

ON LEADERSHIP

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This article focuses upon leadership in Hawai‘i, especially as it relates to Hawaiians. It discusses certain influences upon the author’s unique personal leadership development, models of Hawaiian leadership, and Hawaiian leadership and values. The author shares his own thoughts and reflections on leadership, including the fundamental principles and attributes upon which he has based his own leadership principles and practices, as well as how to improve one’s leadership. Finally, the article addresses and discusses current leadership by and for Hawaiians and suggests how such leadership could and should be improved for the future.

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INTRODUCTION

A‘ea‘e mohala i luna o ke kukui. *Whiteness unfolds on the kukui tree.* (Referring to the white hair on the head of an elder.)

This article results from an invitation I received to write an essay for this issue of *Hūlili*. I have chosen to write on the topic of leadership. Though I am an elder, nearly 70 years old with nine grandsons, I urge readers to be mindful that old does not necessarily equal wise. Readers should make their own judgments about what I have written.

I will discuss (1) my early influences and models of leadership, (2) my path to leadership, (3) Hawaiian leadership and values, (4) thoughts on certain key leadership principles and attributes, and (5) Hawaiian leadership in the present and for the future.

EARLY INFLUENCES AND MODELS OF LEADERSHIP

Kū i ka māna. *Like the one from whom knowledge is received.* (A child learns what he is fed.)

My mother, Felice Jen Wun Wong, was descended from Chinese missionaries. Her mother was a hardworking schoolteacher who raised five children by herself. Education was highly valued in the family, and my mother excelled in academics. She graduated from the Mid-Pacific Institute in 1933 at age 15, finished college at the University of Hawai‘i in 1937 at 19, and earned an advanced degree as a laboratory technician at 21. My father, Thomas Kaulukukui Sr., was half-Hawaiian, one-quarter Chinese, and one-quarter Caucasian. Both his father and mother were from Kohala, but branches of the family tree also grew in Maui. Dad was born in Honolulu but raised in Hilo, one of 15 children. After graduating from Hilo High School in the early 1930s, Dad received an athletic scholarship to the University of Hawai‘i. He was the first in his family to attend college, and in 1935 he became the first Hawai‘i athlete to receive honorable mention as an All-American football player. By his senior year he was captain of the football, baseball, and basketball teams and student body president. He married the campus Chinese beauty queen,

my mother. Dad served in WWII as an officer in the Engineers. In 1943 Dad's mom, Malina Kaulukukui, was chosen as Hawai'i's War Mother of the Year. She had 12 children in the service, including Dad, eight of his brothers, and three sisters.

I was born on November 11, 1945, in Honolulu. My older sister, younger brother, and I were raised in rural Kuli'ou'ou Valley. In the valley were pig farms, the Wai'alaie Nui Farm dairy, and a small store. With other Kuli'ou'ou kids, we went barefoot, hiked the hills and valleys, swam and fished and crabbed in Maunalua Bay, hunted mountain doves, spear-fished in Hanauma Bay, body-surfed at Makapu'u and Sandy Beach, and safely hitchhiked anywhere we needed to go. Our parents were our first teachers. Mom stressed proper morality and ethics and the importance of education. Though Dad was a man of few words, he led an exemplary life, teaching by example. The most important lesson from my parents was integrity and the importance of a good name. The preceding generations worked hard to establish the Kaulukukui family as honest, hardworking leaders in the community.

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Many of the teachings of the Mormon Church reinforced the lessons taught at home: the emphasis on spiritual matters and on the family as a core social unit within the broader society, and an excellent curriculum of values and ethics education. Sports and social activities afforded opportunities to practice these values.

MY PATH TO LEADERSHIP

I ka hana ka 'ike. *Knowledge comes from doing.* (Knowledge is derived from experience.)

My path to leadership was neither straight nor narrow. I attended neighborhood schools, then 'Iolani School, then Kamehameha Schools. My parents and teachers had high expectations. I consistently scored very high on standardized national achievement tests. But I surfed more than I studied, so my academic record was average. Kamehameha Schools was a military institute at the time. I boarded at the school during my senior year and graduated in the class of 1963, in quiet anonymity among others who distinguished themselves. In 1963, I flew 4,400 miles from

home to attend Michigan State University, a place I had never seen. I almost quit during the winter term when the wind chill dropped below zero but was talked into staying by a caring professor. I began to study martial arts, which became a lifelong interest. In 1967, I graduated with a degree in health/physical education.

