

Special
Summer
2017
Edition:
Frank
Damon

LEGAL ALERT

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A LAW CORPORATION

A Celebration of C. F. “Frank” Damon, Jr.

– with Aloha.

Eulogy at Central Union Church on June 5, 2017 by Kenneth R. Kupchak

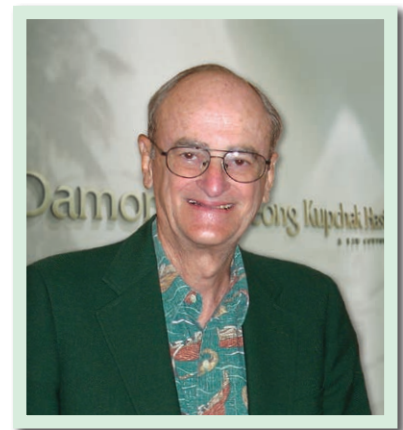
Franks celebration of life was special today. I was honored to share a “few” (A relative word among lawyers - I opted for Frank’s definition) words at the gathering:

One of the mottos that Frank adopted from his grandfather was “Within the Four Seas, all Men are Brothers.” Taking these words to heart, Cyril Francis Damon, Jr. truly became a man for all seasons and all people, regardless of their standing, race, color, or even disposition.

Frank was never a person of yesteryear. His was always focused on what either should be or could be. He was in the vanguard of emerging civil discourse and always encouraged our better selves as we marched forward through time.

Imagine Henry Shigekane’s surprise, when a tall gangly haole approached him at the Yale post office in the late 1940’s. This haole asked him if he was from Hawaii, not too many locals on the East Coast in those days, especially on a prestigious Ivy League campus. Frank Damon, a year ahead of Henry and a graduate of St. Paul’s, an East Coast prep school, made it a priority to show Henry around and occasionally dropped in on him to talk story.

Armed with a law degree from Colorado and the experience of serving as the Administrative Assistant to Hiram Fong, the United States’ first Senator of Asian ancestry, who in person, sponsored Frank’s admittance to the Bar of the United States Supreme Court, Frank became the State of Hawaii’s first Director of the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.



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“Within the Four Seas, all Men are Brothers.”

Continued from cover

There, he broke with precedent not for the first or the last time, by talking story with Jack Hall of the ILWU and Art Rutledge of the Teamsters — something the then — controlling Republicans had never previously considered — perhaps this is why the Republicans promptly lost the Governor's office and with it Frank's Directorship.

So it came to pass that Frank began searching for something new to do. He approached his Yale schoolmate, Henry to form a law firm that ignored traditional, social and cultural barriers. Today, 54 years later, not only is Frank's and Henry's courageous move emulated by the entire legal community, but also the Damon law firm's lawyers continue to ply our profession as Frank taught us, providing ethical, professional service to our community.

Along the way, Frank became President of Hawaii's Young Lawyer's Association and then, in 1967, President of the Hawaii State Bar Association. As Hawaii's State Bar President, Frank advocated publicly for the formation of a law school, which was opposed at that time by many in the business community. He also advocated that Hawaii adopt a Judicial Selection Commission before the constitutional convention followed suit. For many years, Frank, was also Hawaii's delegate to the American Bar Association.

Frank reminded each of us that being a lawyer was a privilege. And with it came the responsibility to uphold the ethics and professionalism expected of us. Because of Frank's example, our firm has not only always sponsored membership in the Bar Associations, but also we continue to encourage our lawyers to emulate Frank and be actively involved at all levels.

Frank also believed in *community* and urged all to actively support Hawaii's social and community activities. He was an early supporter of the Aloha United Way, serving on its Executive Committee and as the head of the law firm participation Division. Needless to say, Frank always encouraged each of us to likewise contribute each in our own way and within our own means. Under Frank's gentle persuasion, we routinely achieved the 100% participation level. After all, Frank would say: "This is our community and it is important that we do what we can to support it."

Self deprecative and always humble, Frank was naturally and genuinely interested in *you* for who you were. He never shied from introducing you to members of his wider circles. Further, if your parents showed up at the office, Frank would be the first to tell them not only what a fine lawyer you were, but also what an important contribution you were making to our firm. I recall positively beaming when he extended that famously firm handshake to my folks and told them how important I was to him and to our office.

