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# 20 For the Next 20

## Twenty people to watch

JERRY BURRIS, CATHY CRUZ-GEORGE, SHARA ENAY, DENNIS HOLLIER AND JASON UBAY

Energetic and intelligent leaders may be our most valuable resource. We count on them to inspire us, to be our problem solvers, and to guide us as we build our future.

We need to nurture and support our emerging leaders, and that's why Hawaii Business has devoted the following pages to identifying 20 emerging leaders for the next 20 years.

About 200 people were nominated and it was difficult to narrow that list to 20. Age was not a factor. We looked for breakout people who are already having an impact on Hawaii and appear likely to be even more important leaders in the next two decades. We chose them from different fields: business, public service, innovation and politics. (To avoid favoritism in an election year, we did not select anyone who is running for higher office and limited our list to just one elected politician.)

Be assured that many of the people who were not selected this time will be on our watch list as we pick another 20 next year. We'll be soliciting nominations again in the fall.

Many people nominated this year are already well-known, major players in Hawaii. We wanted to reserve the list of 20 for those who are a little under the mainstream radar, so for some prominent, but still-rising leaders, we created a second list of "Ten for Today" (page 38).

Finally, we saw another group of young and dynamic people we also wanted to recognize, so we created a third list of "Five for the Future" (page 31, with profiles online at hawaiibusiness.com).

We hope you enjoy reading about our 20 emerging leaders. We feel they are a strong foundation for Hawaii's future.

**Keith Amemiya, 44**

**Executive director,  
Hawaii High School Athletic Association;  
Starting March 8,  
chief administrative officer,  
UH Board of Regents**

Recalling his time on the Punahou track and cross-country



team, Keith Amemiya describes himself as a “marginal athlete, skill-wise.” As the executive director of the Hawaii High School Athletic Association, he was phenomenal.

After six years as an attorney in commercial litigation, a colleague suggested the HHSAA job in 1998. The association had been under the state Department of Education’s jurisdiction, but became an autonomous nonprofit in 1996, meaning it needed other sources of revenue.



Photo: Expressions Portrait Design

Amemiya’s accomplishments there are staggering: multiyear statewide TV and radio agreements; numerous corporate sponsorships; double the number of state championships with nearly an equal number for boys’ and girls’ sports; and the HHSAA Foundation for scholarships are just a few of his creations and successes.

“Keith is a very strategic thinker and a very organized thinker, and I think he is able to see the big picture,” says Bruce Nakamura, an attorney at Kobayashi Sugita & Goda, which worked closely with HHSAA. He adds that Amemiya is easy-going and well-connected to private- and public-sector movers and shakers.

“From the kamaaina perspective, he’s the ideal, because he’s done the unthinkable – he’s innovated and recreated this otherwise antiquated entity, but he’s done it within the context of being a local guy,” Nakamura says.

Amemiya managed the interests of 94 public and private schools statewide while reforming HHSAA. Those skills will prove valuable at his new job as the liaison between the UH Board of Regents and the system’s president and chancellors.

– JU

## **Bryan Andaya, 38**

**Vice president and COO,  
L&L Drive-Inn**

Bryan Andaya recently traveled to Ookala, a tiny town near Hilo, to see the plantation home in which he was raised. Though the house no longer existed, the trip helped him connect the different parts of his life.

“I’ve come full circle,” says Andaya, who was raised by Filipino immigrants – his mother picked macadamia nuts; his father was a sugar-cane farmer. “To come from that to where I am now, in many ways I’ve come so far, and in



some ways I don't feel any different," he says.

Andaya left the Big Island more than 20 years ago to study law in Oregon and Chicago. In 1997, he returned to Hawaii to work for the Supreme Court and the law firm Imanaka Kudo & Fujimoto.



Photo Courtesy of Bryan Andaya

Today, Andaya is chief operating officer of L&L Drive-Inn, one of the nation's fastest-growing restaurant franchises with more than 200 locations worldwide.

