Mei (May) 2025 | Vol. 42, No. 05

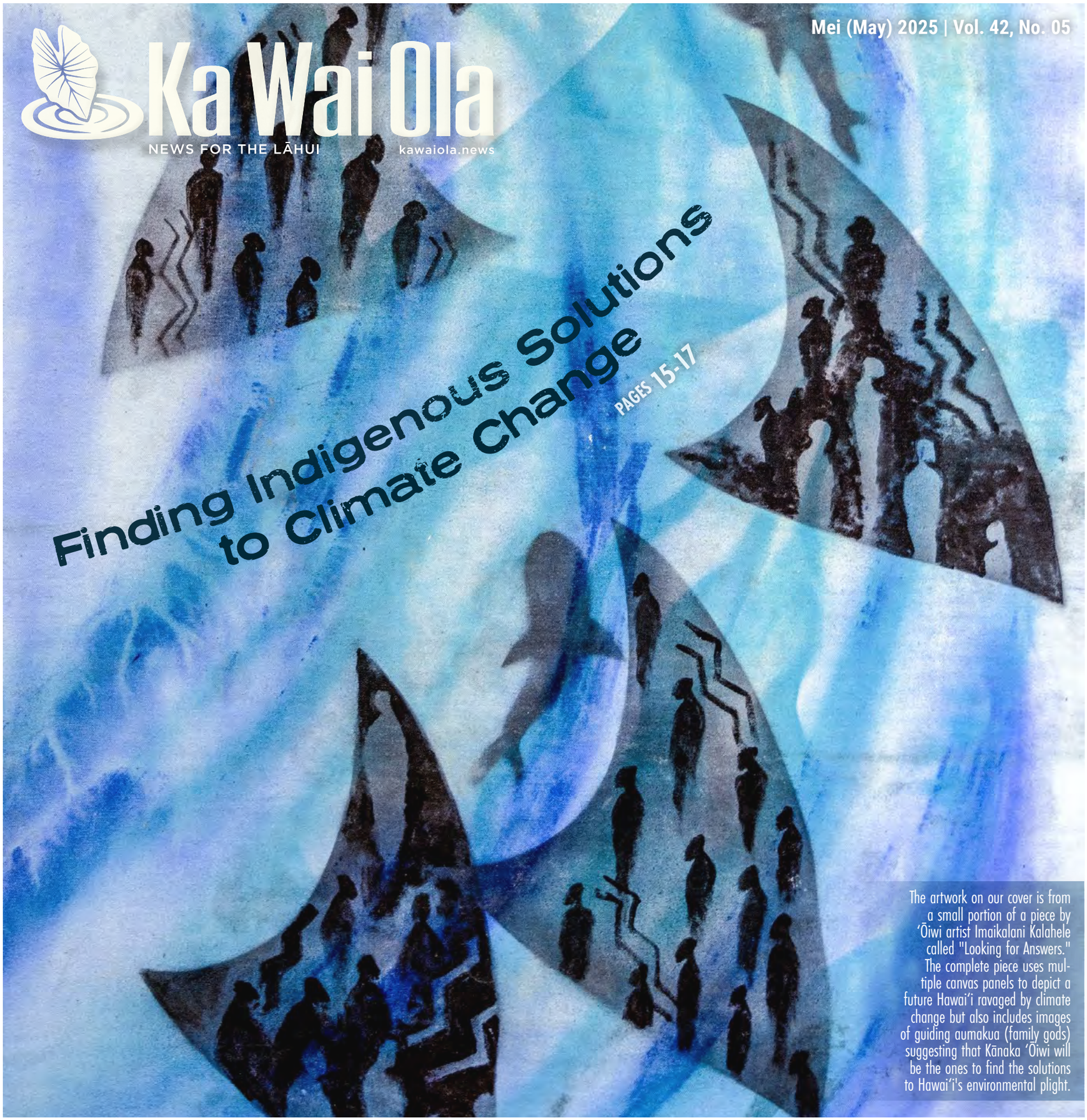
Ka Wai Ola

NEWS FOR THE LĀHUI

kawaiola.news

Finding Indigenous Solutions to Climate Change

PAGES 15-17



The artwork on our cover is from a small portion of a piece by ʻŌiwi artist Imaikalani Kalahele called "Looking for Answers." The complete piece uses multiple canvas panels to depict a future Hawaiʻi ravaged by climate change but also includes images of guiding aumakua (family gods) suggesting that Kānaka ʻŌiwi will be the ones to find the solutions to Hawaiʻi's environmental plight.

May 2025 Events

Royal Hawaiian Band Performances
May 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30, Noon - 1:00 p.m.
Honolulu, Oʻahu

The Royal Hawaiian Band holds free concerts on the ʻIolani Palace grounds most Fridays. rhb-music.com

10th Annual Manu o Kū Festival
May 3, 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Honolulu, Oʻahu

Celebrate the official bird of Honolulu at ʻIolani palace. Activities include nature-themed costume contest, music, hula, art, stories and more. conservehawaii.org

Are You Hewahewa? Planning Meeting & Workshop
May 3, Workshop, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Waimea Valley, Oʻahu

A genealogy workshop coordinated by Hewahewa Nui descendants. There are as many as 14 - 16+ lines whose recorded beginning is Kohala, Hawai'i. Register online bit.ly/Hewahewa. Na'mi Kama at 808 927-8072 or email the.descendants.namikama@gmail.com.

9th Annual Kauaʻi Steel Guitar Festival
May 4, 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. | Līhuʻe, Kauaʻi

Hawaiian steel guitar masters and NextGen steel guitarists perform traditional and contemporary Hawaiian music at the Kukui Grove Center. kauaisteelguitarfestival.com

Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls National Day of Awareness
May 5

A day of remembrance for Missing and Murdered Native Hawaiian Women, Girls and gender diverse individuals. Across Canada and America, red dresses are displayed in public spaces to symbolize the absence of these individuals and the violence they have faced. In Hawaiʻi, Native Hawaiian women and girls are over-represented in cases of domestic violence and sex trafficking, and 37% of child sex trafficking victims are Native Hawaiian. Read the MMNHWG Task Force Report: bit.ly/MMNHWG1

Puʻuhonua Mākeke
May 10, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. | Waimānalo, Oʻahu

A marketplace showcasing products, services, and businesses from puʻuhonua across Hawaiʻi. Puʻuhonua o Waimānalo (Nation of Hawaiʻi), 41-1300 Waikupanaha St., in the pavilion. FB/IG @ puuhonuamakeke

Kamaʻāina Sunday
May 11, 9:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Honolulu, Oʻahu

Enjoy audio tours of ʻIolani Palace, ʻono food, lively entertainment, and shop local vendors. iolanipalace.org

Concerts With a Cause
May 17, 5:30 p.m. | Kīlauea, Hawaiʻi Island

Kalani Peʻa with special guests Coppin ʻOhana Trio at Anaina Hou Community Park. A portion of ticket sales benefit Project Vision Hawaiʻi. Tickets available online. anainahou.org

Science & Sustainability Festival 2025
May 31, 9:00 am 3:00 pm. | Kapālama, Oʻahu

Bishop Museum's Science & Sustainability Festival brings together scientists, educators, cultural practitioners, and community partners to highlight the need to protect biodiversity and build a sustainable future in Hawaiʻi. bishopmuseum.org

MĀLAMA ʻĀINA EVENTS

Lā Mālama ma Puʻuokapolei
May 3, 8:30 - 10:00 a.m. | Puʻuokapolei, Oʻahu

Wear clothes that can get dirty, bring water for hydration. Tools will be provided. www.uluae.org

NiU NOW!: Kūkaniloko Workday
May 7 & 21, 8:00 a.m. – Noon | Wahiawā,Oʻahu

NiU NOW! is about growing food for a healthy society. Workdays every other Wednesday to care for the coconut grove and to stave off the Coconut Rhinoceros Beetle. puuhonua-society.org/niu-now

Mālama Hulēʻia Volunteer Day
May 17, 8:00 a.m. – Noon | Līhuʻe, Kauaʻi

Every 3rd Saturday is a community workday at Alakoko fishpond. Sign up at: peleke@malamahuleia.org or malamahuleia.org

Waipā Community Workday
May 24, 9:00 a.m. – Noon | Waipā, Kauaʻi

On the 4th Saturday each month check in at the old Waipā poi garage before 9:00 a.m. Bring closed-toe shoes, a water bottle, gloves, hat, rain gear, a towel, a change of clothes, snacks and/or lunch. Lunch is provided if you rsvp in advance. waipafoundation.org

Mālama Hāmākua Maui Kōkua Days
May 31, 9:00 - 11:30 a.m. | Hāmākua, Maui

Plant, weed, mulch, and compost our native plants and operate power tools. Tools and lunch provided. Meet at the Hahana Rd. entrance of the Hāmākualoa Open Space Preserve. www.malamahamakuamaui.com

HOʻĀKOAKOA LĀHUI EVENTS SPONSORED BY OHA

Mei Mele: Hāna Hoʻolauleʻa Series
May 2 – 16 | Hāna, Maui

5/2, 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. Hāna Farmers Market

5/9, 2:30 - 5:30 p.m. Hāna Farmers Market

5/15, 9:00 a.m. - Noon, Hāna High & Elementary School / 4:00 - 7:00 p.m., Hotel Hāna Maui Resort

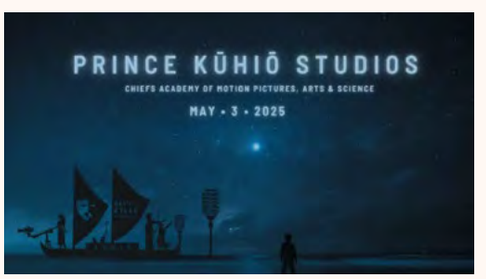
Free cultural celebrations featuring music, hula, lei-making, lauhala weaving, and keiki-friendly activities. hanaarts.org

The Waipa ʻĀina Festival
May 3, 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. | Hanalei, Kauaʻi

A fundraiser for Waipā Foundation and local entrepreneurs. Celebrate ʻāina, culture and community with music, ʻono food, activities, and local vendors. Located a half-mile past Hanalei town. waipafoundation.org

Punana Leo o Hoʻomau Molokaʻi Celebration
May 3, 9:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
Kaunakakai, Molokaʻi

Fundraiser for Pūnana Leo o Molokaʻi featuring music, Hawaiian language song competition, keiki activities, local vendors, food and cultural demonstrations at the Mitchell Pauʻole Center.



Prince Kūhiō Film Festival
May 3, 2:00 - 10:00 p.m. | Kapolei, Oʻahu

Premier of the film Kai, featuring waterman Kai Lenny, who mentors houseless 12-year-old Dustin, to surf the extreme big waves of Peʻahi, also known as Jaws. The festival includes music by Alana Kahiapo, DJs and local homestead artists. instagram.com/prince.kuhio ■

Preserving Mana at Mānā Amid Climate Threats

Aloha mai kākou,

I recently traveled with OHA Lead Compliance Specialist Kamakana Ferreira and Director of ʻŌiwi Wellbeing and ʻĀina Momona Kūʻike Kamakea-ʻŌhelo to the Mānā Plain on the west side of Kauaʻi for a site visit to the Pacific Missile Range Facility (PMRF).

Our purpose was to huakaʻi (journey) to one of the most sacred and storied areas of our pae ʻāina, a place on Kauaʻi where the natural and cultural histories of our people are deeply rooted in the land, and where the protection of iwi kūpuna is both a kuleana and a necessity in the face of rising environmental threats.

Welcomed by kānaka leaders that included Kunane Aipoalani of Nā ʻOhana Papa o Mānā, Kaulana Mossman, Jonell Kaohelauliʻi and Thomas Nizo, we were guided through the wahi pana there, visiting sites such as the Nohili Sand Dunes and Keonekani o Nohili.

The Mānā Plain supported fishing camps, taro cultivation, and sandalwood harvesting. The coastal dunes, used as sacred burial grounds, are a testament to the area's role as a final resting place, a leina a ka ʻuhane, a leaping point for souls returning to the realm of the ancestors.

Sand dunes, lava tubes, caves, and cliffs were seen as natural repositories of mana, sacred places where iwi could return to the earth in peace.

Today, this wahi kūpuna faces unprecedented threats. Climate change is accelerating coastal erosion and sea level rise, disturbing centuries-old burial grounds and exposing iwi kūpuna to the elements. What was once protected by shifting dunes and natural coastal buffers is now increasingly vulnerable.

In the face of these changes, lineal descendants of the Mānā Plain, along with ʻŌiwi leaders at PMRF, are leading protection and preservation efforts of ʻike kūpuna with intention. The restoration of the Nohili Sand Dunes, a process being guided by cultural practices, is helping to preserve iwi in place when possible and ensuring that the coastline remains in balance with the natural surroundings.

When iwi are exposed and preservation in place is not possible, the respectful interring of iwi kūpuna is conducted at the Lua Kupapaʻu o Nohili Crypt at night during the summer solstice. In Hawaiian cosmology, Pō (darkness or night) is not simply the absence of light, it is the ancestral realm, the source of creation, and the domain where the ʻuhane (spirit) dwell. Without the distractions of the daylight world, ʻuhane can travel, transition, and settle with greater peace.

The work at Mānā is a powerful example of how cultural preservation is an essential and urgent response to the impacts of climate change.

Across the pae ʻāina, many coastal areas are experiencing similar challenges. The need for vigilant stewardship, protection of burial sites, and the active engagement of cultural practitioners and lineal descendants is more pressing than ever. As the tides rise, so too must our commitment to protect our past, because in doing so, we preserve our mana. ■

Me ka haʻahaʻa,

Stacy Kealohalani Ferreira
Ka Pouhana | Chief Executive Officer

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From State to Stewardship:

Reclaiming Land, Reclaiming Identity

By Parker Kamealoha Spencer

The transfer of lands from the state and county governments to the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) represents more than just a shift in legal ownership – it marks a pivotal step toward restoring justice, equity, and self-determination for Native Hawaiians.

For generations, the loss of ancestral lands has contributed to the erosion of cultural identity, economic opportunity, and the wellbeing of both kānaka and ʻāina. Reclaiming these lands through OHA, a constitutionally established entity representing Native Hawaiian interests, offers a path to healing and empowerment.

This work aligns with OHA's Mana i Mauli Ola Strategic Plan, which affirms that wellbeing for Native Hawaiians is grounded in the health of ʻāina, ʻŌiwi leadership, and the ability of our communities to determine their futures.

Land stewardship contributes directly to our strategic outcomes – restoring not only access to resources but the conditions of ea, or self-determination practices of our people.

ʻĀina is foundational to Native Hawaiian culture and identity. It is not a commodity but as a living entity, a source of life and spiritual connection. The dispossession that began with the illegal overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom in 1893 severed many Native Hawaiians from this connection, resulting in cultural disconnection and systemic disparities.

In transferring land to OHA, the state and counties acknowledge the historical injustices and begin to fulfill their responsibility to reconcile past wrongs. Our lands can serve as foundations for Native Hawaiians to rebuild sustainable communities rooted in traditional practices.

Agricultural projects, fishpond restoration, and renewable energy development on OHA-managed lands would provide an opportunity to promote food sovereignty and environmental stewardship while generating economic opportunities - not only to create jobs but also to reinforce cultural values and ecological knowledge that have sustained kānaka for centuries.

With more land, OHA has more opportunities to pursue housing projects to meet the needs of Hawaiian families, stabilize communities, and help Native Hawaiian families thrive in safe, rooted environments where cultural practices can be passed down.

Land ownership also gives OHA greater political leverage to influence decision-making for ʻāina and resources.

Whether asserting more influence in government decisions, managing education and healthcare services, or advancing the vision of nation-building, greater autonomy allows us to better determine our future; it means allowing Native Hawaiians to define and pursue our path forward on our terms.

Land transfers also set legal and moral precedents, acknowledge the unique legal and historical status of Native Hawaiians, and affirm the state's obligation to honor its public trust obligations to Native Hawaiians, holding the state accountable to set right and fulfill its responsibilities, consistent with governmental action across America to address injustices against Indigenous peoples.

In essence, transferring ʻāina to OHA isn't merely about land acquisition – it's about restoring dignity, opportunity, and power to a people who have long been denied these fundamental rights. It is a tangible expression of commitment to Native Hawaiian self-determination and a critical step toward a more just and equitable Hawaiʻi for all. ■

Parker Kamealoha Spencer serves as ka pōhaku niho mauli ola (strategy consultant) for Strategy & Implementation - ʻĀina Momona & ʻŌiwi Wellbeing for OHA, where he supports and leads efforts in systems change grounded in ea and aloha ʻāina.

A Lifetime Advocate for Native Hawaiian Rights

Melvin "Mel" Madison Masao Masuda

Jan. 1, 1943 – March 19, 2025

By Hailama Farden, OHA Senior Director of Hawaiian Cultural Affairs

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) honors the life of OHA public policy advocate Melvin "Mel" Masuda, Esq., who passed away on March 19. I met Mel when I joined OHA in 2024 – an energetic kupuna who introduced himself to me as "Maka." He had joined OHA in January 2023 and his work here included tracking legislative bills and writing testimony. However, his service to the lāhui began decades ago and those in the know knew him as a legal scholar, a journalist, a warrior for justice, defender of the people and a tireless advocate for Native Hawaiian rights.

Mel Masuda at the ʻOnipaʻa March on Jan. 17, 2025. - *Photo: Jason Lees*

Born on the island of Maui during WWII, Melvin "Mel" Masuda came from humble origins. His mother, Setsuyo Ono, grew up on the sugar plantation in Puʻunene, Maui. His father, Tatsuo Masuda, was a Japanese immigrant who came to Hawaiʻi in 1920 at the age of 13 to work on the sugar plantation in Lahaina. Mel was the second of three boys born to the couple – he had an older brother, Richard, and a younger brother, Roy.

As a youngster, Mel was deeply curious and believed in the power of words followed by action. While attending Wailuku Elementary School, he discovered the public library on High Street and a whole new world opened up to him.

While Mel was still in elementary school, the ʻohana moved to Oʻahu. A brilliant student, Mel was editor-in-chief of the school newspaper at Roosevelt High School and won several essay contests. That led to him working as a reporter for the *Honolulu Advertiser* while still in high school – only the third person of color to work in its newsroom.

At UH Mānoa, Mel took advanced placement courses and was accepted to both Stanford and Princeton universities. He chose Princeton, becoming the first Roosevelt graduate to attend the prestigious institution.

While there, Mel served as managing editor for the *Daily Princetonian* newspaper, earning accolades for his investigative journalism. He then attended Yale Law School where he earned a seat on the *Yale Law Journal*.

Members of the Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana make a presentation at Maui Community College shortly after the January 1976 landing of the "Kahoʻolawe Nine" on the island. George Helm, Jr., (left) and Mel Masuda (center) answer questions. Also pictured are Dr. Emmett Aluli and Walter Ritte, Jr. - *Photo: Ian Lind*

After graduating with his juris doctorate and passing the Hawaiʻi Bar Exam, he clerked for Chief Justice William S. Richardson, contributing to landmark cases that shaped the legal landscape of Hawaiʻi.

But it was the 1960s and there was a military draft. Mel opted to join the 411th Engineers Battalion at Fort DeRussy as an army reservist, serving for six years. With a recommendation from Chief Justice Richardson, Mel was selected as a White House Fellow – the first person selected from Hawaiʻi and only the second of Asian American ancestry.

His work in Washington, D.C., led to an invitation to study at Harvard's Kennedy School where he earned a master's degree in public administration, making him one of the few people in the world to have graduated from Princeton, Yale and Harvard.

As an attorney in private practice and a lifelong advocate for Native Hawaiians, Mel stood shoulder to shoulder with Kahu Abraham Akaka to protest the Hawaiʻi Land Reform Act of 1967, which allowed the state government to condemn land owned by large landowners and transfer the land to homeowners living on leasehold property – a law which adversely affected Aliʻi Trust landowners like Kamehameha Schools.

In the 1970s, Mel became a close friend of George Jarrett Helm, Jr., using his legal skills to help Helm found Hui Alaloa and later, the Protect Kahoʻolawe ʻOhana – both seminal organizations associated with the Hawaiian Renaissance and Hawaiian rights movement. For years Mel served as the organization's pro-bono attorney, actively fighting for an end to the bombing and for the return of Kahoʻolawe to the Hawaiian people.

Mel with his daughter, Kaiewa, wife Karen, and moʻopuna - Keolaloa (front) and Kahiau (back). - *Courtesy Photo*

George was lost at sea off Kahoʻolawe in 1977. Through his tears, Mel authored the liner notes for the album, "George Helm: A True Hawaiian," posthumously released the same year.

