



**HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM**  
**A S S O C I A T I O N**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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*Courtesy: Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA)*

### **31<sup>st</sup> ANNUAL NA PO'E PA'AHANA AWARDS RETURNS AFTER THREE-YEAR HIATUS**

*Event recognizes the best in the hospitality industry*

**HONOLULU** — It's back! After being on hiatus for three years due to the pandemic, the annual Na Po'e Pa'ahana Awards returned as in-person event yesterday at the Sheraton Waikiki, to honor hospitality industry professionals who have excelled in their respective fields. Organized by the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association, this yearly event gives a chance for Hawai'i's tourism industry to recognize employees who embody the spirit of Aloha that our state is known for.

"I'm very pleased to see everyone gather for this long-awaited awards ceremony, often known as the Oscars of Hawai'i's visitor industry. It gave our members the opportunity to reconnect with their peers, and celebrate the accomplishments of our many awardees," said HLTA President and CEO Mufi Hannemann. "Amidst the devastating Maui wildfires in August that ravaged our state and had a direct impact on several of this year's award nominees, witnessing the unity among members of our tourism industry is truly uplifting. The collective support they've shown for each other is remarkable."

This year's awards garnered nearly 250 nominees from various hotels statewide. Two of the most coveted awards were "Manager of the Year" and "Most Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year," with the following winners announced:

- **Manager of the Year:** Nani Kaina, Director of Housekeeping, Wailea Beach Resort
- **Most Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year:** Cathy Troy, Executive Administrative Assistant, Sheraton Waikiki

Irene Pacheco, a laundry attendant from Hilo Hawaiian Hotel, received a standing ovation when she was announced as the Small Property Category winner for Housekeeper of the Year; now in her 90s, she has been in the hospitality industry for 53 years.

The Na Po'e Pa'ahana Awards also honored HLTA's Allied members who made substantial contributions to Hawai'i's tourism sector. Amongst the individual awards was the NPP Legacy Award, bestowed posthumously upon Danny Kaleikini for his lifelong dedication to enriching Hawai'i as an entertainer and ambassador of aloha. During the ceremony, Joni Albao, one of the original Kahala Sweetheart dancers from Danny's shows, paid tribute by performing to one of Danny's beloved songs, "Hula Eyes."

[CLICK HERE FOR A LIST OF THE 2023 NA PO'E PA'AHANA AWARDS WINNERS.](#)

*Photo captions:*

- 1. Irene Pacheco, winner of the Housekeeper of the Year Award in the Small Property category, received a standing ovation for being in the industry for 53 years.*
- 2. Danny Kaleikini's family and friends pose with HLTA President & CEO Mufi Hannemann, along with HLTA Board chair Josh Hargrove and chair-elect Angela Nolan.*
- 3. From left to right: HLTA Board chair Josh Hargrove, Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year finalist Brandon Kotter, Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year WINNER Cathy Troy, Outstanding Lodging Employee of the Year finalist Eduardo "Eddie" Domingo, HLTA President & CEO Mufi Hannemann, and HLTA Board chair-elect Angela Nolan.*
- 4. Some of the 2023 Na Po'e Pa'ahana Awards finalists gather for a group shot.*

### **About the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association**

Established in 1947, the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association (HLTA) is the state's largest private organization representing hotels, condominiums, timeshares, other lodging entities, suppliers, and related firms and individuals with a connection to tourism. A 501(c)(6) association with over 700 member organizations, HLTA is dedicated to supporting the tourism industry through education, advocacy, and philanthropy. For more information, visit HLTA's [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or website at [www.hawaiilodging.org](http://www.hawaiilodging.org).

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