I met my future wife, Joyce, in college. In 1967, Joyce and I were married. We both taught school in Michigan. Then in 1968 at the height of the Vietnam War, I was drafted into the United States Army. From 1969 to 1970, I served in Vietnam as a platoon sergeant in the 173rd Airborne Brigade. My platoon spent most of the time living like animals in stifling heat and torrential monsoon rains, in a jungle inhabited not only by enemy soldiers who were trying to kill us, but by poisonous snakes, giant scorpions, spiders, centipedes, elephants, and tigers. In June 1970, I was honorably discharged. I was 25 years old, but I felt much older.

My army experiences, especially in combat, taught me valuable lifelong lessons. The men in my platoon were from different places, races, cultures, and family circumstances, but when stripped down to our basic core, we were more alike than different. I learned that people will believe in those who believe in them. I learned the value of courage and of leading by example. I learned how to quickly make decisions in the face of enormous risk and to make such decisions many times

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a day. I learned that when people are part of a team and believe and depend on each other, their loyalty becomes as fierce as fire, and they will fight and even die for each other.

After I left the army, I returned to Michigan State University and finished graduate school. I was offered a research fellowship, but I wanted to return to Hawai'i. When my father found a high school PE teacher's position with a hiring priority for a wrestling coach, I told him to tell the athletic director that I was a wrestling coach. "Good answer," he said. I knew nothing about wrestling. I would never advise anyone to lie about their qualifications, but I missed home so badly. So my wife, infant daughter, and I moved home to Hawai'i. I became a wrestling coach. I took over a team that was winless the prior year. When I quit coaching three years later, we were fifth in the state.

In 1974 I entered law school. I also worked 20 hours a week. We lived on whatever I earned, plus \$444 a month from the GI Bill and food stamps. My wife had the hard job of raising our small children. My class started in 1974 with 12 married students, and only two of us were still married on graduation day. I then clerked for Chief

Judge Samuel P. King, a brilliant scholar and practical decision-maker, and went on to practice business litigation for 10 years. In 1988 I was appointed trial judge on the First Circuit Court. I was young, only 43 years old.

I really enjoyed being a judge, and I thought it would be my last job. But in 1993 I was asked by a friend to help him and his organization improve the health of Hawaiians. While pondering this new mission, I happened to drive onto the highway in Kailua behind an old truck coming from Waimānalo. The bumper sticker on the truck said simply, “Eddie Would Go,” referring to Eddie Aikau, who sacrificed his life attempting to save his fellow sailors clinging to the hull of the swamped *Hōkūle‘a* voyaging canoe. At that moment, I knew what I had to do. “Eddie Would Go,” so I went. I left the judiciary to help improve the health of Hawaiians. I became the Community Affairs vice president of the Queen’s Health Systems, working with community health centers and other organizations.

In 1993 I also began to train in the Hawaiian martial art of lua. This awakened a deep interest in Hawaiian culture and arts. Recognizing my Hawaiian warrior self helped me accept that my experiences in the army were not an aberration, but a natural consequence of who I, and my people, have always been. That realization helped me to heal.

In 1998, I was invited to become a trustee of the Queen Lili‘uokalani Trust. I have served as chair and managing trustee since 2002. The trust and its program division, the Queen Lili‘uokalani Children’s Center, help improve the lives of orphan and destitute children in Hawai‘i. Each year we touch the lives of about 50,000 children. I have learned much about social and family issues and challenges faced by our Hawaiian families. My life is now dedicated to fulfilling the wishes of the queen and achieving the mission of the trust and Children’s Center.

My path to leadership has been less a straight line than like a canoe blown by the changing winds. I believe one should pursue and acquire as much education and life experience as possible. Of the two I have found that life experience is especially valuable if one aspires to lead others. Since age 13, I have had 34 paid jobs. I learned something from every job, and I am still learning.