"I hope to spread our aloha and the plate lunch to far and distant areas of the world," says Andaya, who masterminded L&L's "express model," featuring lower startup costs and food-court-style operations.

"Bryan thinks five to 10 years ahead," says Eddie Flores Jr., chief executive officer and president of L&L. "He has an uncanny ability to maximize efficiency and drive growth in existing business models."

Andaya has made similar strides in the community as well. He is past president of the United Filipino Council of Hawaii and serves on the boards of the Hawaii Restaurant Association and the Filipino Community Center in Waipahu.

– CCG

## Andrew Aoki, 41

### Co-founder, 3Point Consulting, and political strategist

Andrew Aoki is not a "normal" guy – and that's a compliment. He's attended some of the best colleges in the nation, including Stanford University, Michigan Law School and Harvard University, but he doesn't exactly scream Ivy League. He's soft spoken, says he never really had a clear career path – even now – and is more concerned about making Hawaii a better place for future generations than padding his bank account.

"I don't want much, and I don't really have expectations from anybody, but I do want my kids – and their peers – to be able to pursue their dreams," Aoki says. "The work I do now in public service will hopefully improve their future world."



Photo: Olivier Koning

So far, that work has been extensive. Aoki is the co-founder of 3Point Consulting and was part of the original staff of Kanu Hawaii. He also helped develop College Connections Hawaii, a nonprofit created to improve educational opportunities for college-bound students, oversaw the grant program at the HMSA Foundation, was an analyst for the state auditor and served as program director for the YMCA.

Olin Lagon, director of Kanu Hawaii, says what impresses him most about Aoki is his selflessness, sound moral compass and expertise in many different disciplines. “Andrew is a good communicator, but he’s not a talker,” Lagon says. “He sees a problem, sees a need and then can strategize and implement a plan. He’s very grounded in Island values and always thinks big picture.”

Aoki is now taking his first stab at running a political campaign as the deputy campaign manager for gubernatorial candidate Neil Abercrombie.

—SE

**Junior Atisanoe, 49**

**Project coordinator,  
state Department of Human Services and Hawaii Public  
Housing Authority**

For many of the homeless on the Waianae Coast, the surest way off the beach probably passes through Lautoa Atisanoe Jr., better known to everyone as Junior.

Junior is the state's point man in a program that connects homeless people in West Oahu with a wide variety of services. Actually, he's more than the point man; he is the program. With no staff, no office and no dedicated budget, Junior works tirelessly to link the homeless with jobs, shelter and especially the social and financial counseling they need to move off the beach for good. It's all about education, Junior says. "We can't just have people live in homes and not know how to stay in a home."



Photo: David Croxford

But he notes that you have to build trust with people before they'll begin to accept help. "I'm looking at starting something called Beachside Aloha Services," he says. He envisions on-the-job training programs, education for young mothers, and counseling about transitional and low-income housing – all on the beach. "What we're going to do is go down there and start educating them on the beach. Telling them, 'If you leave the beach, here's what we have for you.' "

Junior knows this will be tough work. "I cannot say I love my job," he says. "But there's a joy in my job. Thank God, every day I can try to make a difference for somebody."

–DH

**Kyle Chock, 37**

**Executive director  
Pacific Resource Partnership**

When the Hawaii Carpenters Union wants to take a stand on big development issues such as rail transit and the Thirty Meter Telescope, it sends Kyle Chock to advocate for the union's 7,000 members and the state's top contractors.





Chock is a classic case of local boy makes good: He's honest, sincere, humble, smart and knows how to get the job done. His staff says he's a workaholic who often rants things such as: "You know how we get rewarded for hard work? More work!"

For the past five years, the Saint Louis School alumnus has championed fair labor practices and in 2008, launched the Play Fair in Hawaii campaign to encourage developers to adhere to the rules governing Hawaii's construction industry.