As an educator, Mel nurtured generations of legal minds, serving as a professor of law at the Hawaiʻi Pacific University for 25 years. There, he established legal programs, mentored students and created innovative courses to ensure that his students understood that knowledge was a tool for empowerment.

His 1994 article "Do you have to be Hawaiian to Love the Land?" eloquently captured his unwavering commitment to aloha ʻāina and justice for Native Hawaiians.

Throughout his life, Mel continued to fight for the voiceless. In 2019, already well into his 70s, Mel acted as attorney for six defendants in the Kahuku Wind Farm case. And in 2023, he joined OHA as a public policy advocate, continuing to use his skills, knowledge and expertise to serve the Native Hawaiian community.

Mel is survived by his wife, Karen Masuda; son Makamae (Allison) Masuda; daughter Kaiewa (Matthew) Muranaka; and grandchildren Ikaika, Kapono, Kahiau and Keolaloa.

Mel's life was interwoven with the struggles and triumphs of the Hawaiian people; his legacy is one of service, courage, and dedication to the oppressed. His story echoes the very principles of Psalm 82:3-4 which says: "Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."

Mel Masuda spent his entire life defending the weak, uplifting the needy and delivering justice. He is honored as a true protector of the land and its people.

Aloha ʻoe, Mel. Your legacy lives on in the justice you fought for, the students you inspired, and the hearts of all who had the privilege of knowing you. ■

Faces of the Diaspora

Teaching ʻŌlelo Hawaiʻi to Keiki in Washington

By Megan Ulu-Lani Boyanton

In a classroom for Kānaka Maoli kamaliʻi in King County, Washington, children's books in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi sit on shelves, and a mahina (moon) phases chart hangs on the wall. Here, Kamalei Brandon sings songs and plays games with keiki once a month as part of a Hawaiian immersion program on the continent.

Last year, Brandon spearheaded the Mālama i ka ʻĀina (MIKA) program through the Mokuʻāina a Wakinekona Hawaiian Civic Club, with the initiative officially kicking off this past February.

The goal of the monthly event, Ke Kula Pōʻaono o MIKA, is to provide developmental and cultural programming in ʻōlelo to children ages 0 to 5 years old. Brandon teaches alongside her friend, Kauʻi Auwae.

"My biggest hope is that not only my ʻohana but, really, all our Kānaka Maoli children out here on the continent, have a pathway where they feel like this is possible," Brandon said.

While she now resides in Seattle, Brandon was born in Kailua-Kona and raised in Waikōloa. Her paternal side is Hawaiian, with her grandmother hailing from Kauaʻi and her grandfather – whom she calls "Papa" – from Oʻahu and Hawaiʻi Island. Her mother is white, though she moved to Hawaiʻi as a child.

Brandon was her parents' firstborn, followed by her brother, Nicholas Kekaulike. She recalls being surrounded by cousins, aunts and uncles on the ʻāina.

"My papa would always say, there's three things in the world you need: Akua (God), ʻohana (family) and culture," Brandon said.

She attended Keikiland Preschool, then Waikōloa Elementary & Middle School. Brandon danced hula as a child. But outside of reciting the Lord's Prayer in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi, Hawaiian language wasn't a significant part of her upbringing.

In elementary school, Brandon's family left Hawaiʻi for Modesto, California. They spent over a year in the city – a tough transition, although Brandon remembers seeing other residents who looked like her.

Once they moved to Covington, Washington, that changed. The city's demographics skewed white, and Brandon faced stereotypes and prejudice because of her ancestry.

"To be kānaka wasn't welcomed here," she said.

But her papa taught her to value culture and education. He paid for her to attend Kamehameha Schools' Explorations Series programs.

"It's not great at all that we had to move," Brandon said, "but I do feel like it was such a blessing that I had my formative years back home in Hawaiʻi."

Still, on the continent she found it difficult to overcome the judgment of her peers. Brandon began to distance herself from her Hawaiian identity. She stopped using her Hawaiian name going, instead, by her first name, Kaitlin. And in middle school Brandon used a light shade of foundation on her face and avoided the sun.

Kamalei Brandon with her husband, Dorian, and their son, Kalaʻikoa Damari. - *Courtesy Photos*

Mālama i ka ʻĀina, a program of the Mokuʻāina o Wakinekona Hawaiian Civic Club in Washington State delivers cultural programming in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi to keiki being raised in Washington State.

In high school the student body was slightly more diverse with other Pacific Islanders enrolled. Brandon recalls feeling twinges of jealousy over their ability to hold onto their roots.

While in high school, Brandon discovered her love for teaching. She worked as a gymnastics instructor where she connected with her pupils – particularly the students with disabilities.

After graduating from high school in 2014, Brandon enrolled at the University of Connecticut, moving across the country. In college, she met other educators of color who helped open her eyes to the racism she experienced in her youth.

By 2017, Brandon had earned two bachelor's degrees: one in elementary education and another in English. She returned to Washington with a mission: Prioritizing racial justice work for marginalized students to ensure others didn't suffer the challenges she was forced to overcome.

Brandon reconnected with her ʻohana and added her Hawaiian name back to her full name – "trying to heal from that trauma," she said. She was accepted into graduate school at the University of Washington.

During that time, she met her now-husband, Dorian, on a dating app. They both share island roots: He is Jamaican and Black. The couple soon sparked a relationship.

Brandon earned her master's degree in teaching in 2018 and began working in the Seattle Public Schools system. Brandon said teaching felt so natural it was like "gliding." She was part of the school system for several years – mostly teaching kindergarten and first grade. She also lectured about English and ethnic studies. Brandon was eventually awarded the Learning for Justice Award for Excellence in Teaching.

In 2019, Brandon and Dorian were married on Hawaiʻi Island. And two years later, during the COVID-19 pandemic, she was hāpai. Brandon decided to switch from working in the classroom to the district office becoming an elementary ethnic studies curriculum specialist.

In June 2022, she gave birth to Kalaʻikoa Damari. Brandon took time to heal from her pregnancy and raise her young son. A doula at Hummingbird Indigenous Family Services, a local nonprofit, supported her throughout the process.

The experience sparked her interest in studying home visiting programs for families, and she took an Indigenous doula training course in November 2022. Brandon earned her certification, and Hummingbird Indigenous Family Services hired her as a program manager in March 2023.

Although she loves doula work, "I realized my naʻau was really tied to early childhood education and home visiting," Brandon said.

She is now the nonprofit's Pilimakua Family Connections director, offering free services, such as home visits, parent groups and community connection events, to Indigenous families with newborns and young keiki – Indigenous being inclusive of Native Americans, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders.

She also felt called to reclaim ʻōlelo for herself and her son, taking Hawaiian language classes. "I wanted my son to have that connection to our culture, to the language, to the ʻāina," Brandon said.

She's since become a cultural liaison for her budding family and others in the diaspora through the Mālama i ka ʻĀina program.

"My big hope is that my branch of our ʻohana can fully reclaim and sustain fluency in ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi," Brandon said. "So my son, Kalaʻikoa, can grow up feeling incredibly proud to be Kanaka Maoli." ■

For more information about the Mālama i ka ʻĀina program visit: www.mawhcc.org/mika.

Our Grandkids' Water

The connection between climate change, landfills, and the legacy that we leave future generations

By Wayne Chung Tanaka

"We have to remember, landfills are forever," Honolulu Board of Water Supply Chief Engineer Ernie Lau reminded lawmakers in March, testifying in support of a prohibition against siting solid waste facilities over a drinking water aquifer.

For Lau, the chronic or sudden release of extremely toxic landfill sludge or "leachate" directly over any drinking water source is an unacceptable threat.

"My kuleana is about providing water for our future – not just today, but for the future seven, eight or more generations from now, a hundred years from now. What will those who are around then say about the condition of the water resources on O'ahu?"

Lau's views are well-grounded, particularly after the U.S. Navy's Red Hill Bulk Fuel Storage Facility contaminated O'ahu's primary drinking water aquifer, despite years of assurances regarding its safety.

Thus, the City and County of Honolulu's proposal to place a new landfill in Wahiawā, directly over another aquifer, suggests that there is a lack of understanding about the importance of zealously protecting our freshwater resources.

Using a climate lens may help provide more clarity on how to understand – and address – O'ahu's landfill conundrum.

All landfills, even modern ones, are expected to eventually leak. When they do, "leachate" containing a number of extremely toxic ingredients, including heavy metals, PFAS ("forever chemicals"), and other long-lasting compounds, are released into the environment. These toxic chemicals percolate into the soil, and eventually seep into any underlying groundwater.

Thus, siting a landfill over a drinking water source essentially guarantees its contamination – whether in our lifetimes, or in that of our children's or grandchildren's.

What does this mean, from a climate perspective?

Hawai'i is already facing historic water scarcity, with 90% of our islands seeing less rainfall compared to a century ago.

This trend will only continue. While some climate models predict rainier conditions in windward areas, all agree that Hawai'i's leeward regions will see substantially decreased rainfall, and at least one indicates a 30% reduction in rainfall in wetter areas and a 60% reduction in drier ones by 2100.

Additionally, hotter temperatures mean higher evaporation rates and reduced aquifer recharge – along with greater demand for water for drinking, agriculture, and other purposes.

In other words, our grandchildren are going to need all the water they can get – and where we place our next landfill could rob them of even more of this precious, irreplaceable resource.

Tons of toxic trash should not sit above our islands' aquifers. - *Courtesy Photo*

A glimpse inside an aquifer. - *Photo: Board of Water Supply*

The city's assurances of environmental safety through operations and routine maintenance don't reflect our climate reality.

Even ignoring the inevitable failure of landfill "liners" and the ever-present risks of human error or even sabotage, climate-fueled superstorms, floods, and wildfires will create unprecedented challenges to preventing the disastrous release(s) of toxic leachate over our water supply.

Meanwhile, as sea level rise increasingly inundates coastal cities and displace millions; as increasingly frequent climate disasters cause economic and social institutions to falter and collapse; as billions of "climate refugees" are forced to migrate; as droughts cause mass crop failures and starvation; and as regional conflicts increase as a result – the supply chains we now take for granted will begin to break down.

This, in turn, will keep us from sourcing and bringing in the equipment necessary to operate and repair the leachate pumps, monitor wells and test equipment, leak detection and containment systems, and other components to safely contain and manage the millions of gallons of leachate that the new landfill will annually generate.

If future maintenance failures that will poison our grandkids' water are essentially unavoidable, should the new landfill be sited as proposed?

Is there a solution?

Fortunately, existing climate strategies provide examples of how we might address our interconnected landfill and climate challenges, and their shared root causes.

Both the climate and landfill crises compel us to upend the social inequities plaguing us. For example, it has become increasingly clear that those most impacted by the impacts of the climate crisis – and by its underlying phenomena of overconsumption, industrial exploitation of people and 'āina, colonialism, and patriarchy – must be empowered to use their experience-based insights to pivot us away from the devastation that lies ahead, and toward a more just and sustainable way of life.

Hawai'i residents who have directly experienced the public health, environmental, economic, and social impacts of living next to landfills must be solicited for their input and offered meaningful (and paid) decision-making roles in planning the next one. This should include ideas for protective measures against the harms they have experienced, and the reparations and compensation that they, their communities, and any future community should receive, for bearing the costs of hosting O'ahu's waste.

Only through such a demonstrated commitment to justice, can we puka through the outright opposition a new landfill will face – and begin rebuilding the reciprocity and understanding needed to navigate our waste management and climate crises.

We also need policies and investments to stop our unsustainable reliance on imported food and goods – the source of much of our waste and size of our carbon footprint. This includes reining in the profit-driven exploitation of land and water that makes local food security and sustainable ways of life nearly impossible to achieve.

Broad implementation of Indigenous land and water management can also reduce our external dependencies, and restore the circular, largely waste-free economies our islands previously enjoyed.

Educational curricula and strategic investments, from home gardening classes to civic empowerment programs, can also help us take control of our collective fate, and live in far better balance with our islands, and each other.

O'ahu's landfill crisis is not just a waste issue, but one intertwined with our ever-worsening climate crisis. Our grandchildren will want to know: did we uphold our generational kuleana to take on both? ■

Maunakea on the National Register of Historic Places

By Bianca Isaki, KAHEA Maunakea Legal Director, and Huliauapa'a

On March 27, 2025, the National Park Service made the historic decision to list Maunakea on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Maunakea is now listed as a Traditional Cultural Property ("TCP"; currently termed "Traditional Cultural Place") and District by the United States government.

The listing of Maunakea as a TCP will assist ongoing efforts to protect the mauna. In response to efforts at industrial development on Maunakea, such as the proposed Thirty Meter Telescope, Kānaka Maoli community leaders and other experts have pushed for thorough assessments that more fully honor Maunakea's cultural significance.

TCPs are places associated with the cultural practices or beliefs of a living community that are rooted in a community's history, important in maintaining its continued cultural identity, and historically significant.

Being listed on the National Register of Historic Places does not transfer authority or title over lands to the federal government.

In 2023, Hawai'i nonprofits KAHEA and Huliauapa'a, along with Mauna Kea Anaina Hou – an association of

Maunakea - *Photo: sin_ok, adobestock.com*

Kānaka Maoli cultural practitioners of Maunakea – collaborated to nominate Maunakea as a TCP to the Hawai'i Register of Historic Places (HRHP), submitting 'ike kūpuna as well as relevant public records from administrative hearings, court cases, written comments, plans and reports.

The Hawai'i Historic Places Review Board approved the listing of Maunakea on the Hawai'i Historic Register in November 2023 and subsequently submitted a nomination for Maunakea's listing on the National Register which was approved in March.

"I am so grateful that Mauna Kea and its sacredness will now formally be recognized as a TCP," said Mauna Kea Anaina Hou President Kealoha Pisciotta. "This means that all proposed activities are now required to consider all the sacred sites and how they are culturally interconnected and protected in whole – not just randomly like they have been treating the mauna throughout the years – it is whole and that helps us as Kānaka Maoli to become more whole again also."

With this listing, those seeking government permits or funding will be required to weigh the impacts of their proposed projects on the cultural and historic significance of Maunakea.

"Official registration helps lift the burden of debating the cultural significance of Mauna Kea. Listing Mauna Kea as a TCP means that we will not need to start from square one to prove the mauna's cultural significance if any other project is proposed," said Jonathan Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio, KAHEA Board president.

"Mauna Kea is inherently sacred to us. What's important is that this recognition affirms our pilina and practices, and with that, comes a responsibility to consider how our cultural community and resources may be affected," said KAHEA board member Shelley Muneoka. ■

For more information go to kahea.org or huliauapaa.org .

NOTE: The spelling of Maunakea as one or two words varies from group to group. OHA's "standard" spelling is one word. However, the members of KAHEA and, Huliauapa'a and Mauna Kea Anaina Hou prefer the two word spelling and asked that their quotes reflect that.

Riskier Voyages Ahead

Climate change has become the most pressing challenge for ocean voyagers

By Christine Hitt

Hōkūleʻa sailing on the high seas during her Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage (2014-2017). More frequent and severe storms caused by climate change will make future voyages more challenging and dangerous. - *Photo: Nāʻālehu Anthony, ʻŌiwiTV*

Fifty years ago, when *Hōkūleʻa* set sail on its maiden voyage, the focus was to revive Hawaiʻi's connection to ocean voyaging and then to perpetuate the tradition for future generations. However, as voyaging looks toward its next chapter, a challenge has emerged and it's not one that can be ignored.

"The No. 1 challenge that's coming up right now is climate change. It's seriously a part of our conversation now," said Chadd Paishon Pwo navigator and executive director of Nā Kālai Waʻa. The nonprofit launched Hawaiʻi Island's voyaging canoe, *Makaliʻi*, 30 years ago.

"For us, the final factor in saying, 'Yes, we're going to go,' or not, is weather," Paishon said. "And now that weather has shifted so much, you know, will this be a factor of maybe we won't sail long as often, but that's what we have to continue to look at. Because even for our families down in the South Pacific, they're seeing such a difference in their seasons right now that they've never seen before."

Climate change is warming the ocean and storms thrive in warmer ocean temperatures.

In the last century, the temperature rose between one-half and one degree Fahrenheit, and Hawaiʻi's average temperature could increase 7.2 degrees Fahrenheit by the end of the century, according to the State of Hawaiʻi Climate Change Portal.

The hotter ocean temperatures intensify and fuel hurricanes. There's no telling, though, how intense the storms will end up being.

"Essentially, we have to train harder now for the storm than we've ever trained before," said Nainoa Thompson, Pwo navigator and CEO of the Polynesian Voyaging Society. "It's always been about our relationship with nature and we're having to build a relationship to a fast-changing natural world, one which humanity has never faced before, in terms of the pace of change."

The data scares him, he said, but he believes in the younger generation, and he wants them to be prepared for the storms. "What the data is showing is that there's not necessarily more hurricanes, but it's showing that they're more intense, they're stronger, and the length of time of dangerous days per storm has increased," he said.

This means there could be shorter windows for canoes to sail between hurricanes, and plans need to be made ahead of time on how to avoid a severe storm if one appears. "It's all about decisions on when to go and when not to go, where to go, where to hide," Thompson continued. The places to hide are usually where there have been no hurricanes historically or at the Equator, where the Coriolis Effect prevents hurricanes from forming there.

"We're like hurricane-hole-hopping. It's much more complicated, but it's required us to know a lot more about nature," Thompson said. "We're looking at Earth systems. And if you don't understand the systems, you can't predict the weather. But if you do understand the systems, then it helps you to be able to make better decisions."

Hōkūleʻa is about to continue its Moananuiākea voyage, which is intended to travel 43,000 nautical miles to 36 countries. Thompson said that this voyage will be the most dangerous and riskiest because it crosses around the South China Sea and the Philippine Sea, where the ocean is the hottest in the world and where there is a high probability of hurricanes (known as typhoons in that region).

He said they have multiple plans in place depending upon the weather, ranging anywhere from not going at all to diverting to other places. Additionally, an escort boat will accompany *Hōkūleʻa* and sister canoe *Hikianalia*, and its crew will also help keep an eye on the weather.

Thompson said the changing climate is forcing them to ask different questions now than they did in the past. The crew is also using advanced technology to give them the most accurate weather and atmospheric information when they're on the ocean.

Whether or not climate change would ever prevent voyaging in the future is unknown at this point.

"For us in voyaging, we're going to keep voyaging. We're going to keep sailing until the data shows us that it's beyond the safety envelope," Thompson said. "We're not there yet. So we're going to continue the voyage. But we have to alter. We have to adapt. We have to learn."

One of the best investments, Thompson said, is in the future generations, as they will be learning and training with more information and research than ever before. These up-and-coming generations will be relied upon to tackle climate change and determine how best to weather the storms. "We're in the most important time ever for the world to have explorers," Thompson said.

"We need to help our young people be great navigators, not necessarily on canoes, but in the issues of making the best kinds of adaptation to change in the world." ■

Marine National Monument in Jeopardy

By Jonee Leinā'ala Kaina Peters

Rare melon-headed whales swim peacefully near Palmyra Atoll in the Pacific Island Heritage Marine National Monument. That peace is now threatened by extractive commercial fishing. - *Photo: Kydd Pollock, The Nature Conservancy*

About 934 miles west-southwest of Hawai'i is a remote group of seven small, uninhabited islands and atolls spread out over some 495,000 square miles of ocean: Baker, Howland, Jarvis, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Palmyra Atoll and Wake Atoll.

These low-lying islands and atolls in the Central Pacific have no aquifers or freshwater resources, so they are not suitable for human habitation.

However, the region is renowned for its extraordinary biodiversity. Its islands are home to colonies of at least a dozen different endemic seabird species and its nutrient-rich shallows support countless species of coral, fish, giant clams, sea turtles, reef sharks and giant clams.

Beyond the reefs, dolphins, sharks, whales and other threatened and depleted species thrive in the deep water between the islands – including rare melon-headed whales and a possible new species of beaked whale. It is a region of deep seamounts and other unique ecosystems, much of which remains unexplored.

U.S. Activities in the Central Pacific

In the mid-19th century, America laid claim to these islands – known until recently as the Pacific Remote Islands – via the Guano Islands Act of 1856. Guano, a by-product of seabird excrement, was a valuable resource used for fertilizer and, to a lesser degree, gunpowder.

Just prior to World War II, America used these islands again – this time for a secret seven-year project to secure the region as a stop-over location for its military planes.

"Colonists" (known as Hui Panalā'au) were recruited from Hawai'i to inhabit Baker, Jarvis and Howard islands. About 130, mostly Native Hawaiian, young men were sent there so America could prove the islands were resident-occupied by United States citizens.

The ill-conceived project resulted in the tragic deaths of three of the young men and was terminated in February 1942 after the U.S. entered the war.

