‘Don’t be afraid to venture off. Just visit and visit often. Also don’t forget where you came from, and remember who paved the way from you to get there.’

HUMANS OF UH HILO, PAGE 9
For the second time in the last decade, we have a leap year. Today, February 29, 2016, is an extra day which makes this year 366 days long. So that extra time you have been looking for is today. You now have an extra 24 hours that you didn't have last year, so what are you going to do with it? One of my favorite quotes is from Buddha and he says, “The trouble is, you think you have time.” It reminds me to live in the moment and make the most of the present day. When we say ‘later’ it often turns into ‘never’.

I know many people have asked, and so I wanted to mention that our website has been down since the winter break because of a server crash. We are working to get something up by early next week. Look for the link to our new website on our Facebook or Instagram page.

You will notice many of the articles in this issue are profiles or bios of students. It gives us a peek into the diversity that we are so lucky to have here at UHH. Everyone has a story and we want you to hear it.

A couple weeks ago, myself along with a few other Ke Kalahea members plus other UHH students, took advantage of the Edventure program at the Student Life Center (SLC) and went on the whale watching trip. It was a beautiful clear day and the cover photo of this issue was shot by our writer Alyssa that morning. We docked out of Hilo Bay and went through the bay, up towards Richardson's beach and then up the Hamakua coast. We were lucky to see one humpback whale just outside the break wall, since this has been a slower year for seeing whales. The crew from SLC was awesome and they were especially helpful when a few of us, including myself, got a little seasick. If you have been seasick before you know it is not fun; however, getting to see Hilo and the Hamakua coast from the boat was worth it. This and many other trips are available to UHH students for free and they go every weekend.

Remember to come see us at ‘News & Brews’ in front of the Ke Kalahea office for free coffee, food, and prizes! Dates: 2/29, 3/14, 4/4, 4/18, 5/2 from 9-11am

A Hui Ho

Editor In Chief
Britni Schock

Cover Photo By Alyssa Grace
In the last edition of Ke Kalahea, we covered the sudden passing of Hawai'i State Senator Gil Kahele, who represented the First District (Hilo region) of Hawai'i Island.

Now, it's his son's turn to serve: Governor David Ige announced Feb. 16 he had appointed Kaiali‘i “Kai” Kahele, 41, to fill the seat the older Kahele held for more than five years in the state Senate. He was sworn into office the following day by Mark Recktenwald, Chief Justice of the Hawai‘i Supreme Court.

“Kai has extensive community support and is committed to completing the work of his father. He has a broad vision for the future of this district and for all of Hawai‘i Island that will serve his constituents well,” Governor Ige said in a press release.

The younger Kahele's strong ties to the Big Island are reflected by his résumé: he is the executive director of Pa'a Pono Miloli'i, a non-profit organization “dedicated to keeping the fishing practices and cultural traditions alive for future generations.” Additionally, Kahele is a Major in the Hawai‘i Air National Guard and a pilot for Hawaiian Airlines.

In accepting Ige's appointment, Kai Kahele was clear in stating who inspired him to seek public office: “My father led by example, and community service was part of my life for as long as I can remember. I am honored to carry on his legislative initiatives,” Kahele said.

As for his priorities while in the Senate, Kahele pointed to the economy, as well as education – the latter of which is undoubtedly shaped by his role as an adjunct faculty member here at UH Hilo.

“...I intend to focus on job creation by strengthening workforce opportunities and small business in Hilo and the state, and I will continue to be a strong advocate for Hawai‘i Community College and UH Hilo,” Kahele said.

A special election will be held this November to determine who will hold the seat for the rest of the older Kahele's 2019. Already an announced candidate for that seat, Kahele is expected to win the election.

“MY FATHER LED BY EXAMPLE, AND COMMUNITY SERVICE WAS PART OF MY LIFE FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.”
HAWAII STATE SENATOR KAIALI'I KAHELE
We believe that to continue the legacy of scientific exploration, every generation must be inspired to learn what we know about our world and the Universe, and how we have come to know it. We also believe that it takes a community to educate a child...and a network of communities to reach a generation." This is Journey through the Universe’s mission statement.

Journey through the Universe is a volunteer-based annual outreach event hosted by Gemini Observatory in which "Astronomy Educators" go into classrooms in the Hilo-Waiakea area and teach students for one class period about various aspects of space science and their careers.

Astronomy Educators are anyone who is knowledgeable and passionate about sharing their knowledge of space science. This includes astronomers, outreach specialists, engineers, professors, IT, and more. At least ten of the participants this year are coming from the mainland just for Journey including NASA SSERVI (Solar System Exploration Research Virtual Institute).