Photo Courtesy of Kyle Chock

"Kyle is one of the key leaders who will ensure the viability of the state's construction industry," says Ron Taketa, financial secretary and business representative for the HCU. "He will continue to play a significant role in the future of our state's economic growth and recovery."

Last year, Chock was influential in creating a carpentry preapprenticeship program with the Department of Hawaiian Homelands that allows Native Hawaiian beneficiaries to become carpenter apprentices who then help build homes for other Native Hawaiians. He also serves on the state Land Use Commission and other nonprofit boards such as the Lanakila Pacific Foundation and Child and Family Service.

"I enjoy the fact that my job has generational impact," Chock says. "There's a strong sense of responsibility that comes with that so I always want to make sure I do things the right way."

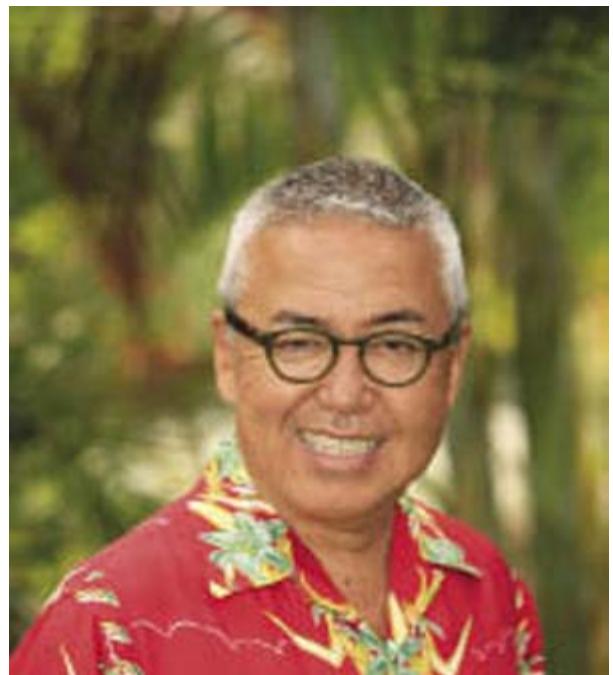
—SE

## Matthews Hamabata, 56

**Executive director  
The Kohala Center**

Colleagues describe Matthews Hamabata as the "then what?" guy because he has the brains, connections and vision to turn big ideas into reality.

A native of Hanapepe, Kauai, Hamabata has leveraged his East Coast experience and network to attract big money and talent. He's grown the center's annual operating budget from \$15,000 in 2001 to \$4 million last year, allowing for increased environmental research and education. Hamabata, a former dean at Haverford College in



Philadelphia and professor at Yale University, has also been able to forge partnerships with national research powerhouses such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Cornell University.



Photo Courtesy of Matthews Hamabata

“We want to grow while remaining small,” Hamabata says. “We’re an example of how a rural community can leapfrog into a global-knowledge economy and participate in an international arena – and do it well.”

Under Hamabata’s leadership, TKC has become a premier advocate for energy sustainability and food self-reliance. It has also conducted important research that has led to county legislation and implemented programs, such as the Hawaii Island School Gardens Network and the Kohala Watershed Partnership, to help the community thrive ecologically, economically, culturally and socially.

“Matt’s philosophy is not about supporting science at any expense. It’s about developing science in conjunction with and respect for the land, people and culture,” says Roberta Chu, president of TKC’s board. “His greatest accomplishment has been his ability to build a team of people that converts theory into actual results – and the whole island and state will benefit as a result.”

–SE

## Kippen de Alba Chu, 45

**Executive director,  
Iolani Palace**

After six years studying international business in Paris and Bologna, Italy, 13 years as a legislative staffer and a couple of more years as a lobbyist for the insurance industry, Kippen de Alba Chu may not have seemed like the obvious choice when he was selected to run Iolani Palace in 2006. “I remember asking the search committee why they were considering me,” he says. But the choice now seems providential.

