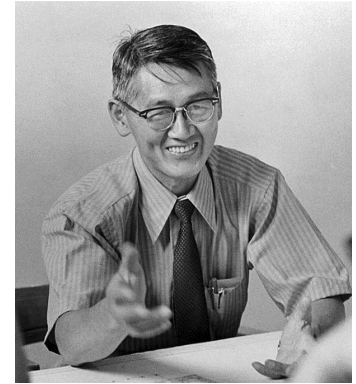




**Landscape Architect:** Hideo Sasaki  
**Birth/Death Dates:** November 25, 1919 – August 30, 2000  
**Practice Dates:** 1953 - 2000  
**Firms:** Sasaki (1953 – 2000)  
(formerly *Sasaki, Walker & Associates*)



Researched and written by Paola Larios

## Biographical Information

Hideo Sasaki was born in Reedley, California in 1919. He had just begun his undergraduate education at the University of California, Berkeley as World War II reached the US. In 1943, at age 24, the United States government forced him into an internment camp: Poston block 318-12-A in Arizona. After hearing about a farmer shortage in Colorado, Sasaki volunteered to help the effort and be transferred as a farm worker to Sterling, Colorado. Once released from the internment camp, Sasaki chose to stay in Colorado. He was living in Denver when he met his wife, Kisa, a University of Colorado alumna.

Sasaki returned to focus on his undergraduate education at the University of Illinois, graduating with high honors and his Bachelor of Fine Arts and Landscape Architecture in 1946. He continued on to graduate school at the Harvard School of Design. He graduated in 1948 with his Masters in Landscape Architecture. Sasaki believed deeply that cross-disciplinary collaboration yielded the best results in design. It was with this principle that Sasaki taught as an Assistant Professor at the University of Illinois from 1948 – 1950. Succeeding as an educator, he moved back to his alma mater and taught at the Harvard School of Design from 1950 – 1968. While there, he served as Department Chair from 1958 – 1968.

In 1953, at 34 years old, Sasaki partnered with two associates and opened a firm in San Francisco, California called *Sasaki, Walker & Associates*. In 1957, Sasaki and Walker moved the firm to the Boston suburb of Watertown where it would live on as the home base for the company. Sasaki was Chairman and President of the Board from 1954 – 1980. From the years 1958 – 1968, Hideo Sasaki was a professor and department chair at Harvard, Chairman and President at his own firm, and a devoted family man.

As a professor and practicing Landscape Architect, Sasaki's belief in theory-based design approach proved successful. He promoted thoughtful concepts and purposeful execution. At his firm, there were and continue to be people representing various disciplines such as civil engineering, urban planning, architecture, landscape architecture, art / sculpting. He taught his staff and students alike that true collaboration amongst disciplines is the key to enjoying the fruits of a beautifully successful project. Very often, Sasaki would take his students to his firm and allow them to shadow the staff in an effort to expose them to real world design issues and solutions. He maintained his connection as such to the Harvard School of Design even after he resigned as Department Chair and Professor.

Hideo Sasaki's opinions on design were highly sought after by the early 1960s. In 1960, he was appointed and retained by the University of Colorado Boulder as both a member of their design review board and their lead designer for the revision of the master plan and new Engineering Building. President John F. Kennedy appointed him to the United States Commission of Fine Arts in 1961. Sasaki was reappointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson in 1965, and stayed on the board until 1971. He served as a juror for the Vietnam Memorial Competition (1981), the Astronaut Memorial Competition (1988), and the Peace Garden Competition (1989).



In addition to serving on various review boards, Sasaki won many awards and recognitions both as a firm and an individual. He was the first recipient of the American Society of Landscape Architects Medal in 1971. He received the Allied Professions Medal by the American Institute of Architects in 1973. In 1984, he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate by University of Colorado for service on design their review board. Sasaki resigned as a member of the University of Colorado design review board in 1994 after about 33 years of activity at the age of 75. In his honor, the University of Colorado established the Hideo Sasaki Scholarship in Interdisciplinary Design for economically disadvantaged minority students studying interdisciplinary design and planning. In 2000, he was awarded the Centennial Medal by Harvard for his significant impact on their design program.

In 2000, the world of design lost Hideo Sasaki to cancer. He was 80 years old and was survived by his wife Kisa and two daughters, Rin and Ann, in Lafayette, California. His legacy is carried on through his firm (Sasaki), various scholarships, and foundations. Described as transformative, inspiring and profoundly contemplative; Sasaki was also known for attending to the human scale in each design. His design approach forced people to defend their concepts and decisions in a way that formalized purpose, inspired beauty, and enlightened all who could understand the meaning.