Nearly all of the Mauna Kea observatories participate in this large event that reaches over 5,000 students in one week. This year, there are 84 people going into classrooms which is one of the largest groups yet. However, "Journey isn't just about the teaching, it's about coming together as a community," Janice Harvey, the Community Outreach and Education Programs Leader at Gemini Observatory said. This year is Hilo’s 12th Journey through the Universe and Janice Harvey has been here since the beginning.

Journey through the Universe started out as a national program with a 5-year commitment organized by individual states and funded by NASA. "Big Island's first Journey had only 5 Astronomy Educators! It was very successful. But the very next year, NASA lost all of its funding," Harvey said. That could’ve been the end of Journey through the Universe or Waikoloa. They will have solar telescopes to watch the eclipse with and more information on this incredible event. To keep up to date on the exact happenings of this viewing, follow CFHT (Canada-France–Hawaii Telescope) and Gemini Observatory on facebook. Whether or not there will be a viewing in Hilo is yet to be decided as well. The Astronomy and Physics department at the University does have a solar telescope but whether it is used or not depends on what time the sun sets behind Mauna Kea.

One free public event that will definitely be easily accessible to students is Brian Day's talk at the University on Wednesday March 9, 7 - 8:30pm in STB (Science and Technology Building) room 108. He will be discussing NEOs (Near Earth Objects), their previous impacts (yes, that is a pun) on Earth and its inhabitants, and how we can change our future through amateur astronomy. Be on the lookout for flyers of this event on campus!

Journey through the Universe is not the same every year. It varies depending on community participation and demands and the opportunities every new year presents...For example, last year educators did not go into kindergarten or first grade classrooms because there simply wasn't enough people. But this year, Journey through the Universe is making an effort to go into K-1 classrooms with an inflatable planetarium called the Starlab throughout the spring semester. The Starlab lesson plan will include fun facts about planets in our solar system and Hawaiian stories regarding the western constellations and the Polynesian Voyaging Star Trails. This is an incredibly special opportunity that will hopefully continue next year as well.

Journey's ultimate long-term goal is to become a statewide program that involves and teaches all STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields, so that Hawai‘i students are aware of every career opportunity available. But this isn't something Gemini Observatory can accomplish alone. Even now, Journey is working on expanding its reach to the entire Big Island. Thanks to the participation of CFHT in Waimea, Honokaoa will be a part of this year’s Journey through the Universe. Maybe next year, someone will step forward to expand Journey to Kona as well (there have been requests from schools for this to happen).

Organizing an event of this scale takes a lot of time, effort and passion but the benefits are worth it. "Teaching our students about various career opportunities is how we will get our children, our keiki to stay here," Harvey said.

I personally grew up in Oahu and went to public schools on the windward side of the island all my life. I never once learned that I could be a scientist. In my first year at Manoa, I took an Astronomy course and fell in love. The next semester, I moved to Hilo and I can't imagine a more perfect place. I don't think everyone has to grow up to be a scientist. But I do want every student to know what opportunities are available to them and how special these Hawaiian islands are. I don't anyone to ever miss out on a dream simply because they didn't know about it.
Shouse claims members of the UHHSA executive board have created a hierarchy among the student association. “It feels at times as though Lazareth (Sye) behaves as a dictator; creating rules that centralize power within the executive board and then declares them to be infallible,” Shouse stated. “UHHSA is essentially supposed to work under a “one person, one vote” (the democratic way) policy excluding the president who is not allowed a vote. It seems as though this is not currently the case and that when a senator dares to voice a progressive or even different voice than that of the executive board, they receive backlash.”

Shouse believes the current executive board does not have the same experience with students, talk with them, bring forth bills and stuff like that to our meetings, and in our community. “It feels at times as though Lazareth (Sye) behaves as a dictator; creating rules that centralize power within the executive board and then declares them to be infallible,” Shouse stated. “UHHSA is essentially supposed to work under a “one person, one vote” (the democratic way) policy excluding the president who is not allowed a vote. It seems as though this is not currently the case and that when a senator dares to voice a progressive or even different voice than that of the executive board, they receive backlash.”

“IT is a sad state of affairs and it needs to end,” Shouse stated. “Many of my friends have been discouraged, discriminated against, and in my case, defamed. I felt frustrated with the delay in the president assigning her to work on committees as a student senator, Amber Shouse, is off-again, this time for reasons other than the student association. Shouse believes this can become a reality during upcoming UHHSA elections in May, when students have a chance to elect representatives who they believe will adequately represent them. “This is disappointing behavior in a place of higher learning. Students pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in student fees that have been seemingly hijacked by UH Officials with their own agenda and irresponsible senators who are not being held accountable by their peers. I hope that my resignation, and other unethical actions perpetuated by Campus Center and UHHSA shines a light on the injustices occurring at UH Hilo, and creates the opportunity to hit a reset button.”