Puchi Romig, president of the board of directors of the Friends of Iolani Palace, points out that de Alba Chu has garnered support for the museum among legislators and government officials. As the chair of the Statehood Commission, he expanded the civic role of the palace. Even his time abroad has been useful. “He has a world vision for the palace,” Romig says, noting that it has been nominated as a World Heritage Site. “Basically,



Photo: Mark Arbeit

he's the best thing that's happened to us this century."

He's also been a kind of ambassador. "When I first started at the palace, there had been a very strong resistance to engaging the activist groups," de Alba Chu says. "That was something that I set out to change." For example, despite some controversy, Onipaa – Queen Liliuokalani's birthday – is finally celebrated on the palace grounds. Even after the occasional palace takeover, he still reaches out to Native Hawaiian groups.

"No one should underestimate the power of building bridges," he says, "even if, at the time that you build one, it's almost like it's a bridge to nowhere."

–DH



**Kelly Hoen, 52****General Manager,  
The Royal Hawaiian**

Kelly Hoen lives by three core values that sum up why she is a force for the future.

**Respect:** “It was the backbone of my family values. It is now my leadership guiding principle.

Without respect, I cannot serve,” she says.

**Sincerity:** “Listening – really listening – is how I demonstrate a true feeling of sincerity. My heart is huge and I am touched by humility.”

**Passion:** “My energy is abundant and my enthusiasm is real. I find excitement in watching people succeed.”

Hoen is the first wahine general manager in the iconic Royal Hawaiian Hotel’s 83-year history. She reopened the Pink Palace last year after a six-month, \$60-million renovation at the height of the tourism downturn. Her vision for the Royal is to provide guests with an authentic Hawaiian experience while offering luxury accommodations.

“Kelly has done a fantastic job repositioning the hotel to lead us into a new era,” says Keith Vieira, senior vice president and director of operations for Starwood.

Vieira says Hoen is one of the best mentors the Royal has ever had and hopes she will one day replace him as the lead regional executive for Starwood. “Local leadership, especially in Hawaii’s No. 1 industry, is very important and I can see Kelly taking the reins one day,” he adds.

Under Hoen, the Royal has been involved with various community organizations such as the REHAB Hospital of the Pacific, Adult Friends for Youth and Habilitat. Hoen also serves on the boards of the Hawaii Hotel and Lodging Association and La Pietra.



Photo Courtesy of Kelly Hoen

–SE

**Ku Kahakalau, 50****Founder and president,**

## Kanu o ka Aina Learning Ohana

Ku Kahakalau – the daughter of a Hawaiian jazz musician – grew up in Italy, France and Germany. Yet, she always knew that she would settle in the Islands to reconnect with her local roots.

“To be whoever you are, you have to know your language, culture and traditions,” she says. “When I came home at 19 years old, I made it a point to study Hawaiian.”

Today, Kahakalau is a Native Hawaiian expert, researcher and educator and the co-founder of the Native Hawaiian Charter School Alliance.

She is most noted for establishing the Big Island-based Kanu o ka Aina Learning Ohana, an educational program rooted in Hawaiian culture, community and family.



Photo Courtesy of Ku Kahakalau

The “womb-to-tomb” program serves thousands of people from infants to the elderly, and is the core of the Kanu o ka Aina New Century Public Charter School in Waimea.

“I’ve never known anyone to have such passion and vision,” says Taffi Wise, business manager of Kanu o ka Aina. Wise’s three children and four hanai nieces and nephews are testament to the program’s success.

Culturally driven programs are not blanket solutions. They succeed when tailored to specific communities, says Kahakalau, who has conducted extensive post-graduate studies in indigenous education. “The failure of the Hawaiian students is not the students, but the failure of the system to provide a form of education that works,” she says.

