

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Fituina F. Tua

Fituina F. Tua, son of Loia and Malia Tua, was born on February 15, 1956 in American Samoa. The fourth child in a family of eight brothers and sisters, Tua came to Hawai'i in 1958.

He lived across the street from Mayor Wright Homes. Later, the family moved to Kamehameha IV Homes. Tua attended schools in Kalihi. At the age of fourteen he joined Pālama Settlement's Pākōlea Program which used sports and other activities as incentives for learning.

He subsequently attended St. Louis School and graduated in 1975. Four years later, he received a bachelor's degree from San Jose State University and eventually earned a master's degree from the University of Massachusetts. While in Boston he worked as a caseworker in probation court.

Returning to the islands in 1991, he worked in family court.

Today, he is a probation officer in the U.S. District Court system. Tua is married with a family.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Fituina F. Tua (FT)

Honolulu, O'ahu

January 15, 1998

BY: Warren Nishimoto (WN)

WN: This is an interview with Fituina Tua for the Pālama Settlement oral history project on January 15, 1998, and we're at his office in Honolulu, O'ahu. The interviewer is Warren Nishimoto.

Okay. Why don't we start. First, if you can tell me when and where you were born.

FT: I was born in American Samoa (on) February 15, 1956. (I was two years old when my parents [Malia and Loia Tua] and) I arrived in Hawai'i.

WN: Do you know why they left?

FT: Economic reasons. Opportunities (for) school and employment. Because Samoans were migrating from American Samoa to here. And it was just a trend, part of a migration pattern.

WN: How many brothers and sisters?

FT: I have a total of ten, including my parents. Eight brothers and sisters. Four and four.

WN: What number are you?

FT: I'm in the middle. I'm actually number four.

WN: So you were two years old when you came over to Hawai'i. And so when you came, where did you live?

FT: Right across Mayor Wright [Homes] housing. Across Mayor Wright housing, there was this street they called Horse Street. H-O-R-S-E Street. The community was (made up of) old houses, the green painted type of homes that you sometimes see now. And it was upstairs-downstairs kind of a thing. It was a real close, small, community—neighborhood time.

WN: When you say, "across the street," across what street?

FT: Right now there's a housing—apartment building that's there, Kukui Garden, I think. It's on the Liliha side across of Mayor Wright's.

WN: Okay. Yeah, I know where that is. Okay. So across Mayor Wright on Liliha?

FT: [Yes.] My aunts and uncles lived with us as well. It was a little neighborhood. Just a little neighborhood. If you went outside of that little block—made up of walls, same type of homes—you went into Mayor Wright (housing). I was too young to even know that Mayor Wright was [low-income] housing. I thought it was all apartment buildings. And there was a church there—that still stands today, too—the Methodist church. And I don't think that was the original building, though. I think the original building was much bigger than that. They had a Samoan congregation there, too. I remember spending time there. [Some of] my elementary years were spent (at) Princess Ka'iulani Elementary [School].

WN: When you were growing up there, there are eight brothers and sisters, plus your two parents, plus aunts and uncles. How many people were actually living in your apartment?

FT: The younger ones came after. I would say, the four of us—maybe my next one was there, too—four and my parents is six, my aunt and uncle was eight. (It) was eight at the most. And I believe the apartment building—wasn't an apartment (it) was a house, top part of the house. It was a three-bedroom (with a) large living room.

WN: Was it a housing, a state housing?

FT: No, I didn't think it was a housing because it was not concrete or anything like that. It was homes, regular. I remember ours because (it) was two levels (with) two staircases on both ends leading up to the top of the house. I remember my cousins lived right across the street facing the house. And the street was narrow. We used to play right around there, kid's games and things like that. The houses were all in rows. And I always remember this landlord. Was a Japanese fellow and the kids, they lived there, too. And he had a bigger house in that same style, but he had things like a slide, things that kids could play. He would invite us to go in there and play. And I remember the good old days, the *manapua*, *pepeiao* [truck] used to come up the street, and that kind of thing.

WN: So you said there was a Japanese landlord. Ethnic wise . . .

FT: There was (a) mix; it wasn't like predominantly Samoan, there was mix with me and my friends. (We) had Filipinos (and) Hawaiians (living) there. They had some people that (lived) there for a little while. But as to say how many Samoan families in that neighborhood—sheez, it couldn't be more than four or five. Of course they had large families, too.

WN: So I would assume your playmates were pretty mixed also.

