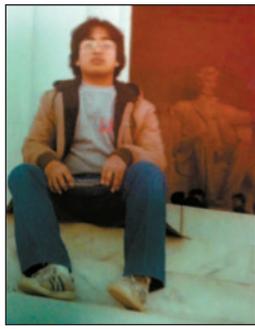




Editor on Kama

Bagoyo shares how Kama's heart was always that of a servant.

See p4



Small Kid Time

Keith-Agaran expounds on the importance and shaping from 'Small Kid Time.'

See p5



Tasha Kama's Legacy

Kama's life is celebrated following her untimely passing.

See below



Fil·Am Voice

Magkaisa Tayong Lahat | "Let Us All Unite"

November 2025 • Vol IX No 11 | FILIPINO AMERICAN VOICE • UPLIFTING OUR COMMUNITY | FREE

inside



Our sense of community being the 'Pusong Pinoy' is eyed by Guiwa.

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Students from Lahainaluna volunteered for food distribution event.

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November is certainly a month to be remembered.

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Tasha Kama

AUGUST 14, 1952–OCTOBER 26, 2025

"Served with Grace and Kindness"

Alfredo G. Evangelista | ASSISTANT EDITOR



Tasha Kama (center), left of the 2022 Miss Barrio Fiesta, Audryanah Starmer, was present during the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Barrio Fiesta that kicked-off the 2023 event. Also present were Alfredo Evangelista, Esq. (from left), Councilmember Yuki Lei Sugimura, Sharon Zalsos Banaag, Liaison to Gov. Green on Maui Leon Bolosan, then President of Binhi at Ani Melen Agcolicol, event chair Nora Cabanilla Takushi, and then Sen. Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran

PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA

Faithful. Determined. Thoughtful. Fair. Leader. Dedicated.

These are the words Maui residents would use to describe Natalie "Tasha" Kama when they learned of her passing on October 26, 2025.

Tasha, the current Council Presiding Officer Pro Tempore, was born on August 14, 1952 at Tripler Army Medical Center and moved to Maui in 1983. The daughter of Rev. Clarence and Ruth Kama, Tasha and her late husband David had eleven children, thirty-one grandchildren and six great-grandchildren.

Tasha herself would serve



Natalie "Tasha" Kama

COURTESY PHOTO

as an Assistant Pastor and then Senior Pastor of the Christian Ministry Church.

Later, she would serve as a social justice organizer with Faith Action for Community Equity (FACE) Maui.

"[Tasha] was a special kind of lady. She had a very hard life. I mean, you think of a hardlife, she walked it. But it's because of those life experiences she brought to the [Maui County] Council, that she had the empathy for people who had less than most," said former Maui Mayor James "Kimo" Apana. "Her style was I going help these people but not from taking from others. I just going help everyone I can with special emphasis on the very, very



Kimo Apana

the forgotten ones. I think that's what made her special, and why people always said, 'Go for it, girl!'"

Tasha's initial attempts at elective office were not successful—running against then Speaker Joe Souki. But in 2018, Tasha ran for the County County (Kahului residency)

see TASHA KAMA p.2

FREE

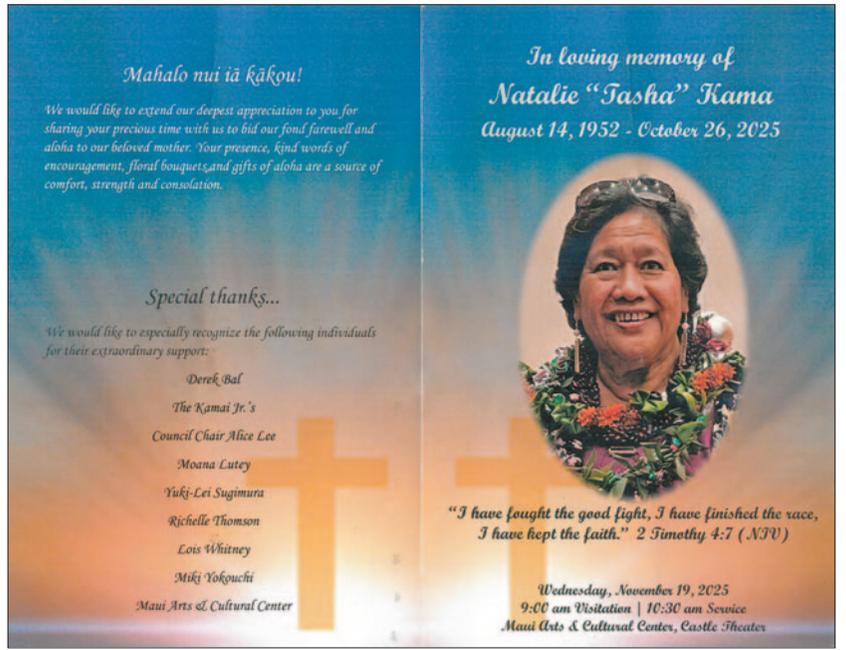


PHOTO ABOVE: The cover of the program during Tasha Kama's celebration of life was presented to each visitor on November 19 at the Maui Arts & Cultural Center.

IMAGE COURTESY THE KAMA 'OHANA

PHOTO LEFT: Images of Tasha's immediate family were projected onstage on the large screen inside the Castle Theater.

PHOTO: GILBERT KEITH-AGARAN

Tasha Kama ...

from p. 1

and won. She was re-elected in 2020, 2022 and 2024.

On the Council, Tasha served as Chair of the Affordable housing Committee, the Human Concerns and Parks Committee and the Housing and Land Use Committee.

When Tasha was initially elected, she was part of the 'Ohana coalition. She later switched sides and it was reported that Councilmember Yuki Lei



Yuki Lei Sugimura

Sugimura played a large part. Sugimura's office was next to Tasha's. "Tasha had a heart for the community, and her family, her religion and helping people. I think her big thing was helping the community," said Sugimura. "She spoke up for those who could not be at the table, right? The disabled, the *kūpuna*, and the *keiki*. But mostly her thing is helping the native Hawaiian, I used to think she



Joyce Afalla

belongs to be in the Senate or the State with all the things she did. It was huge." Tasha's faith was at the forefront of everything—even during campaigns. "She was serving her Lord, her God. You know, I was her campaign treasurer the first time she ran for council. Our campaign meetings weekly started with a half an hour of prayer," said Joyce Afalla, her long-time friend. "At every campaign strat-



Justin Woodson

egy meeting, everything. We prayed for her opponents. We prayed for voters. We prayed for leadership. We prayed for discernment. We prayed for her, and we prayed for ourselves. That really was pivotal, meaningful to me."

"For me, I referred to her as 'Pastor,'" said Kahului State Representative Justin Woodson. "Pastor, she was outwardly thinking. She always

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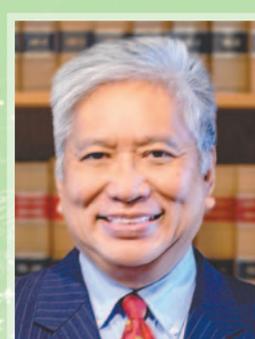
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Tasha Kama (3rd from left) takes a photo with Nora Cabanilla-Takushi (from left), Melen Agcolicol, Leon Bolosan, Yuki Lei Sugimura, Gil S.C. Keith-Agaran and Sharon Zalsos Banaag against the fence fronting the Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center during the 2023 Annual Barrio Fiesta.

PHOTO: BASILIA EVANGELISTA



Lahela Aiwohi

thought about other people. And I think that's where she had her joy. She spent countless, countless hours thinking about that. The last time I saw Pastor, she was concerned about the *Kauhale* in Pu'unēnē. That's how she always was, she was always focused on uplifting people. She will be missed."

"[Tasha had great love, passion and commitment] about her community,



Melen Agcolicol

about her 'ohana, said Lahela Aiwohi, a community activist and consultant. "And that's what made her who she was. A very, very special lady. I am grateful for everything she has done for us."

As the Kahului councilmember, Tasha had a special place in her heart for the Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center and its programs. "Tasha was very supportive of Binhi at Ani," said Melen Agcolicol

who served as president from 2020–2024. "Right after Binhi at Ani's Seed and Harvest Dinner in 2019, Tasha pledged \$25,000 and together with another \$25,000 through then Mayor Michael Victorino, Binhi at Ani was able to renovate the kitchen. This proved very helpful during the pandemic as we were able to launch the Bayanihan Food Distribution program and later the Bayanihan Feeding Program."