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HAWAIIAN LEADERSHIP AND VALUES

He lā'au kū ho'okahi, he lehua no Ka'ala. *A tree that stands unaccompanied, a lehua of Ka'ala.* (A leader who stands alone, unlike any other.)

I became interested in the topic of Hawaiian leadership years ago and found that little has been written on this subject. Our ancestors lived leadership rather than studying it. The term “Hawaiian leadership” is hard to define. Writings on traditional models of leadership usually focus upon Hawaiian ali'i such as Kamehameha I. Such models provide some context for modern leadership, but they are not perfect. There were despotic chiefs who abused their power and authority, and some were killed by those they ruled. Hawaiian ali'i ruled because of their birth status, not as political leaders in a democracy. They may not be the best models for leadership in a modern society.

Some define the term “Hawaiian leadership” as leadership practiced in accordance with Hawaiian values or Hawaiian culture. But this seemingly innocuous definition raises some questions. What are Hawaiian values? Who judges which values are Hawaiian? What aspects of Hawaiian culture are relevant to leadership? Hawaiian culture *when*, past or present?

Values, firmly held personal beliefs about what one regards as important, worthy, desirable, or right, are usually learned early in life and seldom change without powerful stimuli. Values influence behavior, and how we behave is who we are. Culture includes the beliefs and behaviors of a particular society at a given time. My focus on actual behaviors rather than a list of ideal values reflects my preference for teaching and learning leadership through actual conduct and experience. In the words of Auntie Betty Jenkins, we are the product of the three Bs: *Believe, Behave, Become.*

In my leadership classes, I begin the discussion on Hawaiian values by defining the terms “values” and “culture” and then ask, “What makes a given value a Hawaiian value?” There are usually different answers to this question, including, “They are values traditionally adopted and practiced by Hawaiians before us,” or “They are values that are part of the Hawaiian culture,” or “They are values that inspired or motivated Hawaiian behaviors,” or “They are values unique to Hawaiians and their culture.” All these answers make sense to me, so there is no need to exclude any definition. I next ask for a list of values that are generally considered to be Hawaiian values. The resultant list, with a few additions or deletions, almost always consists of the following:

Ahonui	<i>Patience</i>	Kuleana	<i>Responsibility</i>
Aloha	<i>Love</i>	Laulima	<i>Cooperation</i>
Ha‘aha‘a	<i>Humility</i>	Lōkahi	<i>Unity</i>
Hō‘ihi	<i>Respect</i>	Lokomaika‘i	<i>Generosity</i>
Ho‘okipa	<i>Hospitality</i>	Mālama	<i>Caring</i>
Kōkua	<i>Service</i>	Pono	<i>Morality</i>

This list has been recited so repeatedly that I now call it the “standard” list, though some values on it are subject to particular circumstances. For example, there are some endeavors in which one should refuse to cooperate, such as an endeavor that is morally wrong. For another example, humility is not always a virtue. Could racial equality ever be a reality if oppressed minorities continued to humble themselves before their bigoted masters? I think not. There are times when pride should overrule humility.

I am more critical of the above list because of what is *not* included. Traditionally some values are more associated with female (Hina) energy and behaviors, while others are more commonly associated with male (Kū) energy and behaviors. The standard list includes values most commonly associated with female (Hina) energy and behaviors, though both males and females can have any or all values on this list. We have women to thank for the preservation of our Hawaiian culture and community. For two centuries after colonization, women fostered and fed our families, cared for our culture, and kept our communities together while the traditional leadership of Hawaiian males was diluted. For colonization to be successful, one must disarm the native warriors, defrock the native priests, seize control of native lands, control the native economy, and disrupt tradition by banning the native language. All of this occurred during the colonization of Hawai‘i and effectively emasculated the traditional roles of Hawaiian males. Based on my experience working with Hawaiian families, this loss sometimes persists. Thankfully, women filled the gap in male leadership, but this naturally results in lists of Hawaiian values that have a decidedly feminine (Hina) bias.