FT: Mixed, also. And of course, Chinatown. And that whole block, a lot of things now that's there, they've moved some of these Japanese buildings. They've since relocated that. It's still there, but it's not the original location. I remember in the back of where we used to live on King Street they used to have this (large)-sized building. And it was occupied by Chinese owners. I know, because we'd break into the place from the back. (Chuckles) When we were kid time we'd break into the place just to see—curiosity, what was in there.

WN: So as you're heading on King Street, or Beretania, heading on Beretania, on the right-hand side before you get into Liliha?

FT: Yeah. Okay. It was on the right . . .

WN: That's where it was. Okay.

FT: You know where the Burger King is now? Across the street . . .

WN: Across from the street from that . . .

FT: Yeah. That street, right across, directly across, yeah.

WN: Now, did you mix with the Mayor Wright kids at all?

FT: Yeah, because (our homes) were real close, so they had Mayor Wright kids that come over. I was too young to know (if) there's a difference between "this is housing" or "this is Mayor Wright's." I just know they lived in that location, in those buildings. Yeah. And when we were going to school, we'd walk down King Street heading towards Princes Ka'iulani [Elementary School]. And to this very day, that store still stands there in front of Mayor Wright housing on King Street. I'm almost certain used to have a lot more stores (in) that building. The setup is still the same, except it was more open with things outside. Kids was walking in and out. . . . Of course, we went to Ka'iulani Elementary [School], and there was a lot of kids from (the) neighborhood, including Mayor Wright housing, and so forth. I got to know a lot of the Mayor Wright kids as I was growing up. Even when we moved to Kam[ehameha] IV housing [i.e., Kalihi Valley Homes on Kamehameha IV Road].

WN: Which was when?

FT: I would have to say---I think I was like, seven or eight years old when we moved.

WN: What did your father do?

FT: My father came from Samoa (and) he was a farmer. He later became a (woodcraft) person. And he became employed [by] Blair Limited. Yeah, the monkeypod [wood carving]. They used to have a warehouse and a store right out here where Gem's [Parkview-Gem of Hawai'i, Inc.] used to be [near] Ala Moana.

WN: Right. On Ward [Avenue].

FT: On Ward. Yeah. And he made a lot of those monkeypod [crafts], and stuff, for Blair's. My mom was just a housewife. I went to Kalihi Elementary [School], and that's where I finished my elementary school years. And the housing was one thing. We were one of the very first Samoan families in the housing, Kam[ehameha] IV housing. And I know my cousin them was there, too. When we were living at Horse Street, they would (tell my parents about) the process of applying (for Kam[ehameha] IV housing). My parents moved to Kam[ehameha] IV [housing]. And the place was predominantly mixed—Hawaiians, Filipinos. I remember (living there), we had our lickings being new immigrants, and so forth. Went through that stage.

When I was a youngster, probably about twelve years old, I began earning money for my parents. I was selling newspapers with the [*Honolulu Advertiser*]. After school, go out and sell newspapers (at) wrestling (and) sporting events (at) the old Civic Auditorium (and) the

[Honolulu] Stadium. (I) just earned money (and) give 'em (to my parents). Make five dollars, (chuckles) then you give 'em five dollars. I remember (the newspaper man) picked (us) up, and (he) would drive to these different locations (and) pick up other paper kids. And those locations were the (housing) projects. So they would stop at Mayor Wright housing and (other locations). And all these kids would pack into this truck—enclosed truck—and take us to the locations (to) sell newspapers. You would go, and they would holler out, "Okay, next stop, so and so." Kids from so and so. (That's how I) remembered those kids, the Mayor Wright kids. Some have since grown and become notorious criminals too. (Chuckles)

My elementary school years wasn't too bad. I think when I was sixth grade, I began to get in trouble. I made friends, and (got into) delinquency (problems). And then, went to Dole Intermediate [School] and really struggled. My parents (were) unable to (control me)—changes began: involvement with family court, and delinquency. Hanging out with the wrong kids was pretty common. I struggled, and never really went to school. I ended up flunking out. (In the) seventh grade (I) got involved with (a lot of) trouble again. And then, somehow, it was my cousin that took me under his wing. My cousin just said, "Better keep an eye on you now. So you come with me go football practice." So I'd carry his uniform. We'd walk from Kam[ehameha] IV housing all the way to Kalākaua [Intermediate School]. And I would watch 'em practice, just watch 'em practice. And I was their water boy and all that, and watch 'em practice. And then took an interest in it, right?

