About the Author

Kim Young Wo (金永佑；김영우) was born in Seoul on March 26, 1895 and left in 1914 for the U.S. Unlike the many Koreans who were recruited for plantation labor in Hawai‘i and Mexico, Mr. Kim was among a group that sought higher education in the States. He allied himself with Syngman Rhee and two important organizations. The first was the Korean Christian Institute (KCI), which ran a school in Honolulu where Mr. Kim started teaching in 1917 and later worked as vice-principal in 1919. When the Peninsula became embroiled in massive protests against the Japanese, he was appointed chief financial officer and secretary for the Honolulu chapter of the Korean National Association (KNA), through which he managed the sale of bonds to support the independence movement back home. He also served as an editor for a monthly periodical called Pacific Ocean Magazine (태평양잡지；太平洋雜誌). It was at this time Mr. Kim undertook the publication, The Epic Battle for Korean Independence.

In 1920, Mr. Kim left the Islands to attend Springfield College in Massachusetts but returned due to an injury. In 1923, Mr. Kim toured the entire Peninsula with the KCI boys baseball team and a girls orchestra; the tour raised upwards of $8,000 to support the school. He later helped to host a Korean baseball team that toured the Islands the following year. By 1925, Mr. Kim relocated to California and started working for the famous El Mirasol Hotel in Santa Barbara, where he is said to have served Joan Crawford and Franchot Tone.

Around 1941, Mr. Kim returned to the Islands and married a widow who ran a boarding house for plantation workers in Hilo called the Puueo Hotel. He then established Variety Shop (later Variety Shoe Store) at 27 Haili Street, across from the famous Palace Theater. He managed the store until retirement in the 1960s. He died on December 27, 1980 and is buried at Diamond Head Memorial Park on the Island of O‘ahu.