–CCG

## Linh DePledge, 44

**Vice president, sales and marketing,  
DTRIC Insurance**

Linh DePledge is committed to solving one of Hawaii’s oldest and most disastrous crises: brain drain. As such, she’s been involved with high school mentoring, served as a judge for the University of Hawaii’s business plan competition and is working with DTRIC’s human resources



department to develop an outreach program for local students.

DePledge is so passionate about nurturing and retaining local talent that you'd never believe she just moved to Hawaii six years ago. She was born in Vietnam and fled at the age of 10 during the fall of Saigon in 1975. Hers was the first and only Vietnamese family at the time in Schenectady, N.Y.



Photo: Photo: Mark Arbeit

“Linh is probably one of the most fearless people I know,” says Susan Ing, executive vice president and director of marketing for Bank of Hawaii. “She brings her East-Coast drive and applies it to our Island-style environment and is effective at just about everything she puts her mind to.”

In 2007, DePledge came up with the concept for the green-haired Deetric Dude to create more awareness and establish a visual tag for DTRIC. Her innovation and creativity have helped the local insurance company compete against national and international insurance giants with much deeper pockets.

“I think when people talk about ‘keeping it local,’ that should also include retaining Hawaii’s local talent,” DePledge says. “I feel very lucky for a lot of things in my life, so I hope to help others realize their potential and create opportunities for themselves right here where they live.”

—SE

**Terri Ann M.K. Motosue, 38**

**Managing partner,  
Carlsmith Ball**

The legal profession in Hawaii, as elsewhere, is undergoing dramatic changes. Big law firms today are no longer ivory towers; they’re working hard to be more engaged and better partners with their clients. As the youngest managing partner in the history of Carlsmith Ball, Hawaii’s oldest and largest law firm, Terri Ann M.K. Motosue is going to be at the center of the profession’s transformation for years to come.

In the past, according to the firm’s chairman, Karl Kobayashi, the legal profession wasn’t noted for its bedside manner. “Now, lawyers have to be good businesspeople,



too, very responsive to our clients' demands and needs," he says. "And I think having people like Terri – people who are not just good technical lawyers, but have good people skills and can explain the law and the consequences of the law better – that will help to demystify the law a little bit." It's also an important part of attracting and retaining clients.



Photo: Mark Arbeit

As the managing partner responsible for business development and recruitment, that's the crux of Motosue's job. But that doesn't mean she's removed from practicing law. Indeed, she still maintains a full stable of clients and continues to put together complicated real estate and financing deals. It's this juggling of legal and business skills that makes her the epitome of the modern lawyer.

Motosue's not blind to the advantages of her position. "If you see something that you want to change or that could be done better, you can get it done," she says.

–DH

**Yvonne Midkiff, 27****Assistant project manager,  
Pankow**

Yvonne Midkiff is a fierce combination of brains and beauty. With such an impressive resume, it's hard to believe she's still awaiting her 10th high school reunion.

Midkiff was born in the Philippines, raised in Oklahoma and moved to Hawaii four years ago to pursue a master's degree in civil engineering at the University of Hawaii. She was influential in starting the local chapter of Engineers Without Borders, a nonprofit humanitarian organization that works in poor communities. She is also a Bill Gates Millennium Scholar, recently received LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design)

certification and is active in the Society of Women Engineers. Oh yeah, and she surfs and models in her spare time.

Five years ago, she was paralyzed when she broke her neck after slipping off a wet rock on Oahu's Maunawili Falls trail. After being airlifted out, she underwent major surgery and intense rehab to learn how to walk again. Four months later, the former captain of her high school's basketball and volleyball teams was running and working out.

"The woman knows no boundaries!" says Leslie Miasnik, head of business development and marketing at Pankow and president of the National Association of Women in Construction. "This is a male-dominated field and at times she's the only woman on the job site, but Yvonne can hold her own and go toe-to-toe with the guys out there."