Missing from the common lists of Hawaiian values are those usually associated with male energy and behaviors, i.e., Kū values, as well as other important values that may be common to both genders. As a people, we still need to act courageously and compete in an increasingly competitive society; to be daring and decisive; to persevere and work hard to provide for our families and our communities; to be competent and skillful in all that we do; to be educated,

because education is a great equalizer; to act honorably and honestly, because good character is foundational to good leadership; to achieve good spiritual, emotional, psychological, and physical health, because our current health statistics are deplorable; and to practice and teach leadership at every level of our society. To motivate and to inspire these behaviors, my list of Hawaiian values includes Koa (Courage), Ho'okūkū (Competition), 'A'a (Daring), Ho'oholo (Decisiveness), Ho'okumu (Initiative), Hanohano (Honor), Pa'ahana (Industriousness), Alaka'ina (Leadership), Ho'omau (Perseverance), Ha'aheo (Pride), No'eau (Skill), Ikaika (Strength), 'Onipa'a (Steadfastness), Paulele 'ia (Trustworthiness), 'Oia'ī'o (Truth), Maka'ala (Vigilance), Kūpa'a (Loyalty), Ho'omākaukau (Preparation), Ho'omana (Spirituality), Ola Kino (Healthy Body), and 'Imi 'Ike (Seeking Knowledge). There are many others one could choose to add, but I propose these.

These additional values are not exclusively male. They add balance and should be included in any list of Hawaiian values. While love, harmony, cooperation, and similar themes are admittedly worthy goals, the addition of Kū values produces a better-rounded person. One of my friends bluntly calls the standard list the "noble savage" list. For example, if one now aspires to be proficient in business, invest, and make a profit, the behavior/value is ho'opuka. When I ask individuals or groups to list Hawaiian values, this value is *never* included. It isn't even listed as a core value by Hawaiian businessmen and -women. Yet King Kamehameha was a shrewd businessman, amassing profits for his kingdom through a government monopoly on the sandalwood trade and port duties on visiting ships. His behavior embodied ho'opuka. How could ho'opuka not be a Hawaiian value? For a trustee like me, the answer is yes.

Lists of Hawaiian values (standard or otherwise) are interesting but not particularly helpful in defining Hawaiian leadership, though a short balanced list of core behaviors is a useful beacon for behavior. To ensure that any list of Hawaiian values is relevant for today, I recommend that we determine worthy goals that if achieved would advance and uplift us as individuals and as a people, and that we behave and act in ways that will help us achieve those goals in accordance with the values that motivate these behaviors and actions. To me, this is a more pragmatic way of examining and identifying relevant values.

MY THOUGHTS ON LEADERSHIP

Lawe i ka ma'alea a kū'ono'ono. *Acquire a skill and make it deep.*

My preference for examining behaviors, and the leadership principles and character traits that result from such behaviors, has resulted in certain core principles and teachings that I refer to as the Five Principles of Leadership.

PRINCIPLE #1: LEADERSHIP IS INFLUENCE. In its simplest form, leadership is *influence*. Influence is the power to produce effects. A person who can influence others possesses the first quality of leadership. The sources of influence are many and varied, including conferred or inherited rank or status; recognized skill, knowledge, or competency; moral, ethical, or spiritual power, purity, or excellence; prestige and/or reputation; social or cultural recognition; or pure necessity.

PRINCIPLE #2: LEADERSHIP INVOLVES AFFECTING FEELINGS, THOUGHTS, AND ACTIONS. The root of the word “influence” is the Latin word *fluo*, “to flow or stream.” Leadership involves affecting the flow of feelings, thoughts, and actions. Influence starts with self-control, for if one cannot lead oneself, one is unlikely to be able to affect the thoughts and actions of others.

PRINCIPLE #3: GOOD LEADERS DO THE RIGHT THING, IN THE RIGHT WAY, AT THE RIGHT TIME. The challenge of course is to know what is the right thing, what is the right way, and when is the right time. This knowledge comes from education, training, and experience, which should produce wisdom, sometimes defined as “common sense, to an uncommon degree.” Doing the right thing means to behave in a moral and ethical manner, in accordance with worthy values. Acting in the right way implies competent behavior, which requires good judgment, another by-product of experience. The right time can be hard to identify, ambiguous, or beyond one’s control. I believe it is seldom too early to do the right thing in the right way, and my default time is NOW, unless the situation mandates otherwise.