Beyond the renovations of Binhi at Ani, Tasha was supportive of Binhi at Ani's other programs. "She volun-

teered at almost every monthly Bayanihan Food Distribution during the pandemic," recalls Agcolicol. "And she not only gave financial support to the Barrio Fiesta through the grant process but she made sure to attend where she was always amazed how a group of small volunteers could organize and present the Barrio Fiesta."

According to the County rules, the Council will have thirty days to appoint her successor. If not, it will fall to Mayor Richard T. Bissen, Jr.

"I just hope that whoever takes her see TASHA KAMA next page

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Science for better



From the Editor's Desk

Vince Bagoyo, Jr.
EDITOR • FIL-AM VOICE



Tasha Kama with eldest granddaughter Kerri-lyn Valdez and eldest great granddaughter Brook-lyn Feiteira.

COURTESY PHOTO

Councilmember Tasha Kama

A selfless public servant

We are deeply saddened by the passing of our beloved Councilmember, Tasha Kama—who left a legacy of a selfless public servant. She was a resolute member of the Maui County Council representing Kahului and known for her work on affordable housing as the Chair of the Council's Land Use and Housing Committee. She was a relentless champion for Native Hawaiian causes, especially their housing needs. Councilmember Tasha Kama understood the challenges faced by many of Maui's hard-working families because she also experienced them. Her steady leadership and her steadfast commitment to our community helped shaped many of the housing policies that brought positive impacts on the lives of many Maui 'ohana.

Councilmember Tasha Kama will always be remembered for her Christian faith, compassion, and commitment to public service. She never shied away from her deep

faith and her love for God. Her warm-hearted and respectful demeanor and steady temperament at the Maui County Council is what sets her apart from other elected officials. She walks the talk in her conviction in addressing Maui's housing crisis. Maui lost a public servant who had the heart of our hard-working 'ohana.

We at the *Fil-Am Voice* extend our deepest condolences and prayers to Councilmember Tasha Kama's family. We are grateful for her service and she will certainly be missed. Because of her faith she is now in the presence of God and accepting the greatest accolade from her Almighty Creator saying, "My Good and Faithful servant." Welcome home! ✨

VINCE BAGOYO, JR. | EDITOR



An image of former County Councilmember Tasha Kama graces the projector screen at her celebration of life, November 19 at the Maui Arts & Cultural center.

PHOTO: GILBERT KEITH-AGARAN

"I just hope that whoever takes her place will have the same concern and support for Binhi at Ani and the Filipino community. I will miss her; Binhi at Ani will miss her; the Filipino community will miss her; it's such a great loss for Maui"

— MELEN AGCOLICOL, IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT · BINHI AT ANI

Tasha Kama ...

from p. 3

place will have the same concern and support for Binhi at Ani and the Filipino community," said Agcolicol. "I will miss her; Binhi at Ani will miss her; the Filipino community will miss her; it's such a great loss for Maui." ✨

Assistant Editor **Alfredo G. Evangelista** is a graduate of Maui High School (1976), the Uni-



and the University of California at Los Angeles School of Law (1983). He is a sole practitioner at Law Offices of Alfredo Evangelista, A Limited Liability Law Company, concentrating in estate planning, business start-up and consultation and nonprofit corporations. He has been practicing law for 42 years (since 1983) and returned home in 2010 to be with his family and to marry his high school sweetheart, the former Basilia Tumacder Idica. **Gil S.C. Keith-Agaran** contributed to this article.



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DINENGDENG & PINAKBET

Small kid time



Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran — PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

Locally when talking story with old friends, we often wax nostalgic and with affection about “small kid time.” As I grow older, the easy temptation to misremember the bad with the good is the persistent challenge. I’m missing my high school class reunion. They going ‘Vegas around Thanksgiving (same weekend UH plays UNLV and the Raiders host Dillon Gabriel—if he’s still Browns QB1- at home). I can’t get away.

I look forward to those moments—scheduled or by happenstance. It’s simply comforting to recall how Maui was small kid time.

Old Kahului Shopping Center (an innovative place—when it first opened in the 1950s, one of the first U.S. spots built specifically to house a mixture of shops and food spots outside a residential neighborhood or a town square). It had Craft and Toda Drugs (including comic book and magazine racks). Noda Supermarket. Peggy’s and Johnny’s. Ah Fooks Market. Tasaka Guri Guri (before the *azuki* beans were banished). Port Town Delicatessen. Barber shops. Shirley’s and a Dairy Queen

across Lono Avenue. Plenty places outside Central Maui.

Driving with friends to various swimming holes then stopping at various Ha’ikū and Upcountry mom and pop stores. Who had the best hotdogs and cone sushi? The bakeries were usually sold out by the time we were out-of-school and *pau* with clubs and sports and general gallivanting.

Growing up on Luna Lane, the town off Baldwin Avenue and Hāna Highway was where we hung out. I would get sent to buy rope tobacco and twine and other things for my grandfather at the Pā’ia Mercantile. Hours reading comic books at Machida’s and Nagata’s until the cashier gave you stink eye to remind you it wasn’t a library. Getting haircuts at Garcia’s. Going dentist at Dr. Ikeda next to Ikeda Store.

Everyone got jobs for spending money. Working at Dairy Queen because I was born too late in the year to join classmates and friends making good summer money at the Cannery. Even some of our high school teachers were summer supervisors at the Cannery.



Author Gil S.C. Keith-Agaran with his high school classmate Mark Lopes, HC&S Harvest supervisor, at the ceremony of the final plantation harvest 2016.

We kinda operated on plantation time. Irrigators like my dad going bed right after dinner so they could get up early for catch ride on the red HC&S trucks that came by the Kahului house to ferry them to their assigned cane fields.

It was a carefree, maybe careless time. Driving with your lights out from Wailuku to Kepaniwai Park and ‘Āo Needle. Going beach every weekend. Camping on empty beaches at Wailea and Mākena. Playing on old pillboxes on the Pā’ia and South Maui shoreline. Fishing in Pā’ia with just bamboo poles, some string and a hook with bait from Bersamin’s fish

market. Catching prawns in various streams. Collecting tilapia from HC&S reservoirs. Swimming at the Salvation Army Pool. Wading in ‘Āo Stream.

Maui County Fair at the dusty old fairgrounds. Parties at the old plantation club houses in Pu’unēnē and Pā’ia before all the County built the community centers.

Hanging out at Kahului Library because it was cooler inside on a weekend.

My roots are firmly on Maui. I colleged on the east coast and law schooled in the Bay Area (Go Giants!

see DINENGDENG & PINAKBET p.7



Maui High School classmates at a reunion many years ago.



Keith-Agaran attended his reunion a few years ago.



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Cailyn Paa

Being Filipino and growing up in Hawai'i we get a blend of different cultures, traditions and lifestyles seeping into our own. It's like experiencing the Philippines without even having to fly to our sacred Motherland. Stories of livelihoods, hardships and family are passed to us by *lolas, lolos, Titas, Titos* and even our own parents, for generations to come. The legacy of being Filipino runs through our blood and many of our fellow Filipinos carry it deeply in their hearts. It does not matter what percentage of Filipino you are nor does it affect this tight-knit community, immersed in Aloha, making being Filipino-American such a blessing.

All of us have different experiences growing up yet the strong sense of community is what we share. A student from Baldwin High School, **Sadie-Lei Deocares**, expresses how growing up in Hawai'i is special to her: "We have

Google® Is Not Everything ... Pusong Pinoy

Ehra Louise Guiwa | MAUI HIGH SCHOOL, CLASS OF 2028

a huge community here filled with generations of Filipinos in Hawai'i that makes me feel like I belong!" Hawai'i is home to more than 370,000 Filipinos who have carried the spirit of home miles away. Similarly, another student from Baldwin High School, **Landon Dela Cruz** adds "It's interesting to see

how Filipino culture mixes with Hawaiian culture." Over the years, Filipino Culture has impacted Hawai'i in many different ways; a common example is through its food. Local dishes such as Chicken Papaya and Chicken Long Rice have their Filipino counterparts: *Sotanghon* and *Tinola*. Not to mention house-party staples like *pancit* and *lumpia*. This is derived from many generations of Filipinos who have contributed to the building of local culture.

