



**BACKGROUND PAPER**  
*Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority*

**About the Film**

*Patsy Mink: Ahead of the Majority* is the first documentary film to explore the life and times of Patsy Takemoto Mink, one of the most dynamic figures in American political history. The film shows footage of various stages of Mink's political career and interviews with people who knew firsthand about Mink's life, personality, and extraordinary accomplishments.

Born in 1927, Mink began her life on a Maui sugar plantation. She rose to become the first woman of color in the U.S. Congress, where she served the people of Hawai'i for 24 years before her untimely passing in 2002. Intensely criticized for her liberal politics, Mink spoke out early and persistently against the Vietnam War. She entered the 1972 presidential primary, making her one of the first women to seek the nation's highest office. She is most remembered as the driving force behind Title IX, later renamed the Patsy T. Mink Equal Opportunity in Education Act, the landmark legislation that expanded educational opportunities for women.

In 1992, *McCall's* magazine cited her as one of the ten best lawmakers in Congress. In 2003, the National Women's Hall of Fame inducted her into its membership for her contributions to women's rights. These accomplishments aside, Mink's compelling life story is more about the obstacles she faced—dual discrimination of being a woman and an Asian American—and her courage, grit, and grace in facing them. She dispelled stereotypes of the compliant Japanese female and committed herself toward advancing America's promise of equal opportunity.

Simultaneously a woman of the people and a pioneer, a patriot and an outcast, Mink's story is endlessly intriguing—one that embodies the history, ideals, and spirit of America.

**About the Filmmaker**

Kimberlee Bassford, an award-winning independent filmmaker who owns Making Waves Films LLC, a documentary production company in Honolulu, has a passion for social-issue and cultural stories. Most recently, she was a producer on *Unnatural Causes* (2008), a four-hour national Public Broadcasting System (PBS) documentary series and public awareness campaign investigating socioeconomic and racial disparities in health. In 2005, she was a producer on the three-hour PBS documentary series *The Meaning of Food*, which explored the social significance of food in the United States.

Bassford's directorial debut was with *Cheerleader* in 2003, a short documentary that followed a squad of young, bright-eyed California cheerleaders on its quest for the national cheerleading championships. The film aired on HBO Family and won the Student Academy Award in Documentary and CINE Golden Eagle. It also screened at film festivals in the U.S., Canada, Europe, New Zealand, and the Cannes Film Festival's Kodak Emerging Filmmaker Showcase.

A graduate of Punahou School, Bassford holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in psychology from Harvard University and a Masters in Journalism from the University of California at Berkeley.