Shouse noted UH Hilo will soon be getting a new vice chancellor of Student Affairs. Shouse hopes to work with him/her and other “fair minded” university officials to bring about “fairness, equality, transparency, and promote a vibrant student life where students can fully enjoy, learn, and grow from their college experience.”

“I encourage all students interested in a fair and equal university to work with me, with UHHSA, and with other student organizations to bring about the much needed reform,” Shouse stated. Despite her resignation from UHHSA, she stands to remain involved in representing the students at UH Hilo, working with other student activists to request “reform and transparency” from UHHSA and Student Affairs.

Shouse plans to run for the UHHSA board in May, and encourages all students interested in supporting “student rights, sustainability and positive change at UH Hilo” to run with her. “Universities are supposed to revolve around students and I hope to see students interested in perpetuating the educational experience that they would like to see, which would be promoted through the creation of a Student Bill of Rights,” Shouse stated. “I see UHHSA overseeing all affairs at Campus Center, a right which has already been granted by University Policy and is not currently being practiced. Comparable universities around the country have their campus center run by students. We can do the same at UH Hilo.”
Have you heard of the blog “Humans of New York” started by Brandon Stanton in 2010? With New York City ranking as one of the most diverse in the country, Stanton set out to capture and catalogue the citizens of the Big Apple. Today, “Humans of New York” has millions of followers on social media, is a best selling book, and features people from around the world.

Hilo, 4,881 miles away from the Big Apple, contains a similar melting pot. Everyday you pass hundreds of people of all ages, striving for the common goal of higher education.

A classroom could hold anywhere from 20-100 students. How many of them do you know? How many of them do you really know?

Living in a place as culturally woven together as the islands, Hawai'i provides an amazing opportunity to experience other parts of the world one may never get to see. By getting to know the people you are experiencing this part of life with, you take advantage of that opportunity and learn the most you can from it.

“Health is a primary concern and demands urgent attention in my island of American Samoa. Growing up in our island, I have witnessed the deteriorating health of my people due to severe dietary issues, lack of healthy lifestyles, and cultural eating habits. I wholeheartedly believe that my island people need to be psychologically/mentally educated and physically active in changing the way we eat and live. This is where my desire to be a doctor aspires. It is from seeing my people, young and old, being diagnosed with diabetes, hypertension, kidney failure and heart problems and it seems to be an ever-increasing factor with casualties every week. Our Dialysis unit has been extended twice and there is still a waiting list.

It is my resolute to go back home after my education here at UH Hilo and give back to my people by being the best doctor available to them. I see the need and desperation in my community for our own to rise up and take care of our island people and community but the resources are few and the lucky ones that do make it to the real world always get sidetracked and lose focus, so it is imperative to have strong support from family and community in order to come back strong and secured to help our people.

My plan may seem miles away and out of reach, but I truly believe that if this is where my passion and heart is, then my goals and plan will benefit not only myself and my family but the ultimate goal-to serve and be a blessing to my people and island of American Samoa.”

“College is accidentally butt dialing your mother at 1 a.m. while studying at the steps of campus because your housing doesn't have Wi-Fi and leaving her in a panic thinking her child is getting stabbed or strangled cause all she could hear through the phone is the sound of her daughters muffled cries because she's stressed from lack of sleep and from drinking too much coffee and too much homework and the cat she just saw get run over by a car.”
"I am an exchange student from New Zealand. I've been here just over a month and a half now and I am really enjoying it here. The university has been very welcoming and supportive with an activity filled orientation week and various other events that helped all the exchange students settle in. So far I have gone on various outdoor adventures and also attained my open water certificate for scuba diving. In comparison to NZ, Hawaii is very similar, its summer back home at the moment so the heat and sun intensity is the same and there's always a good few days of rain no matter the season. It's just as green although it is a different type of green; palm trees instead of cherry blossoms line the streets. There is still the same amount of cats, dogs and birds although the birds are very colorful here and you would only find lizards on the coast instead of on your front door. I am looking forward to exploring the rest of the big island and getting used to the odd dining hall and bus hours as they seem forever changing."

