

Mits Aoki Legacy Foundation

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Colette V. Browne



Kathryn L. Braun

9th Annual Meeting & Scholarship Luncheon*



"Motugaafa: Reweaving the Torn Strand"

Saturday, January 9, 2027

Registration Starts at 10:00 AM (event 10:30 - 2:00)
Church of the Crossroads, 1212 University Avenue

- This event is free of charge
- Seating is limited. Register by January 3rd using the QR code or click **HERE**
- Registration is required
- Donations are appreciated

https://tinyurl.com/yn6fjaxw

Announcing the 2026 Mitsuo Aoki Community Service Award: Drs. Colette Browne & Kathryn Braun

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GUEST SPEAKER » *Reverend Piula Alailima*

"Motugaafa: Reweaving the Torn Strand: Healing Through Reweaving the Torn Strand of Pacific Islander Relational Communal Identity & Culture"



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The Mits Aoki Legacy Foundation aims to make accessible the pioneering work of Reverend Dr. Mitsuo Aoki, and others, by teaching and promoting a holistic approach in the areas of health, healing, death, and dying, to individuals, groups, organizations and institutions. Learn more at our website.



For more information on the Dr. Reverend Mitsuo Aoki Scholarship Fund, CLICK HERE



Colette V. Browne, DrPH - Mitsuo Aoki Community Service Awardee

Dr. Browne is Professor Emerita, Thompson School of Social Work and Public Health at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. There, Dr. Browne was the inaugural Richard and Rose Takasaki Endowed Professor in Social Policy, the director of a U.S. Congress mandated national resource center on indigenous elders, chair of the Myron B. Thompson's undergraduate and graduate social work programs, and led the gerontology specialization for master's and doctoral students with a focus on research on social policy, health and aging, and women's issues. As founder and instructor for the School's Gerontology Program, she was privileged to work with and inspired by more than 1,000 students in gerontology and social policy who now practice in Hawai'i and beyond. When asked what inspired her choice of career, she stated that, as a new social worker, she observed the poor and inadequate treatment older adults faced in health settings and "it broke my heart."

She has written extensively on diversity issues, health and social policy and is a Fellow of the Gerontological Society of America and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education. Prior to her work at UH, she was founding director of geriatric services at the Kuakini Medical Center, and one of the founders of the Hawai'i Pacific Gerontological Society. She has served as a gubernatorial appointee to the State's Policy Advisory Board for Elderly Affairs and Presidential appointment to the President's (Clinton) Retirement Summit. Her work, now archived at the UH Hamilton Library, has been recognized nationally by the Gerontological Society of America and the American Society on Aging, and here in Hawai'i by the National Association of Social Workers (Hawai'i Chapter) and the Hawai'i Pacific Gerontological Society. Dr. Browne is currently affiliated with the Workplace Center at Columbia University's Workforce Excellence Program in Japan. She resides in Hawai'i with her husband and is the proud mother of two wonderful daughters and proud tutu of two grandsons.



Kathryn L. Braun, DrPH - Mitsuo Aoki Community Service Awardee

Dr. Braun is Professor of Public Health and Social Work and holds the Barbara Cox Anthony Endowed Chair of Aging at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. Her career in gerontology started in the 1970s and included research in support of the state's first long-term care task force, the Queen's Foster Family program, the Nursing Home Without Walls program, Project Malama, the Growing Old in a New Age telecourse, Kokua Mau, the Complete Life curriculum and booklet series, 'Imi Hale Native Hawaiian Cancer Network, and Hā Kūpuna National Resource Center for Native Hawaiian Elders. From 1995-2009, she served as director of the UH Center on Aging, awarding more than 100 students their Certificates in Aging. She is a past winner of a UH Board of Regents medal for teaching excellence and the Peter V Garrod Distinguished Graduate Mentoring Award. She is a past president of the Hawai'i Pacific Gerontological Society and the Active Aging Consortium Asia-Pacific, a former Peace Corps Volunteer (the Philippines), and a former Fulbright Scholar (South Korea). She also is a Fellow with the Gerontological Society on Aging and the Association for Gerontology in Higher Education.
https://manoa.hawaii.edu/publichealth/directory/kathryn-l-braun-drph/



Reverend Piula Alailima - Guest Speaker

A presentation by Reverend Piula Alailima, titled "Motugaafa: Reweaving the Torn Strand," is part of his doctoral dissertation, "Toe Fa'aaliaina o Aganu'u Fa'a Samoa mai le Gagana Samoan: Recovering the Samoan Way and Culture Through the Samoan Language." It focuses on healing and restoring the rupture in Indigenous Oceania's culture, spirituality, and worldview, which was dominated, supplanted, and replaced by Western-American colonization, the Imperial Christian Church's Doctrine of Discovery, and the ensuing colonial expansion of the early Christian missionary movement. This presentation focuses on reweaving the torn strand of Pacific Islander relational and communal identity—restoring the broken vā (the gap and sacred space of relationships), the strands that hold the weave, the mat, the ie toga (treasured fine mat), and the aiga (household) of all creation together.

Rev. Alailima was born and raised in Samoa and later moved with his family to Hawaii, where he attended Dole Intermediate, Kaimuki High School, and Hawaii Loa College (B.A. in Liberal Arts). He earned his Master of Divinity and Doctor of Ministry from the Claremont School of Theology in Claremont, CA. He served as a pastor in United Methodist Church churches in Washington State for the first 8 years and, for the last 36 years, in Lahaina, Kailua (Keolumana), Wahiawa, and Wesley (Kahala), retiring from active ministry in 2024.