PRINCIPLE #4: THE PATH TO LEADERSHIP IS THROUGH SERVICE. Service has been called the rent you pay for room on earth. The experience and education we acquire should be used to help others, rather than to simply advance our own interests. Years ago, on a trip to Sāmoa, I visited a school. Over the door was a sign that read, “ENTER TO LEARN. LEAVE TO SERVE.” Never have I seen Principle #4 so simply stated. The Samoan students saw that sign every day as they entered their school. Perhaps every school or organization should display such a sign.

PRINCIPLE #5: GREAT LEADERS TEACH OTHERS TO LEAD. The main aim of this principle is to impose the obligation on leaders to teach leadership to others, thus ensuring generations of new leaders. For example, I grew up at the knee of my dad, a great coach and teacher who taught me to teach. Leadership education should begin at an early age. It's a matter of imposing reasonable responsibility upon the young. They have a greater capacity for learning than most of us realize. If we leaders do not teach, who will take our place? One does not need a formal certificate to teach. All one needs is some knowledge to share and a generous heart.

Besides the above principles, I have compiled a short list of Key Attributes of Good Leaders. I define good leaders as leaders with a positive influence upon others, who are motivated by and act in accordance with a moral code of ethics and values. I focus on attributes I consider foundational and indispensable: Character (Pono), Courage (Koa), Commitment (Kūpa'a/'Onipa'a), Competency (Mākaukau/No'eau), and Compatibility (Aloha). Note that the Hawaiian words for each attribute are not necessarily direct translations, but are words that encompass the essence of the idea.

CHARACTER (PONO). Here I mean admirable moral or ethical qualities, like honesty and integrity. Pono is also defined as “just, moral, right, fair, proper.” The best leaders are made of the right moral “stuff.” At their core they are truthful, trustworthy, honorable, fair, and reliable. A person of character has a moral code aligned with the highest expectations of his society, lives by that code, and inspires others to do likewise, because as Goethe said, “Character calls forth character.”

“Character calls
forth character.”

For a leader, and for the organization or society in which he or she lives, character is the foundation upon which the house of leadership stands. Character is needed to do the right thing as mandated by Principle #3 (right thing, right way, right time).

COURAGE (KOA). Koa is a Hawaiian word for courage. Koa is also the word for warrior and for a great tree. Courage has been called “the stepladder upon which all other virtues mount,” since it is courage that enables one to fully embrace and express other virtues. Being courageous does not mean being fearless. Fear is important for self-preservation.

Courage often involves acting in spite of one's fears. Courage, like cowardice, is contagious. The former inspires; the latter despairs. In battle, I learned that sometimes a leader has to act courageously, act *now*, act *first*, and lead from the *front*, despite the personal fear. But often, moral courage is more difficult than

physical courage. Acting responsibly according to the dictates of our conscience can be a daunting task. But if we aspire to be good leaders, we must have the courage to do the right thing in the right way at the right time, even in the face of opposition or doubt. As has been said, “One man with courage is a majority.”

COMMITMENT (KŪPA‘A/‘ONIPA‘A). Commitment involves dedication and loyalty to worthy ideals, people and places, organizations, communities, and our nation. Like courage, commitment is most respected when it is demonstrated in the extreme. The Hawaiian word *kūpa‘a* means “to stand fast” (committed) or “loyal.” The word *‘onipa‘a* can mean “immovable,” but it can also mean “steadfast” or “persistent” or “committed to a certain course.” The polar extremes of commitment can involve taking a position from which one cannot be moved, or moving so purposefully that one cannot be stopped. Common sense and experience teach us that commitment cannot always be absolute, because circumstances may dictate otherwise. Good leaders learn when to compromise between these extremes.