Coming from the mainland, I had no local contacts, other than my wife. Frank openly welcomed me and introduced me into his extensive circles, as he did for many others before and after, over the rest of his life. Remembering his own admission, he suggested that I join the bar of the U. S. Supreme Court and stood up for me as Senator Fong had for him.



Henry Shigekane



Cyril Francis Damon, Jr.

Frank reminded each of us that

This is not an isolated story. Another takes place in 1985. It was the second year of law school for Robert Thomas, now a Director in the firm. When I asked around the office for remembrances of Frank, Robert shared the following:

“During my second year at law school, when interviewing for a summer clerk position, Mike Yoshida, of the Damon firm, invited me to visit the firm, where I met Frank. A few days later, I was at my folks’ house when the phone rang. Mom answered. Her eyes went wide and she handed me the phone. “It’s Mr. Damon.... asking for *you* she whispered. It was Frank calling to make me an offer, which I accepted on the spot. Frank considered it his duty to deliver each of the firm’s job offers, because his name was first on the door. After we ended the call, mom asked me, incredulously, “Mr. Damon called you?”

You see, she was Japanese and had grown up on the Halawa Plantation. She explained that when the plantation truck would occasionally take the country kids to town in the back of the flatbed, it would travel through the Damon Estate, which back then included what is now Moanalua, the airport, Salt Lake, and other nearby places. As she grew older and her own family became more Americanized, she would ride with her dad in his used Model T “over the hill” to town on Moanalua Road, again through the Damon Estate. “The Damons,” in her recollection, were the “big family, the luna class, the gentry, the missionaries,” the “Haole people.” All her words, not mine.

Plantation folks and such people didn’t mix. And people from that class *never* called plantation people, asking them to join their downtown law firm, even more than half a century later. It was, in her view, unheard of. It isn’t like that anymore, mom, I explained, “This is the 80’s!”

She understood, I think, but to the end of her life she remained awfully impressed that “*Mr. Damon*,” the scion of a family that she had, in her youth, considered among the ruling class of Hawaii, had actually called on me — a kid only one generation removed from the plantation — to ask *me* to come work with him as an equal.

She reminded me of this many times over the ensuing years, especially so after she met Frank in person, and he was so warm, welcoming, and down-to-earth. She had approached their first in-person meeting at one of our firm get-togethers like it was going to be an audience with the Pope, with a touch of awe. A plantation girl meeting *Mr. Damon* (even though they were roughly equal in age).

Afterwards she remarked, “He was so nice!” For her, the ultimate compliment. She never forgot Frank’s graciousness in that first call, or in person, nor will I.”

Wow, Robert’s moving account truly captures the essence of Frank, even though those were Frank’s cousins out in Moanalua.

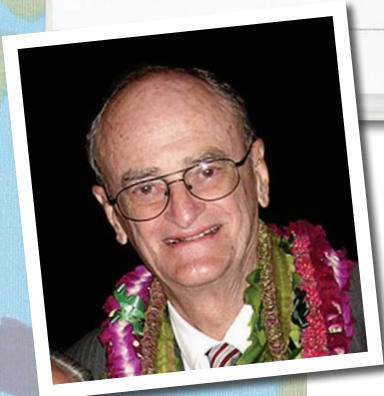
Shifting gears, did I mention that Frank was a man for all seasons? In 1954, Frank, Charlie Judd, Bob Nordike, Sig Ramler, Bob Kamins, Henry Shigekane, Page Anderson, Ed Black, Baird Kidwell, Chip Higgins and others started a Book Club that, because of Frank’s gentle guidance and example, continues to this day. He always asked us *not* to call our group the “Damon” Book Club, he preferred the simple non-descript label of “Discussion Group”, the Damon Book Club label, however, has persisted. Today we have second and third generation members as well as a few stragglers such as myself who were invited to join along the way. Although Frank was very proud of the club’s longevity, he prized its collegiality even more. He enjoyed listening to the shared perspectives and following the diverse approaches each member favored, perhaps because these approaches spoke volumes regarding the different back-grounds of our members.