A Maui High School student, **Alvis Agader** comments "Being Filipino in Hawai'i is different than Filipino in the Philippines or even on the mainland. I'm proud of Filipino people who take up important roles like doctors, cops, lawyers, teachers and coaches." In its earliest days, Filipino laborers, often called *Sakadas*, made up the largest workforce behind Hawai'i's sugar plantations and have now led them to become professionals in numerous career fields. Although representation of our culture in the media has remained low, this motivates many of our youth to strive high in hopes of inspiring those in the future.

Cailyn Paa, a sophomore at Maui High School shares "It has also given me a strong sense of belonging and identity that is hard to come by, especially when you are only half of that group ethnically." Mixed-race children often fall into an identity crisis; some feel they are not enough of either ethnicity. To Cailyn, "The Filipino community here is so rich in culture and lets me experience and learn things I wouldn't be able to anywhere else." This creates a balance between her Ko-

rean and Filipino heritage. During my childhood, I've moved from Maui to California many times but with every return to this beautiful island, it made me appreciate how surrounded I felt by its community. With many events happening in society, we lose ourselves in constant worrying, forgetting why most of us call this island home in the first place. Cailyn shares "Being around so many different people from so many different backgrounds exposed me to diversity at a young age." Diversity brings us closer in Hawai'i; our differences do not stand in the way of unity. The teaching of Aloha is a vital core value; it is a huge part of life "a lot of people don't get to experience," Sadie comments. While Landon expresses his love for the land around him, "the nature makes it stand out to me. After finally

traveling outside the state, I notice many other places have larger cities with many buildings, which makes me appreciate living in Hawai'i, where things are calmer."

As the idea of moving away from Hawai'i becomes a hot topic surrounding its community, this column serves as a daily reminder to think about what in Hawai'i stands out to you. ✨

Google® Is Not Everything ... is a monthly column authored

by high school students. The column's title emphasizes that education is more than just googling a topic. Google® is a registered trademark. This month's guest columnist is **Ehra Louise Guiwa**, a Sophomore at Maui High School. She is the President of Sabers of Law (Maui High's Mock Trial Club), one of the Executive Vice Presidents for Student Government, Historian in the Key Club, and a student of eskrima under Doce Pares Multi-Style Hawaii. Ehra Louise is in the Law and Public Safety

pathway at Maui High and aspires to be a U.S Senator. In her free time, she enjoys sewing, baking, volunteering at church, spending time with family and friends, and exploring. She is the only daughter of Merlyn Guiwa and Reymund Guiwa.



"... This column serves as a daily reminder to think about what in Hawai'i stands out to you."

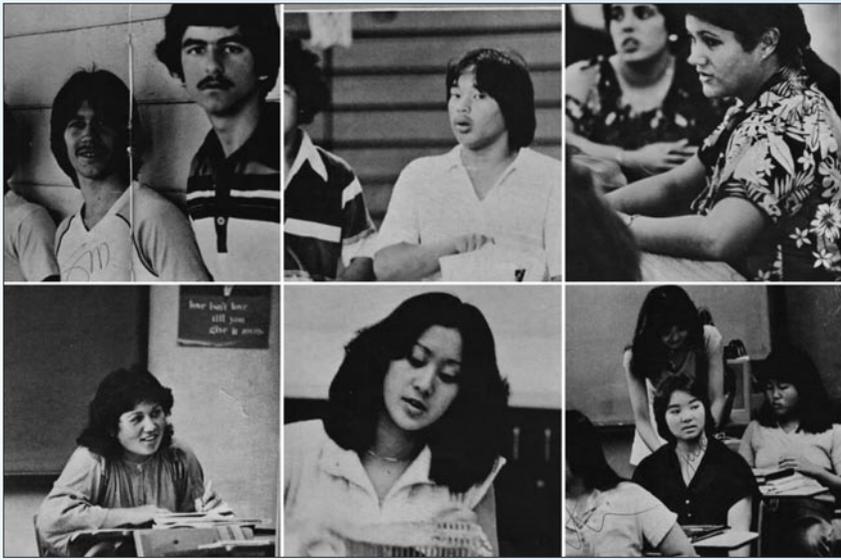
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DINENGDENG & PINAKBET | from p. 5



Some photos from Maui High's 1980 year book remain to memorialize my 'small kid time.'

Boo 49ers / Who Dey!). I worked in the big city of Honolulu. I love living here. It's why I made a conscious decision many years ago this is where I wanted to stay.

Growing up, working and living here, I know our grandparents and our parents who worked on the plantations improved the quality of life and choices for my generation. It took hard work, education, opportunity and yes, a somewhat unconsciously selfless sense of community. Obviously, I, more often than not, intentionally dwell on the better memories. Not that interested in acknowledging whether my grandfather and my father came here from the Philippines as Settlor Colonist pawns or toiled in the hot sun really as little more than enslaved farm labor. I like the notion they were heroic in traveling to a place far away from *Inang Bayan* with the plan to make a better life for their progeny.

It took courage. My grandfather and my dad came to Hawai'i before airplanes made the journey a matter of hours rather than months on an open ocean (my mom came later on the *S.S. Wilson*—still many weeks on the open ocean while sharing a room with three other women). They came without first seeing the sand and surf on television or the internet. They came knowing only the people who disembarked on the ships with them. But at some point, they made—perhaps as much accidentally as purposefully—Maui home.

Whether we were born on Maui or moved here or moved back after seeing America, we all have more economic choices today. Small kid time we had open ended possibilities for the future. Maybe not the paradise and mythical good life we would wish but still better than hours in the pineapple and cane fields or the cannery (a couple of my classmates did spend their careers with HC&S, many until the final harvest). I have classmates who got engineering degrees who were not interested in playing with water. So instead of taking a local job with public works or Pearl Harbor naval shipyard or one of the private civil firms helping developers, they moved to California, Washington or elsewhere to pursue aeronautical and military industrial complex supporting positions.

My class, as far as I know, had only one person earn a medical degree. We have a number of nurses and medical technicians (and not all of them with roots from the Motherland) and others in health-related and adjacent fields. We have tradesmen and contractors and a prominent local developer. We have some artists and musicians and entertainers. Quite a number went into the various armed services, some for the minimum but others for many years, before coming back for civilian jobs using the skills (or not) they learned. We have classmates in the civil service throughout the various departments and agencies. I'm most surprised by how many teachers, counselors, professors and educators came out of Maui High School (and so many have already "retired" after decades of service).