COMPETENCY (MĀKAUKAU/NO‘EAU). There are several Hawaiian words for competency. One is *mākaukau*, which means “able, competent or ready.” Another is *no‘eau*, which means “skilled.” Even if a leader has a fine character and is courageous, committed, and compatible, he or she will have few dedicated followers if he or she is not competent. People will follow leaders they dislike or with whom they disagree if that leader is competent and able to achieve the mission of the organization. There are levels of competency, from the minimal levels of adequate or properly qualified to well-qualified, well-trained, and skilled, perhaps even *loea* (expert). The best leaders aspire to be expert in their work. This is not merely expert by education, but also by practice and experience. A Hawaiian proverb states, “*Ike ‘ia nō ka loea i ke kuahu*” (an expert is known by the altar he builds). True expertise can be recognized in the quality of the completed work.

COMPATIBILITY (ALOHA). This attribute describes the ability to skillfully interrelate positively with others. With its many definitions, the Hawaiian word *aloha* captures the essence of positive relationships: love, loving, affection, compassion, mercy, sympathy, pity, kindness, greetings, salutations, regards, sentiment, grace, charity, compassionate, charitable, etc. The best leaders I have known have had this skill of understanding and getting along well with people. We humans are generally social animals who live in communal groups. Most of us in a civilized society must work successfully with others every day.

The best training in people skills comes from people themselves! Leaders work with people from many different social strata, geographical locations, and cultural backgrounds and learn that for all our differences, people are more alike than different. In the workplace people like to be known as individuals, be included in the information loop, and be recognized and thanked. A leader who cares for people and demonstrates caring inspires people to care for each other.

IMPROVING LEADERSHIP

I believe there are certain areas that if strengthened will improve anyone's leadership. One area is *spirituality*. I define spirituality as the belief in powers greater than oneself. This includes religion but is broader than a personal or institutional belief in a supreme being. One can find spirituality in nature, in the power of our ancestral spirits, in art, music, or other creative endeavors. Spirituality is a way of recognizing and accepting our place in the universe. When my last grandson was born, I was privileged to be in the birthing room. When the baby's head began to emerge, I chanted in Hawaiian the last 17 generations of his genealogy. He entered into this world with the names of his ancestors ringing in his young ears. The past, present, and future, all bound up in that magic moment.

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Another focus in leadership development is *self-knowledge*, beginning with knowledge of one's special places and special people. By special places, I mean places with which one has special affinity, whether historical, familial, or spiritual. Knowledge of these special places can give one a sense of *permanence*. By special people, I mean those in one's genealogy. Knowledge of these special people can give one a sense of *continuity*. Knowledge of both brings balance. I ask my students, "What is your special mountain, valley, river, ocean, wind, and rain? Who are your ancestors?" Our Hawaiian traditions teach us that if we lack the answers to these questions, we don't really know who we are.

A third area of leadership involves the study of *power, prestige, authority*, and other facets of the spiritual essence Hawaiians call *mana*. I am not expert on this subject, and I have not found anyone who claims to be. Although our Hawaiian ancestors knew about *mana* in all its iterations and nuances, most of us know comparatively

little about it because our way of living has changed. I believe mana still affects our lives, but we tend to use terms such as power, prestige, and authority. The study of mana as it relates to power, prestige, and authority in our lives and in our leadership is an area worth exploring.

A fourth area involves *improving communication*, especially *oral communication*. Oratory has been called the poetry of leadership. Effective oral communication is one of the most powerful tools of a leader, enabling him to directly affect the feelings, thoughts, and actions of his listeners. The average speaker speaks when authorized, using common protocols and language, usually invoking reason and common sense. The orator may do all of these things too, but he also speaks when and where he must, finding his authority and mandate in his status and role as an orator. He may also use elevated (sometimes sacred) protocols and figurative language, invoking emotion and passion to move the spirit and the body while providing a rationale for the mind. By influencing others, the orator is a leader; those who desire to wield influence should aspire to become able orators.

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Finally, I suggest that potential leaders focus on the art of *decision-making*, because good leaders must have a reliable and effective process for making thoughtful decisions. I place an especially heavy emphasis on desired goals and outcomes and on sound analysis and management of risk. A laser-like focus on desired goals and outcomes brings one's creativity and perspective to the fore when considering alternatives. The ability to recognize and manage potential risks clarifies the list of possible solutions, provides comfort when risky choices must be made, and allows confident leaders to venture where angels fear to tread.

