

Aloha,

We are now at the conclusion of the Hoohanohano I Na Kupuna conference series, designed to Honor Our Ancestors by working to incorporate their knowledge into the contemporary educational and governance systems of Hawaii. The embodiment of this ike, this knowledge, are the cultural practitioners and kupuna gathered with us today.

It may seem that our purpose has been merely to develop a bridge or consultation process that will allow those in government to have access to the knowledge maintained by these people so as to benefit all of the people of Hawaii and to sustain our natural resources. But it is not so simple, because the knowledge of these practitioners is based on the relationship they have with specific aina, kai and wai. And so our task today is to also ensure that their rights and ability to plant, gather and fish are preserved.

Chief Justice Richardson and OHA Trustee Walter Heen have done much in their lives to keep Native Hawaiian traditions alive. We thank them for their efforts and for taking the time to be with us to share their moolelo and their manao. In many ways, their path reflects my own; in that we are Hawaiians who have assimilated into the Western way. We learned to play the hoale game.

Others have kept their feet in the mud of the loi kalo and their hands salted hauling upena and fishing lines. As Hawaiians must we choose one path or another?

Several participants today have proposed that we can reach our goal by ensuring that Hawaiians are on advisory boards and commissions, and I would like to commend Joanne Yukimura's suggestion of a charter amendment to include a cultural practitioner on the Kauai Planning Commission. On the other hand, as Sharon Pomroy noted, we have to ensure that Hawaiians are able to participate with authority, and not be just a voice to be checked off to reach a FONSI.

The two days of this puwalu, and even the three puwalu of this conference series, have not provided us with adequate time to complete our work. But we have accomplished much. Hawaiians from all of the moku in the archipelago have met three times to identify common goals, and these are outlined in the resolution from Puwalu Ekahi and the Statement from Puwalu Elua, which are found in your briefing books.

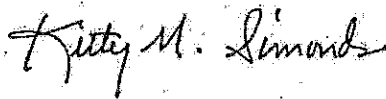
Among the recommendations made in the Puwalu Elua statement is the establishment of a state holiday to celebrate the Kanaka Maoli. Might I suggest that this be a day in which not only the Hawaiians walk their aina,

but also a time, like the Makahiki of old, when those who govern walk the breadth of each ahupuaa.

As Colin Kippen noted, responsibility must be put on government to find the people and not vice versa.

The establishment of Aha Moku consisting of cultural practitioners on each island will facilitate the task of finding the people with the ike, and we are optimistically hopeful that those of us gathered today will join the cultural practitioners in including this goal in their 2007 resolutions.

Mahalo, Aloha, Mele Kalikimaka and Makahiki Hou



Kitty M. Simonds