"My grandfather had a very large heart, and he gave up a lot to make sure that his keiki had what they needed. For many of us grandkids we know the true giving of this man and appreciate all that he has done. He housed us; taught me how to drive stick; all was had the best snacks after spotting games; celebrated with us in our successes; and comforted us in our failures; he slipped us cash when we didn't have any. I'll never forget the day I picked up my grandpa in my first car and hearing him say good job.

Its funny how after someone is gone it reminds you of all the lessons that they have taught you while they were around. How amusing it is that our minds unpack all of those memories stored away for years just come flooding back like they were yesterday. Is it for our comfort?

1. Family is important. You may hate them now but they will always have your back when it counts.
2. Never forget where you came from and your family traditions.
3. He taught me to always look my best. It's not about showing off, it's about feeling good about yourself. He took pride in how he looked even at 87 he was still turning heads.
4. Don't forget to take a minute breath and have a beer.
5. "No be shame hit max bet" not only on the penny kind (from my first trip to Vegas with him)
6. Enjoy the little things (some of my favorite memories include cooking, fishing, or just sitting out on the lanai)
7. Love with all your heart: women are a hassle and crazy. But if you find one, the right one she will drive you crazy in all the right ways. My grandma hated that one but loved him all the same.
8. Education; my grandfather never had the opportunity to go to college so he made sure we had every opportunity and chance that we could have
9. Work hard
10. Don't be afraid to venture off. Just visit and visit often. Also don't forget where you came from, and remember who paved the way from you to get there.

I know it seems cruel to say 'life goes on', but in actuality it does. People come and they go and the best way for us to remember them is by perpetuation there life lesson that they, might live on forever."
 LEAH WILSON’S STORY  
A perspective on identity and culture

News Writer Brian Wild | Photo Courtesy of Vince Wilson, Wilson Digital Media

A rt and culture are vital aspects of a society, a truth that is certainly understood by Leah Wilson. A performing arts major graduating this semester, Leah is a young woman with a passion for telling stories – whether it be through an image or the stage. Originally from Baltimore, Leah’s family moved to O‘ahu and later to Hilo, “because my dad didn’t want to be cold anymore”… it was either Hawai‘i or Florida and here we are today.”

Still, Leah looks fondly back on her younger years.

“My childhood was filled with art. My mother and father both had visual arts as a hobby and they took me and my brothers to the Baltimore Museum of Art on a regular basis. I was homeschooled on and off throughout my grade school years,” Wilson said. “During the times I wasn’t in a physical classroom I was either training in gymnastics, reading, making short films, dancing, doing some sort of visual art or putting on elaborate scenes with my cousins or neighborhood kids,” Leah said.

In light of Baltimore’s recent exposure in the news for not-so-happy reasons, Leah says her hometown continues to hold a special place in her heart.

“I love Baltimore. I love the people, food and scenery. There’s beautiful architecture and art in the city and also there’s lovely parks and forests along with the Chesapeake Bay Inner Harbor.”

As a result, she bristles at the terms “ghetto” or “slum” when they are affixed to places like Baltimore.

“I find it irritating when people label places based off of sensationalized and often badly reported events no matter where the place may be.”

With today signaling the end of Black History Month, Leah is cynical on how meaningful a difference such events have had on people’s attitudes towards race.

“Black History Month never really meant that much to me. Growing up, especially during my time in the public school system, Black History Month was a broken record that kept retelling the same handful of prettily packaged and approved stories.”

In true millennial fashion, Leah replied that “Most of the black history I learned I had to find on my own and usually found it on Tumbli.”

From the institution of slavery to the conquest of Native American lands, to say that racism has constantly plagued our country is, at this point, all but cliché. That doesn’t make it any less true, however, and 2016 is no exception. For Leah, and for countless others, this is a reality that is lived on a daily basis.

“I usually shy away from talking about race not because it’s a hot-button topic, but mostly because many of the people I’ve spoken to about it in the past didn’t understand what I was saying,” Leah Wilson, senior at UH Hilo

“#BlackLivesMatter protesters are anti-white think that way because we live in a world where white supremacy has permeated the way we think about pride and self love. Anybody should be able say that they love themselves or their people, heritage, or physical traits and not be questioned about their motives.”

“But in the past, and sadly still today in some cases, white people who would take pride in their race would do so by putting other races down. You don’t need to step on someone’s neck to raise yourself up. So when these people see black people celebrating or simply having confidence in themselves they take that as a threat.”

As an art often tailors to culture, Leah concurred with the argument put out by many that specific areas of society – like the film industry – exemplify the view that minorities as “less than”, if not ignored altogether. Hollywood has already gotten plenty of flak for the #OscarsSoWhite controversy, where not a single Academy Award nominee in any of the best actor/actress categories was non-white this year. (Quite an awkward spot for Oscars host Chris Rock, to say the least.)