Needless to say, Frank and not so Frank stories abound, but allow me to close by saying simply, Frank was the kindest person that I have ever known.



being a lawyer was a privilege.

*Tributes—some
of the many
personal stories
and experiences
we all shared
with Frank*



**“He was the
essence of
a gentleman’s
gentleman...”**

“Frank and I had a running joke – the first question he asked me in an interview was whether I intended to have more children. That wasn’t PC even in 1977! He really wanted to know the answer, but the more important truth was that he valued family beyond most anything else, and he cared about everyone of ours.

He never forgot my daughters’ names and asked after them frequently. Miraculously, he always seemed to know what year they were in school and how they were doing. Maybe he kept notes in those little books – if he did, they served him impressively. He consoled me when the last left for the mainland for college – I knew he really did share and appreciate the pride/heartbreak push me pull you we all went through. He attended their weddings and each treasures a Hawaiian gift that Frank gave her – each is proudly displayed in their homes. He was thrilled when they had children and remembered my grandchildren’s names too! And through it all, he made us a Damon Key family. His devotion to all of his families was wonderful to behold. I will miss Frank – the caring Renaissance man – immeasurably.”

DIANE HASTERT

“Frank had the practice of wanting to be the first to receive your Damon Key business card when you received your first box. He would know when Esther, or whoever ordered them, gave you the box and he would either get them before they were given to you, or he would come to your office and ask for the card. Wonder what happened to them all?

He had a wry sense of humor and would check up on Mary and I. After Mary left Goodsill and opened her office in Kaneohe, he would call her and pretend to be a potential estate planning client (he would speak pidgin) with a horrendous set of problems until she finally figured out it was Frank calling. Then they would have a good laugh. He would do that on occasion just to chat and find out how she and the family were doing. I guess he was checking in his own way whether I was behaving.

Frank knew when Michelle (my daughter) was eligible for Punahou Kindergarten and came to my office asking whether we would apply for Punahou. Being stupid, stubborn and a product of public schools, I said I was reluctant to do so for various reasons. Without mincing any words and in no uncertain terms, I was instructed by him to submit an application. One of the best decisions I have made in my life. I remember asking (Denis) about it and in his own way he told me not to be stupid and stubborn and submit the application. Thanks again.”

MICHAEL YOSHIDA

“I will miss Frank – the caring Renaissance man – immeasurably.”

“About 15 years ago Mr. Damon had summoned me to his office. He stated that he believed I had talent and potential which my tasks at the time did not nurture. He finished by saying something along the lines of, “if you ever find yourself in need of a referral or a letter of recommendation, you can count on me.”

It was Mr. Damon’s way of selflessly guiding me to reach my higher self. Mr. Damon had never viewed an employee as a mere soldier who existed to help him achieve his personal or organizational goals. Instead, it was as if he became the soldier who did everything in his power to nurture an employee—even if it meant said nurturing would lead to one soaring beyond the halls of DKLKH. For Mr. Damon, it was never about how indebted an employee ought to be but rather how indebted he was toward a member of his team (aka ohana). An old-school leader whom at his core held an old-school mission and ideologies.

Mr. Damon often gave beyond himself. He’d periodically give me a book or two when he believed the story or topic would catch my interest. I have in my possession a bookshelf of Mr. Damon-recommended books. In one book Mr. Damon jotted, “Warren...to my longtime friend who contributes so much. Warmest Aloha...Frank.” Those words and the many memories of Mr. Damon continue to fuel me to this day.

I’ve been blessed to have known the consummate gentleman and selfless leader who had always made me feel like a longtime friend.”

WARREN KANESHIRO

“Frank called me Catherine for the first three years I was with the firm. Catherine is a pretty name so that was fine. I learned many things from him – but to this day I remember his very tedious care related to invoices.

He said once a month you communicate with your clients and this is one thing that they will look at carefully. Make sure you spell out names of people you are referencing. Don’t forget to put Mr. or Mrs. or Ms. Make sure you are descriptive so they know what you are doing for them. Do not use abbreviations. Use colons and semicolons properly. Every month I am reminded of how he cared about how important communicating with your clients is.

