

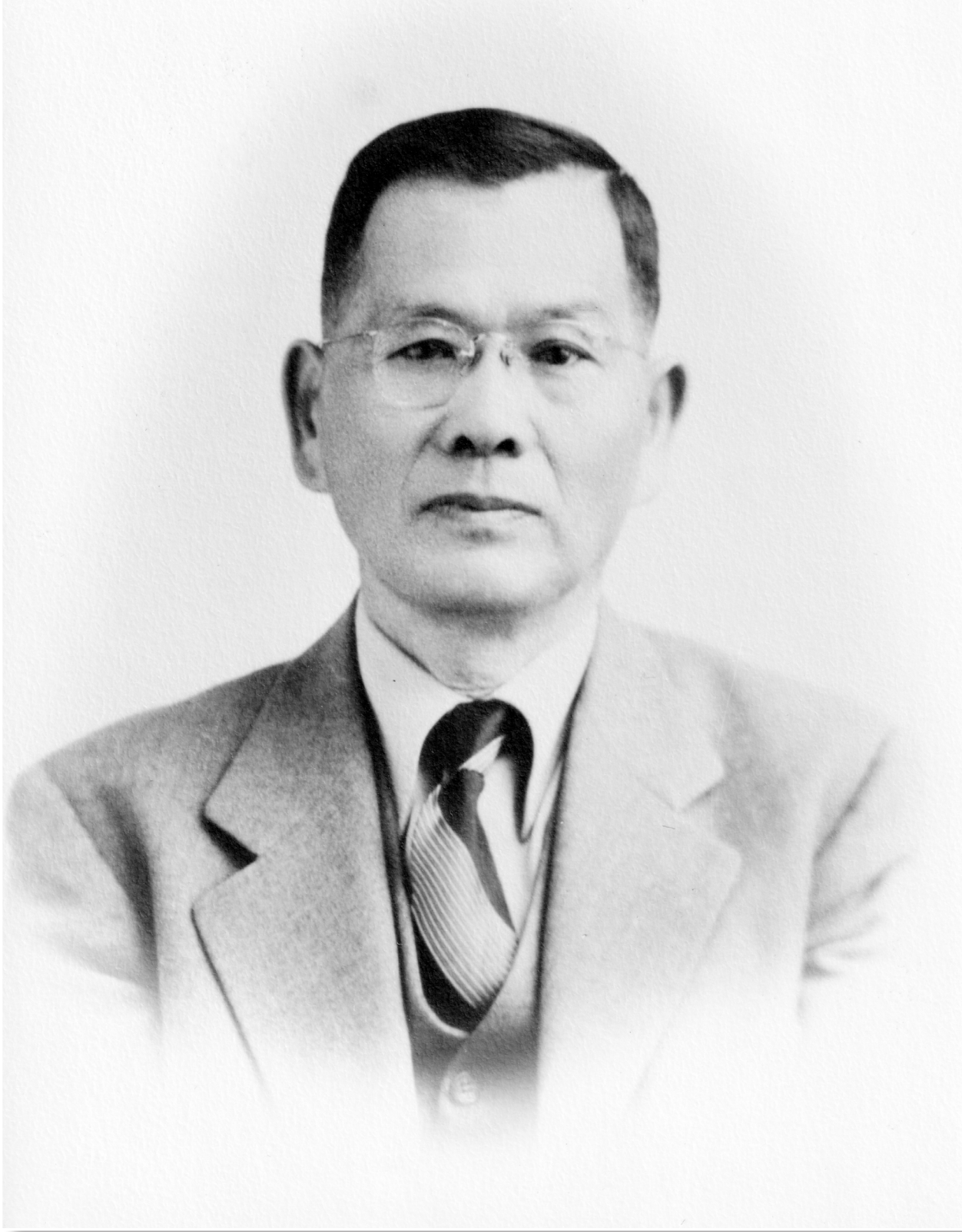
LEADING from the Top

Hikotaro “Harry” Kono didn’t play baseball in Alameda, he just managed it. But in his life you could say he was batting 1000. He was among the island’s leading citizens, Japanese or Caucasian. For that reason, it’s a shame he is largely forgotten.

He had the rare ability to hobnob among the Caucasian businessmen and politicians. In that regard, he was well ahead of his time.

Harry arrived in America in 1907 and worked for the **North American Mercantile Company** of San Francisco. Five years later he married Eiko Furuta. Around 1917 he began his own florist business in Alameda, taking over Hayashi Florist (Harry retained the Hayashi name on the business that many Alamedans still think of Towata Flowers).

Harry was the first non-white member of the **Alameda Elks Club**.



He was also a prominent member of the Chamber of Commerce and International Rotary Club of Alameda, and a bonded member of Florist Telegraph Delivery Association.

Harry was also interested in education and served as the Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Japanese school at the Buddhist Temple of Alameda.

If Harry is remembered at all today, it's as one of the Alameda Taiiku Kai (ATK) baseball team managers. He also organized all-star baseball teams that traveled around California and Japan. Some of the teams that competed in Japan included Caucasian players which starred several future mayors of Alameda.

Harry's fortunes turned with the advent of World War II. He lost the floral business and evacuated to Gila River in Arizona. When he was released, he restarted his life in Selma, CA, a small farmtown just south of Fresno.

He never returned to Alameda...and that's why he isn't well remembered anymore.

He died in Fresno on February 5, 1955.