

# Kūpono

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Scholarships for returning adult students can help entire families – like Hokulani Garcia's | Page 3



Aloha,

In the face of adversity, the true test of a community is always revealed. The resilience of our UH 'ohana and Maui College has been stretched and frayed, but its real strength is the faith our residents will always have in each other.

The outpouring of support from both near and far is a reminder of how integral UH is to our island communities. We've set up a page on our website where people can support UH students and faculty impacted by the fires at [uhfoundation.org/helpmaui](http://uhfoundation.org/helpmaui).

Meanwhile, students are back at our other nine UH campuses, and at UH Mānoa, RISE opened with brand-new student housing and an innovation and entrepreneurship center – one of only a handful like it in the U.S.

We're grateful every day for the commitment you make to our state university and to the students whose lives are forever changed by the opportunities you make possible.

**Tim Dolan**

UH Foundation CEO and  
UH VP of Advancement

# UH chemistry professor gave crystal clear advice

UH Mānoa emeritus professors of chemistry Roger Cramer and Karl Seff were longtime colleagues. Cramer still remembers the conversations they had carpooling to campus for many years.

“Karl was a good listener, and he was deeply interested in people,” he says. “When he encountered someone who needed some help or advice, he would get involved. If the situation was difficult or risky for Karl, it did not faze him. He would provide the help and support he felt was necessary. That sort of behavior develops solid friendships.”

Seff, who passed away on Sept. 11, 2021, in Honolulu, was more than just a colleague: he was a good friend to Cramer and his family.

“Karl Seff was a friend of the family for as long as I can remember,” says his daughter, Christine Cramer. “My sister and I always called him Uncle Karl. He was an interesting, unique, vibrant man who liked people and enjoyed life. I miss him.”

## Lasting influence on science

Seff was born in Chicago and grew up on a chicken farm in California. He joined the UH Mānoa faculty in 1967 as an assistant professor and was a full professor by 1975, serving as department chair from 2000 to 2003 and directing the research of 19 MS and 12 PhD students.

Seff was an expert in X-ray crystallography, particularly of zeolites – absorbent catalysts that act as molecular sieves commonly used in the refining industry.



“When I was an assistant professor,” says Roger Cramer, “my research reached a point where it became necessary to determine molecular structure, which is what X-ray crystallography does.

“I asked Karl if he would work with me and teach me how to do it. He agreed, and we solved an important structure in my field. It resulted in my first publication from UH.”

*Continued: See SEFF on p. 8*

# Crankstart scholarship helps mom of five earn BA

Hokulani Garcia's long journey to earning her bachelor's degree from UH West O'ahu began when she became a police dispatcher at age 24. But it was her experience during the COVID-19 pandemic

Garcia once dreamed of becoming a lawyer. But after leaving high school, getting her GED and having her first child, she says, "Life changed; things happened." After working at several different jobs,

learn, especially when she found out she could use the credits, along with some of her paralegal training, toward a degree.

She enrolled at UHWO in 2020, but she had to take out student loans because she didn't know how to tap into financial aid.



Hokulani Garcia with her children (L-R) Madoxx, Chanelle, Jonah, Jaxxon and John

years later that gave her the drive to finish her degree and set her sights on graduate school.

Garcia, 41, graduated in December with her bachelor's in public administration with a dual concentration in disaster preparedness and emergency management, and community health. She was recently accepted to a graduate program in public health policy and management at UH Mānoa, where she'll start in the fall.

It wouldn't have been possible without financial aid, including a Crankstart Foundation Re-entry Scholarship that's designed for working adults who've been out of high school for a few, or many, years. Many of the recipients are also parents like Garcia, a single mother of five children.

she became a police dispatcher, a position she held for eight years.

"That's when I slowly started trying to go back to school," she says, but the idea of law school then seemed out of reach for a working mom. She took an online course to become a paralegal and worked for private firms before getting a job in the state Office of the Attorney General five years ago. "Then seeing what I saw during COVID made me realize that maybe my calling was elsewhere."

At the start the pandemic, when the Hawai'i Department of Health needed people to train for contact tracing, Garcia applied and was selected by UHWO professors for the first cohort. The 6-week training program included two college courses that reignited her desire to

**"I thought scholarships were for kids right out of high school," she said. "I didn't realize there were other types of scholarships."**

UH counselors helped Garcia apply for and secure several scholarships, including the Crankstart scholarship. At the same time, her daughter, Chanelle, was preparing to go to college. Now 20, she is finishing her sophomore year, and Garcia's son Jonah will be a freshman this fall.