He used to ask me about the activities of the Japanese American community – and he would take down notes in his little notebook. I wonder what he did with all his notes. I know he loved the silk embroidery the firm got for his 90th birthday and that he used it to cover his bed. I hope Kitty lays it to rest with him.”

CHRISTINE KUBOTA

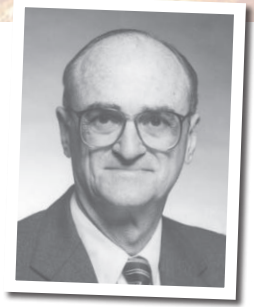
“Up until about 5-6 years ago, Frank would come to the office once a week or so. He would circle the whole office to say hello to everyone. He would tap on my door, and ask if I had a moment to chat. He was always interested in each individual in the office and what they were up to, whether it was work or family-related. If we were getting deep into a subject, he might take from his front pocket his notebook and jot some thought down, saying, “I want to look that up later.” He was always eager to learn something new.

We used to go occasionally on Fridays at lunch to listen to the Royal Hawaiian Band at the Iolani Palace. We’d grab a sandwich and go over to the Palace grounds. Frank would get the program and study the numbers to be played. He invariably knew each song and would sometimes hum or sing along. Eventually, we took the summer law associates each for lunch while listening to the band. Frank would get to know each summer associate while we enjoyed the music.”

TRED EYERLY

“Thank you Mr. Damon for the footprints you have left in my life and heart...”

“Mr. Damon did not demand respect; it came naturally for anyone who met him. He would always stop to chat, say hello, ask how my boys were, and be genuinely interested in how old they were, and what they were doing at the time. When we would chat, he always had a story to tell, and would end it with some words of wisdom, or a laugh, if he was telling a joke. He was easily approachable, and always made me feel comfortable, welcome, important, and appreciated.



I was truly impressed by his knowledge and interest in the Hawaiian language and culture, and his inspiration to learn as much as he could. He would often call me to come to his office to show him how to do something on the computer, record his voicemail message, or retrieve his messages, and he would jot down the steps in his little notebook for future reference. He always had a notebook and pen in his pocket. He loved learning new things, and on occasion, would request one-on-one computer training. After learning something new, he would always say, “Rhonda, you so Akamai! Mahalo for your help. What would we do without you?”, and I would say “oh, you’d get by”, and we would chuckle together. I can still hear him laughing: I’m really going to miss that laugh.... “

RHONDA VELARDO

“Frank had a tremendous sense of humor, especially when tied to words, puns and word-play. He was the essence of a gentleman’s gentleman and, to my knowledge, would personally come into each new attorney’s office, sit down and heartily welcome each of us to the firm with his ever – beaming smile.”

DAVID MCCAULEY



“The size of the footprints people leave behind is not reflective of one’s stature or position. It’s all in the way you treat and respond to people. It’s about the kindness, care and respect you impart.

Mr. Damon had left enormous footprints in my life.

During my 20 years at Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert as receptionist, Mr. Damon would often tell me how much he appreciated my caring nature and professionalism. He said that I had made an impact not only on him, but on the firm’s clients, staff and various professionals that came through the doors. Having told me that, I felt as though I played an important role at the firm; that I was significant. Had Mr. Damon only known the impact he had on me while expressing the impact I had on others.

We were the DKLKH ohana--all adults, all professional in our respective position. In any organization there are ranks, but at DKLKH Mr. Damon would treat everyone equally. In his eyes, we were his ohana and everyone had their role in that ohana.

I will cherish and continue to emulate Mr. Damon’s ways and philosophies.

Thank you Mr. Damon for the footprints you have left in my life and heart. Aloha O’e.”

JAE JENNINGS

Thoughts by Denis Leong

Frank was the man willing and able to help any way he could with everything and with Punahou School. One thing about Frank, it was easier to cave into what he wanted or he would continue to hound you. I feel anyone having the opportunity to experience Punahou School or a similar educational institution could only benefit from the experience. My other belief is a person builds from the ground up. The stronger your base which you build upon the better will be the outcome. You have to take advantage of it and thrive. Frank also subscribed to these concepts with all of his public service with Punahou School, Mid-Pacific Institute, and KCAA Preschool of Hawaii.

