we found a spot for her at our new reservations department located in the Outrigger Waikiki. The word “department” is really an exaggeration because there were really just four members – Patti Maldonado, Napua Ishikawa (nee: Peltier), Francine Chun and Alice – crowded in a little room behind the Front Desk. By that time Wide Area Telephone Service had reached Hawai‘i, and more and more reservations were handled by phone. The system was primitive, however, and each time a call came in, someone would yell, “I’ll get it!”

My office was right next door. Later, as the company grew, we developed a corridor right through my office and added shared desks for others including Linda V.G. Kelley, David Carey, Bill Sthay, Patricia Kaahanui, Pat Moore, Laurie Hirata, and Ann Harada. All of the latter group are still active members of our ‘ohana today.

At that time, Roy Kelley still had an office on Lewers Street, where the Waikiki Beach Walk project is now underway. When someone asked Roy for a reservation, he would simply scribble “see Alice” on a yellow reservation form and send him or her to the Outrigger Waikiki office, several blocks away, to complete the transaction. Alice never lost a customer.

More recently, Alice has been handling VIP reservations and has a database of distinguished guests from all over the world. Many have written to her recently wishing her the very best. Here’s a typical letter:

“Alice, you ARE the true Aloha spirit and we will miss you. You have been the perfect ambassador for Hawaii, Honolulu, Waikiki, the Outrigger and OHANA group and the Kelley Family. I know you have legions of raving fans around the world who wish you well in your retirement. I was one of the first guests at the Outrigger West (now the OHANA Waikiki West) – they were still hanging doors in the halls and finishing carpet in the lobby – and that must be about 35 years ago too. Oh, how time passes! Aloha dear lady, Aloha.”

Many thanks, Alice, for being such a great supporter of Outrigger and OHANA for three and a half decades. Please let me join so many others in wishing you the very best and a Happy Retirement!