At just about the same time, my years at the intermediate (school) began to change. I took an interest in school. One subject that I've always struggled with is English. Someone (took interest in) me in one of the English classes. It was this Japanese teacher, an older teacher, Mrs. Sasaki. I'll always remember her because she took this special interest, and said "I want to teach you. I want to teach you." She really made a big impact. She got me involved, got into these English programs, competitions, and group presentations at that age.

Meanwhile, (Pop Warner) football was (getting interesting) as well. Finally, I think about eighth grade, I wanted to play because we would play Pālama Settlement and all that. Mr. John Sharp came into my life when I was at Kam[ehameha] IV housing. He actually came down and was involved with my brother. And he saw a lot of kids, and he became involved, and got kids involved with sports. So when we played Pālama, I saw John Sharp there. I said, "I wanna play for that guy." 'Cause he had a real good team. And then there really weren't a lot of Blacks [in Hawai'i], you know. And they were kind of like role models when you saw them. You said, "Wow, yeah. I'd like to play for that guy." And that's how I became involved with Pālama Settlement. It was at my eighth grade year I became involved with Pālama Settlement. Sports gave (me a purpose). The crowd (I) hung out with was (also) different. (I) no longer became involved with (the) other crowd. You hung out with the kids that were pretty good kids—you know, they had some trouble, but they were pretty decent kids. All in the same neighborhood, all of them, but they were decent kids.

So I went (to) Pālama Settlement and participated in the [Pākōlea] Program. I loved it. At first, there was a little fear, because you couldn't just play sports. You had to participate in the academics as well. (The) program was so structured, and they had things there, and opportunities there, that I've never experienced at home. Christmas was tough for us, growing up. (I saw opportunities to earn things if I worked hard.) And I'll never forget this lady—she was also, along with John Sharp, Earlene Chambers, now [her last name] is Piko. She was a very big influence on me along with John Sharp. I'll always remember her saying—it's kind

of funny, too, because I had been there probably after two years in that program already. It's kind of funny because she was interviewing another kid. And that kid was in the Pākōlea Program (for) juveniles. And she said, during her assessment and (interview) of the kid, the kid had discussed about some of the problem kids that he hung out with—the troublemakers, the delinquency kids. And she said [to FT], “And your name came up.”

I said, “No kidding.” And then I said, “What did he say?” I knew the kid, too. “What did he say?”

“He said you were the leader.”

(Laughter)

WN: In the good way or the bad way?

FT: The bad way.

(Laughter)

FT: “You’re the leader of the bad crowd, right?”

And I laughed. I said, “Nah. I didn’t see myself as being the leader.”

“Well, they obviously saw you as being the leader.”

“I don’t know about that.” So I’ll always remember that. It was her [Earlene Piko], Kenneth Ling and John Sharp. Very big, big, big, big. They helped a tremendous amount of people.

Anyway, I tell you, the program was so ideal, and I’m a big supporter of it. (Since I did not have much both material and supportwise, Pālama was ideal. Pālama and staff was like a second parent.) I listened to a lot of these Western ways of treating kids, (but when) I go back home (chuckles) it’s the cultural way, so there’s a conflict. I say, “Ahh, my parents never did that form of counseling.” The term “counseling” was (different for my parents). My parents (would) just say, “Don’t do it again.” Boom-bang, and that’s it. That’s your counseling.

(Laughter)

FT: They had their own ways of counseling you.

WN: Was there any formal way of discipline, in the cultural way?

FT: Oh, there was. There is. There is. There is a formal way. That’s something that’s been passed on to generation to generation, right?

WN: Right.

FT: It’s basically (a) tough love type of a thing. “Don’t do it again,” and so forth. Religion is a big part of the upbringing of the Samoan kids. (My) trouble began when I began not (to) go to church despite my parents’ efforts to push me. Actually, their attempts worked the opposite. I

was running away from it. I rebelled. When I look back, during my period of delinquency (change began for the better) when I went to The Detention Home. I remember when my parents would go to court—I'd go to juvenile [i.e., family] court a lot. When I went to The Detention Home the first time, I saw all the Mayor Wright kids (I sold newspaper with). That place [i.e., The Detention Home] was so disciplined (it) was unbelievable. (The older kids were) supportive, because when I finally left, everybody said, "I don't want to see you back in here again." And it was real kind of a support group. I remember sitting back, thinking about how much hurt I put on my family, my mom dragging me to court, and my father having to take time off from work, and so forth. Something happened. I just said, "This is it. I can't do this anymore."