The Yoshidas – Michelle, Michael and Mary – took advantage and thrived. I remember when Michelle wanted to take swimming lessons at school as she strolled past the Punahou swimming pool as a child in elementary school. She then developed into a nationally ranked swimmer. I am happy to have worked with Frank in giving a partner an assist which Frank did often. Still, the credit for Michelle's significant successes is due not only to a push from Frank but also is due to Michelle and the efforts of her devoted parents.

We first got computers around 1985 at Pauahi Tower and began learning to use them. They were strange to most of us "old" folks. Frank once called Rhonda into his office to ask for help. Nothing seemed to go out from his computer. Rhonda suggested to Frank that he push the button labelled "Send". It worked.

Once while at a Firm retreat at Turtle Bay, we were helping to prepare a meal. Ever anxious to help and participate, Frank asked how he could help. We suggested he cook the rice (in the rice cooker). He stared at the rice for a while. Frank – you have to wash the rice. So he did. Sort of. He then loaded the rice pot to the top with the rice. Frank, the rice will overflow. Take some rice out. Huh? Frank, go do something else. We will cook the rice. Still wanting to help, Frank was next assigned to fry the Portuguese sausage. He put the sausage in the frying pan and turned the heat up all the way to 200 degrees. Frank, what day this week do you expect to eat the sausages? Huh? Cooking was not his strength.

Frank was always our cheerleader and the front man in community events and participating in the community. He led by example. The Firm often had 100% participation in Aloha United Way fund drives led by Frank. Frank was so proud of his Firm. Please do not tell Frank that Randy Kajikawa and I slipped in some money on behalf of the cheap folks to bring our participation level up to 100%.

Frank even had involvement with the First Chinese Church. His family helped to start that church and Frank continued the family tradition by attending some of the First Chinese Church events. Frank would proudly tell us that his grandmother, Mary Happer Damon, who was a missionary evangelizing in China and a friend of Sun Yat-sen would read to him and his siblings and cousins at her home in Moanalua – sometimes in Chinese. Francis Williams Damon and Mary Damon believed to convert heathens to Christianity, it was easier to first familiarize them with the English language. This is why the Damon family devoted so much of their lives to education. Frank even gave me some Chinese artifacts from his grandmother. Probably still have it around somewhere.

Always interested in the outside world and world peace, Frank with Sig Ramler founded and helped to launch the Foundation for Study in Hawaii and Abroad in 1966 at Punahou which opened vast horizons by exposing Hawaii students to students from other countries and the world generally. Frank was rightfully very proud of this accomplishment.

When Frank cleaned out his office and moved into his home office, I had Frank's door sign and mine combined so that the marked office was always available to the father of our Firm.

Frank paved the way for harmony among everyone without regard to race, gender or religion. Frank often reminded us as we should remind ourselves:

TACKLE THE DREAD.

WITHIN THE FOUR SEAS, ALL MEN ARE BROTHERS.



**“Frank paved
the way for
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A D V E R T I S I N G M A T E R I A L

Legal Alert is published periodically by Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert to inform clients of legal matters of general interest. It is not intended to provide legal advice or opinion.

Frank Damon Facts

Frank served as an Administrative Assistant to U.S. Senator Hiram Fong in Washington D.C. from 1959 to 1962. He helped with the formation of the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii.

Appointed to the cabinet post as Director of Labor and Industrial Relations by Governor William F. Quinn.

In 1963, with his friend from Yale, Henry Shigekane, they founded the first interracial law firm in the state of Hawaii, Damon Shigekane which today is known as Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert.

In 1966, Frank and friend Sig Ramler founded the Foundation for Study in Hawaii and Abroad at Punahou.

Frank was a 4th generation trustee of Punahou School where he served on the board from 1973 - 2002, and was Chairman of the Board from 1998 - 2001. He was also a trustee of KCAA Preschools of Hawaii, The Mid-Pacific Institute, The Sun Yat-sen Hawaii Foundation and served as an adjunct professor at the University of Hawaii Richardson School of Law.

Frank was a word-smith of the first order. He loved books and started a book club called the Discussion Group in 1954 that still meets to this day, 63 years later.

Frank was an avid tennis player and an Eagle Scout.