Midkiff is currently working on a project at Hickam Air Force Base to restore historic homes from the 1930s to their original condition. She hopes to someday teach at the collegiate level and be a role model for other women looking to advance in science and math-related careers.



Photo Courtesy of Yvonne Midkiff

—SE

**Marcus Oshiro, 50****State representative,  
House finance committee chairman**

It is often said that the most powerful legislators are those running the money committees – Ways and Means in the





state Senate and Finance in the House. That alone makes Marcus Oshiro someone to be reckoned with.

As finance chairman, Oshiro effectively decides how the money is collected and where it goes – not a happy job these days.

But Oshiro is up to it. Maybe even born for it. His father is the late, legendary Robert Oshiro, also an attorney and legislator whose true claim to fame was his work as a grassroots organizer of many key Democratic political campaigns.



Photo Courtesy of Marcus Oshiro

The younger Oshiro (born in the statehood year of 1959) has played a less prominent role in the party. But as a legislator since 1994, he's been a consistent voice for core Democratic values, and particularly outspoken as a counter-voice to Republican Gov. Linda Lingle.

Lowell Kalapa, president of the Tax Foundation of Hawaii, has appeared before Oshiro and his committee more times than he can count.

"Unlike some of his colleagues, he does his homework," says Kalapa.

Kalapa contends Oshiro combines social conscience with his father's drive and a pragmatic recognition of changing political realities. "He is a breath of fresh air," Kalapa said.

Oshiro disavows ambition beyond his district and legislative duties. But many believe he is destined for an even more powerful leadership position in the Legislature when the time is right.

–JB

## **Keiki-Pua Dancil, 36**

### **President and CEO, Hawaii Science and Technology Council**

Success came quickly for Keiki-Pua Dancil. While she was still in graduate school at the University of California San Diego, her research on biosensors earned her a patent and was published in the prestigious journal *Science*. Not surprisingly, many Mainland companies tried hard to recruit her.



But Dancil, a Maui girl, always planned to return to Hawaii. So when local biotech company Trex came looking for Hawaii scientists who wanted to come home, she jumped at the chance. Since then, she's been in the thick of biotech in Hawaii: first as director of research and development at Trex; then at Chitopure, after a two-year hiatus while she earned an MBA at Harvard.



Photo: Mark Arbeit

At HiSciTech, Dancil's extraordinary background will be important. "I think that Keiki-Pua represents the future of tech and biotechnology in Hawaii," says board vice-chair David Watumull. "She's somebody who was born and grew up here. She went to Kamehameha Schools. You know her academic background. And she wants to make tech work in Hawaii."

She took her new job with a broad vision in mind. "I could work for one company, and work really hard to move that company forward," she says, "or I could help the whole industry move forward."

Watumull believes Dancil will be a powerful symbol for technology. "It's not about rich people from the Mainland," he says. "It's about Hawaii's people having a future. She can represent that concept extremely well – whether it's at the Legislature, among her peers, or with the traditional power structure, including unions and Bishop Street. I think a lot of people are going to be able to relate to that vision through her."

–DH

## Ted Peck, 43

### State energy administrator

The centerpiece of the Lingle administration – and, in many ways, of Hawaii's burgeoning technology sector – is the Hawaii Clean Energy Initiative. If it's successful, HCEI will transform our energy infrastructure, and our economy along with it. The key to that success will likely be the omnipresent Ted Peck.

He began his career in Adm. Rickover's Navy, coming to Hawaii 17 years ago to decommission a nuclear submarine. After he left the Navy, he worked at the consulting firm Booz Allen, which, under his leadership, grew from a staff of a couple of dozen to more than 200 professionals in Hawaii. "We were very fortunate to get him," says DBEDT director Ted Liu. "It speaks to how compelling is our path



on energy.



Photo: David Croxford

One of Peck's primary roles is as liaison between energy-related businesses and the administration. "The fact that he comes from the private sector means he brings that perspective," Liu says. "He understands what makes business tick, the economic and financial drivers of getting business done. And I think the business community recognizes that."

