



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**OHA RECOGNIZES SEVEN KŪPUNA
AS MASTER PRACTITIONERS AND KNOWLEDGE KEEPERS**

HONOLULU – The Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) today held its inaugural Nā Mamo Makamae o Ka Po'e Hawai'i: Living Treasures of the Hawaiian People, a Native Hawaiian community-driven event that honored seven master practitioners and knowledge keepers.

The event was a collaboration between OHA and the PA'I Foundation and was held at Dole Cannery, with about 200 people in attendance.

The Living Treasures awardees are:

- Patience Nāmaka Bacon of O'ahu – for hula
- Josephine Fergerstrom of Hawai'i Island – for lauhala weaving
- Sam Ka'ai of Maui – for carving
- Marie McDonald of Hawai'i Island – for lei making and kapa making
- Nainoa Thompson of O'ahu – for navigating

This inaugural cohort of awardees also includes two posthumous recognitions:

- Elizabeth Malu'ihiki Ako Lee of Hawai'i Island – for lauhala weaving
- Abraham "Puhipau" Ahmad of Hawai'i Island – for videography, documentary

These treasures were nominated and selected by a group of nine cultural experts and practitioners. While other organizations honor living treasures, Native Hawaiian organizations have not had their own program to honor our kūpuna and esteemed elders, said OHA Ka Pouhana (Chief Executive Officer) Kamana'opono Crabbe. "These kūpuna are not just keepers of the flame, they are the connection and bridge to our past," said OHA Ka Pouhana (Chief Executive Officer) Kamana'opono Crabbe. "The more we learn from our kūpuna and apply what

we learn from them, the more we maintain that bond with our ancestors, our homeland, and our identity as Kanaka ‘Ōiwi.”

PA‘I Foundation Executive Director Victoria Holt Takamine said, “The PA‘I Foundation is pleased to provide partnership support to this important event, which aligns well with the PA‘I Foundation mission of preserving and protecting Native Hawaiian culture and arts for future generations.”

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About the Office of Hawaiian Affairs

Established by the state Constitutional Convention in 1978, OHA is a semi-autonomous state agency mandated to better the conditions of Native Hawaiians. Guided by a board of nine publically elected trustees, OHA fulfills its mandate through advocacy, research, community engagement, land management and the funding of community programs. Learn more at www.oha.org.

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