

Welina mai kākou! Welcome all honored guests, dignitaries, and most importantly to all of our ‘ohana in attendance. On this momentous occasion, we celebrate the accomplishment of the graduating class of 2022.

Ua lilo kākou i ka mea lanakila e nā hoapuka! Graduates, the victory is ours . It is because of your diligent efforts, your sacrifices, and your eagerness to be steadfast that we are all here today. Our kupuna are here with us and they are proud. We have triumphed over countless adversities and chosen to use them as stepping stones along life's path. Our victory has helped to lift the pains of our past and is the start to new endeavors. As kanaka Hawai‘i we are free. We are not slaves to any master of any kind. Like the ‘iwa of Kāhili or the Mōlī of Kīlauea we soar through each obstacle and allow ourselves to ascend higher than before. Now, we have obtained the gusto needed to pursue higher heights and to truly reach for those things that will bring us peace, joy, and happiness. The phrase “E ‘onipa‘a” which is a humble invitation for us to stand together in pride and in humility so that we can be steadfast in our pursuit to be vessels of knowledge. Our kuleana now is to impart our ‘ike (knowledge) to the rising generations so that they can perpetuate real change in real time for the days ahead of us. The hope of any nation lies in the hands of our children. My love for education goes beyond the infrastructures of a school. This academic year I was given the privilege to become a Hawaiian immersion teacher for the fourth grade. In this time I have learned that our students are the best teachers of our day. Our Beloved Queen Lydia Lili‘u Loloku Wewehi Walani loved her people and she knew the days ahead of us as kanaka Hawai‘i would be filled with opposition. Nonetheless, She had hope in the intellect and ‘ike of her people. Her plea to all of us is to be continual seekers of knowledge. “‘A‘ole pau ka ‘ike i ka hālau ho‘okahi” Not all knowledge is learned or gained in

one house. I am graduating this semester with my BA in Social Sciences with an emphasis in Political Science through UH West O'ahu distance programs. In order to further my own 'ike and to continue my journey as Kumu, I will be starting my Master of Education in Teaching Elementary through the UH Mānoa statewide hybrid (distance) program. We are all kia'i (caretakers) of our 'ike. The change we want to see starts with us. If we want something different, we have to do things differently. Change is inevitable and we must adapt to the times but remain rooted in our 'āina. My foundation is built and sustained by aloha. Aloha has many nuances but the highest meaning that I choose to uphold is sacrifice. True aloha requires sacrifice and no one understood this better than our kupuna, especially our Queen Lili'uokalani. She was willing to bleed every drop of her own blood on behalf of the well-being and prosperity of her people. Our Queen embodied was a woman of charity and we must embody the same kind of love in order to counter the evil that is ever so present. We have much more to do, so be ready for the call to serve. I implore you, let us be our brothers and sisters keeper. Let us be the kia'i that we want to see leading and imparting our 'ike kupuna so that we honor the passing, living, and rising generations to come. E holomua kākou a e 'inu i wai 'awa'awa. Let us all press forward and drink from the bitter cup!