Meanwhile, Johnston Atoll, despite being designated as a seabird refuge in 1926, was used by the U.S. military between 1958-1962 as a launch site for extremely high-altitude (outer space) nuclear weapons development and testing. A series of three nuclear missile test accidents during this period left portions of the atoll contaminated with plutonium.

Then in 1971, the military built a chemical weapons storage facility on Johnston Atoll, which at one point housed nearly 7% of America's chemical weapons arsenal, including various nerve agents and 1.8 million gallons of Agent Orange – nearly 30,000 gallons of which leaked into the soil of Johnston Atoll over a five-year period.

Eventually, a chemical agent disposal system was built on Johnston Atoll to destroy the arsenal there. The facility was closed in 2000 and its use as a bird sanctuary resumed. Nevertheless, portions of the atoll remain contaminated.

Efforts to Heal and Protect the Region

Recognizing the region's rich biodiversity, in the early 2000s, conservation scientists began advocating to establish the area as a protected marine sanctuary. The islands of Baker, Howard and Jarvis had already been designated as National Wildlife Refuges in 1974 and by 2001, Kingman Reef and Palmyra Atoll were similarly designated.

In 2009, U.S. President George W. Bush designated the region as the Pacific Remote Islands Marine National Monument (PRIMNM) establishing management areas of 50 nautical miles around each set of islands and atolls.

The management area was later expanded to 200 nautical miles for three of the islands (Johnston Atoll, Wake Atoll and Jarvis Island), making it one of the largest protected areas in the ocean.

Although Hawai'i is the closest inhabited island group to the region, it is known to, and was used by, other Pacific peoples. For example, both Johnston Atoll and Wake Island were used by ancient navigators from many cultures as a resting stop during their voyages. Thus, efforts to expand protections to 200 nautical miles for the remaining islands has continued with involvement from Indigenous Pacific Island nations

In January 2025, the PRIMNM was renamed the Pacific Islands Heritage Marine National Monument (PIHMNM) to respect the region's cultural and historical importance to all Pacific Island nations, and the sacrifice of the young men of Hui Panalā'au was formally honored.

Clear and Present Dangers

Despite its status as a marine national monument and its critical importance to the biodiversity of the Pacific, the PIHMNM remains endangered.

In March, the Department of the Air Force announced its intent to build "two commercial rocket landing pads" on Johnston Island for its Rocket Cargo Vanguard program which aims to develop the technology to deliver up to 100 tons of cargo anywhere on Earth using non-military commercial rockets.

Scientists and environmentalists are speaking out against this plan citing - in addition to the atoll's obvious protected status - the biohazards and contamination remaining on the atoll from the military activity there in the 1960s and 70s.

In a press release, American Bird Conservancy President, Michael J. Parr, said that "installing rocket landing pads on Johnston Atoll cannot occur without significantly disrupting wildlife and harming the important bird colonies found there."

Despite the protests, the Department of the Air Force and Space Force released a draft of its Environmental Assessment (EA) with a "Finding of No Significant Impact" last month and gave the public just 30-days to comment on the project.

Then in April, the commercial fishing ban in PIHMNM was reversed by executive order – a veritable one-two punch to conservation scientists and ocean protectors.

"This undermines decades of work to protect and preserve public lands and waters, endangered species, and cultural heritage in favor of commercial interests," said Earthjustice attorney David Henkin. "This is one of the most pristine tropical marine environments in the world [and it] already faces dire threats from climate change and ocean acidification."

The primary advocate for commercial fishing in the PIHMNM is the Western Pacific Regional Fishery Management Council headed by Executive Director Kitty Simonds who has long opposed the establishment of marine protected areas across the Pacific, advocating on behalf of commercial fishing interests despite the council's congressional mandate via the Magnuson-Stevens Act to protect fish stocks, habitats, and protected resources as well as to prevent overfishing and ensure sustainable fisheries.

"Scientific studies have shown that [establishing] marine protected areas increases the amount of fish available to commercial fishers in waters outside the protect-

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ed areas," explained marine biologist Bob Richmond. "By raiding what amounts to our children's marine bank accounts, we are denying them a future of sustainable food from the ocean."

U.S. Congresswoman Amata Radewagen, who represents American Samoa, has also been extremely vocal about allowing industrial tuna fishing in the protected region.

American Samoa is located 2,124 miles south of the PIHMNM. Tuna fishing and processing is a key part of its economy. The Starkist cannery employs about 5,000 people and canned tuna accounts for some 99.5% of American Samoa's exports.

However, overfishing in waters near American Samoa has adversely affected fish populations, threatening the industry – one reason why the territory has aggressively pursued commercial fishing in the PIHMNM and challenged the scientific rationale for even having marine protected areas.

Although the executive order purports to restore American competitiveness in the seafood industry, the iconic Starkist Charlie Tuna cannery in American Samoa is actually owned and managed by Dongwon, a South Korean conglomerate.

Despite past extractive and abusive human activities, the oceans encompassing the PIHMNM remain one of the last intact oceanic ecosystems in the world and must be protected.

Solomon Kahoʻohalahala, chair of the Pacific Island Heritage Coalition said in a statement that, "opening this sacred place for exploitation is short-sighted and does not consider current or future generations of Pacific people who rely on a healthy ocean and know this special ocean space as our ancestral home." ■

Jonee Leināʻala Kaina Peters is the executive director of the Conservation Council for Hawaiʻi. She is Kanaka Maoli, a cultural practitioner, and a conservationist from Kahaluʻu, Oʻahu. Her uncle, William Kaina, was a part of Hui Panalāʻau.

A Call for Urgent Action at the SOS Ocean Summit in Paris

By Sonja Swenson Rogers, Polynesian Voyaging Society

Renowned oceanographer Dr. Sylvia Earle of Mission Blue and Polynesian Voyaging Society CEO Nainoa Thompson joined global leaders for SOS Ocean, a high-level gathering held March 30-31 at the Musée National de la Marine in Paris, France.

Under the leadership of French President Emmanuel Macron and in collaboration with the Portugal-based Oceano Azul Foundation, the event convened policymakers, scientists, and advocates to confront urgent ocean challenges as France and Costa Rica prepare to host the Third United Nations Ocean Conference (UNOC-3) in Nice, June 9-13.

The SOS Ocean convening aimed to shape the Nice Ocean Action Plan, a five-year agenda which will be negotiated during UNOC-3 and is designed to prioritize ocean protection and restoration and support implementation of sustainable development goal (SDG) 14: Life Below Water, a new treaty for the high seas, and the protection of marine wildlife.

Presentations at the convening highlighted the accelerating consequences of the climate crisis, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem collapse – underscoring the need for immediate, science-backed solutions.

Two major ocean priorities were repeatedly stressed during the event: 1) The need to rapidly bring the high seas treaty into force so that urgently needed protections can be afforded to ecosystems and biodiversity in areas beyond countries' national waters; and 2) The need to protect the deep sea from the growing threat of deep-sea mining.

At the culmination of the two-day event, Thompson and Earle jointly presented the SOS Ocean Manifesto to President Macron issuing a powerful call to action for world leaders to adopt bold, ambitious, and regenerative policies at UNOC-3. Thompson and Earle also brought a call for urgency, ambition, and an invitation to include the voices and people of the Pacific, whose engagement in these international ocean processes is essential and must be supported.

"We must protect the ocean as if our lives depend on it, because they do," said Earle. "Highest priority must be to safeguard the High Seas from the needless, destructive folly of deep-sea mining and to halt industrial fishing, a principal source of pollution, human trafficking and massive decline of ocean wildlife."

Polynesian Voyaging Society CEO Nainoa Thompson (right) presents France's President Emmanuel Macron with a makana as Dr. Sylvia Earle of Mission Blue (center) looks on. - *Photo: Courtesy of Presidence de la Republique France*

"The world's oceans are 70% of the earth's surface. When you protect the oceans, you are protecting all life on earth. They provide over half of the oxygen humans breathe, regulate our climate and stabilize global temperatures so that the earth can provide the food that we need. Human actions are disrupting this vital balance, changing the earth and now it's changing us," said Thompson.

Under President Macron's leadership, France is a European leader in global efforts to protect the high seas and has been instrumental in advancing efforts to secure the 60 ratifications needed to bring the high seas treaty into force, enabling the establishment and management of marine protected areas on the high seas.

These two ocean priorities are particularly relevant for the Pacific Ocean, a region which stands at the frontlines of the climate and biodiversity crises. ■

This article was adapted from an article that originally appeared in the April 7 issue of "Hōkūleʻa Newsletter." This article has been reprinted in "Ka Wai Ola" with permission from the Polynesian Voyaging Society.

Combating Coral Bleaching

By Lisa Huynh Eller

When researcher Kuʻulei Rodgers started working at the Hawaiʻi Institute for Marine Biology (HIMB) back in 1992, hardly anyone had heard of coral bleaching, a stress response that causes corals to lose their color.

But just four years later, Hawaiʻi had its first documented widespread coral bleaching event, which affected reefs in Kāneʻohe, Kailua and Waimānalo.

A decade later, two major coral bleaching events happened in 2014 and 2015, bleaching more than half of all corals statewide and leading up to a 30% loss. In Kāneʻohe Bay alone it was observed that 80% of the coral had been bleached white.

Once a phenomenon predicted to happen every 50 years, coral bleaching episodes, triggered in part by heat waves, are now expected about every six years.

Researchers and resource managers now know more than they did a decade ago about why some corals seem more resilient in the face of increased stress. What they've learned has led to positive changes in coastal management, scientific advancements and the implementation of novel approaches – all aimed at giving corals a better chance of survival.

"We're at a very pivotal place right now in history where the decisions we make today, and especially this decade, are going to determine the direction of the future of our reefs. It's gotten that bad," said Rodgers, who recently retired from HIMB. "We've already lost over half of the world's coral reefs. But the good news is that we still have half of the coral reefs – and many of them are in Hawaiʻi."

Coral bleaching happens when corals expel symbiotic algae from their tissues as a stress response to environmental factors, including increased ocean temperatures.

But many Hawaiian corals also uptake zooplankton from the water as another source of nutrients, said Rodgers. These species of corals have lower mortality rates than others. Prolonged coral bleaching can cause die offs of coral colonies, which form the foundation of all marine life.

In 2015, the Hawaiʻi Coral Bleaching Collaborative (HCBC) was formed to create a system and network through which coral reefs could be rapidly surveyed following bleaching events.

"Hawaiʻi has stood out across the world as being one of the more coordinated places. We've had inquiries from all over the world, asking us how we've been so successful. The reason why is because we came together under the HCBC," said HCBC Coordinator Mary Donovan who joined HIMB last year as an assistant researcher.

The surveys are triggered when members of the collaborative receive notification from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) about an impending heat wave or a prolonged period of above-average water temperatures.

Heat waves in Hawaiʻi typically occur during the warmest months, usually starting in August and ending by December. Donovan said a prominent study has shown that heat waves are becoming more frequent and longer lasting.

Coral can be grown in nurseries from live fragments and then outplanted onto damaged reefs. - *Photos Courtesy of HIMB*

Donovan's lab team also leads the Hawaiʻi Monitoring and Reporting Collaborative (HIMARC), which combines data from various surveys to produce maps and graphs about coral reef health for decision makers.

The latest data shows pollution, particularly from waste disposal, weakens corals' ability to survive heat stress. The presence of herbivorous fish, such as uhu, kala, and nenue, help maintain the balance between corals and algae.

Areas with pollution and low populations of herbivores can be overgrown with algae that suffocate coral reefs and make them less likely to survive bleaching events. Donovan's team is working on a statewide analysis on the variability of coral reef health related to these environmental factors.

"There's still a lot we can do, even as we have climate change causing these really devastating events to happen," said Donovan. "We can work together to decrease the pollution that gets into the ocean and fish in a pono way."

Donovan said progress has been made, especially in the past 10 years. "I want to give credit to DAR (the Division of Aquatic Resources under the Department of Land and Natural Resources) for the work they're doing with the community to develop rules and other actions that will help us in the next bleaching event."

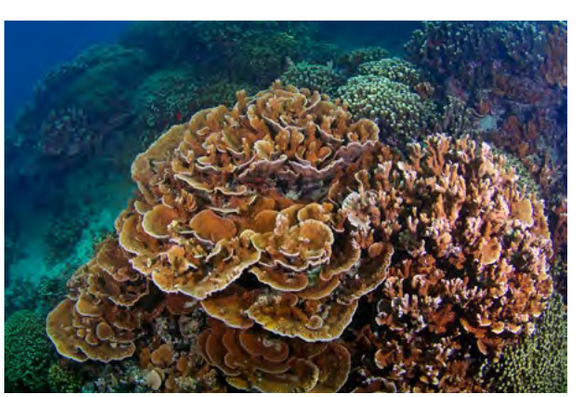
DAR set a goal of "sustainably managing herbivore populations through responsible harvesting practices in order to promote coral reef resilience." In February 2024, after a years-long public process, resource managers adopted new fishing rules that increased the minimum size required to harvest certain herbivore species important to coral reef health.

The restoration of corals lost during recent bleaching events also became the highest priority in DAR's plans related to coral bleaching. Specifically, the "Makai Restoration Plan" updated in April 2023 has set a goal to "build capacity to develop, test, and apply restoration methods that enhance the resistance and recovery of coral reefs impacted by bleaching."

Fourteen potential areas that had experienced severe impacts to coral communities during bleaching events were identified in the plan. These include the Leeward side of Maui, North and South Kona and South Kohala on the island of Hawaiʻi and Kāneʻohe Bay, Lanikai and Waiʻalae-Kahala on Oʻahu.

Beyond management actions, scientists are also looking at ways to support coral restoration efforts through technological advancements. One example comes from Smithsonian Institution researcher, Mary Hagedorn, whose lab at HIMB is studying viable ways to save coral egg and sperm through cryopreservation or freezing. "If these corals are lost, at least there is still something that can help them, like having a bank for reproduction," said Rodgers.

Last year, Hagedorn and other researchers from Harvard Medical School, National Ecological Observatory Network, University Corporation of Atmospheric Research, and the University of Minnesota published a paper in BioScience exploring the idea of creating a passive lunar biorepository – cryogenic preservation of biological material on the moon – to safeguard Earth's biodiversity. ■



On the left is an example of brown lobe coral (*Porites evermanni*) and pictured on the right is rice coral (*Montipora capitata*). Corals are not plants but tiny animals, cnidarians, that form colonies of individual polyps that secrete a calcium carbonate skeleton that, over time, creates coral reefs.

New Climate Action Documentary on Coral Restoration

By Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

Kuleana Coral Restoration (KCR), the first Native Hawaiian-led nonprofit dedicated exclusively to coral reef restoration, is featured in a new documentary, *Reef Builders*, which highlights community-driven efforts to reverse the impacts of climate change on coral reefs in Hawai'i, Africa, Australia and Southeast Asia.

The film's worldwide release was April 14 on Amazon Prime. It can be streamed for free.

Founded in 2019, KCR is the passion project of co-founders Alika Peleholani Garcia and Kapono Kaluhiokalani – both longtime fishermen, firefighters and ocean stewards – and Daniel Demartini, Ph.D., a biochemist and assistant professor at BYU-Lā'ie who serves as director of science for the nonprofit.

Together, the team launched KCR in response to the visible decline of Hawai'i's coral reefs – ecosystems that are among the first, and hardest hit, by climate change. Their mission is to restore, protect, and monitor these ecosystems by combining cultural values, modern science and meaningful community partnerships.

"As fishermen, we saw the changes firsthand. We wanted to be part of the solution – not just observe the decline," said Garcia. "This work is our kuleana."

Operating across the island of O'ahu (with supporting partner communities on Maui), KCR restores degraded reef systems using techniques such as direct coral reattachment and pilot-scale reef stabilization. One technique featured on the documentary is the use of "reef stars" – rebar structures coated with local sand onto which broken – but living – coral fragments are tied and placed back onto the reef to regenerate and grow.

These tools help corals grow faster, survive, and recover from stressors like warming seas and stronger storm swells, both directly linked to climate change.

With a focus on developing capacity in the next generation to continue this work, KCR's Coral Occupational Applications and Scientific Techniques (COAST) training program was developed in partnership with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement. It offers rigorous site-based, hands-on training in coral restoration and scientific diving, integrating 'ike Hawai'i and cutting-edge western science.

Kuleana Coral Restoration co-founder Alika Garcia speaks at the premiere of *Reef Builders* at Ko 'Olina on April 14.

COAST is designed to create meaningful career pathways in conservation for Native Hawaiians, Pacific Islanders, and residents of the moku of 'Ewa and Wai'anae: communities typically underrepresented in the field of marine science. Garcia notes that by investing in emerging local leadership, "KCR is growing Hawai'i's climate resilience from the inside out."

KCR is also supported by the Sheba Hope Grows campaign, one of the world's largest corporate-backed coral reef restoration initiatives. Sheba Hope Grows is part of Mars Sustainable Solutions (MSS), the environmental sustainability subsidiary of Mars, Inc.

Since its restoration efforts began in 2011, MSS has established 72 reef restoration sites in 12 countries. Utilizing their Mars Assisted Reef Restoration System (MARRS), they have installed over 90,000 reef stars and outplanted more than 1.3 million corals worldwide.

The program aims to restore over 185,000 square meters of coral reefs globally by 2029, assisting oceanic and coastal communities living on the front lines of climate change to rebuild these vital ecosystems.

Reef Builders showcases the people behind these efforts, including Garcia, Kaluhiokalani and Demartini, who all appear in the documentary, alongside actor and environmental advocate Auli'i Cravalho, star of Disney's Moana. Cravalho is an associate producer of the documentary and is shown helping KCR to construct and install its first reef stars.

The world premiere of *Reef Builders* was held in London, England, on April 9, followed by its Hawai'i premiere on April 14 at a gala event hosted by KCR at Ko 'Olina. ■

Ho'ōla, a 35-foot fishing vessel retrofitted for coral reef research and restoration supports divers as they work beneath the waters of Ma'alaea Bay off of Maui. The vessel, purchased with support from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs through the Mālama Loan Fund, is a critical tool for advancing grassroots marine conservation efforts in Hawai'i. - *Photos: Courtesy of Kuleana Coral Restoration*

U.S. Bypasses United Nations to Fast-Track Deep-Sea Mining

By Puanani Fernandez-Akamine

In a brazen move intended to bypass the authority of the United Nations International Seabed Authority (ISA), on April 24 the United States announced an executive order to launch deep-sea mining (DSM) in both U.S. and international waters claiming the U.S. has an "energy supply emergency." The mining targets an area of the Pacific Ocean known as the Clarion Clipperton Zone (CCZ) which is just 500 miles south of Hawai'i Island and well outside of U.S. jurisdiction.

The announcement was met with swift and strong international rebuke.

"This executive order is yet another bid to give away our nation's public lands and waters, this time coupled with an attempt to circumvent international law to exploit our shared global oceans for corporate profits," said Addie Haughey in a statement from Earthjustice.

Arlo Hemphill of Greenpeace USA said: "Authorizing deep-sea mining outside international law threatens ecosystems, global cooperation, and U.S. credibility all at once. We condemn this administration's attempt to launch this destructive industry on the high seas in the Pacific by bypassing the United Nations process."

Apparently, the U.S. has been in talks with representatives of The Metals Company, a Canadian mining company for several months. The Metals Company has been aggressively pursuing deep-sea mining in the CCZ for years, initially partnering with the tiny Pacific Island nation of Nauru because under the ISA only countries, not corporations, can apply for a deep-sea mining permit.

Nauru applied for a permit in June 2021, however there is strong worldwide opposition to DSM and no permits have been granted.

At least 32 countries have called for a ban or moratorium on deep-sea mining until more is understood about its ecological impact. And more than 750 leading marine science and policy experts representing more than 44 countries have spoken out against deep-sea mining, which has been compared to strip-mining in the ocean.

In 1989, an experiment to simulate deep-sea mining and its impact was conducted in the Pacific Ocean off of Peru, South America; 26 years later, the seabed ecosystem there has still not recovered.

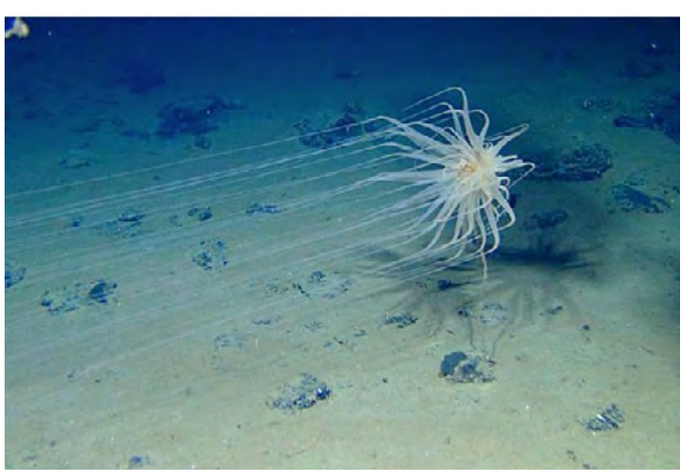
"This is a clear case of putting mining companies' greed over common sense. Any attempt to accelerate deep-sea mining without proper safeguards will only speed up the destruction of our oceans," said Dr. Katie Matthews, Oceana chief scientist and senior vice president.