“#OscarsSoWhite is completely based in valid reason. It’s also not just about black people. There weren’t any nominations for any people of color. Is the Academy saying that there just weren’t any actors of color worthy of nomination out of all the films of the year?” Leah said.

For her senior project, Leah starred in Fabulation, Or The Re-Education of Undine by Lynn Nottage; directed by actor Ken Elliott, a UH Hilo alumnus, the story centers on a black woman, Undine Barnes Calles, who has “made it” – she’s a successful businesswoman in Manhattan – only to have her life come crashing down once her husband deserts her and leaves her pregnant and penniless. Grappling with such a miserable turn of events, Undine returns to her roots in the Brooklyn projects and learns a powerful lesson in rising above life’s challenges. These stories aren’t always pretty, and it had a tangible impact on Leah.

“The story of Undine was significant to me as a performer as I had to go places and experience emotions that were incredibly uncomfortable and I learned how to successfully do that and come out the other side still sane,” Leah said.

With this semester nearing the halfway mark, Leah is already looking forward to her future after college. If there’s anything to be accomplished for the future, it’s her drive to further grow as an artist.

“After I graduate I will focus on building my resume with more acting, directing and even some dance. I’ll also be working with my family businesses, Big Island Beds and Wilson Digital Media, with photography and graphic design. I plan to move to the mainland in about two years to try my hand at show business full time.”

To Leah, and to all aspiring storytellers out there, just keep on keepin’ on.
So I know usually I tell you guys about upcoming events, but I want to tell you about events that happened. So in the first half of February, I got the chance to take part in a lot of fun events. One of the first happened February 3rd. It was a small tabling event with Hohonu, Kanilehua, and Board of Student Publications. Kanilehua and Hohonu wanted to let the student body know when their deadlines were. Board of Student Publications was there... well mostly because I love tabling and wanted to interact with the student body. I had a wonderful time at the event and really loved getting to know the staff from Hohonu and Kanilehua. It was also wonderful to interact with the students who were interested in the publications.

On February 11th, I got the chance to interact with Leomi Bergknut where she went over my Student Leadership Challenge results with me. Student Leadership Challenge was an awesome leadership program I did last semester which really helped me figure out what kind of leader I am. (No surprise, I'm an Encourager.) Leomi Bergknut is the Student Leadership Development Coordinator. Berghurt puts an amazing amount of effort into giving the student body a chance to become better student leaders. She is one of the driving forces behind Ka Lama Ku, which held a conference February 27th about Ho‘okele I Ka Moku Lanakila—Navigating Towards Success.

On February 17th, Student Activities Council (SAC), Campus Center Fee Board (CC Fee), and Board of Student Publications (BOSP) hosted a FLOW together. I had so much fun at this thing. The food was so good, I think I had like at least 2 juice boxes and way too many Gushers. Also there were these peanut butter jelly sandwiches that I definitely ate too many of. Ciarra-Lynn Parinas, BOSP treasurer, made this amazing playlist for the event which had this Britney Spears jam session right in the middle that I had way too much fun dancing too. One of the best things that happened at the beginning of the event was when one of the students who was participating in the event said that the event totally reminded her of going back to what she used to do when she was younger. Since that was the theme, it was great that somebody picked up on it.

Later in the evening when the games started, the event took on a whole new fun aspect when people's competitive sides came out. The game of musical chairs took the most amazing turn at the end when one of the studentship hit-checked their competitor to the ground. Needless to say, it was decided that the two that made it to the end of the game both deserved a prize. While the CSOs were present with three of them hosting, it was great to see some RISOs come out too. My apologies if I am remembering the names wrong, but I believe the Anime Club and the Guild of Games were at the FLOW. It was great to see such a diverse crowd.

Lastly on the topic of the February FLOW, I just want to say a big thank you to everyone involved. To the student body: Thank you for coming to the event, it was so amazing to see so many of you all having fun there. To all the people that came to table: from the RISOs to the Publications (like Kanilehua), it was amazing to have you all there to add to the festivities. SAC, CC Fee, and BOSP: Thank you so much for all of the time and effort and help you provided at the FLOW, it wouldn't have happened without you all. And to everyone who missed out on this FLOW, Board of Media Broadcasting is hosting the next one that is coming up on March 16th. Don't miss it!