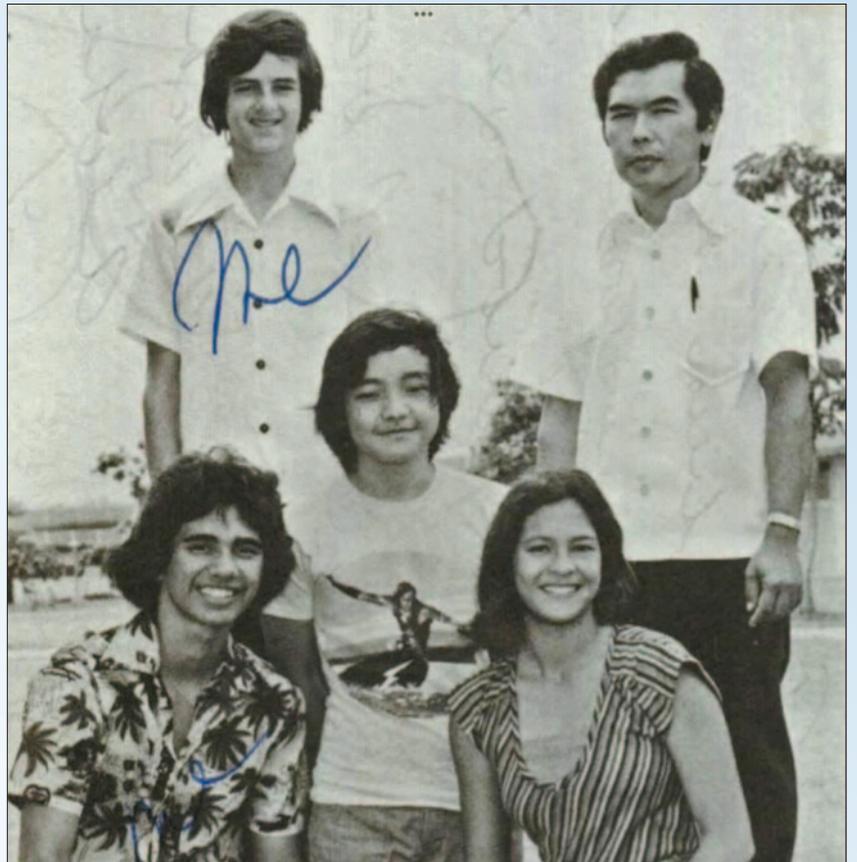
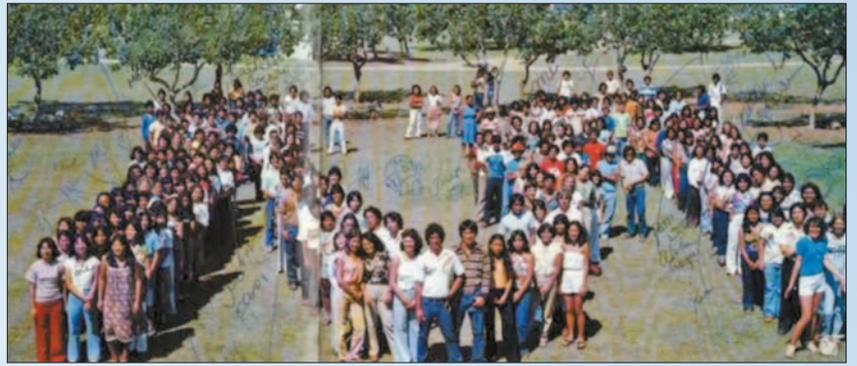
I admire my fellow Sabers a lot. I appreciate them for contributing to Maui's community or whatever place they've made their home, in so many different ways. They've worked and built and created. They've formed families and raised children. Each year we lose a few more, and I remember many of them from small kid time with both sadness and reflective fondness.

I kinda wish I could join the reunion but I know we have reunions whenever we see each other in the street.

Never would have predicted the lives we've lived from small kid time.



Gilbert S.C. Keith-Agaran attended Maui High School in one of the first classes to spend all four years at the Lono Avenue campus. He practices law in Wailuku and formerly worked in state and county government and served in the state legislature.



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Community... In Action



Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center is open for your celebrations.

PHOTO: CEASAR LIZADA PHOTOGRAPHY



Joseph Pontanilla, on behalf of the Maui Lions Clubs Region VI Zone 1, presented a \$10,000 donation to Binhi at Ani for the Bayanihan Food Distribution.

PHOTO JEANICE PAA



The Philippine Nurses Association Maui Hawaii volunteered for the Bayanihan Feeding Program.

PHOTOS: CHRISTINE GUMPAL



Volunteers helped to pack the 420 boxes.

PHOTO JEANICE PAA



Some of the 125+ volunteers who assisted.

PHOTO JARED AGTUNONG

BINHI AT ANI

Celebrate your special events at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center. The Center can be rented on Mondays through Saturdays from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. for \$1,400 (which includes the cleaning fee) plus GET and a \$500 security deposit or from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. for \$1,200 (which includes the cleaning fee) plus GET and a \$500 security deposit.

On Sundays, the Center can be rented from 1:30 p.m. to 11 p.m. for \$1,050 (which includes the cleaning fee) plus GET and a \$500 security deposit.

If alcohol is provided and/or served, there is an additional fee of \$300 and you must hire two licensed bartenders.

If alcohol is BYOB or



placed in coolers, there is an additional fee of \$500.

The office is open on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. and on Saturdays by appointment only. Telephone (808) 877-7880.

A Bayanihan Christmas: Aggie Cabebe Scholarship Fundraiser will be held on Saturday, December 21 at Binhi at Ani Filipino

COMMUNITY... IN ACTION

Compiled by Assistant Editor Alfredo G. Evangelista.
Send your community briefs to info@filamvoice.com.

Community Center. Table Sponsor (premium seats for 10) are available for \$1,000 while individual seats for the buffet dinner are available for \$50 each. The Dinner is to sustain the memory of Aggie Cabebe—a remarkable trailblazer in Maui's Filipino community—for generations, with the dinner funding the Agrifina Cabebe/Binhi at Ani Scholarship.



The Dinner will also honor Hedy Udarbe, the 2025 recipient of the Promoting the Bayanihan Spirit Award. For more information, contact Arnel Alvarez at (808) 357-0748 or Lenra1268@gmail.com or Alfredo Evangelista at (808) 294-5510 or AlfredoGEvangelista@gmail.com.

Bayanihan Feeding Program provides a Sunday lunch to Hale Mahaolu Residents in Central Maui (Hale Mahaolu Elua and Hale Mahaolu Akahi) and Maui Adult Day Care.

Through October 31, 2025, a total of 39,407 lunches have been distributed.

Teams serving during the month of October 2025 include Central Pacific Bank, Confederation International Association of Samahang Ilocano Group, Maui



Representatives of Kaibigan ng Lahaina volunteered.

PHOTO: JARED AGTUNONG



Event chair Nora Cabanilla-Takushi (front center) along with other volunteers.

PHOTO: JARED AGTUNONG



Volunteers from Lahainaluna High School.

PHOTO: JARED AGTUNONG



Melen Agcolicol oversees the hot food line.

PHOTO: JARED AGTUNONG



Volunteers help pack the 800 plate lunches.

PHOTO: JARED AGTUNONG



Enhance@Fitness for Kūpuna at Binhi At Ani Filipino Community Center classes are held.

PHOTO: CLAUDETTE MEDEIROS

County Federal Credit Union, Philippine Nurses Association Maui Hawaii and Seventh Day Adventist (Kihei and Lahaina).

There is a need for additional teams of volunteers to prepare the free lunches. Create a Team by contacting Melen Agcolicol at (808) 205-7981. Tax-deductible donations are accepted via Paypal or a Credit/Debit card or by mailing a check payable to Binhi at Ani, 780 Onehe'e Avenue, Kahului, HI 96732 [Memo: Feeding Program].

The Bayanihan Feeding Program is a partnership with Maui Food Bank and is supported by grants from Bayer Crop Science Hawaii and Nareit Hawaii.

The annual Bayanihan Food Distribution Program was held on Saturday, November 15 at Lahaina Intermediate School. Over 125 volunteers assisted in

packing and distributing the boxes.

The monthly Bayanihan Food Distribution Program was created during the pandemic and is now held annually before Thanksgiving. 2025 was the second year it was held in Lahaina.

Through November 2025, over

\$80,000 in monetary donations were received enabling the distribution of 9,463 food boxes including 11,120 plate lunches, 1,000 turkeys, 106,478 canned goods, 85,304 pounds of produce, 6,674 bags of rice, 17,041 packages of noodles, 3,661 dozens of eggs, 3,868 loaves of bread/pan de sal, 6,200 McDonald's certificates, 21,697 beverages, 26,310 snacks, 3,810 containers of spaghetti sauce, 6,006 Maui Gold pineapples, 2,160 gallons of milk, 2,318 boxes of mashed potatoes, 730



The 2025-2026 Dr. José P. Rizal Scholarship Dinner will be held Saturday, Jan. 10, 2026. For sponsorship opportunities, advertisements, call (808) 250-5330. For tickets, call (808) 298-2395

IMAGE COURTESY MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOUNDATION

whole chickens, over 2,500 dragon fruit, and other miscellaneous items such as toilet paper, coffee, goat cheese and masks.

Enhance@Fitness for Kupuna at Binhi at Ani Filipino Community Center classes are continuing. Offered in partnership with the County of Maui, Office on Aging, classes are held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6:15 a.m. to 7:15 a.m.; from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m.;

from 8:45 a.m. to 9:45 a.m. Enhance@Fitness is an exercise program for those over 50 years of age that improves cardiovascular fitness, strength, flexibility and balance. Since July 2022 and through May 2025, there have been 944 classes with seventy-five participants. For more information on Enhance@Fitness, contact En-

hance@Fitness Coordinator Ginny Kiick (808) 280-6251 or gkiick@hotmail.com or Wellness Coordinator Claudette Medeiros (808) 463-3166 or claudette.b.medeiros@co.maui.hi.us.