"Mining the seafloor can cause irreparable harm to delicate ecosystems, which themselves are vital to ocean economies. We should be protecting, not undermining, the health of our oceans."

Hawai'i leaders have taken a strong stand against DSM. Last July, Gov. Josh Green signed SB 2575 into law as Act 228 which prohibits deep-sea mining in Hawai'i. The Hawai'i State Legislature found that DSM "is not consistent with the public interest, including the right that each person has to a clean and healthy environment."

In addition to Hawai'i, the Pacific Coast states of California, Oregon and Washington have also passed bans on DSM in their waters.

In a statement issued in late March, ISA Secretary General Leticia Carvalho reiterated that the ISA holds exclusive control over all activities in the international seabed areas beyond national jurisdictions and that "any unilateral actions would violate international law and directly undermine the fundamental principles of multilateralism, the peaceful use of the oceans and the collective governance framework established under UNCLOS (the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)." ■



A newly discovered species, Relicanthus, swims over polymetallic nodules at a depth of 2.5 miles in the Clarion Clipperton Zone, 500 miles south of Hawai'i Island. Deep-sea mining will permanently destroy this deep water ecosystem and kill the creatures who live there. - *Photo: Craig Smith and Diva Amon, ABYSSLINE Project, UC Santa Barbara*

The Discovery of "Dark Oxygen"

Oxygen is being produced in the deep sea by the polymetallic nodules coveted by mining companies

An unexpected scientific discovery, published in a report last July just ahead of the 29th session of the United Nations (UN) International Seabed Authority (ISA), strongly supports the arguments of Indigenous Pacific Islanders and conservation scientists who oppose deep-sea mining (DSM).

The report documents evidence of what is being called "dark oxygen" – oxygen that is being produced in complete darkness on the ocean floor at depths of up to 3.5 miles. Even more remarkable is the fact that the polymetallic nodules being targeted by proponents of deep-sea mining appear to be central to the production of this deep-water oxygen.

Scientists hypothesize that the polymetallic nodules – comprised of precious metals like cobalt, nickel and copper – may be producing oxygen through a process similar to electrolysis. The nodules seem to be acting like batteries, producing electricity through chemical reactions that split seawater (H2O) into hydrogen (H2) and oxygen (O2).

Our oceans produce an estimated 50-70% of the Earth's oxygen – and until this study was published, it was assumed that this was exclusively through the process of photosynthesis, when phytoplankton (microscopic plants) near the surface of the ocean convert carbon dioxide and sunlight into oxygen and glucose.

The discovery of dark oxygen produced on the ocean floor challenges current scientific understandings of oxygen production on Earth.

Solomon Kaho'ohalahala from Lāna'i has emerged as an international leader in the fight to prevent deep-sea mining. His message to the world leaders who want to plunder our oceans for profit is based on the *Kumulipo* (Hawai'i's creation chant) – that the ocean floor is a sacred place of creation from which all life began.

To him, the scientific revelation that oxygen is being created on the seafloor is an affirmation of the *Kumulipo* by western science.

"What came to mind the moment I learned about it was that it says in the *Kumulipo*, 'hānau Kumulipo i ka pō he kāne; hānau Pō'ele i ka pō he wahine,' (born was Kumulipo in the night a male; born was Pō'ele in the night a female). But it's language spoken in metaphors. Kumulipo and Pō'ele are not entities, they're opposing forms of energy, and they come into play at the very bottom of the ocean with this opportunity to create life."

Confronting the Climate Change Crisis

Finding solutions through Indigenous values and ‘ike kūpuna

The effects of climate change are not coming - they have already arrived - and unless humanity collectively takes action quickly, our challenges are only beginning. In these photos, a house on O‘ahu's North Shore has collapsed, while Honoapi'ilani Highway on Maui experiences flooding. The situation is dire but not hopeless - and many ‘Ōiwi are looking inward to our cultural values and ‘ike kūpuna for solutions. - *Photos: Department of Land and Natural Resources*

By Donalyn Dela Cruz

When floodwaters swallowed parts of Kalākaua Avenue in Waikīkī during a King Tide and Kona Low storm in 2021, many residents were reminded that climate change isn't just about melting ice caps. It's happening across Hawai‘i – on our streets, our shorelines, and our communities.

For Native Hawaiians, the impact cuts even deeper, affecting not only place, but identity.

“It's not 100 years from now, it's not 50 years from now, it's right now,” said Dr. Kealoha Fox, deputy director of the Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency for the City and County of Honolulu.

Dr. Kealoha Fox - *Courtesy Photo*

The term “climate change” gained traction in the 1980s alongside growing concerns about global warming. Its primary driver: the burning of fossil fuels, which release greenhouse gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and raise global temperatures.

Across the pae ‘āina, our communities are experiencing radical shifts from the changing climate, with more frequent and intense storms, coastal erosion, sea level rise, coral bleaching and the degradation of vital water resources.

Still, there is reason to be hopeful.

Increasingly, younger generations raised in the practice of ‘āina aloha are holding leaders accountable for policy decisions that increase atmospheric carbon dioxide levels. Kānaka youth have inserted themselves into the conversations around climate change, not as activists but as advocates.

Nineteen-year-old Pāhonu Coleman from Waimānalo, O‘ahu, shared, “It's being in touch with our ‘āina and being connected and aware of the state and the health of our ‘āina to understand that it's changing, and it needs help.”

Coleman was one of the 13 youth plaintiffs in the 2022 landmark climate lawsuit *Navahine F. v. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation* (HDOT). The lawsuit claimed that HDOT, through its establishment, operation, and maintenance, violated the Hawai‘i State Constitution's public trust doctrine and their right to a clean and healthful environment.

“The health of our ‘āina is directly connected to the health of kānaka,” Coleman added.

The youth plaintiffs ranged in age from 9 to 18 and represented communities across Hawai‘i Island, O‘ahu, Moloka‘i, Maui, and Kaua‘i.

“Within our short lifetimes, we've seen beaches disappear. We've seen our communities change,” Coleman said.

He and others joined the case against the State of Hawai‘i through a process of sharing their personal stories.

“I shared about my kaiāulu, my community, Waimānalo, and the efforts that we are doing to restore what we know was once a thriving ecosystem,” said Coleman.

Pāhonu is also the name of a fishpond in Waimānalo and Coleman is one of the leaders in its restoration. “Resource management and taking care of our natural resources is a big part of who I am,” he said, adding that climate change has shifted the approach to some practiced traditions such as gathering – there is less to gather, whether it be for food or for hula.

“Any decision made about ‘āina and our kaiāulu will affect the generations to come – there's no doubt about it,” said Coleman. “And, it's getting harder for young Hawaiians to see themselves in Hawai‘i. It's due to multiple things, right? Economically. But quite literally, our ‘āina is falling apart.”

Kalālapa Winter was the eldest among the plaintiffs.

Raised in Ha‘ena, Kaua‘i, and Hale‘iwa, O‘ahu, Winter said, “I'm so grateful to have grown up in communities that taught me caring for the land [should] be the num-

SEE **CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE** ON **PAGE 16**

CONFRONTING CLIMATE CHANGE

Continued from page 15

ber one thing in my life. So when I learned about the science of climate changing the land, I actively saw these things affecting my community.”

Fox was one of two Indigenous scientists who were expert witnesses for the plaintiffs. In that capacity, she spoke on climate change’s cultural implications and explained long-term impacts of the degradation of ‘āina.

“It was no surprise to us that they (the youth) were adamant, that they wanted to do something about it, that they didn’t just want to sit idle and watch these conditions change around them,” said Fox.

“They wanted to be a positive force for good and use this collective mana of ‘ōpio to be able to really speak to the highest levels of power and say, ‘Hey, you know what? We have these ideas. We don’t feel like you’re moving fast enough.’”

The State of Hawai‘i initially spent nearly $3 million defending itself against the lawsuit, which included nearly $1 million in legal fees to an out-of-state law firm. The state requested an additional $2.25 million to continue the lawsuit before reaching a settlement.

When announcing the settlement in July 2024, HDOT Director Ed Sniffen stated, “Burying our heads in the sand and making it the next generation’s problem is not pono.”

Reflecting on the case, Winter said, “[The state] put us through three years of being treated like crap, just to not have to admit that they did anything wrong. We are so grateful that they decided to work with us and not against us.”

Fox said her understanding of the system was a key reason for joining the case.

“We felt like it was paramount to use our skills and our credentials and our expertise – that ‘know how’ to navigate through these systems, whether it be the judicial system or the academic system – to make sure that we’re uplifting the voices and the legacies of our youth,” said Fox.

For decades, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Interim Dean of the School of Ocean and Earth Science and Technology Dr. Charles “Chip” Fletcher has been sounding the alarm on the effects of climate change. He said the case showcased the youths’ courage and deep love for their communities and land.

“These young leaders are not just demanding climate justice for themselves – they are standing up for future generations and offering a model of kuleana that inspires us all,” Fletcher said.

As a result of the settlement, the state agreed to actionable steps that would put HDOT on a roadmap to decarbonize Hawai‘i’s transportation system within the next 20 years. This includes a commitment to develop and use greenhouse gas emission measurements and reductions in vehicle miles traveled when HDOT develops ground transportation projects.

“Our case was a big win for every Indigenous person who hates the system but is also really determined to change things for our community,” said Winter. “There’s never been a case, at least in America, that’s had this many Indigenous kids who have the same perspective as us and had this big of a win.”

As the state works to invest in clean transportation infrastructures, climate change experts say what is equally critical are investments in Indigenous knowledge systems.

“It is strategic,” said Fletcher. “In Hawai‘i, this means funding community-based resource management, supporting language and cultural revitalization, incorporating traditional ecological knowledge into policy, and co-developing research and adaptation strategies with Native Hawaiian practitioners.”

Some of the 13 youth who successfully challenged the State of Hawai‘i in the *Navahine F. v. Hawai‘i Department of Transportation*. In the historic settlement reached in 2024, the state agreed to actionable steps to decarbonize Hawai‘i's transportation system in the next 20 years. Pictured are (l-r): Ka‘ōnohi P., Kalikookalani T., Kalālapa Winter, Navahine F., Charlotte M., Rylee Brooke K., Pāhonu Coleman, and Messina D-G. - *Photo: Courtesy of Earthjustice*

He explained that around the world, Indigenous communities steward 80% of the planet’s biodiversity on just a quarter of the land.

“Yet they remain underfunded, underrepresented, and [are] often actively displaced,” said Fletcher. “The wisdom embedded in their languages, farming methods, and spiritual practices holds essential knowledge for navigating the planetary crisis we now face.”

Honolulu County’s Office of Climate Change, Sustainability and Resiliency was established in 2016 through a city charter amendment approved by voters. The office is tasked with tracking climate science and coordinating the county’s actions to prepare for impacts. As deputy director, Fox brings both scientific knowledge and Indigenous practices to her position.

“Every day it’s my job to bridge those worlds of what our conventional Western systems and science is telling us through quantifiable data,” said Fox, “and what our Indigenous knowledge systems are telling us through generations of traditions and practices and behaviors repeated in the same place over and over and over that show us that these conditions are changing.”

Sea level rise scenarios for Hawai‘i from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration-led inter-agency sea level rise report shows that Hawai‘i is experiencing an accelerating trend.

The 2022 report projects the seas will rise as much in the next 30 years as it has over the last 100 years and that “Hawai‘i and other tropical Pacific sites will experience sea level rise that is 16% to 20% higher than the global average.”

Although sea level rise projections stretch decades into the future, the impacts reach beyond the shoreline. For example, in areas like industrial Māpunapuna on O‘ahu, the King Tides regularly cause groundwater to rise and flood roadways.

Many urbanized coastal districts that were historically wetlands and fishponds now sit at or below the water table. Traditionally stewarded for their ecological richness and as sources of food and fresh water, these low-lying areas were developed over time, filled in with modern infrastructure. Today, these areas are increasingly vulnerable to inundation.

“In some of these neighborhoods, certain hazards will become much more intensified, and we will see this more frequently,” said Fox. “Across O‘ahu, for instance, we already are accounting for sea level

After sailing on *Hōkūle‘a* on the Mālama Honua Voy
on small coastal communities, Austin Kino was ins
immerses students in land to sea learning in Mau
instill in students an aloha for our ‘āina and ocean
takes a group of haumāna sailing on Maunalua Ba

rise, increased heat, increased drough
and hurricanes. That’s a lot of enviro
us to contend with.”

Fletcher and his team have mode
counties, providing localized sea leve
County agencies are using this inf
plans, including infrastructure reloc
foot sea level rise by 2100.

The County of Kaua‘i made a hist
earned an award from the American
ing year. Called the Kaua‘i Sea Leve
nance, it is a planning tool to guide d
nerable to future sea level rise impact

When signing the bill into law,
“This type of measure is something th
today or tomorrow, but they will be
kids and for every generation that fol

Kaua‘i County Planning Director
rise can be hard for people to grasp b
change.”

The reality of sea level rise become
pled with extreme weather.

“There are things like extreme tid
extreme storms, which is just a whol
level rise, right? Like the rain bomb it
in that flood,” Hull said, referring to
seven years ago.

In April 2018 a “rain bomb” pou
communities in a span of 24 hours re
island’s north side. Landslides cut o
Hanalei, Wainiha and Ha‘ena, and re
than a year.

“What essentially happened was
pumping into Hanalei Bay and storm
same time,” Hull explained. “So wat
but it was the surge of the ocean bac
the town out.”

From extreme storms to wildfires,
devastating. Hull said he wants to se

yage and seeing the effects of climate change
pired to co-found Huli - an organization that
nalua Bay, where Kino is from. Kino hopes to
resources. Here, Kino (in blue wearing a hat)
ay. - *Photo: Courtesy of HULI*

t and wildfire risk, flash flooding,
nmental shocks and stressors for

eled coastline projections for all
el rise data and risk assessments.
ormation to develop adaptation
ation, based on a projected 3.2-

oric policy decision in 2022 that
Planning Association the follow-
el Rise Constraint District Ordi-
evelopment in areas that are vul-
ts and flooding.
Mayor Derek Kawakami stated,
hat we will not see the impacts of
seen by our kids and our grand-
llows."
Ka'āina Hull noted that sea level
because "it's such an incremental

s even more apparent when cou-

des and there are situations like
e other level. It's not actually sea
rself, the ocean played a huge part
o the massive flooding on Kaua'i

red 50 inches of rain on Kaua'i
esulting in severe flooding on the
ff access to the communities of
epairs to the highway took more

you had water coming down,
surge occurring on the bay at the
ter moved down into the ocean,
k into Hanalei that really flooded

the effects of climate change are
e more information from the sci-

entific community that provides modeling projections for precipitation events.

"That is clearly an additional effect of a changing climate," he said. "You know, it's sea level rise, it's precipitation events, it's hurricanes, and now it's wildfires."

Thoughts of devastation can be daunting. However, advocates believe every action counts.

Most powerful is practicing aloha 'āina and building upon relationships that are ingrained in Indigenous and local knowledge.

"Small actions rooted in values, especially when done collectively, create ripples of change. You don't have to do everything – but you can do something," said Fletcher. "And that something matters."

Austin Kino of Maunalua knows this all too well.

After sailing on *Hōkūleʻa* during the Polynesian Voyaging Society's Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage as an apprentice navigator in 2015, Kino had a heightened awareness of global warming. He spent time in small communities extremely affected by climate change that no longer had access to places in their homelands due to rising tides.

"It started an interest in meeting people who were studying [climate change] and [who] showed us projections of what our home was going to look like. That got me the most scared," said Kino.

Motivated to make a difference, he co-founded Huli, a nonprofit that immerses students in Maunalua's land and sea to explore and learn about its natural resources.

"I started by trying to build the same love I have for the ocean in the next generation," said Kino. "I figured no one will do anything unless they first have a love for that resource, that place. I try to simplify as much as I can and then partner with people who understand it from a scientific lens."

Prior to sailing on *Hōkūleʻa*, Kino had volunteered for nonprofit Mālama Maunalua and interviewed prominent kūpuna fishermen from the area. They shared their observations that the fish population dwindled as the human population grew, and of the collapse of nearshore ecosystems in Maunalua Bay as "Hawai'i Kai" was developed.

"One thing the uncles always used to say is, 'these fish cannot talk,'" said Kino. "I remember they said, 'you guys talk for them. You've got to understand and advocate for them.'"

Huli's ocean-based advocacy for Maunalua is having an impact on the keiki who enroll in its programs, raising awareness of how every day actions affect the health of the ecosystem.

"I think they understand the simplest things – what I wash my car with and what I put on the grass, will affect what comes down to the ocean. So even just that was a huge connection point for us," said Kino.

The State of Hawai'i is currently working on a Priority Climate Action Plan (PCAP) and a Climate Action Pathway (CAP). Both incorporate Native Hawaiian cultural practices and traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) as foundational elements.

"To return to aloha 'āina is to reject extractive, profit-driven models that separate people from nature and instead re-center on relationality, responsibility, and regeneration," said Fletcher. "This is not about nostalgia; it is about survival."

Grounded in her own Native Hawaiian identity, Fox sees her role, alongside that of the 'ōpio, as facing climate challenges fearlessly, just as our kūpuna faced challenges in their own time.

"Aloha really has to be able to guide all of these opportunities for solutioning and recommendations and changes because there's a myriad of them out there," Fox said.

"What should we do in the face of climate change? No one is going to come up with those solutions for Native Hawaiians other than Native Hawaiians; solutions that will make the most sense for our lāhui's future. I highly know that deep in my na'au." ■

About the Cover Art

Looking for Answers
by Imaikalani Kalalehele

The 2017 juried exhibition Contact 3017 challenged artists to take on the role of "futurologist" - to imagine possible, or impossible, futures for Hawai'i in light of climate change, nationalism, globalization and resource distribution. In his piece, "Looking for Answers," ʻŌiwi artist Imaikalani Kalahele uses multiple canvas panels to depict a future Hawaiʻi ravaged by climate change, but also includes hopeful images of guiding ʻaumakua (family gods) suggesting that Kānaka ʻŌiwi will be the ones to find the solutions to Hawaiʻi's environmental crises by applying our cultural values and ancestral knowledge.

Sovereignty Conference to be Held in June

By KipuKai Kuali'i

The Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA) is hosting the Hawaiian Home Lands Sovereignty Conference, June 2-4, 2025, at the Ala Moana Hotel in Honolulu.

Our annual conference is dedicated to the 203,000 acres of tribal lands in Hawai'i, the tens of thousands of enrolled Hawaiians defined in the 1920 Hawaiian Homes Commission Act (HHCA), our self-governing Homestead Associations and our larger lāhui and allies.

Over a century ago, Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole, championed self-determination and the return of our kānaka to our 'āina. We continue to honor his powerful voice and work today.

Our homestead leaders are excited to welcome many wonderful presenters including Gov. Josh Green who will share his vision for the administration of the Hawaiian Home Land Trust, solutions, innovations and reaching the full potential of our trust lands and people.

Sen. Samantha DeCorte (Hawaiian), Rep. Diamond Garcia and Rep. Darius Kila (Hawaiian) will share a panel conversation about bi-partisan policy making on the issues of Hawaiian Home Lands; Tasha Kama (native Hawaiian), a Maui County council member and one of the early leaders of SCHHA will share her mana'o on the building of SCHHA, policymaking and civic engagement; and DHHL Director Kali Watson (Hawaiian), will share the department's vision for building greater engagement with homestead associations focused on achieving greater self-determination on our trust lands.

Sheri Daniels (Hawaiian), CEO at Papa Ola Lōkahi and homestead partner will address meaningful collaboration in advancing homestead capacity and wellbeing of our homestead and kānaka 'ohana. Hawaiian Lending & Investments (HLI) Executive Director Rolina Faagai (Hawaiian) will deliver the HLI annual report and organize a breakout session with mortgage lenders experienced in making home loans on homesteads (Accessing Capital for Home Mortgages). Lilia Kapuniai (Hawaiian), CEO at Papakōlea Community Development Corporation (PCDC) and SCHHA Policy will share the work of Kupa'a Hawai'i – a homestead association national enrollment database – using technology to uplift the voices and solutions of Native Hawaiians.