"That's one of the biggest decisions for parents," she says. "We have kids going into college. Can we afford also putting ourselves through college?"

Garcia also has two young sons, Madoxx, 7, and Jaxxon, 6, in addition to her oldest, John, 22. She hopes her college experience inspires her children.

"They're a big part of my motivation, just wanting them to see that you can do whatever you want to do," she says. "You set your mind and just work for it."

# Okada scholarship helps UH Army ROTC cadets **BE ALL THEY CAN BE**

Before 2nd Lt. Patrick Jason Macatlang was a medical service officer for the 2nd Battalion 11th Field Artillery Regiment, 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks Hawai'i, he was a UH Mānoa ROTC cadet who received the Howard S. and Yukiko Okada Scholarship.

UH alumna Marian J. Okada, a retired U.S. government linguist, established the fund to honor her parents and to support students enrolled in the UH ROTC program. Okada's father served on active duty in the Army for more than 30 years. The scholarship provides assistance for tuition, books and other associated costs.

Macatlang says Okada gives all recipients a copy of *The Obstacle is the Way*, a book by Ryan Holiday that offers a framework for turning obstacles into opportunities.

"It helped me alter my thinking in difficult situations," says Macatlang. "Ms. Okada knows that our careers will not be easy, but with ROTC training and her assistance, my peers and I are resilient and adaptable officers in the U.S. Army."

Macatlang had been on active duty for five years when the Army awarded him a Green to Gold scholarship to attend college. He participated in ROTC at UH Mānoa while earning his bachelor's



2nd Lt. Patrick Macatlang

in kinesiology and rehabilitation science, in hopes of becoming a physical therapist for the Army. He now supervises 18 medics in health, welfare, development, and overall readiness, and is the principal adviser to commanders at all levels in the area of field medical operations and evacuation.

"Patrick has a great future ahead of him. Since I have known him, he has always been a proactive person," says Lt. Col. Jerrod Melander, UH professor of military science.

"His studiousness and willingness to contribute to the collective effort of the organization put him in the top 20% of his commissioning cohort nationally. He is a great asset to the Army medical team."

With his bachelor's degree in hand, Macatlang will begin the Army-Baylor University's Doctor

of Occupational Therapy program in January. He says, "ROTC was very understanding about me being a student first, allowing me to graduate magna cum laude and qualify for this doctoral program."

## Training for leadership

The Reserve Officers' Training Corps, offered at 1,700 colleges and universities in the U.S., prepares young adults to become officers in the U.S. military.

UH's Army program began in 1921 and is the only ROTC unit in the nation with a campaign streamer: a decoration attached to its flag, in this case recognizing its active duty in the days following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

In 1942, many UH cadets – officer trainees – were called into service as part of the Hawai'i Territorial Guard, and subsequently as Varsity Victory Volunteers, performing physical labor at Schofield.

The VVV were Nisei (second-generation Japanese Americans) who later formed the core of the 100th Battalion and 442nd Infantry Regiment, the most decorated unit in U.S. military history.

Seven members of UH's ROTC were killed in action during World War II. In 2012, UH awarded them honorary degrees in memoriam for the educations

they never formally completed, showing immense support for the ROTC program and its legacy.

Nine more graduates of UH ROTC died in the Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan wars. They are all honored as Fallen Warriors, and an annual golf tournament in their memory raises funds for other ROTC scholarships.

ROTC cadets take military science courses alongside their majors at the university. Their first two years are an introduction to the Army; their second two focus on military tactics and small unit leadership. The goal for graduates is preparation to be Army officers and to train for small unit and organization-level leadership.

“Seeing these cadets grow into leaders capable of guiding other soldiers is the most rewarding aspect of this job,” says Melander.

### Obstacles and opportunities

“I was nervous and timid before joining ROTC, but my parents’ support and guidance throughout my university studies kept me going,” says 2nd Lt. Gweneviere

Neth, who also received a 2022-23 Howard S. and Yukiko Okada Scholarship.

“I couldn’t see myself doing anything other than leading in the military and making them proud.”

Neth earned her bachelor’s in public administration with a concentration in justice administration from UH West O’ahu in May.