MAUI FILIPINO COMMUNITY COUNCIL FOUNDATION

The Maui Filipino Community Council Foundation will hold its annual Dr. José P. Rizal Scholarship Dinner on Jan. 10, 2026 at the Maui Beach Hotel ball-

room. The goal of the event is to raise scholarship funds for graduating seniors and continuing college students. It will feature nine recipients for the Dr. Jose P. Rizal awards, and a Filipiniana attire gala contest. Tickets are \$75. For tickets call (808) 250-5395. For more information, call or text (808) 250-5330.

Ti Biag ken Pammati

"Life and Faith"



Prayer service was held on All Souls Day at St Joseph Church. Service included a blessing and lighting of the candles for each grave.



A night to be seen. All candles lighted during All Souls Day by the youth ministry of St Joseph Church.

November—a Month to Remember

November 1st is All Saints' Day, November 2nd is All Souls Day, November 11th is Veteran's Day and November 27th is Thanksgiving Day.

Deacon Patrick Constantino | PHOTOS COURTESY PATRICK CONSTANTINO

November is a month to remember our heritage God created. People who made a difference in our lives who were made Saints; our family and friends who lived like them to inherit God's Kingdom and then on Thanksgiving Day we thank God for inheriting us to His Kingdom.

November is a time to remember our heritage in our churches.

All Saints' Day

Our people lived like Jesus to become saints of God. They lived by His examples, trials and tribulations of His time. They are living examples and experiences for us to follow to the end of time.

My friends, the saints were not perfect. but they were committed. They did aspire to something more than themselves. And that wasn't a "something" at all. It was actually a "someone." And for the saints, that someone was *not* someone to simply be admired from afar. They were someone to imitate, someone to be "put on" as Paul says, someone to

embody. The Lord Jesus. And as you know, in the past two thousand years, the Church has canonized hundreds and hundreds of Saints—and *not* as some sort of favor to them in heaven or to their families or friends—but to us, the Catholic faithful across the whole world. And this favor is two-fold. First, we have our friends in heaven to call on for their prayers, an unbroken bond between us and those who have gone before us. And so we turn to them, starting with Mary and continuing through the centuries. They are our friends, our fellow believers, our family. And they pray for us—unceasingly. But secondly, by actually identifying these people for us, the Church has given us countless examples of what holiness truly looks like; people to get strength from and identify with and people to imitate. You see, no two saints are alike. And that means holiness comes in many forms, in every type of person living in every type of life situation. And that means we too can be saints. Seriously. We too can pattern our lives

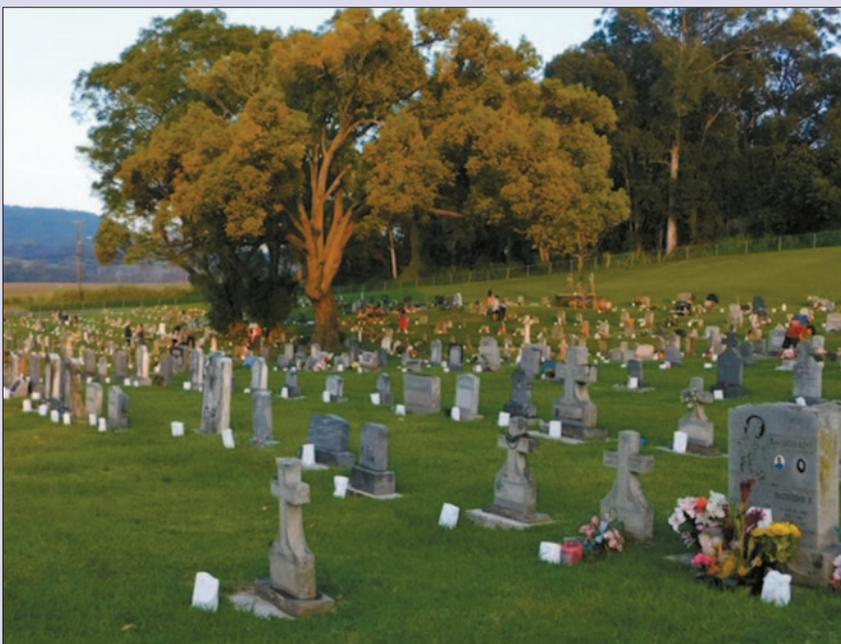
on the person of Jesus—the Lord Jesus who was made visible in these holy men and women through the ages. And it won't take perfection from us. That's *not* possible. And it doesn't have to be achieved through grandiose sorts of things. It just requires we do our best to love—as Jesus loved—and as the Saints loved—exactly as they love us each and every second of each and every day. But it won't happen by accident. It can only happen if we aspire to be saints. All holy men and women, pray for us!

The Commemoration of All The Faithful Departed (All Souls Day)

On the surface, All Souls Day may appear to be a really sad day, a depressing day, a day to shed many tears. After all, the loss of people we loved in this life is a difficult thing, a painful thing. It hurts. And not just a little. A lot. It often makes us feel really empty or broken or incomplete. And we don't just grieve for the person. It's more than that. We also grieve because we know things can't go back to the way they used

to be. We can't simply undo what has happened. We can't just wake up from the bad dream we are having, no matter how much we wish that was so. And that's a really hard thing to face. But actually, All Souls Day is not just about being sad. It's also about being grateful. Truly grateful. Deeply grateful. Grateful for the men and women we remember who made a real difference in our lives, made our lives better, made our lives more complete. Grateful for the people who loved us and who we tried our best to love in return. For the care and comfort they showed us. The compassion. The mercy. The fun times. The ordinary times. The companionship. The challenges and tough times faced together. The friendship. Put simply—we are grateful for the gifts they were to us. And All Souls Day is also about being connected. Our faith teaches us the bonds we forged in this life, the relationships, have not ended. They continue. They remain meaningful. They endure. And so we continue to

see TI BIAG KEN PAMMATI p.12



Cemetery prepared for candles to lighted by our Youth Ministry of St Joseph Church.



We are grateful and thankful for all you do for us. Happy Thanksgiving!



November is here—my birth month and honestly my favorite month of the year.

Back home in the Philippines, November 1 is All Saints' Day and November 2 is All Souls Day. It's the time when we honor and remember our loved ones who have passed. A few days before, people start cleaning the cemetery, fixing the graves and getting everything ready. Some families go by themselves; others hire someone to help. This year, I couldn't visit my grandparents' and my Dad's graves but I asked my cousin to bring flowers and light candles for them. It made me feel a little closer even from far away.

Here in the United States, November is all about Veterans Day and

Let's Talk Pinoy!

Dulce Karen Butay

Thanksgiving. And to all our Veterans—thank you so much for your service and sacrifice. Your bravery gives us the freedom we enjoy every single day.

Thanksgiving, for me, is a reminder to slow down and appreciate what we have. It's so easy to forget the simple blessings—the fresh air, the sunshine, even the rain. Every morning when I wake up, I always take a moment to say, "Thank you for waking me up today." This year, I'm especially grateful

for all the blessings God has given me and even the challenges making me stronger and helping me to grow.

So tell me—what's cooking in your kitchen for Thanksgiving? How do you usually spend the holiday? Do you fly somewhere, drive to see family or stay home and host? Or maybe you skip the cooking and go out to eat?

I'd love to hear your favorite Thanksgiving story. Share it with us at www.facebook.com/filamvoicemaui.

Shout out to all the November ba-

bies! Happy birthday to Leticia (Letty) Domingo, Effren Delos Reyes, Felmar Guiwa, Rose Anne Rafael, Alfredo (Fredo) Dumlao, Grace Andam, Dianne Butay-Guiwa, Peter Villanueva, Rexon Rafael and Eileen Andrea Bueno. *Pada-pada kam nga kum-ablaaw ti naimbag nga panagkasangay yo amin!* (Happy birthday to all!) Happy, Happy birthday to you! (Tagalog) *Maligayangbati sa inyong kaarawan!* (Ilokano) *Naimbag nga panagkasangay mo!* (Ibanag) *Makapagayaya nga aggaw na nikeyana mu!* (Kapampangan) *Masayang kebaitan queca!* (Ilonggo) *Masadya gid nga adlaw sa imo pagkatawo.*

Let's see what's going on with our story this month and where Michael and Angel will be going next, shall we?