Janie Hipp (Chickasaw Nation) former USDA general counsel and founding CEO of the Native American Agriculture Fund, the country's largest philanthropy organization focused on Native food and agriculture systems, will address Food Sovereignty Resilience. Derek Valdo (Pueblo of Acoma), CEO of the Amerind Corporation will share the inspirational story of exercising sovereignty in establishing this national tribally owned insurance company serving tribal homes on tribal lands. Lanelle Smith (Navajo) with Blacksheep Insight & Consulting will host a breakout session on the "Trauma of Money," an exploration and discovery creating financial safety and wellbeing. Jackie Pata (Tlingit) tribal member from the Tlingit Haida Central Tribal Council will share the journey of exercising sovereignty to deliver community development.

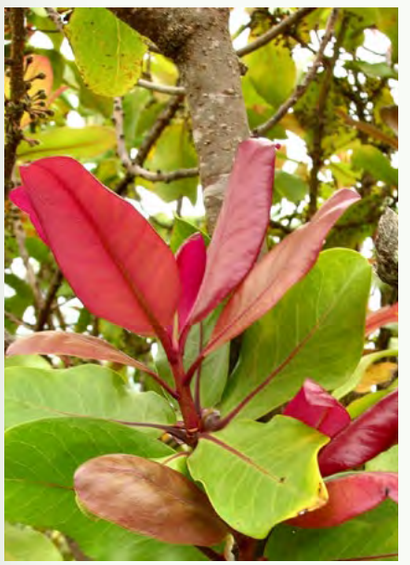
Following traditions of the SCHHA since 1987, this conference will be action-packed featuring local and national policymakers, leaders and practitioners. If you'd like to join in on the learning and sharing, email conference@hawaiianhomesteads.org or call 808-312-1001. ■

Founded in 1987, the Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA) is the oldest and largest governing homestead association registered with the Department of Interior, exercising sovereignty on the trust lands established under the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1920. For information contact policy@hawaiianhomesteads.org.

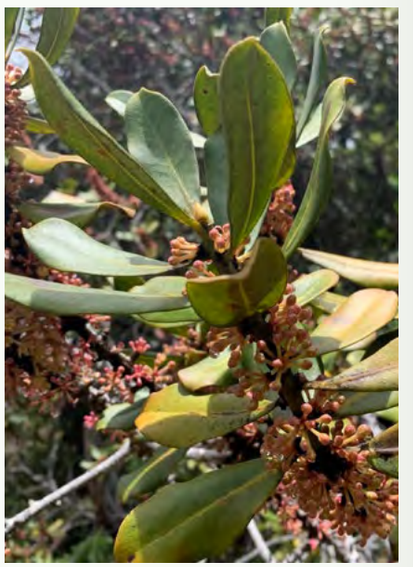
kōlea Kōlea KŌLEA

Ua kāhuli ke 'ano; the appearance is changed

By Bobby Camara



Kōlea (*Myrsine lanaiensis*) with bright pink liko, a surprising treat in the forest. - *Photo: Forest and Km Starr*



Kōlea lau nui (*Myrsine lessertiana*) with large leathery leaves and no pink liko. - *Photo: S Preer, iNaturalist*

Ahhh, kōlea...not the manu, this, the tree. Or trees.

Just as manu kōlea change plumage before flying thousands of miles north, sometimes confounding us with their new look, kumu lā'au kōlea are similarly deceptive. Plant taxonomists, those in charge of correctly naming, all too often change names so that earliest given correct names are used. We've grown accustomed to new names for old friends.

But...kōlea, the trees found on our islands – except for Ni'ihau and Kaho'olawe – are so varied that scientists have used genetics to clarify relationships. Who got here first? It seems that the original kōlea arrived on Kaua'i then evolved into about 20 different species, with many hybrids.

And it's important work, because our kōlea are exceedingly useful trees.

Timber has been used for various purposes, including for parts of wa'a, for kua kapa, and for house posts; while bark, fruits, and charcoal were used for dye. As with other endemic plants, variety matters. Which one is chosen for a particular purpose will depend on the desired outcome. This shade or that of color? Red? Rust? Orange? Something unusual? ■

Kōlea lau li'i (*Myrsine sandwicensis*) with very small leaves, and tinges of pink. - *Photo: D. Eickhoff*

E NHLC...

My family lost our home in the Maui wildfires. The home and property were inherited from our grandparents. Our grandparents are still on title. How do we fix the title, so we can apply for loans to rebuild?

By Liʻulā Christensen, NHLC Senior Staff Attorney

When multiple family members own undivided interests or shares in a single property, that property is generally considered "heirs' property."

Sometimes title is still in the name of a deceased relative because the property has passed down, sometimes even across multiple generations, without the legal paperwork and process required to keep the title in the name of the current, living owners. As a result, sometimes large groups of relatives can own partial interests in family land, however, they often do not have deeds or court documents listing their ownership interest in the property.

This can make it hard to secure loans with the property, which many families need for property repairs and improvements. It can also make it hard for families to allocate shares of expenses related to the property among members of the family, including taxes and maintenance costs needed to retain the property over time.

After a disaster, heirs property owners can struggle to evidence their property ownership as needed to access disaster assistance and recovery aid for their home. In 2021, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) recognized these challenges and the need to accept alternative proof of ownership to access federal aid.

FEMA expanded the ways to prove ownership, including by affidavit in which one must declare how they are an heir to the deceased owner and the circumstances surrounding their ownership claim while providing a death certificate. Other government programs, including the debris removal program on Maui, are not so lenient.

There are numerous strategies that ʻohana can use to update title on their property and manage the property into the future. For many families, the preferred option is that everyone who has an interest in the property agree on a path forward and then enlist legal help to update the legal palapala.

One option is an agreement to create a family land trust and designate trustees that manage the property consistent with terms for the trust. Another option is to transfer ownership of the property into a family-owned corporation, with a board that manages the property and bylaws that outline the rules the board must comply with. Some families might also agree to partition the property to enable separate use, management, and ownership. Yet another option is to allow some members to buy out others and consolidate ownership into a smaller group of family members.

What makes sense for each family and property will vary depending on their unique circumstances. And, if all interested family members cannot agree, perhaps because many are involved and hard to reach, or because of disagreement, that adds complexity. Importantly, however, all interests matter, no matter how small. Obtaining legal counsel can be a critical step in assessing all the options and navigating the complex legal system to update title and maintain ʻohana lands. ■

E Nīnau iā NHLC provides general information about the law. E Nīnau iā NHLC is not legal advice. You can contact NHLC about your legal needs by calling NHLC's offices at 808-521-2302. You can also learn more about NHLC at nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org.

The Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (NHLC) is a nonprofit law firm dedicated to the advancement and protection of Native Hawaiian identity and culture. Each month, NHLC attorneys will answer questions about legal issues relating to Native Hawaiian rights and protections, including issues regarding housing, land, water, and traditional and cultural practice. You can submit questions at NinauNHLC@nhlchi.org.

From Hawai'i to the World: Leadership That Lifts the Lāhui

By Jacob Aki

NaHHA would like to share an article from one of our Lamakū Hoʻokipa, our Beacons of Hospitality, who are making a positive impact through the value of mālama and as a contributing member of the Native Hawaiian community.

As a Native Hawaiian in the airline industry, I often find myself as the only kanaka in the room. But each space I enter is an opportunity – to bring our ʻike, our values, and our people forward. That is my kuleana.

In Hawaiʻi, aviation isn't just transportation – it connects people, families, and cultures. It's central to our economy and daily lives. But just as important as how we fly is who shapes the journey. Native Hawaiian leadership in this industry isn't just important – it's essential.

I'm proud that Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines understand this. They know that true aloha for Hawaiʻi means uplifting its people, and they empower us to help guide the company in ways that genuinely serve our communities. That kind of kuleana is powerful.

One of the most meaningful projects I help lead is the push for locally produced sustainable aviation fuel (SAF). This effort goes beyond reducing carbon emissions. It's about mālama ʻāina – redefining sustainability through ancestral wisdom and future needs. Local SAF could support farmers, promote food and fuel security, and align climate goals with indigenous values.

It also means creating pathways for our keiki to thrive at home. Alaska and Hawaiian Airlines are investing in local workforce training for pilots and aircraft mechanics – high-skill, well-paying careers that don't require leaving the islands. This is how we keep our lāhui strong: by building futures rooted in place and culture.

Mālama means all of this – caring for land, people, and culture with boldness, innovation, and aloha. When we're given the chance to lead, we don't just move the needle – we move mountains.

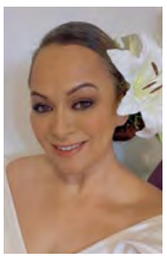
Our kūpuna were master navigators, guided by stars and ʻike. Today, we navigate new skies through leadership and advocacy. But the calling remains: to care for our people, our ʻāina, and our future.

Hawaiians belong in every space where decisions about our home are made. Not as guests. Not as afterthoughts. But as leaders. Because when we lead with ʻike kūpuna and a vision for future generations, we rise – and we lift our entire lāhui with us. ■

Jacob Aki is the senior public affairs manager for Alaska Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines. A Kamehameha Schools Kapālama graduate, he holds a B.A. in Hawaiian Studies from UH Mānoa and an M.A. in Political Management from The George Washington University. He previously served as a senior advisor and communications director for the Hawaiʻi State Senate. Passionate about Native Hawaiian advocacy, he is president of Ke One o Kākuhihewa and active in Hale o nā Aliʻi o Hawaiʻi. He is a dedicated husband and father, committed to uplifting the next generation of Native Hawaiian leaders.

The recent merger of Hawaiian Airlines with Alaska Airlines offers an opportunity for Native Hawaiian employees like Jacob Aki to highlight Hawaiian ʻike, values and people in shaping the culture of the newly formed company. - *Photo: Courtesy of Alaska Airlines and Hawaiian Airlines*

The Civic Club Movement in Hawai'i's "Ninth Island"



By Doreen Hall Vann

The Las Vegas Hawaiian Civic Club (LVHCC) was chartered by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs on July 29, 1989. The population in the Las Vegas valley was 673,000.

The 1990 U.S. Census numbered the Asian American, Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander (AANHPI) in Las Vegas at around 28,000, relatively 4.5% of its population. LVHCC membership and business partners were 300+ strong.

Since then, the growth has been exponential as the Census estimates over 40,000 Native Hawaiians and Pacific Islanders now reside in Clark County, Nevada, in a pool of 3 million residents. Over the past 35 years, 5,000+ residents were a LVHCC club member at one time or another.

Native Hawaiians refer to Las Vegas as the "Ninth Island" due to the city's significant Hawaiian community and strong cultural connections. Las Vegas has become a second home, not just to 'ohana, but to Hawaiian businesses, hula hālau, 'ukulele groups, and events that maintain island traditions.

The term "Ninth Island" was coined in the late 1970s as more and more Kānaka 'Ōiwi transplanted to Las Vegas. Though far from Hawai'i, Las Vegas provides a place where Hawaiians can stay connected to their roots, creating a vibrant community that reflects the spirit of aloha, making it feel like an extension of the islands. LVHCC member Kehau Bryce shared, "When I first heard the term 'Ninth Island,' I thought (like most in Hawai'i) that is NOT an island – why call it that?"

Now, living in Las Vegas, Bryce understands the sentiment behind the beloved moniker. With a large and thriving Hawaiian community, Las Vegas has become a home away from home.

LVHCC plays a vital role in supporting the community by serving as a cultural hub and advocate for Hawaiians living off-island. Established to preserve Hawaiian traditions, LVHCC provides a space to connect, share experiences, and maintain cultural heritage.

Through various events – Ho'olaule'a, Nā Mea Hawai'i workshops, and community gatherings – LVHCC offers a support network for newcomers and long-time residents alike. LVHCC also advocates for the community on important issues, including the reliability of public transportation and the lack of 'ōlelo Hawai'i instruction in local schools – although a recent effort to introduce 'ōlelo Hawai'i in a local school is making inroads.

On Aug. 9, 2023, Kāhea Kāko'o Lahaina demonstrated that the power of the "Ninth Island" to respond with swiftness and unity in the face of crisis is nothing short of extraordinary. The way the Las Vegas community came together to support Lahaina during such a critical time was a testament to the strength and resilience of our people. This event truly brought out the best in our community, showcasing a collective spirit of generosity and determination. While many of the individuals who stepped up were unsung heroes at the time, we want to take this moment to recognize their selfless efforts.

In addition, LVHCC actively engages in charitable and educational initiatives through our five scholarship programs. By advocating for Hawaiian rights and cultural recognition, LVHCC has strengthened the Las Vegas community's voice. It has become an essential organization that helps Hawaiians stay connected while building a sense of belonging and pride in their new home. ■

Doreen Hall Vann is the past president of the Las Vegas Hawaiian Civic Club. Born and raised in Pearl City, O'ahu, she relocated to Las Vegas in 2019 to be closer to family while staying connected to my Hawaiian roots and community.

(L-R): Pat Filbert, Maggie Perry, Doreen Vann, Charlene Makaiwi, Nate Makaiwi and Stacen Makaiwi at an AANHPI White House Initiative event in Las Vegas last year. - *Courtesy Photo*

2025 'Ō'ō Awards: Honoring Selfless Service

By Andrew Rosen

The Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce (NHCC) proudly announces the honorees of the 48th Annual 'Ō'ō Awards Gala, set to take place on Oct. 17, 2025, at the Sheraton Waikīkī.

This prestigious event honors Native Hawaiian leaders who exemplify excellence in business and community service, embodying the values and traditions of their ancestors.

Established in 1977, the 'Ō'ō Awards recognize Native Hawaiian business leaders who demonstrate courage, resilience, and dedication to their craft and the people of Hawai'i. The award symbolizes NHCC's commitment to acknowledging leaders who advocate for Hawaiians in business, ensuring that Hawaiian culture and values remain integral pillars that are passed on to future generations.

This year's honorees have made significant contributions to the Native Hawaiian community in different areas.

Tammy Smith is a respected community leader and advocate of 'ai pono (healthy eating) who has dedicated her life to feeding our people. She is a second-generation owner of the Hale Kealoha restaurant and catering business in Kailua which served Hawai'i for some 35 years. Her work included providing healthy lunches for 300 Hawaiian-focused charter school students each day. When COVID-19 struck, Tammy was working as the dietary manager for The King Lunalilo Trust and Home, overseeing their meal delivery program. A pandemic hero, she expanded her efforts to kūpuna stuck at home, working tirelessly to ensure that they had healthy food, rallying the community to kōkua and partnering with Alu Like and Alexander and Baldwin to pack and deliver some 1,000 meals per week.

Robert Piper has been a dedicated member of NHCC since 1990. He serves as executive director and CEO of the Honolulu Community Action Program, Inc. (HCAP), a nonprofit that addresses poverty. His involvement in public service includes roles as deputy director of the State Department of Budget and Finance and as chief of staff to the lieutenant governor. A former business attorney and banker, Robert has served on numerous community and nonprofit boards. He is a Weinberg Fellow, an East-West Center and Kamehameha Schools Fellow, and was named one of Hawai'i Business magazine's "Twenty for the Next Twenty" emerging leaders.

Ray Soon is a lifelong public servant and leader whose career spans planning, housing, education, and historic preservation. After earning a master's in city planning from Harvard, Ray returned to Hawai'i in 1990 to serve at the Department of Hawaiian Home Lands, eventually becoming chair of the Hawaiian Homes Commission and leading the development of over 3,000 homesteads. He has held key leadership roles at Kamehameha Schools, the Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement, and was chief of staff to the Honolulu mayor. Now retired, Ray remains a steadfast advocate for Hawaiian communities, supporting leadership development and continuing his legacy through his family and consulting work with Solutions Pacific.

The 48th Annual 'Ō'ō Awards Gala promises an evening of celebration, reflection, and inspiration. Attendees will enjoy a program featuring cultural performances, heartfelt tributes, and opportunities to connect with fellow community members dedicated to the advancement of Native Hawaiians.

Join us as we honor these exceptional individuals and reaffirm our commitment to a thriving future rooted in the rich cultural heritage of the Hawaiian community. ■

For more info and to purchase tickets, visit nativehawaiianchamberofcommerce.org.

Nā Hale Aliʻi o Kauikeaouli

Na Kalani Akana, Ph.D.

ʻO Kauikeaouli (Kamehameha III) ka mōʻī i noho lōʻihi ma ke kalaunu – he 30 makahiki. ʻO ia nō ka mua o na Kamehameha i kūkulu i hale aliʻi no ke aupuni. Ua kamaʻāina kākou me ka hale aliʻi ʻo ʻIolani, akā ma mua o kona kūkulu ʻana, aia nā hale aliʻi a Kauikeaouli i kūkulu ai.

ʻO ka hale aliʻi mua i kūkulu ʻia no Kauikeaouli, ʻo ia ʻo Hale Piula ma Lahaina. ʻAʻole ʻo Piula ka inoa o ka hale akā he inoa ia o ke ʻano o ka hale e like me Hale Kauila – ua kūkulu ʻia me ka lāʻau kauila i lawe ʻia mai ka puʻuhonua ʻo Hōnaunau mai. ʻO ka piula kekahi mekala kini no ke kāpili ʻana i ke kaupoku i pena ʻia me ka ʻulaʻula i ʻike ʻia ʻo ia e nā moku e kipa ana iā Lāhaina, ke kapitala o ke Aupuni Hawaiʻi i kēlā manawa.

ʻElua papahele ko ka hale a ua kūkulu ʻia me nā paia me ka punakea. ʻAʻole i noho ʻo Kauikeaouli i ka hale aliʻi no ka mea no ka ʻoihana aupuni wale nō ka hale aliʻi. Ua noho lāua ʻo Kalama ma kekahi hale pili ma Mokulua. I ka hoʻoneʻe ʻana o ke Aupuni Hawaiʻi i Oʻahu ma ka makahiki 1845, ua waiho ʻia ʻo Hale Aliʻi a ua hele ā heleleʻi ke kaupoku piula ʻulaʻula. Ua hoʻomanaʻo kekahi kahuna iā Kauikeaouli, ʻaʻole e neʻe i Oʻahu ma muli o ka wānana a Kaʻōpulupulu: "Ke one ʻai aliʻi o Kākuhihewa."

I ka neʻe ʻana i Oʻahu, ua hoʻohana ʻia ka Hale Uluhe a Boki i kūkulu ai no nā ʻoihana aupuni. He hale aliʻi ia, ʻaʻole he hale noho. He hale pili o Hale Uluhe i kāhiko ʻia ma nā kihi o ka hale me ka uluhe, kekahi palai ikaika. Aia ʻo Hale Uluhe ma kahi o ka hale pule nui ʻo Kana Analū.

E like me ka nohona ma Lahaina, ua moe ʻo Kauikeaouli me Kalama ma ke kauhale a puni. Ma ka hoʻokipa ʻana i nā poʻe hanohano, ua noho ka mōʻī ma kekahi noho kalaunu i hoʻokau ʻia me kekahi ʻahuʻula melemele, ka ʻahuʻula hoʻi o Kamehameha, kona makuakāne hiehie.

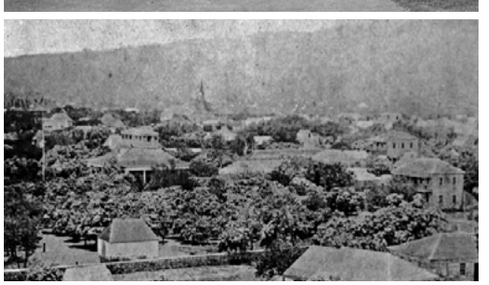
ʻO ka hale noho o Kauikeaouli ka Hale Aliʻi ma Pohukaina. Ua kūʻai ʻo Kauikeaouli i ka hale ma ke kahua like o ka Hale Aliʻi ʻIolani o kēia wā ma kahi o Kekauluohi Hale, kāhi o ka waihona palapala o Hawaiʻi. Na Mataio Kekūanāoʻa i kūkulu i ka hale no kāna kaikamahine ʻo Vikitoria Kamāmalu (Lohelani). Aia kēlā hale ma uka o Pohukaina kāhi hoʻoilina o nā iwi o Liholiho me kāna mōʻīwahine ʻo Kamāmalu. Ma ka hala ʻana o ka mōʻī noho lōʻihi, ua ili ka hale i ka mōʻī hou ʻo ʻAlika Liholiho ʻIolani me ʻEmalani. Ua kapa ʻia ka hale aliʻi e Kapuāiwa, Kamehameha V, no kona kaikaina ʻo ʻIolani.