Still based in Watertown, Massachusetts, *Sasaki* has expanded to an even greater firm with his principles and name. There are branches of the office in Denver, New York City, and Shanghai. The firm follows Sasaki’s vision of a diverse and collaborative practice with representing Architecture, Interior Design, Planning & Urban Design, Space Planning, Landscape Architecture, and Civil Engineering.

*“We must treasure the oases we find and create new ones, no matter how small, with love and care.”* – Hideo Sasaki

**Credited Buildings (partial list)**

Building Name	Location	Site No.	Date*	Status
University of Colorado Boulder Master Plan	Boulder, Colorado	5BL.11191	1960 - 1994	Completed
University of Colorado Boulder – Engineering Building	Boulder, Colorado		1966	Completed
Boulder Pearl Street Mall	Boulder, Colorado		1977	Completed
Fort Lowry Air Force Base Reuse Plan	Denver, Colorado		1996	Completed
Greenacre Park	New York City, NY		1971	Completed
Constitution Plaza	Hartford, CT		1961	Completed
Deere & Company World Headquarters	Moline, Illinois		1961	Completed
Upjohn Company Executive Office Building	Kalamazoo, MI		1957	Completed
IBM Corporation T.J. Watson Research Center	Yorktown, NY		1961	Completed
Foothill College Master Plan	Los Altos Hills, CA		1960	Completed



\*Completion date is stated if known. Plan, building permit, or assessor date is shown if completion date is unknown.

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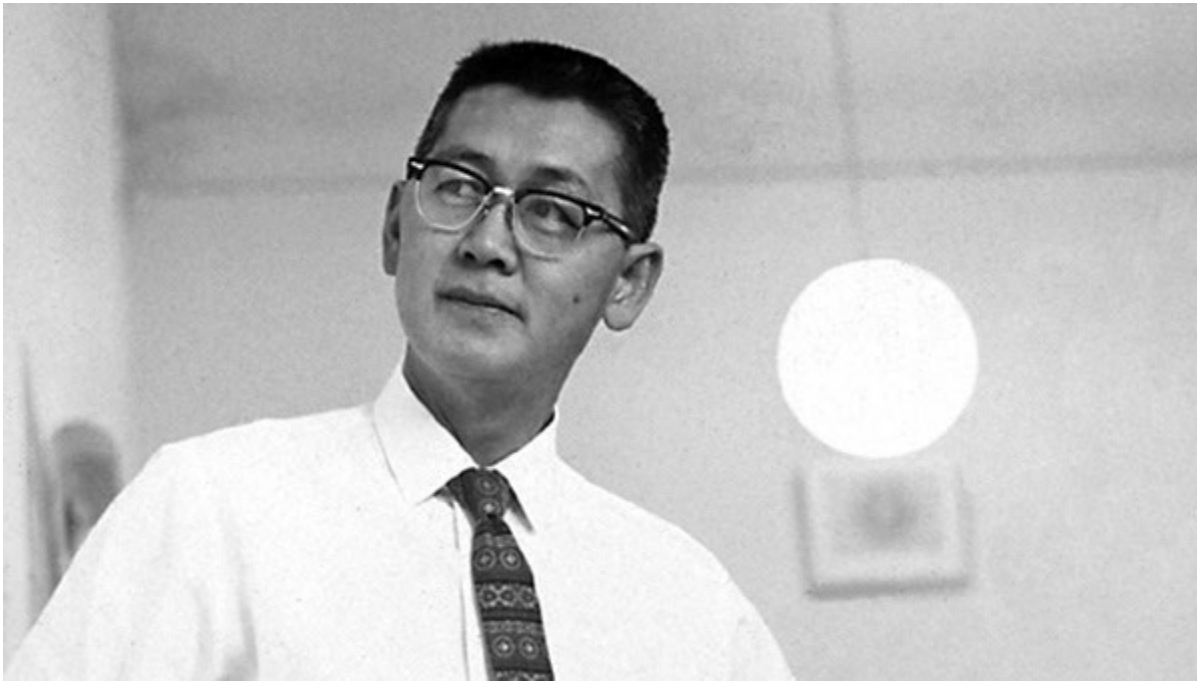
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Revised: January 2023



Hideo Sasaki, date unknown. Photo courtesy of Sasaki Associates.



Sasaki in 1955. Photo courtesy of Sasaki Associates.



Sasaki on a cross-country trip, ca. 1950. Photo courtesy of Stuart Dawson



Sasaki on a Jeep trip to Berkeley, 1950. Photo courtesy of Richard Haag.