February 18th was Student Appreciation Day, and we should all appreciate New Student Programs (NSP) for making that happen. There was a lot of events that happened, however, I was only able to make it to two of them, so those are the ones I'm going to talk about. NSP had this amazing thing called a Freebie Fair where different groups (including BOSP) had the chance to give away free items to anyone who was interested. I had the honor of getting placed right between the BOMB table and the Hohonu table. Brenda Burch was right next to me and she is the most efficient multitasker I have ever known. Somehow she tabled and planned a surprise birthday celebration at the same time, I was so impressed. During the Freebie Fair, NSP was giving away free pizza and believe me, it was delicious.

After the Freebie Fair was a Carnival in Campus Center. Most of the groups who were at the FLOW regrouped to that area. There were so many fun games. BOSP's games was to try to blow a bubble through a hula hoop. I got super excited every time someone would accomplish that goal. It was so amazing to see so many groups working together to create something fun for the student body. It is such a honor to get to be a part of large events like this. I can not thank NSP enough for all they did for Student Appreciation Day, they are all amazing and kind individuals.

The last week of February was the last chance to turn in anything for Kanilehua and Hohonu. Kanilehua is the school's Literary Magazine. Their submission deadline was February 23rd. Hohonu is UH Hilo's Academic Journal. Their submission deadline was February 26th. I am so excited to see what the two publications are going to turn out like. I'm sure you know the other publications, Ke Kalakea, UH Hilo's Student Run Newspaper. (Hint: You're reading it right now.)

There are so many wonderful things to experience and so many amazing people you will meet along the way. I am so happy that I get to make so many new friends and participate in so many different events. I hope that everyone who reads this makes the decision to go to an event, or even to just make a new friend. You are all amazing and wonderful people, and I can't wait to interact with every single one of you.
March is almost here and many students are looking forward to Spring Break, but March brings another big event to University of Hawaii at Hilo (UH Hilo). On March 11-12 at 6 pm to 6 am in Campus Center Plaza, UH Hilo’s Colleges Against Cancer (CAC), a Registered Independent Student Organization (RISO) at UH Hilo, will be hosting the 10th Annual American Cancer Society’s (ACS) Relay for Life. This year’s theme is “Once Upon a Time,” which falls with both the television show and popular Disney movies. CAC invites students, faculty members, survivors, caregivers and the community to join them in a night full of food, fun and entertainment to raise awareness and money for cancer.

Relay for Life first began in 1985 by Dr. Gordon “Gordy” Klatt who took matters into his own hands and created the first City of Destiny Classic 24-Hour Run Against Cancer at Baker Stadium at the University of Puget Sound of Tacoma, Washington. With the support and aid of friends, families and pledges, Dr. Klatt ran and walked for 24 hours around the track and began to think of ways for others to get involved. Dr. Klatt alone was able to raise $27,000 for the fight against cancer and kickstart his idea of a team participating 24-hour event, also known as Relay for Life. In 1986, Dr. Klatt gathered 19 teams at the Stadium Bowl and was able to raise $33,000 from this one event. According to the Relay for Life website, “Gordon ‘Gordy’ Klatt, M.D., founder of the American Cancer Society’s Relay For Life event passed away August 3, 2014, at the age of 71 from heart failure after battling stomach cancer” but his vision grew into a nationwide event that raised over $5 billion to save lives and his legacy is still continued on through Relay for Life.

Cancer is closer than many students think. Brenda Burch, a student at UH Hilo going into her sixth year of Relay, was diagnosed with cervical cancer on June 8, 2015 and has recently been diagnosed with breast cancer on January 28, 2016. As a survivor, Burch says, “it means that you can battle with this disease called cancer that feeds in your body. Surviving isn’t an opposition it’s just the way of life.” She feels she is one of the few that is strong enough to walk among this world with the guidance of those who passed and the strength from those fighting with her. She would like to thank her wife, Kris Quihano, who has been her caregiver, rock and foundation through this transition. “She really stepped up and helped me on my new journey and style. She is my biggest supporter.” Relay For Life is the time for students and the community to fight this battle against cancer. Burch finds happiness when attending Relay since it shows her that she is not the only one fighting this battle and that there are people helping her. Burch explains that ACS has helped her with classes that aid her through her new journey and wigs. She hopes to see many faces at this year’s event, some healthy snacks for the survivors and to be able to walk with her fellow survivors.