He hale aliʻi hou ʻē aʻe ko Kauikeaouli a ua noho ʻo ia ma laila i nā manawa wela iʻo nō ma Honolulu. ʻO kēlā hale ʻo Kaniakapūpū, aia ma uka loa o Nuʻuanu ma Luakaha. Aia kekahi kiʻi o ka hale mai ka makahiki 1844 ma mua o ka hoʻoneʻe ʻana o ke aupuni mai Lāhaina ā i Honolulu, no laila, aia ʻo Kaniakapūpū ke kū nei ma mua o kēlā neʻena.

Ua hoʻokaulana ʻia ʻo Kaniakapūpū no kekahi ʻahaʻaina nui ma laila no ka piha makahiki ʻehā o Lā Hoʻihoʻi Ea, kekahi hoʻolauleʻa 10-lā no ka hoʻihoʻi ea ʻia ʻana o ke Aupuni Hawaiʻi e Beretania. Ma kahi o ʻehā mano kānaka i pāʻina ma Kaniakapūpū. Ua kani nō nā pūpū kani oe. ■

Kalani Akana, Ph.D., is a kumu of hula, oli and ʻōlelo Hawaiʻi. He has authored numerous articles on Indigenous ways of knowing and doing.

To read the English translation go to kawaiola.news



Aia ka hale kupapaʻu o Pohukaina i ka ʻaoʻao komohana lalo. Aia ʻo Hale Aliʻi ma uka o Pohukaina.

Alkaline Water: Truth or Trend?

By Jodi Leslie Matsuo, DrPH, RDN

In recent years, alkaline water has surged in popularity – filling shelves at health food stores, showing up in gyms, and even being promoted through high-priced home filtration systems. But what exactly is alkaline water, and does it live up to the health claims surrounding it?

Alkaline water is water with a higher pH level than regular drinking water. While standard tap water typically has a neutral pH of 7, alkaline water usually measures between eight and nine.

This elevated pH can occur naturally – when water passes over rocks and picks up minerals like calcium and magnesium – or it can be created artificially through a process called electrolysis, used in water ionizers. Some products also enhance alkalinity by adding minerals such as potassium, magnesium, or calcium.

Advocates of alkaline water claim it can neutralize acidity in the body, slow aging, improve energy, and even prevent cancer or osteoporosis. Some athletes use alkaline water to prevent lactic acid buildup after intense exercise, while others turn to it for relief from acid reflux or digestive issues.

However, research doesn't support all these claims.

Some studies suggest alkaline water may help reduce acid reflux symptoms by inactivating pepsin, a stomach enzyme. But there's no strong evidence confirming that it can prevent cancer, treat chronic illness, or significantly improve general health.

Your body naturally regulates blood pH through the lungs and kidneys, and drinking alkaline water won't change that. It may raise urine pH, but diet and lifestyle have a far greater impact on overall acid-base balance. Rather than relying on alkaline water, focus on staying active, eating well, and staying hydrated.

You may have also heard of Kangen water – a specific brand of ionized alkaline water. These machines, sold under the Enagic brand, are found in vending systems across shopping centers, including here in Hawaiʻi.

Kangen water is created through electrolysis, which splits tap water into acidic and alkaline streams. The brand claims to produce "micro-clustered" water that's more easily absorbed, though this claim hasn't been scientifically validated. While all Kangen water is alkaline, not all alkaline water is Kangen.

Alkaline water is generally safe in moderation but drinking too much may reduce stomach acid and affect digestion. People with kidney issues or those on certain medications should consult their doctor before making it a daily habit.

Here's something else Hawaiʻi residents may not realize: our tap water is already slightly alkaline. It comes from underground aquifers filtered through volcanic rock, naturally enriched with minerals. Most areas have a pH between 7.6 and 8.2 – already more alkaline than on much of the continent.

If you're using a basic carbon filter, those beneficial minerals – and the water's alkalinity – remain intact. However, reverse osmosis (RO) systems strip the water of these minerals, often resulting in neutral or slightly acidic water unless a remineralization stage is added.

So, while there's no harm in choosing alkaline water, know that our local wai is already mineral-rich and naturally alkaline. ■

Born and raised in Kona, Hawaiʻi, Dr. Jodi Leslie Matsuo is a Native Hawaiian registered dietitian and certified diabetes educator, with training in integrative and functional nutrition. Follow her on Facebook @DrJodiLeslieMatsuo, Instagram @drlesliematsuo and on X @DrLeslieMatsuo.

A Legacy of Language, Culture and Community

By Pelehonuamea Harman

The United States Mint has honored Native Hawaiian scholar Mary Kawena Pukui on the 2025 Native American $1 Coin, recognizing her profound contributions to preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian knowledge.

The coin features Pukui adorned with a hibiscus flower, a kukui nut lei, and a muʻumuʻu, alongside the inscription "Nānā i Ke Kumu," a reference to the influential book series she co-authored.

As her great-granddaughter, I carry the privilege and kuleana of stewarding her legacy. While this national recognition is deeply meaningful, those who knew her best remember her humility.

"I know Tūtū Kawena would probably blush at all the attention because she was very haʻahaʻa," reflects one of her descendants. "She documented our culture out of love for her people and because she was genuinely interested in learning."

On March 28, the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo – where I serve as director of Native Hawaiian engagement – hosted a panel discussion and kanikapila to celebrate this historic recognition and Women's History Month. The event brought together scholars, cultural practitioners, and community members to reflect on Pukui's enduring legacy. The kanikapila honored her musical compositions. Coupled with impromptu hula offered by attendees, the event highlighted many aspects of her contributions.

This commemoration at UH Hilo exemplifies the university's commitment to bridging academic scholarship with community engagement. By celebrating Pukui's work, UH Hilo demonstrates the importance of integrating cultural knowledge into education and ensuring that Indigenous traditions remain a vital part of Hawaiʻi's academic landscape.

Beyond UH Hilo, the Bishop Museum in collaboration with the Mary Kawena Pukui Cultural Preservation Society will continue honoring Pukui's legacy with monthly programs, beginning with a special After Hours opening event on April 11 and ending in December. These offerings reflect a broader effort to ensure that future generations connect with her scholarship and its lasting impact on Hawaiʻi.

The recognition of Pukui on the 2025 Native American $1 coin is a testament to her invaluable contributions and the importance of linking scholarship with community priorities. Through such efforts, places like UH Hilo play a vital role in keeping Indigenous knowledge relevant, accessible, and deeply connected to the people it serves. ■

Pelehonuamea "Pele" Suganuma Harman resides with her ʻohana in Puna on Moku o Keawe and is the great-granddaughter of Mary Kawena Pukui. She is an educator, community advocate, kumu hula, and the director of Native Hawaiian Engagement at the University of Hawaiʻi at Hilo.

Several generations of Pukui descendants danced to one of her compositions, *Kuʻu Tūtū*, during kanikapila at UH Hilo. - *Photo: Kapuaonaona Roback*

Panelists Hālena Kapuni-Reynolds (left), Larry Kimura (right) and Kepā Maly (not shown) shared moʻolelo in UH Hilo's Moʻokini Library about Pukui's influence on their scholarship. - *Photo: M.Kaimana Vossen*

Hōlanikū i ke Alaula

By Hāwane Paʻa Makekau

The sound of the western shores of our eldest atoll, Hōlanikū, whispered the creation stories of our language to me on her tides every sunset. I was embraced by the sound of our earth, where the human world is so quiet that I could finally hear her heart.

The call of the birds taught me that our ancestors listened with all of their senses. They named the birds in reflection of the sound of the birds' voices. I thought of the moment they received their names and what it felt like to speak it out loud for the first time. I thought of what it felt like to honor their existence in this way. I thought of what it felt like to listen in this way.

Fourteen years ago, I made the journey into the realm of Pō (ancestral realm) to meet my grandmother lands of Papahānaumokuākea. I didn't know it then, but the seven months I spent with Hōlanikū would set the foundation for my life and purpose in ways that are still being revealed to me on the tides.

I was the first fluent language speaker and cultural bearer to return for a full restoration season in a very long time. I knew there was a reason that the pathway opened for me to be there, and I trusted it.

One day I woke up to a brilliant sunrise and felt the deep calling to gift place names to the land that loved me home to myself and my own mana. The names began to travel on the Waialoha winds on the wings of Kaʻupu and Mōlī (albatross). As the birds do, names land in their own time too.

I returned with my sister, Kapulei, two years ago to come full circle and to complete what I set out to do all those years ago. It took me that long to continue to deeply and intentionally cultivate a relationship with my language, with our stories, and with my identity as a Kanaka. It took me that long to prepare for this sacred offering. I needed to live. I needed to love. I needed to grow. I needed to find the fullness of my voice. I needed to land too.

And land indeed I did, back on the western shores of Hōlanikū that I named Wehenaalaula, in honor of the brilliant glow of sunlight on her vast ocean. She looked so different from the last time I saw her.

The land was healing, and the birds were coming back by the thousands. I saw our native plants and animals thriving and taking their rightful place on their homeland. It was at that moment that I knew why the names took their time. She needed a chance to reclaim herself and by the grace of the matriarch islands, so did I.

I spent time with the land in ways that I know in my soul my ancestors once did. I observed her and invited her to reveal to me who she is. I asked the ʻāina in ceremony and prayer what they yearned to be called. I listened with all of my senses and said their names out loud to each place for the first time. I now know what it feels like to honor their existence in this way, and it is the highest, most sacred offering I have ever given. I will spend the rest of my days in this realm singing and chanting their names to life and into remembrance across the currents of time and space.

E ola mau nā inoa ʻāina o Hōlanikū
May the names of Hōlanikū live on ■

Hōlanikū i ke Alaula

ʻUla nōweo ka lā i Wehenalaula
He alahula i ʻAkahipapahonuamea
Hoʻomoea kauluwela Hāʻenaʻihikapu
Kapukapu Kaipunakea i Kahikikū
Kū ke koʻa Māleikūhuluhulu i Hiʻolani
ʻO Hōlani ka piko o ka pule ʻāina
He ʻāina laʻa kapu o nā mokupāpapa
Papā Pūnanakamanu i ka Pōkakaʻa
Kakaʻa Manulewa i Makaʻewaʻewa
Lelewa wale ana i ka holu o ke Kāwelu
I Māhelupapa e kani ai ka leo o ka ʻUaʻu
ʻO aʻu nō ia kahi leo ʻuʻina i ʻĀhulumanu
Kaʻapeha nā ʻēheu manu a luna o ʻIwakeliʻi
A ka luna o Lawakuakōhā ka nuku ʻāwini
ʻĀwili ka hulu kāheʻa i Kahakaʻōnohiʻula
ʻUla nōweo ka lā i Wehenaalaula

He Mele Inoa ʻĀina No Hōlanikū

Haku ʻia e Hāwane Paʻa Makekau

A Hawaiian Phenological Practice

By Kalei Nuʻuhiwa, Ph.D.

Aloha kākou e nā hoa makamaka. Howzit Gang.

In the upcoming months I thought it would be fun to share some kūpuna wisdom by introducing you to some of my favorite Hawaiian phenological connections that are specific to Hawaiʻi's environment.

You might be asking yourself, what is phenology? Phenology is the study of natural cycles, seasonal or natural phenomena as they relate to the timing of plants, animals, and climate activities. Data of parallel forms, growth cycles, and climate processes have been observed for generations and have been recorded in poetic song, story, or prayer. These poetic compositions highlight natural indicators that inform us humans on the conditions of a healthy or unhealthy environment.

For this article, I chose to feature two creatures in the kai (ocean) that are not the same species of fish but have been included in the origin chant called the *Kumulipo*. The *Kumulipo* is a pule hoʻolaʻa aliʻi, a prayer that sanctifies chiefs.

The creatures, timings, and environmental activities mentioned within the *Kumulipo* are all important to a chief's rulership. On one hand, the *Kumulipo* teaches leaders resource, land, and people management. On the other hand, the *Kumulipo* acknowledges and highlights relationships that seem unrelated but are important for the continuum of human existence. Apologies, I digress.

This article's phenological connection is a short one and features the relationship between the laupalaʻī (*Zebrasoma flavescens*) called pala for short, and the kala (*Naso unicornis*).

The *Kumulipo* says, "Hānau ka pala, hānau ke kala i ke kai lā, holo!" Paraphrasing:

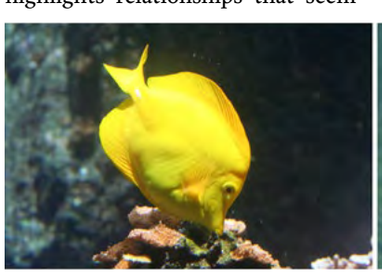
The yellow tang spawns, the bluespine unicornfish spawns together in the ocean, swim!

These poetic lines describe the aggregation and spawning cycles of the yellow tang and bluespine unicornfish, which is around spring and summertime. Their spawning cycles coincide with the fluctuating ocean temperatures that are nutrient rich.

These two fish species are important indicators for ceremonies connected to primary akua (deities/environmental processes) like Kāne and Kanaloa. When the pala and kala are active, communities prepared for the communal fishing seasons that followed shortly thereafter.

Lauʻīpala literally means yellowed tī leaf, which was used for Kāne ceremonies to release one from negative circumstances. Similarly, the word kala means to remove or release one from any transgressions or negative impact one may have caused or acquired. Look for these fish the next time you are near the kai during these summer months.

And that's your Hawaiian Phenological Connection for this article. A hui hou kākou! ■



"Hānau ka Pala, hānau ke Kala i ke kai lā, holo." (The yellow tang spawns, the unicorn fish spawns in the ocean, swim). - *Photos: Kalei Nuʻuhiwa*

Kuʻi ka Lono Indigenous Education Conference

By the Hoʻokaʻa ʻIke Team

Twenty Native Hawaiian charter and Kaiapuni schools gathered in March in Hilo to attend the 22nd Annual Kuʻi ka Lono Indigenous Education Conference, bringing together educators, students, and community leaders under the theme "Hiʻipoi i ka ʻĀina Aloha" (Cherish the Beloved Land). The conference celebrated the deep connection between the land and the Hawaiian people, highlighting the importance of protecting the ʻāina.

This annual conference showcases the impactful work being done in Native Hawaiian mission-aligned, culturally sustaining, academically rigorous educational environments highlighting the advancement of Native Hawaiian-based curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. It supports the development and dissemination of educational strategies that elevate ʻike Hawaiʻi and promote equitable, culturally sustaining learning environments.

This year's driving question: "'Āina is the backbone of our lāhui. What are you doing to protect, preserve, and perpetuate its health and vitality?" resonated throughout the event. Kuʻi Ka Lono is a venue for the showcase

Haumāna and kumu visited key wahi pana in Hawaiʻi Hikina to learn moʻolelo from community members. The wahi pana of Piʻopiʻo, Naha Pōhaku, Waiānuenue, and Mokuola served as focal points for workshops and hands-on activities. The moʻolelo were accompanied by mele shared by haumāna from conference host Ka ʻUmeke Kāʻeo public charter school.

Day two featured presentations by haumāna, with each school showcasing unique projects in response to this year's driving question.

Richard Kane Jr., an eighth grader from Ka Waihona o ka Naʻauao in Nānākuli, Oʻahu, presented on the demigod Maui and his exchange with the manu ʻAlaehuapi when he was seeking fire. Reflecting on his experience, Kane emphasized the value of attending a Hawaiian charter school saying, "It made me learn more about my culture but also my ahupuaʻa of Nānākuli. This is important because we should know where we come from and about our ancestors."

Kanu o Ka ʻĀina from Waimea, Hawaiʻi Island, highlighted the significance of kāhuli (native snails) in Hawaiʻi's ecosystem. Students created informational poster boards and interactive games and partnered with Bishop Museum to showcase live kāhuli for an enhanced learning experience. Fifth grader Mahea Sylva said, "kāhuli are close to extinction and I hope the project helps their survival."

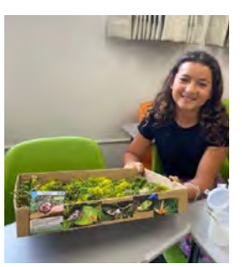
Day two ended with the Pāʻina Hōʻikeʻike Kula, a highlight of the annual conference, with each school sharing mele and hula.

Haumāna from Kula Aupuni Niihau a Kahelelani Aloha (KANAKA) on Kauaʻi explained how they protect Hawaiian culture and values, presented on their aquaponic system, and the sustainability practices they use daily.

The conference closed with a collaboration between the haumāna and local organizations to mālama ʻāina working alongside groups such as Hui Hoʻoleimaluō, the Edith Kanakaʻole Foundation, the Lihikai Cultural Learning Center, and ʻĀina University.

The conference was a wonderful opportunity for haumāna to be involved in organizing activities. Their dedication to education and cultural heritage shone brightly, and this gathering was a beautiful reminder of our shared responsibility to cherish and protect our beloved land for future generations. ■

For more information, reach out to our Hoʻokaʻa ʻIke team: Director Kuʻuleianuhea Awo-Chun, kuuleianuheaa@oha.org; Strategy Consultant Makiʻilei Ishihara, makiileii@oha.org; Strategy Consultant Chantelle Kapua Belay, chantellekb@oha.org or email education@oha.org.



Kanu o ka ʻĀina fifth grader Mahea Sylva shares her kahuli project. - *Courtesy Photos*

Ka Waihona o ka Naʻauao eighth-grader Richard Kane and his mom, Rochelle, who is a kumu at the school.

Six ʻŌiwi Women Honored Posthumously

On March 26, in conjunction with Women's History Month, the U.S. Senate passed Resolution 142 honoring 27 Indigenous women for their contributions throughout history – including six Native Hawaiians.

Honored were Dr. Isabella Aiona Abbott, renowned limu expert and the first woman on the biological sciences faculty at Stanford University; Edith Kanakaʻole, prominent Hawaiian cultural practitioner, kumu hula, and language and culture expert; Emma Beckley Nakuina, who became the first female judge in Hawaiʻi in 1892 – 30 years before any female judges were appointed in America; Mary Kawena Pukui, the noted scholar and teacher who published more than 50 academic works and was the preeminent Hawaiian translator of the 20th century; Rell Kapoliokaehukai Sunn, the celebrated longboard surfing champion of the world who co-founded the Women's Professional Surfing Association in 1975; and Queen Kaʻahumanu, widow of Kamehameha I, and the first woman to serve as regent (like a prime minister) of the Kingdom of Hawaiʻi.

Alaska Sen. Lisa Murkowski and Hawaiʻi Sen. Brian Schatz serve as the chair and vice chair, respectively, of the Senate Indian Affairs Committee. They spearheaded and co-wrote the resolution to honor American Indian, Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian women.

"These [women] were the life givers, the culture bearers and the caretakers of Native peoples who have made precious contributions, enriching the lives of all people of the United States," said Murkowski.

"Native Hawaiian women have made incredible contributions to our communities and country, and it's critical that we recognize their impacts on American history," said Schatz. "The Hawaiian women we commemorate are among many more who deserve our recognition and gratitude year-round."

EA Ecoversity Receives Mellon Grant

EA Ecoversity, a culturally driven, post-secondary education and career training program for Native Hawaiian youth and young adults, received $600,000 from the Mellon Foundation for its HOʻINA Kanaka Culinary Arts Program.

HOʻINA, which means "to return," is a bilingual, Hawaiian culture-based culinary arts and traditional foods initiative that encourages Native Hawaiians to return to a native diet.

This two-year grant award follows a 1-year planning grant from the Mellon Foundation and will support EA Ecoversity's organizational capacity, staffing, and public programming.

HOʻINA addresses the need for Native Hawaiians to return to eating traditional foods, including taro, sweet potatoes, breadfruit, ferns and other greens, seaweed, fruit, and fish. The program seeks to re-establish our unique familial relationship to our native foods. After nearly two centuries of alienation, the aim is to protect, preserve and advance Hawaiian food heritage and cultural traditions passed down in stories, chants, songs, proverbs, and vocabulary.

Studies confirm that when Hawaiians return to a traditional diet and cooking methods, they experience not only weight loss, but also decreases in cholesterol, blood sugar, and blood pressure. Studies also suggest that returning to a traditional, reciprocal relationship with our native food plants results in emotional and spiritual healing from historic trauma.