She says, “My father is a sergeant first class serving in the Hawai’i National Guard. He’s been wearing the Army uniform for as long as I can remember. My mother, who was a military child, had a father and brothers who also served in the Army.

“Both parents encouraged me to join Junior ROTC at Moanalua High School to develop leadership skills, confidence and discipline, and to make a career out of it. They even encouraged me to join ROTC in college.”

“This award is about growth, overcoming past obstacles, and striving to become better,” says Melander. “Gweneviere’s effort led to vast personal improvements,



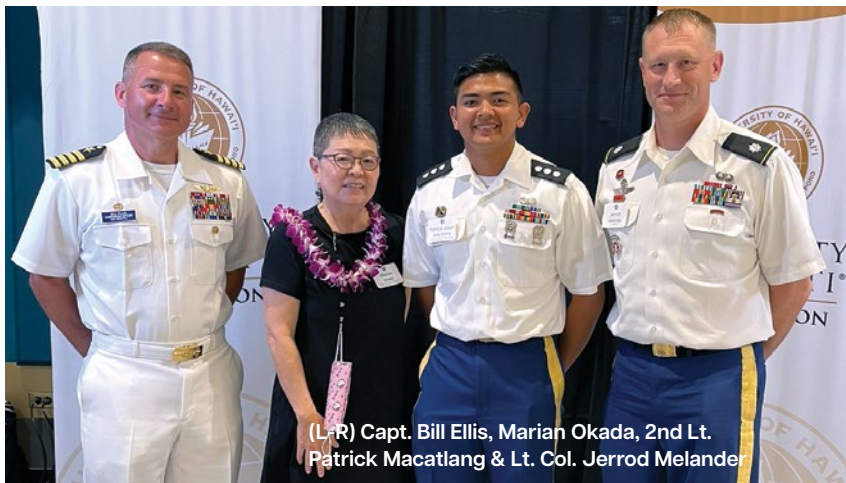
2nd Lt. Gweneviere Neth

which is how we measure excellence in this program.”

“The benefits of character development I received from UH ROTC helped me become the person I am today. I learned it’s okay to make mistakes because that’s how I learn to do better and be better,” she says. “I am currently working out at the gym and going through reading material to prepare myself for the Armor Basic Officer Leadership Course in the next few months.”

Neth’s advice for other students considering ROTC is: “Give it your all. In everything you do, make sure your heart is in it as well. When things get hard, look toward your battle buddy because you’re embracing the suck together. It’s okay to make mistakes; just learn from them.”

She treasures the bonds she’s created in the past few years. “We went from strangers to classmates, to long-lasting friends. They have pushed me to my limits and influenced me to become better.”



(L-R) Capt. Bill Ellis, Marian Okada, 2nd Lt. Patrick Macatlang & Lt. Col. Jerrod Melander



# Changemakers

BONNER PROGRAM INSPIRES COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN HILO

UH Hilo's Bonner Program provides paid opportunities for students to develop as leaders with positive impact on their communities. Through self-reflection, leadership training and partnerships with local organizations, students gain real-world skills positioning them for fulfilling careers and lives of impact.

Students spend 8-10 hours a week in service activities with Hawai'i Island organizations. They also meet weekly to explore social justice, examine community issues, develop cultural humility, and build relationships with each other and with community partners.

A new cohort enters the program each year and remains together for all four years of their undergraduate study. As

they progress, they deepen their community efforts and develop capstone projects according to their passions and concerns.

Devin Brown, a senior geography major with a geology minor, is in his third year as a Bonner leader. For his capstone project, he's working with NO POHŌ, a program affiliated with Zero Waste Hawai'i Island, to reduce waste at UH Hilo.

Zero Waste Hawai'i Island purchases new glass bottles for The Locavore Store's in-house coconut water and cold-brewed coffee in downtown Hilo. Brown says customers can return bottles for a 50-cent store credit per bottle, then Zero Waste Hawai'i Island washes them for reuse by the Locavore Store.

"The store credit is an incentive for consumers to return the bottles, removing thousands of plastic bottles from the waste stream," Brown says. "It's also more economically stable for the business, as the cost of purchasing single-use packaging is greater than the one-time cost of reusable bottles."

The system is beneficial to the consumer, the producer and the environment, Brown explains. "My plan is to bring this reusable system to UH Hilo, helping to keep our campus and Hawai'i a more sustainable place."