Alison Nakata, the Colleges Against Cancer Co-Lead with Erin McClure, is partially in-charge of coordinating UH Hilo’s Relay For Life each year. Nakata informs that CAC promotes healthy living and awareness about the different kinds of cancers that can affect us and those we love. Nakata explains, “an example is, we have an event every year called ‘Pink Out’ where we educate students about breast cancer (self checks for potential tumors, facts about breast cancers and who it can affect, what services are available from ACS, etc.).” CAC’s main goal throughout the year is to raise money for the American Cancer Society and keep the students informed. Kara Morison, the Community Manager for Relay For Life who is Serving East Hawaii, aids Nakata in preparing each CAC chair in their positions and making sure that the event runs as smoothly as possible.

Nakata and Morison explain the ACS as, “The American Cancer Society is a nationwide, community-based voluntary health organization dedicated to eliminating cancer as a major health problem. (ACS) saves lives by helping people stay well and get well, by finding cures, and by fighting back.” Nakata relays for her grandmother, her mother’s classmate and recently for one of her friends from high school who is currently going through treatment for Leukemia. Morison is relaying for her best friend and her family, who had recently lost their father to pancreatic cancer. Morison and Nakata share that cancer has some way affected everyone, whether it be indirect or to the “first-degree.”
both say that anyone can join in the fight either at UH Hilo’s event or online and hope to have “a day where no one has to hear the words, ‘you have cancer.’”

Performers Goody Cacal, a UH Hilo Pharmacy student going into his sixth year of Relay, and Shelby Tangonan, UH Hilo Pre-Nursing student and a survivor who is going into her third year of Relay, have both fell in love with Relay For Life after learning the effects of cancer and wishes to continue the help. Cacal is currently the president of INT Dance Squad, a RISO at UH Hilo, and is in charge of performing at Relay For Life and running zumba for the students. Cacal has performed on stage but says, “while I’ve done plenty of performances in the theater, there is an intimacy and intense energy that you feel while at Relay you just can’t get in a theater.” Tangonan is involved with the Bayanihan Club, another RISO at UH Hilo, and finds joy in performing for a cause. “It feels good to be a part of the event that is raising money for a good cause.” Cacal loves the meaning of Relay For Life, he believes it is more than a big party with activities, entertainment and students. He enjoys how there are also solemn and emotional times through the night where students get the true feeling of the war against cancer. Tangonan who was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in October 2015 and currently cancer free, always looks forward to Mister Relay and the company of her friends and fellow students. She finds that Relay gives hope to those who have none and with the money that is fundraised they get a chance to fight back. Cacal and Tangonan both wish there were a more intense advertising for this event, reminders and more involvement for performers, but hope to encourage students with their performances.

RELAY FOR LIFE IS A DRUG AND ALCOHOL FREE EVENT. FOR STUDENTS WHO WOULD LIKE TO GET INVOLVED WITH THE COLLEGES AGAINST CANCER COMMITTEE PLEASE CONTACT ELLEN KUSANO AT EKUSANO@HAWAI.EDU OR ERIN MCCLURE AT EMMCCLURE@HAWAI.EDU. FOR STUDENTS WHO WISH TO SIGN-UP FOR RELAY FOR LIFE, PLEASE SIGN-UP AT RELAYFORLIFE.ORG AND SEARCH FOR UH Hilo RELAY FOR LIFE AND CLICK “SIGN UP.” FOLLOW THEIR INSTAGRAM PAGE @UHHILORELAYFORLIFE AND LIKE THEIR FACEBOOK PAGE FOR UPDATES WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/UHHILORELAY. THIS YEAR’S RELAY IS MARCH 11 - 12, 2016 FROM 6PM TO 6AM AT CAMPUS CENTER PLAZA.
Sydney Mercer and Pilialoha Kailiawa never thought they would meet again after playing each other in the Northwest Athletic Association of Community College (NWAC) conference tournament in 2014 and again in 2015. Now playing together on the same team this time, 2016 has presented an opportunity for friendship between the two rivals.

“I definitely remember playing against her [Mercer]. She was one of their best players,” Kailiawa said. “She could play both post and shoot. … I could tell she didn’t take crap from nobody.”

Mercer, hailing from Prosser, Wash., attended Prosser High School. She was recruited by several junior colleges straight out of school, making a last minute commitment to Columbia Basin College (Eastern region of NWAC conference) in Washington.

CBC has a recent history of being among the top ranked women’s basketball teams in the NWAC. The Hawks were NWAC champions in 2014 and took sixth place in 2015.

As a freshman, Mercer averaged 9.6 points per game and made an appearance in all 31 games of the season. Her second year she averaged 14.6 points per game, 6.4 assists per game and shot 37 percent from three-point range on the year.

The 5-10 forward transferred to UH Hilo after playing two years for Columbia Basin.

“I chose Hilo for the experience and I had an amazing visit. I got along with the team really well,” Mercer said.