Interns from Kanaka Culinary Arts program. - *Courtesy Photo*

Prince Kūhiō Honored at Mauna'ala

(L-R) Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Trustee Keli'i Akina, CEO Stacy Ferreira, and Strategy Consultant Maki'ilei Ishihara represented OHA at a gathering honoring Prince Jonah Kūhiō Kalaniana'ole at Mauna'ala on March 27. Prince Kūhiō served as Hawai'i's representative to the U.S. Congress from 1903 until his passing in January 1922. Following the 1898 annexation of Hawai'i by the United States, and the passing in 1899 of both his cousin, Princess Ka'iulani and his aunt, dowager Queen Kapi'olani, a brokenhearted Kūhiō and his wife, Princess Elizabeth Kahanu, departed Hawai'i for more than a year, traveling widely throughout Europe. They royal couple returned from their self-imposed exile in 1901 to take part in Hawai'i politics. The popular prince, known affectionately as "Ke Ali'i Maka'āinana" (the people's prince) was the architect behind the Hawaiian Homes Commission Act of 1921. He also established the Hawaiian Civic Clubs and was instrumental in establishing the county government system, still in use today. - *Courtesy Photo*

Miyasato Named CNHA Brand Officer

Blaine Miyasato has been named Council for Native Hawaiian Advancement (CNHA) chief brand officer, to lead CNHA's efforts to strengthen and unify its brand, ensuring it reflects the organization's mission to uplift Native Hawaiians. He joins CNHA with extensive experience in branding, product development, corporate strategy, and community engagement.

Although his ʻohana moved to the continent when he was young, Miyasato returned home in 1985 when he was hired as a flight attendant by Hawaiian Airlines, beginning a 40-year career.

Blaine Miyasato - *Courtesy Photo*

Rising through the ranks, he eventually become vice president of product development and brand, playing a key role in shaping Hawaiian Airlines' brand identity, guest experience, and cultural representation. Most recently, he served as managing director of state government affairs, representing the airline's interests across multiple states.

In 2024, following Hawaiian Airlines' acquisition by Alaska Air Group, Miyasato was relocated to Las Vegas. However, staying connected to his kulāiwi was a priority so he left the airline to join CNHA.

Miyasato was appointed to the Hawaiʻi Tourism Authority (HTA) board in 2023, serving as a board member and chair emeritus before resigning upon his relocation to the continent. He is also a board member of the Chamber of Commerce Hawaiʻi and the former co-chair of the Airlines Committee of Hawaiʻi.

Rare Native Plant Thriving on Kahoʻolawe

In 1992, two botanists from the National Tropical Botanical Garden found two plants unknown to them growing on an outcropping of rocks on Kahoʻolawe. They gathered a sample and found that the plant's pollen matched a previously unidentified fossil pollen.

The critically endangered native plant – called Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa (*Kanaloa kahoolawensis*) – was apparently widespread until it disappeared from pollen records around the 16th century.

Following its rediscovery, sci-

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NEWS BRIEFS

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Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa. - *Photo: Anna Palomino, Maui Nui Botanical Gardens*

entists tried to propagate it, finding only marginal success. The two wild plants died by 2015, and by 2020 only two plants remained in cultivation. Then, incredibly, both plants bloomed simultaneously. One produced seeds, ensuring the species' continued survival. Today, there are about 20 plants.

A website with information about the plant was launched by the Kapalupalu o Kanaloa Hui, which includes the DLNR Division of Forestry and Wildlife, the Kahoʻolawe Island Reserve Commission, the Plant Extinction Prevention Program, the National Tropical Botanical Garden, Hoʻolawa Farms, Lyon Arboretum, and Maui Nui Botanical Gardens. Their vision is to restore Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa across Hawai'i to resume its ecological and cultural roles.

Rediscovery of this plant was particularly notable in that it was found on Kahoʻolawe, which was ravaged by military bombing. Its endurance and resilience, therefore, has special significance.

"The launch of this website marks a significant step forward in our collective effort to restore Ka Palupalu o Kanaloa," said Michael K. Nāhoʻopiʻi, executive director of the Kahoʻolawe Island Reserve Commission. "This plant's resilience reflects the strength and spirit of Kahoʻolawe itself."

OHA BOT Chair Kahele Shares PLT Presentation with Hawai'i Island Legislators

Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) Board of Trustees Chair Kaialiʻi Kahele made a presentation to Hawai'i Island legislators at their regular monthly meeting on April 17 regarding the State of Hawai'i's Public Land Trust (PLT) obligation to Native Hawaiians, as well as the negative ramifications of SB 903 regarding the PLT on the Native Hawaiian community if adopted by the legislature "as is." The bill, introduced by Sen. Dru Kanuha, has been amended multiple times as it has moved through various senate committees and then to the House where it was amended again. OHA strongly disagrees with the current version of the bill which includes global "settlement" language and proposes a change in the composition of the existing PLT Working Group established via Act 226 in 2022. - *Photo: Jason Lees*

Hawaiian Midwife Report Submitted to the UN

A joint report by Ea Hānau Cultural Council, Hoʻopae Pono Peace Project, and Mālama nā Pua o Haumea was submitted on April 7 to the United Nations (UN) regarding restrictive midwifery licensure requirements that they say discriminates against Indigenous birthing practices and knowledge holders in Hawai'i.

At issue during this legislative session is HB 1194, a midwifery licensure measure that has now cleared both the House of Representatives and the Hawai'i State Senate.

All the hearings for HB 1194 were met with strong opposition from homebirth parents, practitioners, and cultural and reproductive rights advocates. However, medical industry representatives have testified in favor of increased restrictions on midwifery practices.

The report was submitted as part of the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) process, a mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council during which the human rights records of all UN Member States are reviewed every four and a half years. This process provides an opportunity for civil organizations to raise concerns about human rights violations – including violations of Indigenous, reproductive, and cultural rights.

The joint submission calls attention to the impacts of HB 1194 within a broader pattern of systemic discrimination and highlights the urgent need for state and federal governments to respect and protect the rights of Native Hawaiian families, including the right to choose culturally appropriate and community-rooted birth care without threat of criminalization or exclusion.

New Mural at OHA's Hilo Office Completed for Office Blessing

ʻŌiwi artist Hiʻilei Dikito (@irieandhaze) stands in front of a portion of the wall art she created for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA) new Hilo office at the Puainako Town Center. The mural features a whimsical collection of iconic images synonymous with Moku o Keawe using a neutral palette of earthtones punctuated with splashes of red ʻōhiʻa lehua blossoms. The mural adorns all four walls of the conference room and was completed a few days before the Hilo Office Blessing on Friday, April 25. The office's main reception area will display the artwork of haumāna from Ke Kula ʻo Nāwahīokalaniʻōpuʻu, Ka ʻUmeke Kāʻeo, and Kua o ka Lā public charter schools. - *Photo: ʻIlima Kela*

Hawai'i Students Protest NEH Cuts

Last month, hundreds of students from public, private, and charter schools across Hawai'i testified in support of federal funding for the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), after drastic cuts by the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE).

The students in grades 4-12 from Kaua'i, Moloka'i, Maui, O'ahu, and Hawai'i Island, together with their teachers and families, were participating in the Hawai'i History Day State Competition at Windward Community College.

Hawai'i History Day is a year-long, history and civics program of local nonprofit Hawai'i Council for the Humanities (HCH), whose NEH grant was terminated via an email from DOGE on April 2.

"The NEH and by extension humanities councils like ours were established by congressional statute in 1972," said HCD Executive Director Aiko Yamashiro, "and yet, in a single email, DOGE has canceled $1.5 million in funding for local humanities programs and projects, funding that has already been authorized by Congress."

The abrupt loss of all NEH support will result in a drastic cutback of programming for the council, including the Hawai'i History Day program, which started in 1991.

HCH is committed to supporting this year's History Day participants and students qualifying for the national competition will still compete in early June. The Hawai'i Delegation will include participants from the Hawaiian-language History Day program, who will share their projects at the Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian. The future of the program, however, remains uncertain. ■

Kalima Lawsuit Settlement Update

By Thomas Grande, Esq. and Carl Varady, Esq.

Settlement Payments to Deceased Class Members' Heirs and Heir Search

Probate Special Master Emily Kawashima and Probate Special Counsel Scott Suzuki continue to carry out the court-approved Probate Plan, which entails petitioning the Probate Court to seek instructions about disbursing settlement payments to the heirs and devisees of Deceased Class Members.

As of April 10, 2025, 19 petitions been filed with the Probate Court, addressing the estates of approximately 500 Deceased Class Members. A total of $27.8 million has been distributed so far through the probate process.

Information about the Probate Plan is available on the www.kalima-lawsuit.com website. Filed petitions are posted on this website under the "Documents" link. Hearing dates and the Deceased Class Members addressed in a particular petition is on the website and will be published in the Legal Notices section of the Honolulu Star-Advertiser.

Outreach to Deceased Class Member Families

The Claims Administrator has not received family information for about 240 of the Deceased Class Members. This information is crucial to locate possible heirs and devisees. Two forms have been developed to help gather information about the Deceased Class Member: An Information Request Form and a Deceased Class Member Family Information Form. These forms must be completed as soon as possible.

Because some families may not be aware that their deceased is a Class Member who filed a claim with the Hawaiian Claims Office, the Sovereign Council of Hawaiian Homestead Associations (SCHHA) will assist by conducting outreach in an effort to locate relatives of Deceased Class Members.

If you are aware of any family whose relative filed a claim with the Hawaiian Claims Office from 1991 to 1995, please have them contact the Claims Administrator (contact information below).

Probate Process

The Probate Process is expected to take another year to complete, depending on the availability and sufficiency of information about Deceased Class Members' families, and the Court's calendar. This is a unique service in a class action lawsuit and requires enormous resources of time and collaboration. All reasonable efforts are being made to expedite this process.

More information about the probate process and how Deceased Class Members' claims will be handled can be found on kalima-lawsuit.com.

If You Have Questions

Please address questions regarding the contents of a Petition or Order them to your own attorney if you have one, or the Probate Special Counsel or Probate Special Master.

For other questions, contact the Claims Administrator at info@kalima-lawsuit.com or at 1-808-650-5551 or 1-833-639-1308 (Toll-Free). If you are only available at specific times, please include that information in your message. ■

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ʻĀkoʻakoʻa: Fusing Community and Science for West Hawaiʻi's Coral Reefs

Kaialiʻi Kahele
CHAIR
Trustee, Hawaiʻi Island

Stretching over 130 miles along the leeward coast of Hawaiʻi Island, the West Hawaiʻi reef system is the longest contiguous coral reef in the Hawaiian Archipelago – longer than the entire circumference of Maui. This massive reef spans more than 70 ahupuaʻa, weaving together the cultural, social, and economic fabric of Native Hawaiian communities that have stewarded these waters for generations.

Over the past two centuries, however, this vibrant ecosystem has suffered dramatic decline. Chronic stressors – coastal pollution from cesspools, septic systems, roadway runoff, agrochemicals, and increasing tourism – have steadily degraded reef health. At the same time, decades of overfishing and unsustainable marine practices have compounded the damage.

Then 2015 arrived. That year, a major ocean heatwave – linked to global climate change – hit West Hawaiʻi hard, causing widespread coral bleaching and mortality. A second heatwave followed in 2019. These back-to-back climate shocks ushered in a new era of reef decline, resulting in a 50% loss of coral cover in some areas – decimating the habitat for countless marine species.

In 2023, an internationally recognized report sounded the alarm, chronicling 20 years of reef loss due to pollution, overfishing, and climate impacts. Rather than accept this trajectory, a new movement emerged: ʻĀkoʻakoʻa.

Born from a long-term collaboration between scientists and the Native Hawaiian fishing village of Miloliʻi, ʻĀkoʻakoʻa represents a groundbreaking fusion of Indigenous knowledge, community leadership, and cutting-edge science. The name draws inspiration from the *Kumulipo* – Hawaiʻi's creation chant – and means both "the assembly of corals" and "the gathering of people."

Led by a Cultural Advisory Board made up of community leaders from Māhukona to Miloliʻi, ʻĀkoʻakoʻa brings together coral biologists, reef ecologists, water quality experts, marine operators, and policy advocates. United by a shared mission, this team is working to restore and protect reef ecosystems by improving water quality, rehabilitating coral populations, and engaging the community in hands-on stewardship.

At the heart of the initiative is the ʻĀkoʻakoʻa Coral Nursery, located at the Natural Energy Laboratory of Hawaiʻi Authority (NELHA) just south of Kona airport. NELHA is now the largest land-based coral facility in the Pacific. With a fleet of six vessels, the nursery has rescued, grown, and replanted thousands of corals along the West Hawaiʻi coastline in less than two years. A "Future Reef Bank" is also in the works to ensure long-term coral survival overcomes future ocean stressors.

But ʻĀkoʻakoʻa is more than science - it's a movement of place-based healing. The effort represents a paradigm shift: science in service of culture, not the other way around. All program actions are guided by cultural values and protocols, ensuring that community voices remain at the forefront of decision-making.

Why This Matters

Reefs are not just beautiful underwater landscapes – they are life-giving systems. They provide habitat for marine species that feed our families, support local economies, and protect shorelines from coastal erosion and rising seas. When we lose coral reefs, we lose food security, cultural heritage, and climate resilience.

This work is urgent. Without intervention, West Hawaiʻi's reef systems could collapse within a generation. But with coordinated, community-based action, there is still hope to turn the tide.

What You Can Do

Everyone has a role to play. The ʻĀkoʻakoʻa program invites residents, visitors, students, and stakeholders to become active stewards of West Hawaiʻi's reefs. Whether it's reducing coastal pollution, supporting sustainable fishing practices, or volunteering with reef restoration efforts, your engagement matters. Visit www.akoakoa.org to learn more. ■

ʻĀkoʻakoʻa was created and is managed by the Hawaiʻi unit of Arizona State University's Global Futures program alongside the Hawaiʻi Division of Aquatic Resources.

Kalua'aha Church and the Mana of my Kūpuna

Keoni Souza
VICE CHAIR
Trustee, At-Large

Recently, I returned to Kalua'aha Church on Moloka'i to honor the life of my late uncle, Daniel Iaea. As I stood in the place where generations of my 'ohana have worshipped, I felt something I can only describe as transcendent.

My great-great-grandfather, Rev. Isaac Daniel Iaea, and my great-grandparents are buried there. As I stood amongst them and sang my grandma Mona's two favorite hymns – *Ua Mau* and *'Ekolu Mea Nui* – it brought me back to my childhood when I would sing with her, and it filled me with the spirit of my kūpuna. The sound of the mele resonating through the breeze felt timeless, as if generations of our 'ohana were singing with me.

Despite having fallen into disrepair, Kalua'aha Church on Moloka'i retains a powerful spiritual current. - *Photo: Keoni Souza*

Kalua'aha Church is more than a historical site; it is my kūpuna and part of my mana. Established in the 1800s, it has weathered centuries of change. And although in desperate need of repairs, it still holds a powerful spiritual current that grounds those of us who are fortunate enough to call it our family church.

In that moving moment during my uncle's funeral, I was reminded of how deeply our people's spirituality is rooted in place, in community, and in song. It reaffirmed for me how vital it is that we, as Native Hawaiians, protect the sacred and ensure that our next generations can still access these moments of connection.

Sadly, we are witnessing a time when many of our sacred spaces and spiritual practices are being neglected – or worse, erased. As the physical remnants of our faith traditions disappear, so, too, does the connection to our spiritual identity. Kumu Kai Markell called it the biggest loss to Native Hawaiians: the loss of our spirituality.

For Native Hawaiians, spirituality is not separate from health, from 'āina, or from identity - it is the foundation that sustains us. It's what carried our ancestors across the Pacific, what built strong, intergenerational communities, and what continues to heal us today.

At the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA), we carry this forward through our Mana i Mauli Ola Strategic Plan, which recognizes that Native Hawaiians thrive when we are grounded in our language, culture, and spirituality.

We support programs that perpetuate 'ike Hawai'i, from investing in Hawaiian language education and cultural healing practices, to funding 'ohana, and community-led initiatives that connect people back to sacred places and traditional knowledge. When our keiki can grow up speaking the language of our kūpuna, when 'ohana can heal through ho'oponopono, when communities can gather to mālama 'āina, we see the outcomes of this work come to life.

That's why I take my kuleana at OHA seriously. I am committed to uplifting efforts that restore spiritual balance in our lāhui. Whether that's supporting church restorations, protecting heiau, increasing keiki programs, or investing in mental and cultural wellness for our Indigenous people, I believe OHA has a critical role to play. Our people deserve more than policy and funding – we deserve pathways back to our roots, our sources of strength and our spirituality.

Going home to Kalua'aha reminded me why I do this work. It reminded me that even in our grief, there is great mana. And that our stories, our songs, and our sacred places must never be forgotten. Let us continue to lead with faith, hope, and love: 'Ekolu Mea Nui. ■

Addressing Climate Change with Aloha

Brickwood Galuteria
Trustee, At-Large

Hawai'i's leadership in addressing climate change is deeply rooted in our commitment to sustainability and the interconnectedness of land, ocean, and people, as reflected in the 'ōlelo no'eau: "Mālama i ka 'āina, mālama ke kai, a mālama nā kānaka" (Care for the land, care for the ocean, and care for the people).

This principle guides Hawai'i's approach to combating climate challenges, where each system – from research to cultural practices – works together to preserve the islands for future generations.

Hawai'i is a global leader in climate research, thanks to the work conducted at Maunaloa Observatory. The iconic Keeling Curve, developed through measurements taken at Maunaloa, was one of the first definitive pieces of evidence connecting human activities to rising carbon dioxide levels. The data from this observatory continues to inform global climate models, emphasizing the urgency of reducing carbon emissions.

Hawai'i's unique position as a geographically isolated archipelago makes it an ideal laboratory for studying the impacts of climate change, with findings that resonate far beyond its shores.

The islands are also leading the way in resilience through Indigenous practices. Traditional Hawaiian knowledge, such as managing ancient fishponds (loko i'a) and cultivating taro (kalo), emphasizes living in harmony with natural systems.

These practices not only offer insights into sustainable resource management but also build community resilience by fostering food security and ecological health. Hawai'i's Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Commission integrates this cultural wisdom with cutting-edge science to highlight a balanced approach, blending tradition and innovation to create effective solutions.

Marine conservation is another area where Hawai'i excels. Coral reefs are under threat from warming seas and acidification, yet they remain essential for biodiversity and coastal protection. Hawai'i's efforts to restore coral reefs – through marine protected areas, coral nurseries, and sustainable fishing practices – underscore our commitment to preserving the ocean's health. These initiatives ensure that coastal communities dependent on the reefs for their livelihoods can thrive.

Hawai'i also champions renewable energy, setting an ambitious goal to transition to 100% renewable electricity by 2045. Solar farms, wind energy projects, and geothermal plants are reducing reliance on fossil fuels, demonstrating that sustainable energy systems are possible even in isolated locations.

These efforts position Hawai'i as a model for small communities globally, showing that it is possible to achieve significant progress in combating climate change. While these systemic efforts are crucial, combating climate change also begins with daily individual actions. Yes...you and me.

Each of us has the power to contribute. A simple, yet impactful, daily practice is to adopt a "mālama" mindset – caring for the environment through small, consistent changes. For example, reducing food waste is an action that anyone can take. Similarly, using reusable bags, bottles, and utensils can reduce plastic pollution, which harms marine ecosystems. Each small step reinforces the idea that the collective impact of mindful living can create meaningful change.

Incorporating Hawaiian values can make these actions even more meaningful. "Kōkua aku, kōkua mai" (Help others, and others will help you in return) reminds us that caring for the environment is also about caring for our communities. Each action demonstrates the interconnectedness of people and the planet.

In Hawai'i, this vision comes full circle. As our islands tackle global challenges with local solutions, we embody the spirit of aloha 'āina (love and respect for the land). This spirit reminds us all, no matter where we are, that caring for the "Honua Mākuahine...Earth Mother" is a shared responsibility.

Let us carry the aloha spirit forward in this collective journey toward resilience and harmony, one action at a time. Aloha a hui hou! ■

Kapu ka Wāhine, Hoʻōla nā Kānaka

Dan Ahuna

Trustee, Kauaʻi and Niʻihau

Aloha ʻāina kākou! As I reflect upon this season of gratitude to the wāhine in our lives, I think of the pillars of our lāhui, our ʻohana, our kaiāulu. The ones we are born from, the ones who raise us, the ones who inspire us, and those we are blessed to raise up for the next generation.

The Office of Hawaiian Affairs' (OHA) Haumea Report mentions how, traditionally, Native Hawaiian women exemplified hoʻōla (giving life) to their communities and ʻohana on multiple levels – but that social, political, and economic changes in Hawaiʻi have transformed many ways which wahine maintain their fullest wellbeing.

May 5 marks the National Day of Awareness for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit People (MMIWG2S). In 2021, the Hawaiʻi Legislature passed HCR 11, establishing the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women Task Force, co-chaired by OHA and the Hawaiʻi State Commission on the Status of Women – becoming the only task force led by a government women's commission and a Native advocacy agency, rather than law enforcement. This unique leadership structure broadens the perspective on addressing this crisis.

A year later, in 2022, the Task Force fulfilled the first part of their kuleana with the Holoi ā Nalo Wāhine ʻŌiwi Report. This report affirms that Native Hawaiian women, girls, and māhū are not only part of this crisis today but have been historically impacted by it as well.

