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# HALIA ALOHA e Dr. Thomas Whelan

Noa Emmett Aluli MD

*Ha'alele koa wa'a, i koa kanaka  
the koa canoe has departed leaving the warriors behind*

*E ho'opiha i ka makalua i hakahaka  
fill the hole from which the plant has been removed*

*Aloha Kakahiaka, Aloha Mai, Aloha Kaua:  
Aloha to this day  
To those from this place - and they who have gone before us  
And Aloha to you*

Greetings from Moloka'i, where I work as a primary care physician and am a Co-Medical Executive Director of the Moloka'i General Hospital, (a Queens Health System company), with Dr. Phillip Waiholo Reyes - who also sends his aloha and from Kaho'olawe, where I roam. Indeed this is an honor to be asked to share some thoughts and memories, in honor of a truly great man. Mahalo, Christal, for reconnecting me with your father, and family.

My first encounter with Thomas Whelan was in 1968-1969. I was teaching at Damien Memorial High School: mathematics! And I was the school's swimming coach. A number of my students and athletes were living at Fort Kamehameha—but I was most interested in checking out the surf at O'ahu military bases. It was there I met Dr. Whelan, and his family. "Small-kind" discussions. However he trusted me more as a chaperone for his daughter Sally and her friends.

In 1969, I entered the University of Hawai'i medical school and we were waiting and hopeful for notification that Dr. Whelan would join the faculty in order to begin the third and fourth year of medical training at the University.

My second encounter was in 1975 and 1976 when Dr. Whelan became the Professor/Chairman of the U of H School of Medicine, Department of Surgery and Director of the Internship / Residency programs. I became one of his first "interns" in the (FLEXIBLE) Integrated Transitional Residency program, a first-year Surgical / Family Practice Residency program.

In January, 1976, I "occupied" Kaho'olawe, (knowing that Dr. Whelan was a trauma surgeon!) and continued to do so on my 48 hours of rest between the 72-hour call schedule at QMC Emergency Room. Unlike other faculty and administrators, Dr. Whelan took the initiative to support me, because what I did while off duty was my own time, even though QMC became the "staging" ground for the Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana' occupations. If convicted with a felony, I would not be able to practice medicine anywhere. I know today, that Dr. Whelan believed in me, but probably was confused with my motives and risks of being charged with "conspiring" against the US Government.

As Dr. Whelan and I talked about my confrontation with the Navy, I acquired the guts and bravery to sit across the tables from military brass such as Generals and Admirals, because I was able to do so with him. Dr. Whelan had set me up with clarity and determination

to discuss my *na'au* (gut feeling) for what was most important to me: the holistic improvement of the health conditions of us Hawaiians.

So to Dr. Whelan, we called you Doctor General, you're a major part of the credit for: my career as a physician, my Hawaiian activism, the ending of the bombing of Kaho'olawe, and now the restoration and remediation and of the island.

Many times, when seeing patients pre and post operative on Moloka'i, or while walking upon Kaho'olawe, or swimming in her waters, I have acknowledged Dr. Whelan, as I do the many *kupuna* (elders) who have stood behind me and my work, and upon whose shoulders we stand today. You have lifted us up, especially when issues have complicated our work.

As Hawai'i had their ali'i—Kamehameha, Lunalilo, Emma, Kapi'olani, Liliuokalani and Pauahi, whose legacies continue to improve upon the health and wellness of their people—so too JABSOM has her patriarchs—Dean Winsdor Cutting, Dr. Charlie Judd, Dr. Fred Gilbert.

Dr. Thomas Whelan joins them, men of a distinctive quality, men who have laid a solid foundation for our medical school and resident training programs for Hawai'i and the Pacific.

I recall an article in 1990, at Dr. Whelan's retirement celebration dinner, of a congratulatory note from President George Bush which I quote: "Your legacy will be the hundreds of physicians who, because of your tutelage and inspiration, will continue to save lives and ease suffering." I will never know if Dr. Whelan played any role, as did Representative Pat Saiki, in ending the bombing of Kaho'olawe. Mahalo Dr. General anyway. And mahalo today, to the Dr. General, as now there are: more than 1500 JABSOM graduates, more than 190 *kanaka maoli* physicians, and more than 60 percent of the physicians practicing in Hawai'i are either JABSOM graduates, or physicians trained in the UH Integrated Residency Programs.

So to you Dr. Whelan, your lasting legacy is a mahalo for allowing people, like us, to compete and collaborate in the advancement of medicine. Our work is to organize the graduates and faculty to position ourselves for the next century of quality health care and wellness in Hawai'i Nei.

*Ha'alele koa wa'a, i koa kanaka  
as you have departed, who will you have left the koa canoe to,  
having departed leaving the warriors behind*

*E ho'opiha i ka makalua i hakahaka  
and who will fill the hole from which you have been removed*

*We will!*

*Naha ke kanaka, ka hale o ke aloha  
we are broken as men, and your house of love is grieved by  
your beloved passing*

*Halia Aloha - fond memories, Dr. Whelan*