

## Living the Aloha Spirit

(#LivingTheAlohaSpirit)

“America’s 250th anniversary is about more than reflecting on our past, it’s about honoring the contributions of individuals who built this country, the innovations that put this country on the map and a man on the moon, and imagining what the next 250 years might look like for our children and the generations to come.” (Rosie Rios, Chair, U.S. Semiquincentennial Commission)

The Charters of Freedom (Declaration of Independence, Constitution of the United States, and Bill of Rights) have been instrumental to the founding and philosophy of the United States.

250 years ago, the signers of the Declaration of Independence taught us vital lessons of personal responsibility, service, and sacrifice, with their mutual “pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor” to protect the “unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness”.

The Constitution united a group of states with different interests, laws, and cultures. The Constitution united its citizens as members of a whole, vesting the power of the union in the people. (National Archives)

“We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union, establish Justice, insure domestic Tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general Welfare, and secure the Blessings of Liberty to ourselves and our Posterity, do ordain and establish this Constitution for the United States of America.” (Preamble to the United States Constitution)

John F Kennedy and Martin Luther King reminded us of the responsibilities in the Charters of Freedom; they also confirmed our responsibility to improve upon our individual actions, values, and moral qualities.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy stated in his Presidential Inaugural Address:

“... we shall pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and success of liberty ...”; as well as,

“Ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.” (This reinforces Americans’ commitment and responsibility to service.) (JFK’s Inaugural Address, January 20, 1961)

Martin Luther King helped us better understand how we should view each other when he said,

“I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.” (I Have a Dream speech, August 28, 1963) (King’s message can be expanded to include other ‘differences’ we may perceive.)

## Aloha Spirit

As we contemplate and plan for the next 250 years, especially in a time of increasing polarization, we individually and collectively have the responsibility of working together to realize the aspirations that the Framers committed to in the Charters of Freedom. Hawai‘i has a lot to offer to the process of fulfilling this. We are asking others to join us by including the “Aloha Spirit” in how we move forward, wherever you live.

As we look to the future and commit ourselves to making wherever we are a better place, we can learn from, reflect upon, and take actions in our community following the core principles of the Aloha Spirit: kindness, expressed with tenderness; unity, expressed with harmony; agreeable, expressed with pleasantness; humility, expressed with modesty; and patience, expressed with perseverance.

The Aloha Spirit “is the coordination of mind and heart within each person [and] was the working philosophy of native Hawaiians ... ‘Aloha’ means mutual regard and affection and extends warmth in caring with no obligation in return. ‘Aloha’ is the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence. ‘Aloha’ means to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen and to know the unknowable.” (The Aloha Spirit is in Hawai‘i State Law, §5-7.5 Hawai‘i Revised Statutes.)

“Spread a little Aloha around the World.” (Mana’o Company) If we act with courtesy and caring (core to the Aloha Spirit), Hawai‘i, America, and the World will be strengthened.

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