I remember when my father came to take me out, one of those re-hearing status, and they said, "Well, you wanna go home?"

I said, "No. I don't wanna go home." Which was kind of unusual. Most kids want to go. I just said, "I need a little bit more time." But actually, it was time for me to think. And finally, one day I said, "Okay. I wanna go home." Whew, went out, and never turned back.

WN: How long were you there?

FT: Less than thirty days. Less than thirty days. I was just a brand-new first timer, less than thirty days. And, whew, never turned back. And that's when the changes began to occur, both in school as well as the sports. Yeah. And when I got to the [Pālama] settlement, the settlement was just unbelievable. I mean, the opportunity to learn in areas of reading, math, science. Those were excellent core areas.

And then, the biggest thing at Pālama (was) the training table. I mean, if there was an incentive, other than playing sports, (it) was the training table. Honest. When you come from a (large) family the portions are always the same. (Pālama) was different like, "Oh, I can't wait to get there."

(Laughter)

FT: I mean, they had a shower room, uniform room, they had everything. All you had to do was earn it. And in order to play, you had to earn your grades. And you were well fed, you had all the programs there that you needed. You couldn't go wrong.

I played football for John Sharp two years, bantam. (We played on) the Mainland, (on) the neighbor islands, and becoming champions and that type of thing. Then I played for Kenneth Ling for three years, I believe. Basketball. The opportunity came, private schools came around, 'cause Pālama Settlement was just dominating. In fact, a lot of the reason why they changed a lot of the rules in Pop Warner, I believe, is because everybody was coming to Pālama. They didn't live in Kalihi, they came from all over.

WN: What are the rules that. . .

FT: The [schools] were having a hard time (getting) kids (to) participate in their programs. Such as Farrington and the other schools. The kids were saying, "Eh, I wanna go to Pālama." These were talented kids. "Eh, I wanna go to Pālama." Why? There was incentives. Hey, you got the

meal table, you got this, and you go on trips, to the Mainland if you win, right. So they slowly curtailed that and made the age group, made the weight group less. Just eliminated those kids, though. Pālama was just like a St. Louis [School]. They were just dominating everybody. And then I left, went on to St. Louis. Always coming back to help Kenneth Ling and John Sharp. Always coming back to touch bases with (the) community.

WN: Did you get scholarship to go to St. Louis?

FT: They call it need, financial need, or aid. The coaches came around, you know, we went up there, took the tests. Pālama helped prepare me for that kind of competition, that kind of changes because (I was) going from a public school to a private school. Totally different, totally different. I mean, I was (taking) general math (in public school and took) algebra (my first year at St. Louis School). Right? And it just blew my mind. So, again, I (struggled and I had to) dig deep into my strengths and say, "Do it. Do it." And did it.

WN: Tell me about the Pākōlea Program. What were the roles, and what was the connection between school and sports?

FT: Pākōlea, in addition to your regular school, which was a demand in itself, you'd come to Pālama Settlement, and you'd take a placement test in the beginning so they know what level (you were in). And you slowly graduated to as far as you could go. And you had a assigned teacher who was usually a University of Hawai'i volunteer person, and you work your program, you had to finish so many reading. They had these—I forgot what they were—these reading materials, and they were all color [coded], the books. Your reading level was purple and your book was purple, and you had tests [at the end of the reading]. You had your math, your science, that you had to do. And you had to earn X amount of points every week for you to participate the following week. So it was ongoing. And if you didn't earn it then you're not going to play. And you going be in detention and you have to make it up. In detention. And it didn't matter if you were superstar or not, you had to do it.

The nice thing at Pālama, when I was playing, we had a real good mix, not only that we had a lot of housing kids who were from Kalihi, we had different kids, too. We had Japanese kids and Chinese kids, and these kids were in private school already. So it was---we got along great. Because the rules were laid out, people followed the rules.

You also got awards, you got something, maybe a t-shirt, if you accelerated and you had so many points. You had a star this week, academically, in addition to your participation in sports, playing in sports. There was a lot of behavior modification type of incentives that they built into the program.

WN: When you say, you know, there were kids from private schools and so forth, what if---were there straight-A students going there, too?

FT: Yes. There were straight-A . . .

WN: They still had to do the same thing?

FT: Yes, it didn't matter. You competed for yourself. Take the placement test and you went as far as you can go. So, we had kids going to Kamehameha [School], kids going to Damien

[Memorial High School], that went to the settlement.

