



WIL Hawaii Chapter officers and advisors are, from left, Conchita Malaqui, Denise Wardlow, Angela Nolan, Ingrid Lin, Julie Arigo, Melina Hicks, Chelsea Tsuchida, Pam Yagi, Karen Wataru-Nakaoka and Dricka Thobois.

# WIL POWER

## The Women in Lodging & Tourism (WIL) Hawaii Chapter empowers women in the visitor industry and in the community

BY BRETT ALEXANDER-ESTES

Cassandra Robinson, a hospitality operations management student at Kapiolani Community College, first approached the Hawaii chapter of Women in Lodging & Tourism (WIL) in 2017.



Cassandra Robinson

“I applied for (their) scholarship online, and provided an essay statement of my professional and personal intentions within our hospitality industry,” Robinson says.

Leaders of a treatment program for Hawaii human trafficking victims have a longer history with WIL. “WIL Hawaii Chapter has partnered with Ho’ola Na

Pua and has been a generous multi-year supporter,” says Jovanna Gianna-

sio-Fern, the program’s development director.

### 2019 WIL Officers & Advisors

Chairperson: **Julie Arigo**, Halepuna Waikiki by Halekulani

Lodging Member Vice Chairperson: **Angela Nolan**, Vistana Signature Experiences

Allied Member Vice Chairperson: **Conchita Malaqui**, Waikiki Beach Walk

Oahu Representative: **Dricka Thobois**, Ameresco

Kauai Representative: **Denise Wardlow**, The Westin Princeville Resort Villas

Maui Representative: **Lisa Paulson**, Maui Lodging & Tourism Association

Hawaii Island Representative: **Michelle Harrison**, Hapuna Beach Prince Hotel

Advisory Council Member: **Karen Wataru-Nakaoka**, Hawaii Visitors & Convention Bureau

Advisory Council Member: **Chelsea Tsuchida**, Nella Media Group

Advisory Council Member: **Ingrid Lin**, School of Travel Industry, UH-Manoa

Past Chairperson: **Pam Yagi**, Hilton Grand Vacations

HLTA Staff Advisor: **Melina Hicks**, Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association



Jovanna Giannasio-Fern

WIL, a committee of the Hawaii Lodging & Tourism Association, has always aimed to “open up opportunities for the women in our industry,” says Julie Arigo, 2019 WIL chair. “Additionally, we have brought awareness to new topics (like) human/child trafficking . . . and implemented

new initiatives in support of women and aspiring youth who look to find careers in our industry.”

Robinson won WIL’s \$1,000 scholarship last year. “After receiving the



Julie Arigo

scholarship,” she says, “I was able to learn more about WIL.” Robinson then met 2019 WIL Vice Chairperson Angela Nolan, who “has empowered me to strive for my beliefs and goals.”

## A Strong Agenda

In 2019, WIL’s “networking oppor-

tunities, mentorship workshops and educational forums are an ideal way to



Angela Nolan

WIL Scholarship ceremony, Ho‘ola Na Pua’s annual golf fundraiser, a workshop at the first Hawai‘i Hotel & Restaurant Show and gatherings on the outer islands.

“It is my hope to host another Maui event this year, and look at ways to bring some of the programs (WIL



Lisa Paulson

partner) YWCA has on Oahu to Maui,” says Lisa Paulson, WIL’s Maui representative. WIL, she says, will also continue to work with the state legislature on bills that support

programs for women and protect the visitor industry. “We have demonstrated the power of uniting women to accomplish a common goal,” Arigo says, and expects WIL’s current membership (465) to increase 3 percent this year.

stay connected and informed in our ever-changing industry,” Nolan says.

This year’s events include the chapter’s annual “Woman of the Year” award, a “Dress for Success” and

“In conjunction with youth detention facilities and shelters in the state, HNP provides group mentoring sessions to youth at risk of, or victims of, commercial exploitation. Last year, nearly 100 youth were reached through (HNP’s) venue.”

# Hawaii’s Tourney Against Trafficking

This year, WIL volunteers will again assist with Ho‘ola Na Pua’s Annual Golf Tournament.

When: May 6

Where: Mid-Pacific Country Club (Lanikai)

Sponsorships: Ranging from \$500 to \$5,000; teams of four (\$800)

Deadline: April 15

Register: Go to [hoolanapua.org/event/golf-tournament/](http://hoolanapua.org/event/golf-tournament/) or call HNP at 445-3131

This year’s goal, says Jovanna Giannasio-Fern, HNP development director, “is to raise \$50,000 in funding to support our current community-based programs.



WIL and Ho‘ola Na Pua members at a recent HNP event.

## A Strong Network

After Robinson graduates from KCC, she will enroll in two University of Hawaii-Manoa bachelor degree programs: Travel Industry Management (TIM) and Sustainable Science Management. When she joins Hawaii’s hospitality industry, Robinson says, she “absolutely” intends to join WIL.

WIL’s mentor-mentee and other support networks “will help me achieve my professional goals . . . since the network is widely spread throughout the Hawaiian Islands. Also, I know if I have a question, I have multiple awesome women to ask for advice who are willing to support me.”



Ingrid Lin

Often, mutual support doesn’t just create good friendships. In Hawaii’s rapidly changing visitor industry, it also creates good business. Hospitality industry students can help industry leaders understand what Hawaii’s younger generation wants “in terms of their lifestyle, attitudes and behaviors towards work,” says Ingrid Lin, a WIL advisory council member.

The right match of people and positions, Lin says, “will enhance productivity and efficiency, reduce turnover rate and enhance an organization’s value.”

## 2019 WIL Agenda

### January:

- Hyatt Centric Networking Event
- 2019 WIL Woman of the Year Award (Laura Richards)
- 2019 WIL Ho‘ola Na Pua Donation

### March:

- “Dress for Success” at YWCA/
- 2019 WIL Scholarship Awards

### April:

- Ho‘ola Na Pua Golf Tournament Fundraiser

### May:

- HLTA Charity Walk
- Hawai‘i Hotel & Restaurant Show

### August/October:

- Kauai (August) and Big Island (October) WIL Events

### October:

- Wahine Forum