Liu also notes that Peck, as a civil servant rather than a political appointee, will likely long outlast the administration. "HCEI's target is in 2030. So I view Ted as the continuity for our energy programs."

For his part, Peck brings a messianic streak to the job. "Right now, it's clear to me that my calling is to be the continuity for HCEI, to shepherd this transition to a clean-energy future."

—DH

**Pono Shim, 46****Executive director,  
Enterprise Honolulu**

Pono Shim speaks in parables. But he puts his own twist to them.

One of his favorites is the story of the crabs in a bucket. Put a single crab in a bucket, the story goes, and he easily escapes; put a bunch of crabs in a bucket, though, and they all hold each other back. Normally, the crabs are seen as a metaphor for people. But Shim sees a deeper meaning.

“You know why the crabs act that way in the bucket?” he asks. “Because we put them in a bucket.” For Shim, it’s the bucket that’s the real symbol. “We accuse humans of acting like that without realizing that we’ve created buckets. So we’ve got healthcare buckets, and IRS buckets, and legal buckets, and spiritual buckets, and political buckets, and buckets upon buckets upon buckets. And people are going nuts. Maybe somebody needs to kick the bucket.”



Photo Courtesy of Pono Shim

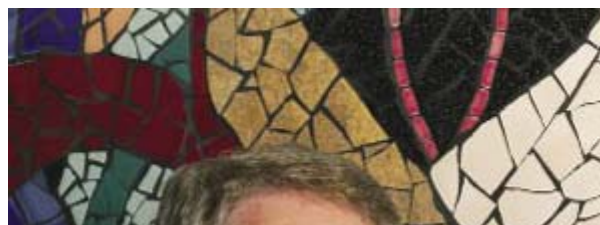
That perspective – the urge to cut through our divisions – is exactly why Shim was selected to run Enterprise Honolulu, says board chairman Robbie Alm. “I think, when we were looking at the challenges facing Hawaii, a lot of them seem to be the inability to get people to talk to each other instead of at each other.” In other words, they’re all in their own buckets.

“Pono has a quiet history of being able to get people to talk about different issues,” Alm says. “I think he has the ability to help people reframe issues, to get away from the traditional ways of looking at them.” That could make all the difference.

–DH

**Kenneth Zeri, 52****President,  
Hospice Hawaii**

Before Ken Zeri took over at Hospice Hawaii six years ago,





there were fears the nonprofit would not survive. Zeri, a former Navy officer, streamlined costs, fine-tuned operations and built a new corporate culture, based on accountability and a shared vision to provide the best care to end-of-life patients. Staff morale improved, which also helped improve care to the more than 700 patients Hospice serves every year.

“Ken is super high-energy and he’s such a visionary,” says Rachael Wong, executive director of the Hawaii Consortium for Integrative Healthcare. “He’s done tremendous things to grow and improve Hospice Hawaii, but I think his work on the policy side will have a much broader impact on the community.”



Photo: Mark Arbeit

In 2009, Zeri spearheaded the campaign that persuaded the state Legislature to pass a law covering Physician Orders for Life Sustaining Treatment. The program, part of a national movement, is designed to improve the end-of-life care people receive and to ensure that physicians honor a patient’s treatment wishes. Zeri continues to be active in Kokua Mau, the state’s palliative care organization, and has consistently led the local movement to redefine what is the best end-of-life care.

“Home care, not ICU care, in my opinion, is the best option for most people, and we can help make that happen,” Zeri says. “I like to think that our organization provides more options for local families and shows that end of life can be filled with dignity and happiness.”

—SE

## **Toby Taniguchi, 38**

**Executive vice president, store operations,  
KTA Super Stores**

Toby Taniguchi is a guy who gets it. He understands that people, just as much as profits, are what define a successful business. He can quickly switch from bruddah to businessman and has a natural ability to relate to everyone from country farmers to key legislators.