WN: What were the qualifications needed to participate? I mean, in other words, they look and say, "This kid is a good athlete, let's get him in the program." Was that the philosophy? Or was it more . . .

FT: No, no, no. Whoever came. Whoever wanted to play. It didn't matter if you were smart or anything. You walked in, you register, you sign up, and you go out there. While you going to the practice you also enrolled in the program, and they take everybody. I don't remember them ever cutting people. It was too hard for them to just cut somebody who's there. And it was like that from—they had a Pop Warner level and the bantam level, so they had two levels there.

WN: And your equipment, provided for?

FT: It was so professional. Because you had like a locker room, right? And you had an equipment room, you went up to the window, and say, "Oh, I need so and so." The guy went up to the rack, it was all organized. "I need socks," or something. You had to come back in and turn it in. If something's missing, you cannot participate until they find out what's going on. And it was such an excellent program then.

WN: And what about relations with the school you go to? Was there communication between . . .

FT: The school was totally different. It was totally different, independent from that. That was basically just supplementing, maybe, your deficiencies in subject areas. The school was totally different. But eventually, when you think of it, it actually builds your strength too, and you continue to go to school. And you had to go to school. You couldn't just say, "No, I want to just go to [Pālama Settlement]." No, you can't do that. You can't. You have to participate in your school.

WN: So I'm sure there was some kind of communication between the school and the settlement.

FT: Sure, I can imagine. Because you couldn't be kicked out, no, or else the parents wouldn't let you. There must have been [some communication] because someone must have kept track. Of course, the law still remains anyway, that you have to be in school. (Chuckles) [Till] a certain age, right? So when I look back, at this point in my life, and if I was to say what was some of the programs that have made an impact in my progress, it would be definitely that. It would be the Pālama experience.

WN: Would you say, was it more Pālama Settlement, or was it more football?

FT: I think, you know, you really look at it, and you'd say it would be football. You know, because football was visible, and football was something that stood out, right? You know, it's like you look at the sporting events today, the UH Rainbows stand out. Always the football first. If you just look at the athletes, it's not always football first, but behind that, if you ask a football player himself, "What was it?" It's always the school. People make the decision to go to school because of the football program, but also the academic program. So it was football, but behind that, was all of this . . .

WN: The institution.

FT: The institution itself. Because if it was football alone, then it would be hard to say if that would have made any difference. Because [a new player's] decision, initially, to come from another Pop Warner team to Pālama Settlement had a lot to do with, "I wanna play for that guy, but I also heard they had training tables."

(Laughter)

WN: You always come back to that.

FT: You got to take care of food first. It was tough for---you had to eat.

WN: By training tables, you mean every day?

FT: Every day. Monday through Friday.

WN: Was this lunch?

FT: This was dinner.

WN: So, after practice?

FT: After practice. After practice. Ho, I mean, some of the meals was unbelievable. And it was all volunteers. It was big, cafeteria style. Yeah, it was interesting.

WN: (Chuckles) What position did you play?

FT: I played defensive end and a receiver for John Sharp. During those days we just played both ways.

WN: Were you bigger then than you are now?

FT: No. Weightwise (I was about 180 pounds). I was a little bit shorter, probably five [feet] nine [inches].

WN: You talked about John Sharp earlier. I interviewed him, and was a collegiate starter for Michigan State [University]. Did that have something to do with it in terms of your respect?

FT: No, no. I think it's just a role model. The word also got out that he played professional football, and that [piqued] an interest, too. And then rest was, you got to know more about the person. But definitely, John was one big reason why a lot of kids went there, initially. And then found out about the programs, you know. And that was like the attachment. Then found out that, "Wow, the basketball program with Kenneth Ling was great, too, man." Yeah? Then you had the program with Earlene Piko. She was great, know what I mean? There was a whole package. Like you said, was an institution.

WN: So when you started St. Louis, how did your relationship with Pālama change?

