UH Foundation’s new home at the Walter Dods, Jr. RISE Center has a new sculpture | Page 4

Susan Yamada and Walter Dods, Jr.
Aloha,

Thanks to your generous support, we’ve reached a milestone in our $1 billion FOR UH • FOR HAWAI’I campaign: we have raised over $650 million in private support. While the numbers are impressive, what’s equally heartening is the growing buy-in from our wider community in support of UH and our students. We’ve seen this up close at our events, including our scholarship celebrations at UH Mānoa and UH Hilo.

We recently celebrated the grand opening of the Walter Dods, Jr. RISE Center, the student innovation and entrepreneurial center and dormitory at UH Mānoa. It’s also our new home as we moved our headquarters to RISE.

Your commitment fuels our efforts and inspires us as we work to ensure UH has the resources to keep providing excellent education opportunities for all students in Hawai‘i.

Thank you for standing with UH and making brighter futures and better tomorrows possible.

Tim Dolan
UH Foundation CEO and UH VP of Advancement
New JABSOM fellowship to teach doctors how to treat liver diseases in Hawai‘i

A $3.76 million gift from UH Foundation board member John C. Couch established the first-ever gastroenterology and hepatology fellowship program at the UH Mānoa John A. Burns School of Medicine to train physicians to treat liver diseases, including cancer, in Hawai‘i. The gift creates the John C. Couch Fund for Hepatology and the John C. Couch Endowed Chair in Hepatology.

The new program will leverage partnerships with health systems that provide JABSOM’s clinical learning environment, including The Queen’s Medical Center, which currently has the only transplant program in the state. The fellowship will unite specialists from diverse disciplines, and create a framework to tackle liver disease and directly improve the quality of life for local patients.

“This generous gift will allow us to develop and grow a program to train hepatologists in Hawai‘i for Hawai‘i patients,” said Lee Buenconsejo-Lum, JABSOM’s interim dean. “The need to proactively create a pipeline of local hepatology specialists is urgent, as the rate of liver disease in our population is forecast to rise. This gift will allow us to get started on that now.”

Hawai‘i’s high liver cancer rate
Hawai‘i has the second-highest incidence of the most common form of liver cancer in the U.S. and a chronic shortage of locally based experts to help prevent and treat liver disease.

Hawai‘i’s higher propensity for liver disease is forecast to become even more pervasive in the years ahead because of the high numbers of adults, especially within Native Hawaiian and Pacific Islander populations, who have diabetes or pre-diabetes that can cause fatty liver disease, a leading cause of liver failure and cancer.

In order to have a liver transplant, and a path to quality of life and survival, some Hawai‘i residents must travel to the continental U.S. For those without the means to travel for the transplant and post-transplant care needed, the options are extremely limited.

“There is a higher likelihood that hepatologists trained here in the islands will make a commitment to practice in our local communities,” said Scott Kuwada, chair and professor of medicine and chief of gastroenterology at Queen’s.

Couch is a liver cancer survivor who underwent a successful liver transplant in 1999. He spent 22 years working in Hawai‘i, most recently as the chairman, president and CEO of Alexander & Baldwin Inc., and previously was president of Matson Navigation Co. He is currently C.M. Capital’s vice chairman.

“As a former Hawai‘i resident for many years, and the beneficiary of advances in the treatment of liver disease, I understand the incredible promise of continuing improvements in the field and am delighted to support JABSOM in providing the best medical training, as well as resources, to deal with the related challenges in the islands,” said Couch.

“We’re grateful for John's incredible generosity with this gift that will touch, and save, the lives of people going through the same health issues he battled,” said Tim Dolan, UH vice president of advancement and UH Foundation CEO. “His foresight gives UH the tools to build a strong program that will allow liver patients to get the care they need here at home.”
A large bronze and copper sculpture outside the Walter Dods, Jr. RISE Center on the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa campus reaches for the sky as a reminder to the building’s student residents and future entrepreneurs to reach for their dreams.

The sculpture, aptly named RISE, was created in 1979 by Kaua‘i-born artist Bumpei Akaji as a gift for the late Masaru “Pundy” Yokouchi, founding chairperson of Hawai‘i’s State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. It arrived in Mānoa this spring as a gift from UH alumni Walter Dods, Jr., and Jay H. Shidler for the student entrepreneurship and innovation center that bears Dods’ name.

Dods is a fan and collector of Akaji’s work and considered him a friend. Akaji, who died in 2002 at age 81, was one of the first Asian American artists to find success in the mainstream art market.