Taniguchi was a 2003 Pacific Century Fellow and is the chair of the Hawaii Island United Way. He is also involved





with the Boys and Girls Club of the Big Island, the Girl Scouts Council and the Hawaii Japanese Center. As a participant of the Junior Achievement of Hawaii Island program, he often shares with students his five principles for success: create a vision, work hard, never give up, live by an impeccable moral compass and give back.



Photo Courtesy of Toby Taniguchi

and looking people in the eye, so I don't care if it's going to be a pain in the butt or cost me money, if I give somebody my word, pau, end of story, it will get done."

Darla DeVille, president and chief professional officer for the island's United Way, says, "There are very few people who walk their talk and Toby is one of them. He's collaborative, genuine, driven, compassionate and never points the finger."

DeVile says Taniguchi's greatest strength is his ability to bring the right players together to get the job done. "If we had more leaders like Toby we would be in a much better place."

Besides, you've got to love a guy who signs his e-mails with a shaka \m/.

—SE

## Vinod Veedu, 34

### Senior nanotechnology engineer, Oceanit

To thousands of Hawaii kids, Vinod Veedu is best known as "Dr. V," the host of "Weird Science," a popular Hawaii News Now segment where his outlandish experiments introduce children to the marvels of science.

But Veedu's greatest legacy is likely to be his role at Oceanit, where many people believe he's going to be the catalyst for a new industry in Hawaii.

"Nanotechnology," Veedu says, "is basically a technology that deals with materials between one and 100 nanometers." For comparison, he points out that the thickness of a human hair is about 1,000 nanometers. At this scale, the property of materials changes. Gold is red; conductors become semiconductors; inert materials become catalysts. And because scientists like Veedu can manipulate structures at the molecular scale, nanotechnology promises whole new classes of materials and tools. The implications for Oceanit and Hawaii are enormous.



Photo Courtesy of Vinod Veedu

One example of the potential of this science is nanoconcrete. Veedu and his team have created an admixture

of carbon nanotubes, which not only makes concrete much stronger, but creates a conductive network, making it possible to sense microscopic cracks in the concrete. Nanoconcrete's applications – buildings and bridges and dams – are almost limitless.

"In fact," says Oceanit marketing manager Ian Kitajima, "we're getting ready to spin off a third company – developing building materials, like nanoconcrete – based on Veedu's work." That's just the beginning. "Nanotechnology is going to transform everything we do," Kitajima says. "It will touch every part of the business."

–DH

**Hank Wuh, ageless**

**CEO, Cellular  
Bioengineering Inc.**

Since the death of sugar, Hawaii's greatest export has probably been education, as too many smart, ambitious young people move to the Mainland for school and better opportunities. Hank Wuh wants to stop that brain drain.

Wuh's company, Cellular Bioengineering Inc., inverts the usual recipe for success for a Hawaii tech company: invent something, and then move out into the world to sell it.

"Instead, we go out into the world and look for ingenious, disruptive ideas," he says. "And we purchase these technologies and bring them back to Hawaii to develop for global markets." The result is an eclectic collection of new products, ranging from artificial corneas to high-tech cleaning materials.



Photo Courtesy of Hank Wuh

Wuh hopes his approach makes Cellular Bioengineering a beacon for Hawaii's youth – even those who've already left. "The idea really is we want talented, young, smart people with great aspirations to know there's a place to come home to and use that talent."

Part of that formula, Wuh says, has been the company's internship program. "It's been growing. We have kids who've gone on to medical school, law school, dental school and Ph.D. programs. It's been fantastic, actually."

Wuh believes Cellular Engineering can be the model for other Hawaii companies. "We're in the business of transforming novel, ingenious ideas into tangible products," he says. "It's just that we've made the decision

to do it here in Hawaii. In the process, we want to inspire other young entrepreneurs to do the same.”

—DH

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