

ELIZABETH DIAZ RECHEBEI
EDUCATOR



Elizabeth Diaz Rechebei, born in Saipan September 30, 1949, is the oldest girl of six children born to Francisco and Reiko Tanaka Diaz. Elizabeth attended Saipan's only parochial school, Mt. Carmel, and graduated in the same year as Felicidad Ogumoro, 1968.

Ms. Rechebei, like Ms. Ogumoro, was encouraged by her parents to break away from the traditional role for young women at that time and go on to college. She and a student from Palau won the first two Government of Guam scholarships ever offered to Micronesians. Elizabeth used the scholarship to enroll at the University of Guam. The following 3 years she was awarded full Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands (TTPI) scholarships; she graduated from the University of Guam with a B.A. in psychology in 1972.

Ms. Rechebei returned to Saipan where, the following year, she took her first job with the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands Department of Education, of which she is now the Director. For 8 years (1973-1981) she served as Trust Territory-wide Testing Coordinator, being responsible for the administration of the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), and the General Educational Development (GED) test, and other tests given throughout Micronesia. During her tenure in this position, Ms. Rechebei assisted in the development and norming of the Micronesian Achievement Test Series (MATS), the only locally-normed achievement tests in use in Micronesia.

During this period, Ms. Rechebei also got married, started a family, and then took a leave of absence for post-graduate study at the University of Hawaii. She had originally aspired to a professional degree in the mental health field, but, as her family obligations increased, settled for an M.A. in educational psychology, which she received from the University of Hawaii in 1976 with the help of an East-West Center scholarship. Ms. Rechebei is one of the first women in the CNMI to have earned an M.A.

Ms. Rechebei then served as Coordinator of Federal Programs for 2 years, and in 1983 she was named Deputy Director of the Department of Education for the entire Trust Territory. A year later, she became the youngest

person, and the first woman, to hold the position of TTPI Director of Education, the position she now holds. No woman before had -- nor has yet -- held the position of director of education at the "district" level.

While many Trust Territory-wide operations are winding down as the U.S. trusteeship is scheduled to come to a close, Ms. Rechebei's department retains responsibility for the administration of some \$14,000,000 in Federal education funds for the entities.

This dedicated woman's commitment to improving education in her region is evidenced by her participation on numerous boards and committees: CNMI Civil Service Commission; TTPI Appeals Board (1981-present); CNMI Board of Regents/Education, Vice chairperson (1982-present); Chief State School Officers: Committee on Extra-State Jurisdiction, Committee on Coordinating Education Information and Research, Committee on Sex Equity; Pacific Region Education Program Policy Board (1983-present); TTPI Incentive Award Committee, Chairperson (1983-present).

Currently, Ms. Rechebei is working on putting together a history of education in Micronesia that is planned to cover the 40-plus years of American administration in the TTPI (1945-present).