"Devin is making an impact in our community through his work," says Ellen Okuma of NO POHŌ and Zero Waste Hawai'i Island. "We are mentoring him in the development of his capstone

project, and I am excited to continue working with him!”

Amena Tep, who graduated in May with a double major in political science and administration of justice, developed her capstone project as a mental health initiative at UH Hilo. She interviewed students about their experiences with and attitudes about mental health, then presented her findings and recommended actions faculty and staff could take easily.

“My mental health journey began with cultural norms that shut down discussion about mental health,” she says, “and it silenced me for most of my life. Once I reached college, I gained the confidence to go against these norms, and to normalize talking about mental health.”

Tep says she gained confidence through the Bonner Program by being able to connect with her cohort. They could discuss their deep, personal struggles and how to address them.

“It helped us to gain knowledge about each other, bringing us closer, so we acted as a unit when we went into the community,” Tep says. “The Bonner program is much more than volunteering; it really allows students to build connections with each other and with the people we meet.”

The Bonner Program aims for meaningful, lasting impact on students and the planet. Students’ learning and networking lead to improved academic performance,

as well as careers and lives of engagement. Their paid internships build Hawai‘i Island organizations’ capacity for serving the community, and students’ capstone projects reflect their visions for changing the world.

**“Engaging with the community effectively must be grounded in an understanding of the history and culture of place,” says Julie Mowrer, Director of UH Hilo’s Center for Community Engagement.**

“Learning about our Hawai‘i Island community from our community members honors their knowledge, creating the foundation needed for students to enter into thoughtful conversations about issues of public consequence.”

Susan McGovern of the National Alliance on Mental Illness – Big Island says the Bonner students are “incredible examples of young people engaged in their educations and actively wanting to make a difference in their community.”

The Governor’s Emergency Education Relief Fund provided the initial funding to establish the Bonner program at UH Hilo. The Kirk-Landry Charitable Fund, recognizing the value of this program for student success, augmented university resources to continue the program.

“The Kirk-Landry Charitable Fund is honored to contribute to this extraordinary program, which fosters youth success and community engagement, sustaining the efforts already in place at UH Hilo,” says Caroline Landry.



“It provides hands-on training to students in supporting their community, so they gain rewarding educational experiences to guide them in shaping their future.”

In doing so, Landry says students learn that their contributions have meaning. “They create a context bringing possibilities for themselves and other young people to thrive,” she says. “Investing in UH Hilo is investing in Hawai‘i Island’s future and all our futures.”

Bonner Program Coordinator Maria Vicente agrees. She says, “These outstanding students are making meaningful connections between their passions and their academics, helping them become true changemakers. I’m excited to see the positive long-term impact it will undoubtedly have on our students and community.”



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## ‘Have a good time by working hard at something you love’

SEFF, *continued from p. 2*

Cramer points out that the chemistry department at UH Mānoa is small and thousands of miles from any other graduate-level program.

“For me it was important to talk to others in the development of my ideas. Karl was the only resource I had available, and he was willing and eager to talk to me about my work and about his,” he says.

“Those car rides to campus were filled with talk about our work, telling each other about interesting things we’d found, and we brainstormed unsolved problems. We each had a deep influence on the other’s work.”

Away from the lab, Seff was passionate about veganism – he served on the board of the Vegetarian Society of Hawai‘i – and his succulent garden, which was featured in several publications including the Honolulu

Star-Advertiser in 2014. He was also active in the Cactus and Succulent Society of Hawai‘i.



### A mentor honors his parents

In 2012, Seff established the Karl, Rose, and Joseph Seff Scholarship, designating a portion of his estate so earnest, capable undergraduate UH Mānoa students majoring in chemistry, mathematics, physics or astronomy could devote their full attention to their studies.

The scholarship honors his parents, who came to America from Ukraine and Poland and worked toward better lives for themselves and their son.

“The object of life is to do no work,” Seff said, soon after setting up the scholarship. “Work is drudgery. I’ve had minimum drudgery and an awful lot of joy. I hope the young people who receive this scholarship work hard and have a life with a minimum amount of drudgery. Have a good time by working hard at something you love.”

From his humble beginnings, Karl became a world-renowned professor in a difficult physical science, says Roger Cramer. “Let his life be an inspiration to students. He has left this gift to them to use as a key to unlock the door to an unlimited future.”

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