After deciding to make a gift of $5 million to UH for the RISE project, Dods began looking for a piece of art to install in front of the historic Charles Atherton House. When he heard that Yokouchi’s estate was selling art from his home on Maui, he chose the large sculpture with its broad arms pointing skyward as a gift for UH. Even though RISE was to be named for Dods, the programs run by the Pacific Asian Center for Entrepreneurship at RISE are housed in the Shidler College of Business, named for Shidler in 2006 following his first major gift to the school. Dods said he called Shidler as a courtesy to tell him that he wanted to buy the sculpture for the building and would it be OK with him.

“And he said, ‘Absolutely,’” Dods said. “He said, ‘I’ll go ‘half-half with you.’”

Dods has long supported local artists in Hawai‘i – as chairman, CEO and president of First Hawaiian Bank, he built an art gallery for artists born and raised in the islands on the ground floor of the bank’s headquarters in Downtown Honolulu.

He recalls meeting Akaji through a friend, when they would drive out to Akaji’s small studio on Sand Island and talk story as the artist welded copper and bronze into large abstract sculptures.

Dods is especially pleased to have brought Akaji’s work to the corner of University and Metcalf Street because of the history of the Charles Atherton House and its ties to an old house once known as the Metcalf Chateau.

Back in 1941, a group of Asian American art students at UH Mānoa lived at the Atherton YMCA. On Dec. 7, they watched from the roof of the Charles Atherton House as Japanese Zeros dropped bombs in Pearl Harbor. Two years later, the young men would join the Army’s 442nd Regimental Combat Team, the most decorated unit in World War II and the most decorated unit for its size and length of service in the U.S. military.

After the war, seven of the Japanese American and Korean American artists came home to attend UH under the G.I. Bill. Six of the artists, who included Satoru Abe and Tadashi Sato, moved into an old house on Metcalf Street they dubbed the Metcalf Chateau.

Bumpei Akaji would join them there later – he stayed behind in Europe to study art in Italy at the Academy of Fine Arts in Milan and at the Academia de Belle Arts in Florence. When he returned to Hawai‘i, he studied at UH Mānoa and became one of the first students to receive a Master of Fine Arts degree there in 1952.
In the 1960s, Akaji moved from painting to sculpture, forming large sheets of bronze and copper into works that are spread across Hawai‘i, including at UH and public school campuses, corporate headquarters, and even Ala Moana Center.

Yokouchi, a Maui real estate developer tapped by Gov. John A. Burns to launch the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts in 1965, worked to showcase the local artists, and acquired their works, including several by Akaji, for his personal collection at his home in Kula. He later was the driving force behind the development of the Maui Arts and Cultural Center.

When Dods and Shidler purchased the Akaji sculpture, it was unnamed, so Dods sought and received permission from Yokouchi’s children to name it “RISE.”

“I thought it’d be cool to name it RISE, and bringing it back to Metcalf Street is just incredible,” Dods said.

From Maui to Mānoa

Dods assembled a team to move the sculpture from Kula to Honolulu and store it for more than a year, and each company donated its services as a gift to UH:

- Matson, which built a special container for the 14-foot sculpture and shipped it from Maui to O‘ahu;
- Royal Contracting Co., which picked it up at the harbor and delivered it to a warehouse;
- Island Movers, which stored it at the warehouse for a year and a half before delivering it to Mānoa.

While the sculpture was in storage, artist and consultant Kelly Sueda put a team together to restore the sculpture to its original glory, repairing the base and polishing the copper and bronze to a shine.

On April 2, Sueda supervised as RISE the sculpture was delivered to the RISE building, lifted by a large crane and placed on a concrete pad outside the front door of the Charles Atherton House. See installation video at: flic.kr/p/2pH2Pph

GIFT IMPACT
In 2014, Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani College of Hawaiian Language held a blessing for its new building on the campus at UH Hilo. Untying the ceremonial maile vine – in Hawai‘i’s version of a ribbon-cutting – was Lydia Makuakāne, a longtime Hawaiian language resource for the college. Lydia was raised by her grandmother in a south Puna community where Hawaiian was spoken. Her husband and family also spoke the language.

The following year, Lydia’s daughters established the Daniel and Lydia Makuakāne Endowed Fund for students at Ka Haka ‘Ula o Ke‘elikōlani to honor their parents. When students received the first scholarships soon after, Lydia was there to meet the recipients. “Until 2019, she met them all,” says her daughter, Dr. Teresa Makuakāne-Drechsel, “and it was always special.”

Scholars continuing the work
Jaine Kaululehua Ekau finished her master’s in Indigenous Language and Cultural Education in May. She says she exhausted other financial aid options, but was able to continue her studies thanks to the Daniel and Lydia Makuakāne Scholarship, strengthening her foundation for teaching in Hawaiian language schools.

“I will continue my work as a kumu at the Hawaiian medium school so I can teach and prepare our keiki in the mother language of this ‘āina,” she says. “So much knowledge has been passed down to me, and now it’s my turn to pass my knowledge to others.”

