

28th Annual Na Po'e Pa'ahana Awards

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Big Island residents won first and second place awards in five categories as Hawai'i's hospitality industry honored the best-of-the-best of its employees at the 28th Annual Na Po'e Pa'ahana (the hard-working people) Awards. Nearly a thousand employees, family members, and industry representatives from throughout the state gathered for the luncheon ceremony, which was sponsored by the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) and held at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort on Thursday, Jan. 11, 2018.



Hawaii Island finalists take 1st and 2nd place in five categories at hospitality industry awards.

“We’re very proud to recognize the people who are the heart and soul of our visitor industry,” said HLTA president and CEO Mufi Hannemann. “They number in the tens of thousands across the state, and this year we have been able to recognize 60 of the finest individuals across small, medium, and large hotels throughout the state. All of the Na Po’e Pa’ahana honorees embody the aloha spirit at work and in the community, and we cannot be more thankful for their contributions to the success of our industry.”

Recipients of HLTA’s accolades are selected based on nominations submitted by their supervisors and co-workers, and are judged on the basis of outstanding and exceptional service to lodging guests, coworkers, and the community.

A total of 67 awards were presented at the event, emceed by KHON2 co-anchors Howard

Dashefsky and Marisa Yamane.

Clarence Yee, Journeyman Tradesman at the Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows, was named the Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year. “Yee has served 38 years in the industry, and is the most senior person at his resort,” said Hanneman. “His selfless generosity, humility, and excellent teamwork shines not only with his fellow associates, but with everyone he meets.”

This year’s Na Po’e Pa’ahana award winners and runners-up are as follows. Hawai’i Island finalists are highlighted:

Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year:

- **1st Place – Clarence Yee, Mauna Lani Bay Hotel & Bungalows**
- 2nd Place – Branden Gaspar, Waikiki Resort Hotel
- 3rd Place – Juanito Tomas, Marriott’s Ko ‘Olina Beach Club

Manager of the Year:

- 1st Place – Carol Lopes, Embassy Suites by Hilton Waikiki Beach Walk
- 2nd Place – Brandon Maeda, The Westin Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas
- 3rd Place – Anderson Almario, Sheraton Waikiki Bell

Valet Person of the Year Large Property (Over 450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Patricio (Peter) Santiago, The Westin Maui Resort & Spa
- 2nd Place – George Sumida, Prince Waikiki
- 3rd Place – Benjamin Sarian, Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa

Medium Property (200-450 Rooms):

- **1st Place – Oren Yamagata, Waikoloa Beach Marriott**
- 2nd Place – Craig Shimizu, The Kahala Hotel & Resort
- 3rd Place – Nathan Brovelli, Aston at The Whaler on Ka’anapali Beach

Small Property (Under 200 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Rexie Butihi, Maui Beach Hotel
- 2nd Place – Tiki Uikirifi, The Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club
- 3rd Place – James Winston, Luana Waikiki Hotel & Suites

Engineering/Maintenance Person of the Year Large Property (Over 450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – David Rickard, The Westin Maui Resort & Spa
- 2nd Place – Trudenio Ramirez, Sheraton Waikiki
- 3rd Place – Nelson Tomas, Sheraton Maui Resort & Spa

Medium Property (200-450 Rooms):

- **1st Place – Terence Yamasaki, Mauna Lani Bay Hotel**
- **2nd Place – Wayne Ohta, Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel**
- 3rd Place – Rodney Young, Marriott’s Waiohai Beach Club

Small Property (Under 200 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Xing Lin, Hokulani Waikiki by Hilton Grand Vacations Club 2
- 2nd Place – Ferdinand Lagundino, Lawai Beach Resort
- 3rd Place – Ben Simao, Marriott’s Kauai Lagoons – Kalanipu’u

Food & Beverage Person of the Year Large Property (Over 450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Roger Arrieta, The Westin Maui Resort & Spa
- 2nd Place – Willie Aniban, The Westin Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas
- 3rd Place – Thomas Rodrigues, Sheraton Waikiki

Medium Property (200-450 Rooms):