"MICHAEL, THIS IS MY *Nanay* (mother), Lena." Angel says, gesturing between them.

Michael's expression shifts, "Lena Ramos Corpuz ..." he repeats quietly, almost to himself.

Angel's *mata* (eyes) narrows. "You know my *Nanang* (mother)? How do you know her?" she asks, surprise and confusion threading through her words.

Then she turns back to the screen, "*Nanay* (mother), he is not Robert—he is Michael. How do you know his *tito* (uncle)?"

The silence that follows hangs heavy, like a held breath.

Her *inang* (mother's) image flickers on the screen, the soft hum of the connection filling the silence that follows. For a long moment, she says nothing—just stares, her expression unreadable. Then, with a sigh that carried the weight of years, she speaks.

"Michael ..." Lena's *timek* (voice) trembles, a mix of disbelief and something more fragile. "You look just like him ... like Robert."

Angel's brow furrows. "*Inay* (mother), what do you mean?"

Lena's gaze drifts, as though she was looking far beyond the screen—back into another time. "Robert and I ... we were *kaluguran* (friends). Yes, we were *kaibigan* (friends) a long time ago. Before you were born."

Michael's throat tightens. He takes a slow breath, his *mata* (eyes) still locked on the screen. "Uncle Ray nev-

er told me much about his past," he says quietly. "Only that there were things he wished he could undo."

A hush settles over the room. Angel feels her *puso* (heart) thudding painfully, her mind racing to make sense of it all. "Are you saying ... you knew his *Tio* (uncle) well?"

Her *inahan* (mother) hesitates, the corners of her *bibig* (mouth) tightening as though she were holding back a confession. "There are some stories, *anak* (child), that never really end," she says softly. "They just wait ... until the right moment to find their way back."

Angel's chest aches. She looks at Michael, who stands so still, his *mata* (eyes) shadowed with emotion she can't name.

"I didn't mean for any of this to happen," he murmurs. "I didn't even know ..."

"I know," she says quietly, though her *bores* (voice) wavers. "I know you didn't."

Lena *pahiyum* (smiles) faintly, tears glinting at the edges of her *mata* (eyes). "Sometimes life circles back in ways we don't expect," she whispers. "Maybe this is one of them."

And in that suspended moment—between the glow of the screen and the silence of the room—Angel feels the strange pull of fate, threading through their lives once again.

Lena's hands tremble slightly as she adjusts the camera, the movement revealing more of the room behind her—a flicker of lamp light, a framed photograph half-hidden on the shelf. When she speaks again, her *tingog* (voice) softens, stripped of pretense.

"Robert and I met when I was sixteen," she begins. "I was working as a maid for a wealthy family in Ilocos. My mother's *gayyem* (friend) was looking for young ladies who can work and do the household chores because she has visitors coming from America. Robert would always come and talk to me even when I'm doing

my chores." Angel blinks. "*Inay* "

Her *yena* (mother) *timan* (smiles) faintly, eyes distant. "He was charming in that quiet way. The kind that made you feel seen. I didn't know he came from a well-off family; he never spoke of it. We used to walk by the old pier, talk about dreams that were too big for the both of us."

She pauses, the corners of her *baba* (mouth) tightening. "When I found out I was pregnant, he had already gone back to the States. I tried to

reach him but his letters stopped coming. I thought he'd changed his mind."

The air in the room seems to thin. Angel's *mata* (eyes) widens, her pulse quickening. "Wait—what are you saying?"

What?! Don't tell me you're thinking the same thing I am! Sooo what do you think happens next? I want to hear all your ideas for where this story could go or comment on how you imagine the story will unfold!

Anyways that's all I have. Keep an eye out for my column in every issue. I'm Dulce, helping you to master your Filipino Languages. Like always, let's laugh, let's *making* (listen) and Let's Talk Pinoy! *Hanggang sa muli!* (Until next time!) *Ingat!* (Take care!) ✨

Dulce Karen Butay graduated from Maui High School and received her Associate in Arts degree in Liberal Arts from Maui Community College. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, specializing in

see LET'S TALK PINOY p.12

English	Pilipino	Ilokano	Cebuano	Ilonggo	Ibanag	Kapampangan
Mother	Nanay / Inay	Nanang / Inang	Inahan	Nanay	Yena	Ima
Uncle	Tito	Tio	Tiyo	Tiyo	Tio	Tangku
Friend	Kaibigan	Gayyem	Bai	Amigo / Amiga	Kofun	Kaluguran
Smile	Gniti	Isem	Pahiyum	Yuhom	Galo	Timan
Heart	Puso	Puso	Tutu	Puso	Kasingkasing	Korason
Child	Anak	Anak	Anak	Anak	Anak	Anak
Voice	Boses	Timek	Tingog	Tingog	Boses	Bosis
Eyes	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata	Mata
Mouth	Bibig	Ngiwat	Baba	Baba	Nga-ngat	Baba



Thank you veterans! May God bless you!
IMAGE COURTESY LAWRENCE PASCUA

love those who have gone before us by praying for them—praying God will take care of them, embrace them, forgive them and welcome them home for all eternity. And, just as importantly, we ask them to pray for us, to help us on our journey. It's really a beautiful thing when you stop and think about it. We loved one another in this life. And we continue to love one another even though things have changed—a kind of two-way street that remains that way even if they seem to have gone away, seem to be absent. And of course, today is also about being hopeful—a day to trust what we say we believe is actually how it is. We're hopeful because our loved ones are in the safest, most incredi-

ble place they could be—with the God who sustained them and guided them, with the God who forgave them—that is, with the God who loves them more than we do. Imagine that. It doesn't seem like that could be true but it is. God's love for our loved ones is actually stronger than ours even though that seems impossible. And we are hopeful because we believe where they have gone, we will someday go too. And while most of us don't want that day to come sooner than it needs to, we do get some comfort in knowing our separation from our loved ones will be no more. The Lord Jesus died to make it so. And nothing can undo that, nothing can reverse that, nothing can undermine that. The victory



Two saints that we celebrate in Hawai'i on All Saints' Day are St. Damien and St. Marianne.

has been won—for our loved ones and for us too. Of course, believing in all the good things this day represents does not take the pain away, does not magically make everything better. Unfortunately, it doesn't work that way. It's a process that actually takes a lifetime, a continual replacing of sorrow we feel with the joy and peace only God can give. And so we pray for that day—pray for a little bit of ability to accept, a little bit of comfort, a little bit of happiness in knowing our loved ones are happier than they have ever been. And if you are one of those people who aren't currently mourning someone dear to you, today is a reminder to reach out to those who are, to be that companion, that shoulder to cry on, that attentive ear, that compassionate presence. It is during these times we need

Special blessings to all our Veterans who risked their lives, for their love and commitment to our country. May God bless them and their families. Lord bless also the veterans who lost their lives in order so that we can enjoy our freedom!

Thanksgiving Day

We thank God with love, for all the many miracles and gifts He has given us in this life. We are to share God's love, as a gift to Him!

Jesus I trust in You! Amen! ✨

Deacon Patrick Constantino retired from active Ministry on July 1, 2022. He is still a Deacon in good standing with full faculties to perform all sacraments in the Diocese of Honolulu Hawai'i. Constantino has been ordained for thirty-seven years. He is the first Filipino Deacon in the Diocese of Honolulu. Prior

"We thank God with love, for all the many miracles and gifts He has given us in this life. We are to share God's love, as a gift to Him!"