Kailiawa took a bit of a less traditional path during her basketball career, though has been arguably as successful as Mercer.

A native of Pahala, Hawai’i., Kailiawa attended Ka’u High School playing basketball, volleyball and softball. Upon graduating in 2012, she took a year off from athletics and attended Hawai’i Community College before moving to Oregon.

Umpqua Community College (Southern region of NWAC conference), located in Roseburg, Ore., recruited the 6-0 post after her sister Pua played for them.

“I was pretty much recruited before I finished high school. I wouldn’t say that I chose UCC, it was more as if they chose me. With my sister playing at UCC, Coach Dave already knew about me and thus I was recruited,” Kailiawa said. “With the hope that I still had a basketball career, I knew UCC was my only shot.”

Though Kailiawa did not see an excess of minutes on the court during games, she remained faithful to her team. She attended basketball practice at Umpqua while juggling five hours of culinary classes each day.

“My position on the team at Umpqua was more of a mentor. I tried my best to keep our team together even at our worst,” Kailiawa said. “I didn’t play much but I was still a key part of the team.”

Towards the end of her second year at Umpqua, Kailiawa contemplated continuing her basketball career at a university.

During this time, UH Hilo women’s basketball head coach Dave Kaneshiro had spoken to UCC women’s basketball head coach Dave Stricklin in regards to recruiting several of Kailiawa’s teammates.

“Hilo meant home, and after being away for two years I was ready to be back. Like they say, ‘home is where the heart is’ and I knew it was time to get back to my roots,” Kailiawa said.

Kailiawa played for Umpqua from 2013-2015, the same time period that Mercer played for Columbia Basin.

Columbia Basin beat Umpqua in the NWAC championship game in 2014, receiving a trophy and bragging rights that carried over into Mercer’s and Kailiawa’s sophomore seasons.

In 2015, both teams
again made an appearance at the NWAC tournament, where the top 16 junior college teams in the Pacific Northwest competed.

Though Umpqua did not win the entire tournament, Kailiawa did find sweet revenge in beating Mercer and her team in the second round, knocking CBC into the loser’s bracket and crushing any chance for back-to-back titles.

Neither of the two basketball players thought they would play against each other after that, much less play with each other. However, rumor spread that the two would meet again, this time on the same team.

“I found out not too long before school started that Syd would be playing here too. I knew she was a great player,” Kailiawa said.

Mercer, on the other hand, knew no specifics only that “a couple of Umpqua posts were coming.”

Playful animosity lingered between the two rivals until they realized how comparable their basketball backgrounds are.

“I think our junior college coaches were very similar being that, well, they were hard asses. I could tell that both our teams took a lot of yelling and did a lot of hardcore running. You could tell because we were at the top of our regions,” Kailiawa said.

Mercer answered harmoniously when asked about their respective coaches, Dave Stricklin of Umpqua and Cheryl Holden of Columbia Basin.

“I feel like our junior college coaches were a lot a like. They demanded perfection every time we stepped on to the court. And that’s why both of our programs were so successful,” Mercer said.

Stricklin would quote ‘A league of their own,’ to his team, reminding them “It’s supposed to be hard. If it wasn’t hard, everyone would do it. The hard… is what makes it great.”

“Coach Dave instilled in me that quitting was not an option. Being mentally strong was the biggest thing and even though your body wanted to give up, if your mind was right, you’d find a way to push through it,” Kailiawa said.

“My coach taught me that the pain and misery we go through during the off season and preseason is worth it in the end. And just how important it is to put in extra work,” Mercer said.

Playing for UH Hilo (10-9 conference, 10-14 overall) has not been an easy transition for either player as both come from winning programs. Yet Kailiawa is determined to find the silver lining.

“We all have the heart and the mindset to have good games,” Kailiawa said.

“Even though it took us a little while to get used to each other playing habits, we have gotten better as individuals but most importantly as a team.”

The bond between the two junior college players displays admiration for one another, both on and off the court.

“Pili is a very diverse post. She’s very good at finishing down low but you give her enough space, she will knock down a three in your eye,” Mercer said.

“Syd is such a goofball. She brings the team laughter and not only that but her talent. She is a very skilled player and her game shows that. I’m glad I got to meet her and be able to play on the same team because she is a great player and even better teammate,” Kailiawa said.

As the end of the season nears, the dynamic duo holds high hopes for the conception of a playoff birth.

“I’m proud of how far we’ve come and the obstacles we had to conquer to get here,” Kailiawa said. We are a great team and I believe we can finish the season strong and make it to conference.”
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