- **1st Place – Sharon Pacheco-Escobar, Waikoloa Beach Marriott**
- 2nd Place – Nancy Dearborn, The Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas
- 3rd Place – Debra Agdinaoay, Andaz Maui at Wailea

Small Property (Under 200 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Robert Bidigare, The Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club

Front Office Person of the Year Large Property (Over 450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Melani Akuna, The Royal Hawaiian, a Luxury Collection Resort
- 2nd Place – Kelly Stutzman, Grand Wailea, A Waldorf Astoria Resort
- 3rd Place – Byron “Keola” Makaiau, Moana Surfrider, A Westin Resort & Spa

Medium Property (200-450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Rebecca “Beccs” Kaneapua-Alexander, Aston at The Whaler on Ka’anapali Beach
- 2nd Place – Denise “Dee Dee” Mikasa, The Kahala Hotel & Resort
- 3rd Place – Craig Pohl, The Ritz-Carlton, Kapalua

Small Property (Under 200 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Tracy Pinnow, Ewa Hotel Waikiki
- 2nd Place – Janine Pagador, Lawai Beach Resort
- 3rd Place – Darwin Van Antwerp, Wyndham Vacation Resorts Royal Garden at Waikiki

Housekeeper of the Year:

- 1st Place – Wilfredo Galicha, Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort
- 2nd Place – Arnel Tuazon, Hale Koa Hotel

- 3rd Place – Brittany Bilbrey, Aulani, a Disney Resort & Spa

Medium Property (200-450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Delia Bernal, The Kahala Hotel & Resort
- 2nd Place – Ador Recaido, Aston Waikiki Sunset
- 3rd Place – Leah Cacay, Waikiki Resort Hotel

Small Property (Under 200 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Remedios Castillo, The Pagoda Hotel
- 2nd Place – Andrea Clemente, Aqua Oasis Hotel
- 3rd Place – Jocelyn Bato, The Surfjack Hotel & Swim Club

Security Officer of the Year Large Property (Over 450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Marvin Rabara, The Westin Ka’anapali Ocean Resort Villas
- 2nd Place – Steven Sotelo, Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort
- 3rd Place – Jameson DeMello, Hale Koa Hotel

Medium Property (200-450 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Shawn Maxwell, The Westin Princeville Ocean Resort Villas
- **2nd Place – Avlyn Moniz, Mauna Kea Beach Hotel**
- 3rd Place – Nathan Chun, ‘OHANA Waikiki East by Outrigger

Small Property (Under 200 Rooms):

- 1st Place – Mark Pasion, Lawai Beach Resort
- 2nd Place – Shawn Uyeda, Marriott’s Kauai Lagoons – Kalanipu’u

Allied Member of the Year:

Alaska Airlines was named the Allied Member of the Year. The company was recognized as a valuable member of the HLTA for its support of Hawai‘i’s visitor industry and the community.

Leader in Sustainability Award:

The Kahala Hotel & Resort, for their exemplary sustainable practices which have been implemented in its daily operations for over 50 years.

Hospitality Educator of the Year:

Charlene Navarro, Kauai High School, for her active engagement in Kauai High School’s Academy of Hospitality & Tourism and enduring support of Hawai‘i’s future hospitality leaders.

Na Po‘e Pa‘ahana Legacy Award:

The Brothers Cazimero, for playing an instrumental role in Hawaii’s visitor industry through the field of culture, arts, and entertainment.

Woman of the Year Award:

Teri Orton, Hawaii Convention Center/AEG Facilities, for her leadership within the hospitality industry, community and HLTA's Women in Lodging & Tourism committee.

Chef/Restaurateur of the Year:

Colin Hazama, The Royal Hawaiian, a Luxury Collection Resort, for his significant contributions to Hawai'i's culinary industry and the community.

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) is a statewide organization representing hotels, condominiums, timeshares, other lodging entities, suppliers, and related firms and individuals. HLTA is dedicated to supporting Hawai'i's visitor industry through education, political action, and membership benefits, and raising awareness about its contributions to communities throughout the state.