The Daniel and Lydia Makuakāne Fellowship was instrumental in Bruce Torres Fischer’s completing a master’s degree in Hawaiian Language and Literature. “Without it,” he says, “I would probably have been unable to set aside time to dive into research for my thesis on native speakers’ pronunciation.”

Bruce says, “I am honored and grateful to receive this fellowship paving the way for graduate students so that we can take the language, culture, and our scholarship to new heights. As a worker at the Kani‘āina: Voices of the Land digital audio archive, it is also special to me to receive support from a scholarship named after one of the cherished mānaleo (native speakers) whose voice I’ve had the privilege to digitize and preserve.”

“We’re honoring their legacy”
Teresa and her husband, Dr. Emanuel Drechsel, first made gifts to the university after they received information from the College of Hawaiian Language seeking scholarship support for Hawaiian language students and
faculty. Dr. Kalena Silva and Dr. Keiki Kawai‘ae’a wrote the flier, and Puanani Woo sent it to Teresa.

“I’ve known Puanani since I was about 14,” she says. “She was my frosh year counselor at Kamehameha Schools Kapālama. Kalena was my high school classmate. Keiki was a classmate at UH Mānoa. These long-standing relationships made me sit up and take notice.

“We first gave to the program because of these relationships,” she says. Conversations with a UH Foundation development officer at UH Hilo inspired the family to consider a longer-lasting fund to honor her parents for their contributions in preserving and perpetuating Hawaiian language and cultural practice.

“We continue to give because of these – and so many more – relationships, these connections to Hawaiian language and culture, because my parents grew up in a time and place where Hawaiian language was primary. We’re honoring their legacy.”

**Investing in the community**

Teresa has a BA in linguistics from UH Mānoa, and Emanuel is a retired UH Mānoa professor and adjunct faculty of linguistics. They established the Drechsel-Hubbard Endowed Fellowship for Indigenous Language-Culture Research, supporting doctoral students of linguistics working on their native or heritage Indigenous languages, especially those of the Pacific and North America. The endowment was named in honor of Emanuel’s sister, Ms. Cornelia Drechsel, and his stepfather, Dr. Laurence Stanley Hubbard, who provided initial funding for this fellowship.

The first recipient, Noah Ha‘ālilio Solomon, defended his doctoral dissertation in April. “We were impressed with the work Ha’a has been doing as a Hawaiian scholar and UH Mānoa faculty member in the Hawaiian Language Department,” says Teresa.

Beneficiaries of the Makuakāne and Drechsel families’ generosity also see the family’s investment paying off for the community.

Alapa‘i Kaulia, a 2023-24 recipient of the Daniel and Lydia Makuakāne scholarship, graduated from UH Hilo in May and plans to enter a graduate program for teacher certification by the state department of education.

“I’ve already been teaching for the past six years,” he says, “but this scholarship has helped me gain the credentials to be a highly qualified teacher at the only immersion program in Kona. Because of scholarships like this, the shortage of Hawaiian language kumu will quickly be resolved. Without them, I would not have made it through college.”
Hawaiian Airlines creates IT & cybersecurity scholarship

Hawaiian Airlines has established its first scholarship at the University of Hawai‘i with a $100,000 gift. The Hawaiian Airlines Information Technology Endowed Scholarship is for UH students studying IT, computer science, cybersecurity and related computer technology programs at one of the UH System’s three four-year campuses.

This new scholarship will help more students build IT careers in Hawaiʻi and beyond.

There were eight inaugural recipients of the Hawaiian Airlines Information Technology Endowed Scholarship during the school year that ended in May. Five are computer science majors at UH Mānoa, two are cybersecurity majors at UH West O‘ahu and one is a computer science major at UH Hilo. IT students at UH Mānoa’s Shidler College of Business are also eligible for the scholarship. All of this year’s honorees graduated from public high schools – seven were from O‘ahu schools and one was from Maui. More scholarships will be awarded in the coming school year.

“As the hometown airline, it is extremely gratifying for us to partner with the University of Hawai‘i to support our local students on their journey to become IT professionals,” said John Jacobi, Hawaiian Airlines senior vice president and chief information officer. “Congratulations to the inaugural scholarship recipients! We wish them an enjoyable and successful academic career at UH.”

In addition to creating the new IT scholarship, Hawaiian Airlines is a longtime supporter of UH Athletics and the Aircraft Mechanic Apprenticeship Program at Honolulu Community College.

The Honolulu-based airline is also one of the local employers participating in UH Mānoa’s IT/Cyber Leap Start Experience Excelerator Program, which strengthens the IT sector workforce pipeline by providing real-world professional experience for UH students approaching graduation and for recent graduates who are seeking work experience.