—DCN. PATRICK CONSTANTINO

each other more than ever. And while no one can ever replace anyone in the life of anyone else, we certainly can make one another realize we don't have to go through the painful times in life alone. We're all in this together. A perfect description of what we are celebrating today. We are all in this together—the living and those who are living out of view but not out of reach. So let's continue to reach out in love, to those who have gone before us, those in our families and workplaces, and neighborhoods, and even those sitting next to us. It might just make a painful time a little less so. Thank you God for loving all the people I have loved. And loving me too!

to his ordination, Constantino was in government—first appointed in 1966 as Assistant Sergeant of Arms by the Speaker of the House Elmer F. Cravalho. When Cravalho became Maui's first Mayor, Constantino became his Executive Assistant—the first of Filipino ancestry. Later, Constantino became the first County Treasurer of Filipino ancestry and the first County Grants Administrator and Risk Manager of Filipino ancestry. Constantino



is married to his lovely wife Corazon for sixty-four years. They are blessed with four children, eleven grandchildren, and fifteen great grandchildren.

November 11th, Veterans Day



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Let's Talk Pinoy! | from p. 11

Accounting, from the University of Hawai'i - West O'ahu. She is currently the Administrative Officer at the County of Maui, Department of Finance. Butay is the owner of Maui Balsamic Vinegar and is a licensed Resident Producer of Life Insurance with World Financial Group and an In-



dependent Consultant of Saladmaster. She is a part of Saladmaster's Travel Club and won an all-expenses paid trip to Cancún, Mexico. Butay has traveled to Texas, the Philippines and Thailand as one of the delegates from Island Healthy Solutions, a Saladmaster dealer on Maui.

Kwento Kwentuhan

Celebrating Christmas as a Community

Gathering Maui style with Filipino spirit.

Liza A Pierce of "A Maui Blog" | IMAGES COURTESY LIZA PIERCE

Christmas on Maui has always been more than twinkling lights and gift-giving—it's about community. Whether you grew up in Hawai'i or came from the Philippines, this season reminds us how important it is to gather, support one another and celebrate the spirit of *Aloha* and *Bayanihan* (community unity).

Across the island, Christmas feels alive in small-town events, local markets, concerts and church gatherings. And in true Filipino fashion, togetherness is at the heart of it all.

Holiday Markets and the Joy of Buying Local

Christmas on Maui means an abundance of holiday markets bringing artisans, food makers, farmers and families together. In almost every town, you'll find pop-up fairs where you can shop for handmade crafts, baked goods, jewelry, art and locally grown treats.

These markets aren't just places to buy gifts—they strengthen connections. Supporting local vendors helps small businesses thrive, especially as they continue to recover and rebuild. Many holiday fairs also feature Filipino food booths, music and cultural displays, making the experience feel like a warm gathering of neighbors.

Buying local becomes an act of community care and a beautiful way to share Maui-made treasures with loved ones.

Community Events That Bring Us Together

Some of Maui's most charming celebrations happen in tight-knit

neighborhoods. Upcountry, the Pukalani Golf Cart Christmas Parade has quickly become a beloved tradition. Decorated golf carts—glowing with lights, garlands and joyful riders—roll through the neighborhood as families line the streets to wave and cheer. It's simple, sweet and full of heart.

Annual Christmas festivities fill the town with music, art and holiday cheer on Wailuku 1st Friday, Kihei 4th Friday, and Pā'ia community events. Shops stay open a little later, *keiki* activities pop up along the sidewalks and the community gathers to celebrate the season Hawaiian-style.

All around the island, nonprofit organizations also play a meaningful role. Groups like Kaibigan ng Lahaina, formed to support the Filipino community after the Lahaina wildfire, help families come together for healing, prayer and celebration. Whether through gift-giving programs, community meals or volunteer efforts, their presence reminds us Christmas is about lifting up one another—especially during challenging times.

Church, Faith and Spiritual Traditions

For many Filipino families on Maui, church is central to Christmas. Seasonal services become a place to reconnect, reflect and give thanks. Some parishes host festive gatherings, special choir performances or holiday outreaches bringing local and Filipino traditions together.

And while *Simbang Gabi* may not be celebrated everywhere on the island the same way it is in the Philip-



Pierce was excited to attend the tree lighting ceremony held at the Fairmont Kealahani Resort this year.

pine, the spirit of faith-filled gatherings and early-morning devotion lives on in the hearts of many Filipino households here.

Music, Caroling and the Sounds of the Season

Christmas music fills Maui streets, parks and churches throughout December. Community bands and choirs perform holiday favorites, creating moments that feel warm and familiar. Concerts in small halls, school auditoriums and town centers bring families together to enjoy the magic of the season.

Caroling adds another special touch. Many of us remember childhood days in the Philippines, going house to house with friends singing "*Ang Pasko ay Sumapit*," "*Sa Maybahay ang Aming Bati*" or "*Pasko Na Naman*." Here on Maui, some families and youth groups still carry on this tradition—sometimes visiting friends, sometimes serenading neighbors. Whether simple or organized, caroling keeps Filipino culture alive and brings joy to those who listen.

Food: The Heart of Every Filipino Christmas

Of course, Christmas would not be complete without Filipino food. On Maui, many households prepare classics like *pancit*, *lumpia*, *puto* or *bibingka*, while others blend traditions by adding *poke*, *kalua* pork or *lomi* salmon to the table. Some families gather early to make *kakanin* while others pick up treats from local Filipino bakeries or holiday

markets.

Like in the Philippines, food becomes the centerpiece that brings everyone—family, friends, neighbors—together.

The True Meaning of Christmas on Maui

Christmas on Maui is a tapestry of cultures, traditions and *Aloha*. It's in the small-town parades, the caroling, the church gatherings and the local markets filled with artisans who pour love into their craft. It's in nonprofits helping families rebuild and in the Filipino tradition of gathering, eating, singing and showing care.

At its heart, Christmas is community. And on our island, that community—woven from Hawaiian, Filipino and many other cultures—makes the season shine even brighter. ✨

Liza Pierce of *A Maui Blog* is an *Interactive Media* enthusiast. She started blogging in 2006 and she loves talking story online and spreading *aloha* around the world. She's been living on Maui since 1994 and considers Maui her home. A wife, a mother, a friend and so much more. She loves *Jesus*; *Maui Sunsets Catcher*; *Crazy About Rainbows*; *End*



Alzheimer's Advocate. Her life is full and exciting here on the island of Maui. Liza is currently the *Digital Media Specialist* with *Hawai'i Life Real Estate Brokers*. She is the author of the book *Maui 2021 and Beyond*.



A Christmas concert with Zeo Worship was held at Hope Chapel Maui.

Sakada Offspring



Grandma and Grandpa Peros



Family Picture with Parents

Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today and creates a vision for tomorrow according to Melody Beattie, an American author. This month's featured Sakada Offspring, Reynold Victor Tagorda surely shows his gratitude to his *Sakada* grandparents, Silvestre Peros, Sr. and Herminia Peros by creating a vision to honor them in Santo Domingo, Ilocos Sur where they were originally from.

Reynold "Vic" Tagorda was born in December 1959 in Vigan, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. He attended Kahului School and Saint Anthony High School on Maui, Hawai'i. He received his Bachelors of Science in Civil Engineering at Saint Martin's University in Olympia, Washington. He also attended the U.S. Air Force Air University: Air War College.

Reynold was employed as a U.S. Air Force Civil Engineer Officer for thirty years and retired in 2012 with the rank of Colonel. He was a Deputy Chief, South and Southeast Policy, Strategic, Plans and Policy Directorate, at their headquarters U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, Hawai'i.

Reynold is married to Joanna Chong Tagorda. She is an Estée Lauder Beauty Advisor. They have two daughters, Jodi Kay Enomoto and Jen-

Reynold Victor Tagorda

Lucy Peros | PHOTOS COURTESY VICTOR TAGORDA 'OHANA

ney Aurea Pantenburg, and a son Joseph Benjamin Tagorda. Jodi is married to Mark Enomoto. They have two children, Chaira (12 years old) and Emet (9 years old). Jenney is married to Jonathan Pantenburg. They have one child, Quinn Penelope (8 years old). Joseph is still single.

Reynold received these prestigious awards, United States Air Force (USAF) (nine medals): Highest Award – USAF Meritorious Service Medal. He also received Department of Defense (medals): Highest Award—Meritorious Civilian Service Medal.