For ʻŌiwi, the ocean is a pathway that connects us to our mauli, our akua, and to other nations and peoples. While foreigners saw our oceans as pathways for the commodification of our land, natural resources, bodies, and labor, Holoi ā Nalo Wāhine ʻŌiwi offers a historical timeline of such exploitation here in Hawaiʻi, how this history continues to impact our lāhui today – including statistics revealing that wāhine ʻŌiwi represent more than a quarter of the girls who are missing in Hawaiʻi.

It is vital that we not only address the immediate needs of MMIWG survivors and their families but also work to perpetuate our cultural values, which have long centered on community and a deep connection between people, land, and sea. Strengthening the cultural fabric of Hawaiʻi is not just a cultural imperative; it is a way to reclaim our mauli ola and ʻohana.

Team Ahuna has had the privilege of establishing meaningful relationships with steadfast hui who focus on mauli ola, preventative care and education, rooted in culture. In attending such spaces of engagement, we are fortunate to hear from a variety of health organizations. The work of leaders like Kauaʻi's Lorilani Keohokalole and Torio Kapule of Kūkulu Komohana o Anahola helps to teach youth in their community about food security and cultural diversity through the wisdom of ʻike kūpuna.

Aunty Lynette Paglinawan, a respected kupuna and haumana of Kumu Mary Kawena Pukui, shared with us at the Hoʻi i ka Hale conference that "ʻike kūpuna is everlasting, and so we must maintain that relationship."

We were also able to attend and present hoʻokupu of lei and haʻi ʻōlelo at the inaugural Nānā i Ke Kumu Event at Bishop Museum to honor and give gratitude to Kumu Pukui, an amazing wahine mana, keeper and sharer of knowledge, and foundation in many a kānaka's life.

All these stories of true aloha ʻāina across our beloved pae ʻāina, and especially these wāhine, resonate and move me to bring further awareness to what our Lāhui Kānaka carry. We cannot address the crises we face as Kānaka ʻŌiwi without strong foundations in moʻomeheu and ʻike kūpuna; our guiding lights back to mauli ola, our healthiest selves. ■

Honoring Mary Kawena Pūkuʻi – A Personal Note

Keliʻi Akina, Ph.D.

Trustee, At-Large

I recently had the privilege of attending the opening event of Nānā i Ke Kumu: Celebrating the Legacy of Mary Kawena Pukui at the Bishop Museum, alongside my fellow trustees.

Participating in this tribute to Kumu Pukui reminded me of the values instilled in me from childhood – values that continue to guide my responsibilities as a trustee of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA).

Growing up, I was surrounded by ʻōlelo noʻeau – wise Hawaiian proverbs – especially those shared by my mother, Marian Lupenui Akina, a devoted admirer of Kumu Pukui. When I was first elected to serve as a trustee of OHA, my mother gave me one of Kumu Pukui's ʻōlelo noʻeau: "I lele no ka lupe i ke pola." This simple phrase translates to, "It is the tail that makes the kite fly."

My mother's maiden name, Lupenui, means "great kite," making this proverb especially meaningful to our ʻohana. It also serves as a guiding principle in my work as a trustee. My mother gently explained that I should never become so enamored with personal success that I forget the everyday people – those who, like the tail of a kite, make it possible for leadership to rise. In other words, be haʻahaʻa (humble) and remember the people.

This lesson is one I carry with me every day. Leadership is not about personal recognition; it's about uplifting the lāhui with intention and respect; serving, not being served, by others.

Kumu Mary Kawena Pukui devoted her life to preserving and sharing ʻike Hawaiʻi. Her contributions to Hawaiian language, culture, and history are immeasurable.

Through seminal works like *ʻŌlelo Noʻeau*, *Nānā i ke Kumu*, and the *Hawaiian Dictionary*, she ensured that future generations would not only have access to their heritage but be empowered by it. Her deep understanding of the spiritual, familial, and communal foundations of Hawaiian identity continues to inspire and inform how we build a stronger, more unified Native Hawaiian community.

(L-R): OHA Trustees Dan Ahuna, Keliʻi Akina, Kaleihikina Akaka, and Luana Alapa at the Nānā i ke Kumu: Celebrating the Legacy of Mary Kawena Pukui event at the Bishop Museum on April 11. - *Courtesy Photo*

At the Bishop Museum, surrounded by cultural practitioners, educators, and community leaders, I felt the presence and enduring spirit of Kumu Pukui. The event was more than a tribute – it was a living reminder that her legacy continues in all of us who strive to carry her vision forward. As I listened to the ʻoli, witnessed the hoʻokupu, and reflected on her contributions, I felt a profound sense of reverence, gratitude, and responsibility.

We stand on the shoulders of giants. Kumu Pukui was one of them. Her legacy is not confined to the past; it lives on in every conversation where Hawaiian is spoken, in every classroom where keiki learn about their kūpuna, and in every decision made with aloha, mālama, and pono.

As we reflect on her life and continue the journey of our people, may we all strive to be the tail of the kite: steady, grounded, and lifting the lāhui ever higher. ■

E Kala Mai...

E kala mai! In the article, "Helping to Mālama Indigenous Land in California," that appeared on page 20 of our April 2025 issue, it was misstated that both fresh produce and cannabis were grown at Fortunate Farm in Caspar, California. That was an error. Although traditional herbal medicinal plants are grown at the farm, cannabis is not one of them. We sincerely apologize for the confusion and for this error.

20 ʻApelila 2025

Faces of the Diaspora

Helping to Mālama Indigenous Land in California

BURIAL NOTICE: WAIKĪKĪ AQUARIUM WAIKĪKĪ, OʻAHU

Human remains were identified by Pacific Consulting Services, Inc. during an archaeological inventory survey being conducted at the Waikīkī Aquarium, Waikīkī Ahupuaʻa, Honolulu (Kona) District, Island of Oʻahu, Hawaiʻi, TMK: (1) 3-1-031:006.

Per Hawaiʻi Revised Statutes Chapter 6E-43, and Hawaiʻi Administrative Rules (HAR) Chapter 13-300, these remains are believed to be over 50 years old and believed to be Native Hawaiian. Records indicate that the human remains are within the ʻili of Kāneloa, which was returned by Aaron Kealiʻiahonui at the Māhele and retained by the Crown. There are no recorded Land Commission Awards within the project area.

The decision to preserve in place or relocate the human remains will be made by the Oʻahu Island Burial Council in consultation with the State Historic Preservation Division and recognized lineal and/or cultural descendants (HAR §13-300-33). Appropriate treatment will occur in accordance with HAR §13-300-38.

All interested persons having knowledge of the identity or history of these human remains are requested within 30 days of the publication of this notice to contact Ms. Regina Hilo, SHPD Burial Site Specialist, at 601 Kamokila Boulevard, Room 555, Kapolei, Hawaiʻi, 96707 (Phone: 808-436-4801, Fax: 808-692-8020, email: regina.hilo@hawaii.gov). Interested parties should file descendancy claim forms and/or provide information to the SHPD that adequately demonstrates lineal descent from these specific human remains or cultural descent from ancestors buried in the same ahupuaʻa or district. Additional information concerning the ongoing work at the aquarium may be obtained at www.pcsihawaii.com/waikiki-aquarium.

CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: INTER-ISLAND SUBMARINE FIBER OPTIC CABLE PROJECT HANEOʻO, HĀNA, MAUI

SWCA Environmental Consultants is preparing Cultural Impact Assessments (CIAs) and Ka Paʻakai Analyses for the proposed Kūnoa North Inter-Island Middle Mile submarine fiber optic cable project. This project aims to bring reliable broadband to rural areas across the Hawaiian Islands by establishing cable landing sites – including two on Maui – that will benefit the Maui communities of Waiehu, Keʻanae, and Hāna and the Hawaiian Home Land (HHL) communities of Waiehu, Paukūkalo, Keʻanae and Wailua.

This cable landing site is planned to be located within the ahupuaʻa of Haneoʻo in the moku of Hāna on the island of Maui within TMK parcel (2)-1-4-007-009. The cable landing site is planned to be located on the ma kai side of Haneoʻo Road in an open clearing slightly southeast of Koki Beach and Haneoʻo Stream. The fiber optic cable (FOC) will be brought ashore via a horizontal directional drilled passage beneath the beach, with a manhole set back from the shoreline serving as the connection point between the submarine and terrestrial FOC. The FOC will cross under Haneoʻo Stream via a second horizontal directional drilled passage before continuing along an overland route. The overland route will involve trenching northwest along Haneoʻo Road for approximately 0.3 miles to connect to existing infrastructure.

SWCA is seeking community input regarding cultural knowledge of the area, including past and present land use, cultural traditions, gathering practices, and any concerns related to cultural practices in the project area. Please email hawaiiculturalconsultation@swca.com or call (808) 437-8974 by June 30, 2025, for more information or to share insights that will help ensure cultural practices and concerns are properly considered.

CULTURAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: PROPOSED HAWAIIAN ISLANDS FIBER LINK PROJECT WITH SIX CABLE LANDING SITES STATEWIDE

Pacific Legacy, Inc. is conducting a Cultural Impact Assessment (CIA) for the proposed Hawaiian Islands Fiber Link Project, an interisland submarine fiber optic cable system with cable landing sites at:

- Nukoliʻi Beach, Hanamāʻulu and Niumalu Ahupuaʻa, Līhuʻe District, Kauaʻi Island
- Barbers Point Beach Park, Honouliuli Ahupuaʻa, ʻEwa Moku, Oʻahu Island
- Kahului Harbor, Wailuku Ahupuaʻa, Wailuku Moku, Maui Island
- Molokai Yacht Club, Kaunakakai Ahupuaʻa, Kona Moku, Molokai Island
- Mānele Harbor, Pālāwai Ahupuaʻa, Kona Moku, Lānaʻi Island
- Pacific Aquaculture & Coastal Resource Center (PACRC), Waiākea Ahupuaʻa, South Hilo District, Hawaiʻi Island

Pacific Legacy, Inc. is seeking to consult with individuals and organizations who possess knowledge regarding any of the six landing site study areas (Hanamāʻulu, Niumalu, Honouliuli, Wailuku, Kaunakakai, Pālāwai, and Waiākea Ahupuaʻa). This includes:

- Cultural associations, such as moʻolelo or connections to legendary accounts.
- Knowledge of past and present land use or traditional gathering practices within and near the project area.
- Knowledge of cultural resources which may be impacted by the proposed project, including traditional resource gathering sites, access trails, archaeological sites, historic sites, and burials.
- Any other cultural concerns related to traditional Hawaiian or other cultural practices within or near the project area.
- Referrals to other knowledgeable individuals who may be willing to share their cultural knowledge of the project areas.

Individuals and organizations interested in participating are invited to contact Dr. Jillian Swift at 808-263-4800 or via email at swift@pacificlegacy.com. ■

HALIʻA ALOHA
FOND REMEMBERANCE

To create a space for our readers to honor their loved ones, Ka Wai Ola will print ***Haliʻa Aloha - obituaries and mele kanikau (mourning chants)***. Haliʻa Aloha appearing in the print version of *Ka Wai Ola* should be recent (within six months of passing) and should not exceed 250 words in length. All other Haliʻa Aloha submitted will be published on kawaiola.news. Haliʻa Aloha must be submitted by the 15th of the month for publication the following month. Photos accompanying Haliʻa Aloha will only be included in the print version of the newspaper if space permits. However, all photos will be shared on kawaiola.news.

ALEXANDER "ALIKA" KAINA LOWE
JAN. 15, 1970 – NOV. 21, 2024

Alexander "Alika" Kaina Lowe, 54, of Lāʻie, Hawaiʻi, and Kuna, Idaho, passed away on Nov. 21, 2024, after a courageous battle with cancer. Born in Kahuku on Jan. 15, 1970, Alika had a gift for connecting with people from a young age. His positive energy, humor, and kindness left a lasting impression on everyone who knew him.

Alika was a proud graduate of Kahuku High School. After graduation, he served a mission in the Philippines, where his charisma flourished. Upon returning, he attended Ricks College, Idaho State University, and ITT Tech, later earning a degree in Information Systems and Cybersecurity. His technical expertise and approachable nature helped him thrive at Blue Cross of Idaho, where he loved both his work and colleagues. Beyond his career, Alika was an active member of the Pacific Islander community in Idaho, a beloved figure who regularly participated in events and formed lasting bonds.

He is survived by his mother, Yvonne Lowe-Hernandez; his significant other, Mitzi Burrus; his brother, Dexter Lowe; his sister-in-law, Jannette Lowe; his nephew, Shaun "Ikaika" Lowe; and his niece, Sierrah Lowe. He was predeceased by his maternal grandparents, George Kaina Lowe and Katherine Lowe, and his paternal grandparents, Moses Solomon, Sr., and Malia Fonoimoana Solomon. Alikaʻs final days were spent at home, surrounded by those who loved him – just as he had always surrounded others with love and warmth.

A Celebration of Life will be held at Hukilau Beach Park in Lāʻie, Hawaiʻi at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, June 14, 2025. ■

HOʻOHUI ʻOHANA
FAMILY REUNIONS

E nā ʻohana Hawaiʻi: If you are planning a reunion or looking for genealogical information, *Ka Wai Ola* will print your listing at no charge on a space-available basis. Listings should not exceed 200 words. OHA reserves the right to edit all submissions for length. Listings will run for three months from submission, unless specified. Send your information by mail, or e-mail kwo@OHA.org. E ola nā mamo a Hāloa!

SEARCH

NAEHU-SAFFERY REUNION - Descendants of Edmund Saffery, wives Kupuna & Waiki Naehu holding reunion meetings. Combined 14 children: Fanny (Kaiaokamalie), Edmund II (Wallace), Henry (Kaanaana), Caroline (Rose), William (Cockett & Makekau), John (Kahaulelio & Nahooikaika), Thomas (Luna), Mary (Palena), Emma (Pogue), Anna (Kealoha & Nahaku) Juliana (Freitas), Charles (Hawele & Kauwahi), Helen (Tripp), Emalia Nellie (Ernestberg & Conradt & Kaloa). Interested in helping? tinyurl.com/NSOASite Contact Dayton Labanon, 808-232-9869, dlabanon@gmail.com, Manu Goodhue manu_losch@hotmail.com, 808-551-9386 or Naomi Losch, 808-261-9038.

KAMAHELE: E nā mamo o Kamahelenui lāua ʻo Anne Nuu Kapahu! From our roots in Kahuwai in the 1800s now is the time to reconnect, share our stories, and celebrate our heritage. The Kamahele Family Reunion will be held on Hawaiʻi Island from October 3–7, 2025, including our Hōʻike Lūʻau on October 4! This lūʻau is our time to gather, honor our ancestors, and celebrate our shared history with food, music, and hula. Seating is limited to 500, so we encourage early participation. For updates or to help with planning, contact Paula Okamoto: 808-382-2607 or email kamahelefamilyreunion@gmail.com

KAUAUA - Attention all Kauaua Ohana members, we will be having a Kauaua Ohana reunion in 2026 on Maui and will hold our first general meeting on Saturday, March 8th at the Maui Botanical Gardens / old Maui Zoo in Kahului from 10a to 12 noon. Please come to assist with reunion planning and coordination. Information can be found on websites: kauauamaui.org or Facebook – Kauaua Maui Ohana. Please call Lisa Kunitzer (808) 281-4537 or Josephine Harris (808) 344-1519 if you have questions re: this Kauaua ohana reunion. ■

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Cultural Pride Raises Self-Esteem

Multi-generational trauma continues today until broken or re-routed leaving Native Hawaiians to deal with addiction, abuse, mental illness, or even death.

It's true that jails and prisons house a lot of Native Hawaiians who do not know their culture, language, and history. Most cannot identify or choose not to upon release. More than half live even more dangerously producing a state of "suicide by lifestyle." Encouraging a "healing of culture" within ourselves must happen to replace the resentments and feelings of guilt, bringing an acceptance and tolerance of differences.

Reconnecting Native Hawaiians to the values and restoration of positive cultural pride is important today in raising levels of self-esteem through achievements in cultural advancement.

Healing is moving beyond the hurt, the pain, the disease dysfunction to establish new patterns of living and letting go of the ones that no longer serve us. ■

- David Kahalewai
Pālolo, Oʻahu

In an effort to create a place for our lāhui to share their manaʻo on issues affecting our pae ʻāina and Kānaka Maoli, *Ka Wai Ola* offers two ways to do that:

Letter to the editor **"OpEd" (opinion piece)**

Guidlelines:

- Letters must be 200 words or less; OpEds must be 500 words or less.
- Please email your submission as a Word document or include it in the body of your email using standard upper/lower case formatting.
- Letters and OpEds should be submitted with the writer's name, phone number and email.
- *Ka Wai Ola* will not print letters or OpEds that attack, slander, defame or demean an individual or organization.
- *Ka Wai Ola* reserves the right to edit letters and OpEds.
- *Ka Wai Ola* will not print letters or OpEds that do not meet these criteria.

For more information on how to submit go to:
kawaiola.news/about/submissions

Classified ads only $12.50 - Type or clearly write your ad of no more than 175 characters (including spaces and punctuation) and mail, along with a check for $12.50, to: ***Ka Wai Ola* Classifieds, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, 560 N. Nimitz Hwy., Suite 200, Honolulu, HI 96817**. Make check payable to OHA. (We cannot accept credit cards.) Ads and payment must be received by the 15th for the next month's edition of *Ka Wai Ola*. Send your information by mail, or e-mail **kwo@oha.org** with the subject "Makeke/Classified." OHA reserves the right to refuse any advertisement, for any reason, at our discretion.

AINA REALTOR - Call me to talk story and let's make homeownership a reality. If you have questions, I can help with both Hawaiian Homestead and residential properties on all islands. One of my missions is to keep native Hawaiian Families in Hawai'i. Let's build a better future for the next generation. Call me: Jordan Aina - RS-85780 Cell: (808) 276-0880 - Locations Hawaii LLC, RB-17095

AINA REALTOR - Real Estate Seminars – O'ahu - Start learning about real estate. Attend one of Locations' educational seminars covering topics like first time Home buying, investing, and senior real estate planning. Reserve a spot for the next one. Don't wait. Jordan Aina - RS-85780 Cell: (808) 276-0880 - Locations Hawaii LLC, RB-17095

DHHL BIG ISLAND LEASE – Maku'u Farmlots, Puna. Single level 3BR/2-1/2 baths, carport on 5.23 acres. $375,000. Contact Ruth 808-936-5341 or ruthmelani@aol.com.

DHHL RESIDENTIAL LEASE AVAILABLE - Punchbowl, O'ahu. Must be qualified DHHL beneficiary. See link for Information: http://interested-party.byethost24.com/

GET BACK MORE OF WHAT YOU HAD BEFORE! More MITOCHONDRIA! Mitochondria are the components in your cells that produce energy and are involved in virtually, every significant eellular function in the body. The key to feeling your greatest and best without discomfort, with an endless supply of energy lies in our MITOCHONDRIA! Contact Elaine Kellyman: 609-510-0292 or email elainekell23@gmail.com. www.moremito.com/LiveWell247

HOMES WITH ALOHA-Paukukalo, Waiehu, Maui -Single level 4 bed/ 2 baths. Renovations throughout the home includes kitchen, bath. $625,000 This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

HOMES WITH ALOHA-Papakolea- two story custom home built in 1996, wrap around porch w/ocean view. 3 bedrooms/ 3 bath 12,676 sf lot $650,000 This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

HOMES WITH ALOHA-Nanakuli (Valley)-Single level 4 bedrooms/ 2 bath 7,500 sf lot in a Cul-desac $560,000 This is a leasehold property -Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474.RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

HOMES WITH ALOHA-Waianae 3 bedrooms/ 1.5 bath $495,000 Move in ready.Beautiful landscaped yard fully fenced. This is a leasehold property – Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) (808) 295-4474. RB-15998 Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303.

NEED FUNDS FOR HOME UPGRADES OR KEIKI'S COLLEGE? Questions about buying or refinancing? Contact Kui at: 808.723.4430 | Kui.Meyer@SNMC.com (NMLS#3116/314203).

SEEKING A PROFESSIONAL TO HELP GUIDE YOU THROUGH THE REAL ESTATE PROCESS? Buying, selling or investing call Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (Realtor) 808.295.4474 RB-15598 Homes with Aloha -Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303

THINKING OF BUYING OR SELLING A HOME? CALL THE EXPERT. Call Charmaine I. Quilit Poki (R) 295- 4474 RB-15998. Keller Williams Honolulu RB-21303. To view current listings, go to my website HomeswithAloha.com. Call, Text or email Charmaine@HomeswithAloha.com to make an appointment to learn more about homeownership. Mahalo nui! Specialize in Fee Simple & Homestead Properties for over 38 years. ■

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