Scholarships Pave Way For Tourism Careers

Last March, Hawai‘i Tourism Authority and Hawai‘i Lodging & Tourism Association introduced the Hawai‘i Tourism Ho‘oilina Scholarships (ho‘oilina means “legacy” in Hawaiian) for local public high school graduates pursuing degrees in the tourism or hospitality fields.

The awards consisted of 10 four-year scholarships of $12,000 per student per year to those admitted to a local university campus offering a hospitality degree — and interest was so immediate and strong that the first awards were made by May. That remains unchanged.

This time around, we’ve made some adjustments to the Hawai‘i Tourism Ho‘oilina Scholarships. Ten scholarships will be awarded again, but eight will be for students admitted to University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa’s Shidler College of Business and two to those enrolling at the West O‘ahu campus. UH Mānoa and West O‘ahu are the state’s only public institutions that offer four-year degrees in hospitality, tourism or culinary management. Shidler recently assumed administrative oversight over the School of Travel Industry Management, UH’s preeminent hospitality program. A blue ribbon committee comprised of a statewide group of business, civic and community leaders will again do the honors of selecting Ho‘oilina Scholars.

Additionally, two two-year scholarships of up to $12,000 per student per year will be awarded to University of Hawai‘i Community College students transferring to either Mānoa or West O‘ahu.

Recipients must maintain a 3.0 GPA, complete community service and internship hours during their studies, enroll in Hawaiian culture and/or language courses, and show evidence of leadership development through participation in a travel-related or student association. Shidler, HTA, HLTA and Native Hawaiian Hospitality Association will coordinate their efforts to ensure that the requirements are fulfilled.

I can’t think of a better way for government and business to collaborate than in supporting the educations of our young people. HLTA already offers nearly 60 scholarships for high school and college students, including many for hospitality students, but this is truly groundbreaking in monetary terms and for the future of our young people and the visitor industry. HTA and its president and CEO Chris Tatum deserve kudos for their efforts in creating a legacy for our future by providing the funding for the scholarships through state tourism tax dollars.

We also are very cognizant that our association with professor Vance Roley, dean of Shidler College of Business and interim dean of the Travel Industry Management School,
and his team will enhance and elevate the Hoʻoilina Scholarships into one of the most prestigious offered to Hawaiʻi’s public high school graduates.

Wishing Tua, McKenzie The Best

Two of the island’s most celebrated student-athletes have been sidelined recently because of injuries suffered on the gridiron. Tua Tagovailoa, the record-setting quarterback for University of Alabama’s vaunted Crimson Tide, had a season-ending hip injury during the team’s game against Mississippi State. The Crusader alumnus and NFL pro prospect is expected to make a full recovery following surgery.

Meanwhile, University of Central Florida star quarterback McKenzie Milton, who lettered at Mililani High, continues to recover from a devastating leg injury he suffered last season. He remains determined to return to football and someday play professionally.

Many athletes suffer injuries of varying severity during their careers, which can sideline them for weeks, months and even for the rest of their lives. I speak from experience, having played both football and basketball in high school and college.

But this time away from sports provides an opportunity for any recovering athlete. Instead of hours on the practice field or traveling to games, that time can be repurposed by studying and concentrating on learning — as an education is meant to do. Refocusing one’s time and energy on academics instead of sports can expand knowledge, lead to the discovery of new worlds, and perhaps lead to the exploration of careers beyond the sports world. In fact, while athletes love sports and have devoted years to honing their skills, no athletic career lasts forever. So, it would be prudent to develop, at an early age, the knowledge and abilities that will last for a lifetime.

We pray and hope for the best for Tua and McKenzie and their ‘ohana. We not only look forward to their return to athletics, but also to the many new experiences that await them in all their future endeavors.

mufi@mufihannemann.com

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