Reynold is active in the community as well as church community. At Saint John the Apostle and Evangelist Church, he is Sir Knight with the Knights of Columbus. He also belongs to the Stewardship Council, Eucharistic Minister of the Holy Sacrament, Senior Ministry, Bereavement Ministry and church cleaning ministry. In the community, Reynold is the President of the Santo Domingo Organization of Hawai'i (non-profit), Founder/President of God's Farm (non-profit), Board of Director, Ilocos Surian Association of Hawai'i, Kunia Orchid Soci-

ety, Mililani Orchid Club and Military Officers Association of America.

Reynold has several hobbies and interests. He enjoys reading, gardening, golfing, fishing and traveling. He has visited twenty-five countries. Besides these, he is also involved in community services.

Reynold has four siblings, Generoso "Gene" Peros Tagorda, Leilani Peros Tagorda Badley, and twins, Richard and Robert Peros Tagorda.

Generoso is a Custodian at Pōmaika'i Elementary School on Maui. He is married to Maria Tagorda. They have two children. Leilani is an Information Technology Specialist, Department of

Veteran's Affairs in California. She has four children. Richard is a Social Service Specialist, Department of Social and Health Services, Division of Home

and Community Living Administration, Washington State. He is married to Lucille Tagorda. They have two children. Robert is a Sous Chef at Palace Luxury Collection Hotel in California. He is married to Mary Jane Tagorda. They have two children.



Vic Tagorda Family



Fourth Tagorda family reunion in honor of Reynante and Aurea Tagorda.

Reynold's maternal *Sakada* grandparents were Silvestre Peros, Sr. and Herminia Torricer Peros who originally came from Camestizoan Baranggay, Santo Domingo, Ilocos Sur, Philippines. Silvestre, Sr. worked as a blacksmith in the Philippines to support his family supplemented by Herminia's income as a merchant. Silvestre was one of the thousands of men who were recruited to come to Hawai'i in 1946 to work in the pineapple and sugar cane plantations. Young Silvestre welcomed the opportunity, so he signed up even if it meant leaving his young wife and his young children, Aurea, Greg and Nenita.

Silvestre came to Hawai'i aboard the *S.S. Maunawili* from Port Salomague. HC&S Company sponsored him. He lived in Camp 13 when he arrived on Maui together with other *Sakadas*. He worked as a fertilizer maintenance man and irrigation system maintenance man until his retirement in 1978.

Life at Camp 13 was a lonesome



U.S. Air Force Colonel Reynold V. Tagorda

one for Silvestre because he missed his family. So in July 1946, his family followed him to Hawai'i. His family was one of the few families living in Camp 13 at that time. Their son James was born in Hawai'i. In 1950, however, Silvestre and Herminia decided the Philippines would be a better place to raise their growing family. So he took his whole family back to the Philippines by boat. Herminia was almost ready to give birth with their fifth child, Sylvester Peros, Jr. while on their way back to the Philippines on the boat. They were afraid Sylvester, Jr. was going to be born on the boat. Fortunately, he was born on land in Santo Domingo on January 3, 1951.

When the Peros children matured into adolescents, Silvestre and Herminia decided once again it was best to have both parents present in raising their children. So in 1960, the whole family came back to Hawai'i except Aurea (Reynold's mom) because she

was already married at that time, however, she was able to come back to Hawai'i a few years later. The Peros family settled in Camp 4 this time. Their youngest son, Jesse was born in March 1962. From Camp 4, they moved to the 6th Increment in Kahului because HC&S was phasing out the camps.

Silvestre, Sr. enjoyed joining his friends at the old Kahului Shopping Center under the monkeypod trees playing cards, checkers and *hanafuda*. He attended *biagans* (chicken fights) with his good friend, the late Jesus Tesoro. Silvestre, Sr. was a very talented barber. He cut many of his friends' hair. Both Silvestre, Sr. and Herminia were very caring and loving parents. They always encouraged their children and grandchildren to have a good education. Their famous line was, "If you no go school, you no mooch good job."

Silvestre, Sr.'s birthday is on New Year's Eve and Herminia's birthday is



Vic's best friend Kkangji Tagorda

on Christmas Eve. So those two days were always celebrated by the whole family. Even though Silvestre, Sr. and Herminia are now gone to another life, the Peros family still celebrates

every New Year's Eve together with a feast of *lechon* (roast pig)!

The following is Reynold's reflection on Grandpa Silvestre Butardo
see TAGORDA p.16

We, Sam and Molly Peralta, joyfully announce the birth of our first daughter, **Kiloa Owens Peralta**, born on October 24th, 2025 at 3:55a.m., in Haiku, Maui, Hawai'i.

She arrived healthy and strong, bringing even more love and light into our home and hearts. Her name, Kiloa, carries the meaning of purity and vision — a reflection of her spirit and the honor of her island roots. We are deeply grateful for the blessing of her life and for the continued love and support of our family and community.

With love,
Sam & Molly Peralta
Maui, Hawai'i




Vic and sister Leilani at Peros ancestral home in Santo Domingo.



Peros grandchildren at the annual New Year's Eve reunion in honor of Silvestre Peros, Sr.

Tagorda ...

from p. 15

Peros and Grandma Herminia Torricer Peros: As I reflect on the lives of my dear maternal grandparents, Silvestre

Butardo and Herminia Torricer Peros, what first comes to mind is my Tagorda family's life in their home in Cames-tizoan Baranggay, Santo Domingo, Ilo-cos Sur, Philippines. My late mother, Aurea Peros Tagorda, was their eldest child. I have vivid memories of the an-

cient lanka (jackfruit) tree in the yard and attending Mass at Saint Dominic de Guzman Church.

My grandfather, affectionately known as "Biti," was a Sakada laborer on Maui, Hawai'i. In May 1966, he petitioned our entire family, my mother Aurea, father Reynante, sister Leilani and brother Generoso to immigrate to the United States. Richard and Robert were born in Hawai'i. I was six years old at the time, and that move changed the course of our lives. It was the seed of all the blessings I've received throughout my journey with Jesus. I am forever grateful to Grandpa Biti and Grandma Erming for who I am and where I am today.

The core values my grandparents instilled in our family were family, education and farming.

While they were alive, we gathered as an extended family at least twice a year, on Christmas and Easter. Today, the Peros family holds an annual reunion every New Year's Eve to honor my grandfather's birthday.

All their descendants have graduated from high school and most have earned college degrees. Though my grandparents lived humbly and were extremely frugal, they were generous when it came to education, offering financial and moral support to all of us. They attended our graduation ceremonies, even those held on the U.S. mainland. Personally, they helped my parents pay for my Catholic education at Saint Anthony High School and Saint Martin's University.

I am proud to be the oldest grandchild in my generation of Peroses. At Grandpa Silvestre's funeral Mass at Christ The King Church on Maui, I had the honor of delivering the eulogy. I took that opportunity to say: "Grandpa, thank you for all your support. Because of you, I was able to graduate from college and join the United

States Air Force and serve our country. I've visited almost all fifty states and over fifteen countries. Grandpa, someday I hope to be a farmer like you.

Fast forward to today: Now retired after serving the United States Department of Defense for 44.5 years, I am preparing for the next chapter of my life—returning to live in the Peros ancestral village of Cames-tizoan, Santo Domingo. There, I will serve as the caretaker of my grandparents' house and three properties, including a rice farm.

With God's grace, I hope to establish God's Farm, a non-profit organization registered in Hawai'i, dedicated to sharing blessings of time, treasure and talent with widows and orphans in the village. Rooted in God's Word, God's Farm will be guided by the wisdom of Saint Mother Theresa: "In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love."

In Santo Domingo, I hope to continue my grandparents' legacy and share the fruits of a Sakada's labor with love, humility and faith. ✨

Lucy Peros is a retired school-teacher, having taught at St. Anthony Grade School and Waihe'e Elementary School. Her late parents, Elpidio Cachero Cabalo (a 1946 Sakada) and Alejandra Cabudoy Cabalo both worked for Maui Land and Pine Company. Lucy enjoys being with other retirees in the Enhance Fitness Program under the Department of Aging three times a week. Whenever she can, she joins other Waihe'e School retirees when help is needed at the school.

Lucy also devotes some of her time as Lector and choir member at both Christ The King Catholic Church in Kahului and St. Ann Catholic Church in Waihe'e. She enjoys being with her granddaughters after school. She also enjoys writing, reading and gardening in her spare time.





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