

RES24-172
Testimony

MISC. COMM. 304

COUNCIL

COUNCIL Meeting

Meeting Date: Jul 10, 2024 @ 10:00 AM

Support: 2

Oppose: 0

I wish to comment: 0

Name: Johnnie-Mae Perry	Email: waianaenb569@gmail.com	Zip: 96792
Representing: Self	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 5, 2024 @ 07:43 AM
Testimony: Outstanding kumu and of the Hawaiian cultural of long ago.		
Name: Tommylynn Benavente	Email: tlbenave@haawaii.edu	Zip: 96789
Representing: PA'I Foundation	Position: Support	Submitted: Jul 5, 2024 @ 07:43 AM



904 Kohou Street #102
Honolulu, HI 96817

July 1, 2024

The Honorable Tommy Waters Chair and Presiding Officer and Members
Honolulu City Council
530 South King Street, Room 202
Honolulu, HI 96813

Dear Chair Waters and Councilmembers:

Aloha mai kākou! We, the Board members of PA'I Foundation (PA'I), are thrilled to write in support of Victoria (Vicky) Holt Takamine's appointment as Dance member of the Commission for the Mayor's Office of Culture & the Arts (MOCA)!

Vicky is first and foremost the Kumu Hula of Pua Ali'i 'Ilima. Vicky studied hula under Kumu Hula Margaret Maiki Aiu Lake (Auntie Maiki), who is recognized as the "Mother of Hawaiian Renaissance". She would eventually participate in an 'ūniki (formal graduation ceremony) and became a Kumu Hula in 1975. Vicky received both her Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Dance Ethnology from the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. She taught hula for more than 30 years at both the University of Hawai'i Mānoa's Music Department and the Arts and Humanities Division at Leeward Community College.

Vicky is also the Founder and Executive Director of PA'I whose mission is to preserve and perpetuate Native Hawaiian arts and cultural traditions for future generations which is in perfect alignment with MOCA's mission.

Through PA'I's numerous programs, projects, events and activities Vicky already has much experience, knowledge and involvement in line with the objectives of the MOCA Commission:

- **...attaining national preeminence in culture and the arts**

Through her advocacy work Vicky has built strong working and personal relationships with many national arts and culture organizations. As one example, in 2016, PA'I, First Peoples Fund, National Association of Latino Arts and Culture, and Alternate ROOTS launched the Intercultural Leadership Institute (ILI), a year-long fellowship program for culturally diverse arts and culture bearers to hone their personal and professional leadership skills in an effort to develop and practice interculturality and action in the greater field of arts and culture. Since ILI's inception, nearly 150 art and culture leaders have participated in this program, with the number of participating organizations now at seven with the addition of Sipp Culture, First Alaskans Institute, and the International Association of Blacks in Dance.

In 2010, Vicky created Pua Ali'i 'Ilima o Nuioka, a New York City based branch of hālau that is also one of the resident companies of La Mama's Indigenous Arts Program. (La Mama is a world-renowned New York cultural institute dedicated to the artist and all aspects of the theater). Through Vicky's hālau and NYC branch, audiences in one of America's premiere cultural capitals have been exposed to Hawaiian culture, language and issues, furthering opportunities for Hawai'i-based artists.

- **...preservation of the artistic and cultural heritages of all its people**

Vicky's relationship with Artspace, a national nonprofit real estate developer, and her crystal clear vision led to the opening of the Ola Ka 'Ilima Artspace Lofts (Kaka'ako, Hawai'i) in 2019. This building contains 84 units of affordable living and work space for local artists and their families. In December 2023, PA'I opened the PA'I Arts & Culture Center (PACC) at Kaka'ako at the Ola Ka 'Ilima Artspace Lofts. With

this new space, Vicky and PA'I are poised to offer, create, and implement even more programs dedicated to uplifting the lāhui and the preservation of arts and cultural traditions of our communities in Hawai'i and beyond.

- **...promote a community environment which provides equal and abundant opportunity for exposure to culture and the arts in all its forms**

In 2005, PA'I partnered with the Bishop Museum to coordinate and produce "MAMo, Maoli Arts Month", a month-long celebration highlighting Native Hawaiian arts, artists, and cultural practitioners. Ten years later, PA'I rebranded MAMo to "Maoli Arts Movement" and now celebrates native art and culture year-round. One of the signature events of MAMo is the "Wearable Arts Show" that highlights local native artists. The MAMo Wearable Arts Show has helped to launch the careers and businesses of local designers such as Manaola Yap of Manaola, Kehau Nielsen of Kahulale'a, and Nita Pilago of Wahine Toa.

Additionally, over the past two years, Vicky has uplifted and advocated for creating space for our LGBTQIA+ community by co-creating with Mahu leaders a premier drag show spotlighting their cultural and artistic talents.

- **...encourage and provide equal opportunity for the development of cultural and artistic talents**

Vicky is recognized as an advocate and community organizer around issues of native rights, social justice, and the protection of the natural and cultural resources of Hawai'i that are so vital to the perpetuation of cultural traditions. Most recently, building on her leadership around the Paoakalani Declaration of 2003, she was elected Chair of the Native Hawaiian Intellectual Property Working Group established by the 2023 Hawai'i Legislature created to protect intangible aspects of Native Hawaiian culture and cultural property.

Vicky possesses a visionary mindset with the ability to clearly see opportunities to bring people together to achieve a particular goal. She continues to make significant

contributions to the preservation and perpetuation of art and culture by being innovative, bold, and strategic. We know we speak for many when we say that Vicky is the perfect addition to the MOCA Commission.

Me ka ha'aha'a,


[Kawika McKeague \(Jul 2, 2024 18:17 HST\)](#)

Kawika McKeague
Planning Principal, G70
President, PA'I Foundation


[Tommylynn Mokihana Benavente \(Jul 2, 2024 06:13 HST\)](#)

Tommylynn Mokihana Benavente
Professor Emerita, UH Leeward CC
Vice-President, PA'I Foundation


[Alison Hartle \(Jul 3, 2024 09:26 HST\)](#)

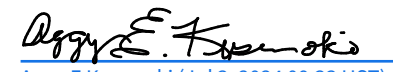
Alison Hartle
English Department Chair
University Laboratory School
Secretary, PA'I Foundation



Lucy Aina Lau
Marketing Director, Hale Koa Hotel
Treasurer, PA'I Foundation


[Kimberly Evans \(Jul 3, 2024 09:16 HST\)](#)

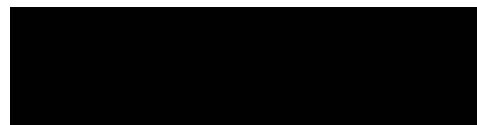
Kim Evans
Airport Planner,
Federal Aviation Administration
Director, PA'I Foundation


[Aggy E Kusunoki \(Jul 3, 2024 09:33 HST\)](#)

Aggy Kusunoki
Department Chair World Languages
St. Andrews Schools, The Priory
Director, PA'I Foundation


[Carol Lau \(Jul 3, 2024 12:10 HST\)](#)

Carol Lau
Chief Clinical Operations Officer
Kōkua Kalihi Valley
Director, PA'I Foundation



Kaleo Manuel
Director of Water Resources
Kamehameha Schools
Director, PA'I Foundation

**The opinions provided for PA'I are personal and are not representative of the agency or organization where board members are employed.*