

Answers to Garden Island Questions September 2010

1.) What is your background?

Professionally I am a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist who worked in social services for 30 years. I have a B.S. and a Masters Degree in Psychology. On Kauai I have served as a program director with the YWCA and Child and Family Service in child abuse treatment programs and the Healthy Start program. I have spent time as the Executive Director of the Children's Justice Center and Leadership Kauai.

As a volunteer I am the founder and former coordinator of the Friends of Kamalani and Lydgate Park and was the General Coordinator of the Kamalani Playground and Kamalani Kai Bridge community build projects. While coordinator of the Friends of Kamalani we created a master plan for the expansion Lydgate Park including the campgrounds (scheduled to be open by next summer) and sports fields. I wrote the grant proposal that funded the sports fields and the initial funding proposal for the coastal path that resulted in the first phase of the ongoing path project being built on Kauai's east side. I advocated for and helped start the non-profit organization Kauai Path.

For 13 years I ran a successful small business, Hawaii Conference Associates, which provided continuing education conferences on Kauai for mental health professionals.

In 2003 I accepted a position offered by Mayor Batiste to coordinate community outreach in the Ka Leo O Kauai program. In 2006 I was elected to the County Council where I now sit as the Chair of the Public Works/Elderly Affairs Committee. After being elected to the Council, I resigned my position as Executive Director of Leadership Kauai, and currently devote my full time efforts to the Council's long list of unfinished legislative business.

2.) If elected, what would be your top priority?

My top priority: implement the measures called for in the 2000 General Plan. The GP is a sound document that sets out a vision for Kauai that I believe we all share. I see it as the marching orders from our community for elected officials.

The vision: keep Kauai unique among the Hawaiian Islands. The GP calls for keeping Kauai's rural character and managing growth. It charts a path different from Maui or Oahu, yet without the proper regulations, that is the path we are following.

Specifically the GP stipulates that we support smart growth in and adjacent to our current towns, and that we preserve the land in-between (read ag land). Yet we have seen too little development in-town where it may be affordable for people who live and work here, and a huge amount of development away from town (pretending to be farms) that is now only affordable to wealthy people who may want to move here.

The guidance we need is accomplished through a proper planning process that includes citizen input on well thought-out community development plans and planning regulations. Yet our community development plans are decades old or non-existent. Our critical CZO (Comprehensive Zoning Ordinance) has not been updated since its inception in 1972! The measures that the GP targeted for immediate implementation are still not complete 10 years later.

Our GP also calls for planning our vital visitor industry, yet we have all seen the bust and boom cycles. Without management we witnessed too many projects happening all at once that saw workers flooding Kauai from elsewhere. Now we see projects half completed and local people unemployed. Other priorities are interrelated; good planning will lead to progress in affordable housing, improved public access, transportation, energy and the environment.

3.) Why should voters elect you?

Since being elected I have stayed true to the principal that every vote I cast is based on what I believe in my heart and mind is best for our community, regardless of the political fallout. You may not have agreed with every position I have taken but I trust in total I have represented Kauai well.

I take the job at Council seriously, and I work hard full time on County business. I believe it is clear, I do my homework and am prepared. The Council is important because the regulations we need to provide proper stewardship for our community are outdated or do not exist. There is a lot of work to do.

I believe that public participation in government is essential, and helps us make better decisions. For that reason I have tried to improve the public process, specifically by advocating for easy access to public documents, release of County Attorney opinions of Law, and public broadcast of all Council proceedings - including budget hearings. Frankly, I am dismayed that this has been contentious and difficult. This is standard practice virtually everywhere other than Kauai, and is easy to accomplish. I have posted many public documents at www.kauaiinfo.org.

I have advocated for a comprehensive review of Council rules, which regrettably have been rejected by Council twice.

Since being elected, I have provided thoughtful and balanced leadership. I value people's input, listen carefully, respond honestly, and endeavor to treat everyone with respect. At the same time I have not been afraid to assert my position and am proud of the initiatives I have put forward. Should I be reelected you can count on me to remain active and engaged. I am honored to serve and humbly ask for one of you seven votes for County Council.