

# Camas resident is a 'Woman of Achievement'

## □ Elizabeth Asahi Sato is one of eight honorees

A Camas resident is among a talented group of Clark County residents to earn the 2008 Women of Achievement award.

Elizabeth Asahi Sato, owner of the Camas consulting company "Rise to Excellence," was selected as one of eight to receive the award presented by Clark College and the YWCA Clark County. The designation recognizes and honors local women for their outstanding community contributions.

According to a press release, Sato was born in Yokohama, Japan, and raised in Portland with two brothers and four sisters. Her family often struggled to make ends meet, and felt the burden of racial inequality.

"My father was born in the early 1900s and grew up very poor, so he instilled in us the importance of working hard and being a person of integrity," she said. "My mother always told us that we were smart and had value. She gave us a sense of personal pride."

Sato graduated from Parkrose High School in Portland, and went on to attend the University of Oregon, where she served on the Commission for the

Rights of Minorities. At the age of 19, she was appointed to the Oregon State Board of Education by then Gov. Vic Atiyeh. She attended school at Waseda University in Tokyo, and later graduated from the U of O with a degree in political science and a minor in ethnic studies.



**Elizabeth Asahi Sato**

She has worked as an educational consultant for the Interface Center for Equity and was vice president of operations for a major medical device distributor. She has also served as the executive assistant to the Clark College president and executive director for Wiconi International.

Today, she runs Rise to Excellence, and has volunteered locally for the Camas High School Boosters and the Friends of the Camas Washougal Community Center. She has also served on the boards of a variety of non-profit organizations.

Sato said her life has been filled with challenges, but she never doubted her ability to achieve — a philosophy she hopes to pass on to others.

"No matter what circumstance you find yourself in, you can overcome any odds if you truly believe you can," said the single mother of three sons. "You can overcome and excel if you understand that there have been many before

you whom you can call upon for guidance and many ahead of you who will learn — from you."

Other 2008 Women of Achievement honorees include Dr. Susan Davis, medical director at Urgent Medical Center; Patricia Downey, teacher and advisor at Mountain View High School; Jean Lacey, first executive director at YWCA of Clark County; Kris Miller, vice president and relationship manager for West Coast Bank; Tracy Reilly-Kelly, program manager for mature learning and continuing education at Clark College; Jeanne Stewart, Vancouver City Council member; and Susan Torres, teacher and mentor through the English as a second language program at Clark College.

Originally started in 1984 by Pat Watne, director of women's programs at Clark College, the Women of Achievement were first honored during a small tea event at Clark. In 1991, YWCA Clark County joined with the college in sponsoring the celebration.

The Women of Achievement celebration will be held Thursday, March 13, 11:30 a.m., at the Vancouver Hilton. Emcee for the event will be KATU television anchor Anna Song.

Tickets, \$35 per person or \$350 for a table of 10, can be purchased by calling (360) 906-4301.