LEADERSHIP TODAY AND TOMORROW

E lawe i ke a'o a mālama, a e 'oi mau ka na'auao. *He who takes his teachings and applies them increases his knowledge.*

I now share some reflections on the progress in leadership in Hawai'i over the last 10 years, including important leadership issues Native Hawaiians should address and goals Hawaiians should seek to accomplish. A new generation of inspired,

educated Hawaiian leaders has emerged in the last decade in our community, in the fields of law, education, medicine, business, and community and public service. They have accepted responsibility for leadership and for teaching. One reason we have made progress is because many of our young leaders sought education and experience in both modern educational institutions and in Hawaiian houses of learning where traditional culture is taught. They have learned that being a modern Hawaiian leader requires them to be adept and comfortable in both American and Hawaiian culture. Leadership that blends both modern and traditional principles and teachings is a powerful tool in a time when obtaining a college degree or professional certification is a Hawaiian activity. Navigating or sailing a canoe in a voyage fraught with risk is also a Hawaiian activity. Warriorhood is a Hawaiian activity. Leadership is a Hawaiian activity. The possibilities are limitless.

Leadership is a Hawaiian activity.

Some areas of leadership need more Hawaiian participation and representation. One is the arena of politics. Respected elders such as retired Senator Daniel K. Akaka and former governor John Waihe'e are working to remedy this shortfall by recruiting and mentoring potential candidates. We need to increase Hawaiian leadership in business, finance, land management, and conservation so we can control and conserve our financial and natural resources. Tourism in Hawai'i should be managed by Hawaiians, and Hawaiians should participate or lead at every level. We also need Hawaiian entrepreneurs to use their creativity to create new businesses and endeavors and to energize current businesses or endeavors that could benefit from new visions. We can benefit from having more Hawaiians in top leadership positions in some of our Hawaiian organizations. Individual leadership among Hawaiians needs to be improved by placing a high priority on focused leadership education, practical exercises to teach leadership, and a balanced values-education curriculum. Any leadership curriculum should include the best modern and traditional leadership principles, but such principles must be relevant to the issues and challenges we will face in modern society. The teachers should themselves be models of positive leadership, and they should be able to do what they teach. Our Hawaiian organizations need to find, foster, and teach leadership to young Hawaiians so Hawaiian institutions are eventually led and managed by our own people. These potential leaders are out there somewhere, developing skills on their own, longing for leadership, seeking guidance. I know this is true because I used to be one of them.

I also recommend that more young Hawaiians should consider pursuing training in the military services, which provide excellent leadership education with numerous opportunities for acquiring practical skills. After high school, structure, self-discipline, and service need to be learned. Whether or not they intend to make military service their career, our youth should consider the fine training and the post-service educational and other benefits they can earn from military service. It is admirable service at the national level, and the path to leadership is through service.

Education is another key factor in attaining leadership in our modern society. Knowledge has always been important in Hawaiian society, and those who attained it were revered. We must elevate the value of ‘imi ‘ike—the pursuit of knowledge—to a high level of importance in every Hawaiian family. Our mantra should be, “Be Hawaiian. Be educated.”

Finally, we must somehow instill a pragmatic form of leadership education into our Hawaiian families, many of whom are struggling. My experience with the Queen Lili‘uokalani Trust has taught me that families who are struggling usually lack male leadership, because the male is either absent altogether or a poor role model. We need to address this issue somehow, because the basic unit of the Hawaiian nation is the Hawaiian family. The architects of Hawaiian sovereignty may have grand plans, but the house of sovereignty cannot stand and will not endure unless we strengthen leadership in Hawaiian families.

CONCLUSION

Aia lā, mai ke kumu a ka wēlau. *There it is, from the trunk to the leaf buds (the whole thing).*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas K. Kaulukukui Jr. was born in Honolulu and grew up in Kuli'ou'ou Valley. He was educated at Kamehameha Schools and Michigan State University. He is an army veteran who has been a high school teacher, business attorney, judge, and community affairs vice president for a local health care system. During the past 17 years, he has served as trustee, chairman of the board, and managing trustee of the Queen Lili'uokalani Trust, which aids orphan and destitute Hawaiian children.