FT: I came back and gave back my time. Volunteer, coach, tutoring, things like that. Yeah. It was just a community center, I wanted to come back. It was something that I wanted to do. And that was my relationship with them. I've always kept in contact with them. (We have) become friends. I graduated from St. Louis then went to UH [University of Hawai'i] for two years, then transferred to the Mainland to finish up (at) San Jose State [University]. And interestingly enough, at the completion of my junior year at San Jose State, I wanted to do an intern[ship]. And the internship program I wanted to do was here in Hawai'i at family court. And they didn't have a lot of positions then. It was through the Department of Justice. And they only had so many slots, I think they had two. Interestingly enough, through my experiences like that, with some of the family court judges and POs [probation officers] who worked with Pālama Settlement, I strongly believe that had a lot to do with it [i.e., FT's eventual acceptance to the internship program]. 'Cause I was dealing with a lot of problem kids. I got denied the internship. And I called Pālama Settlement. Man, I talked to Earlene. Earlene called Judge Rubin. And they all remembered me, anyway. You know, because they followed—they see a kid going [to Pālama Settlement] and they went on to this. They were sitting on the board of directors at Pālama or somehow they remembered the kids, which was really nice. Judge Patrick Yim was still there. And I got a call after being denied, "Hey listen, we got a position for you, to do your internship." And I came aboard and was able to do an internship with them. I got to meet Judge Yim, became friends with him to this day.

WN: As an intern, what did you do?

FT: Interns basically assists the probation officers to do whatever, pretty much a gopher, right? But as an intern being of Samoan [ancestry], I was able to interpret, actually, writings for the court. Interpretation, counseling, sitting in assisting the PO, provide information in terms of the culture. Basically that kind of thing. It was fun.

WN: When in your life did you decide that you were going to go to college?

FT: After St. Louis. Probably, in my junior year. Junior year I decided to go to college. 'Cause I said, "Wow." Learning became interesting at that point. Because I gotten to that point [after] struggling, struggling, and then somehow something opened up and said, "Hey, learning is interesting." And you know, you get a bug, right? And you just continue, you know, and say, "Wow." You come to realize and say, "Eh, that guy's no different than me!"

(Laughter)

FT: You know?

WN: It's a real revelation, though, if you think about it.

FT: Of course. Sure. That guy's no different than me, and I'm no different than him, you know? And somewhere along the line it's just a matter of generation. It's the generation gap. Someone suffered in his family to get him where he is today. Right? So, he came into this world, the parents may have struggled already, and he's just taking it to another level. He may not know what hard living is, or hard knocks, [but he's] no different. My kids will be different. You know? 'Cause I've worked—I've had a difficult time, right? And my parents had much more difficult time. It's just a continuation of this process. I've always have come to learn a lot in that. They say, "Don't forget your roots." That's very true. It's not that they say

you should go back to your roots, but it's basically when you make your decision, think about where you came from, too. (Chuckles) Be informed.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

WN: So, I just want to ask you what you've been doing since you finished the college years, and let's briefly go over, bring us to the present.

FT: Well, I left UH, transferred to—(FT's pager buzzes). Could you stop . . .

WN: Sure.

(Taping stops, then resumes.)

WN: So, we were talking about what you were doing since college.

FT: I wasn't sure what I wanted to get into at UH. I actually wanted to go into sociology. And I went in, got kind of little discouraged. And I wanted to go into criminal justice, which is what I decided to do, but they didn't have the programs, so I went to San Jose State which has one of the best programs in the country. So I went there and experienced the college life there, which is actually another change in my life—that growing, just getting away, being independent. And really, really growing. And it took me to another level, again. I love school, school is beautiful. Get to meet friends, friends from Hawai'i that went to school there, too. So again, being further exposed to a different circle. Internships there, as well. And then left, graduated from there, '79, and came here and decided to take a look at the—just trying to find my way, what to do. Police task force, I was thinking of police, and the test wasn't coming till later, and they weren't recruiting actually.

I got into the hotel industry, went to see a St. Louis guy, "Wanna do this?" I did that for a little bit. Then I was interested in doing something more related to my field, and I went to Legal Aid [Society of Hawai'i]. I became a paralegal there for Legal Aid. And worked in the prison law project for a few years there as a paralegal. That was of interest to me, the area of law. And interesting enough, you know, I said, "Wow. Now I got a taste of work, now I got a taste of making money. I'd like to make a little bit more money." So I was offered a job with the union, UPW [United Public Workers] representing the correctional officers. Again, still in the system. I said, "Sure, I'll take a look at it." So this time I go and become a business agent with UPW representing the correctional officers as well as the family court officers—the detention officers. And I stayed there for a year.

Then, my girlfriend had moved back home to Boston. I was at that point, I think twenty-three years old, I said, "Sheez, I don't want to just stay on this rock." School was of interest, I could stay here, decent job, you know? [But] I want to go away, 'cause I had a little taste of the Mainland. So she called and she said, "Why don't you come to Boston?"

And I said, "I've always wanted to go to Boston." Something about Boston, the mystique of it.

Went there, went to graduate school at U. Mass, University of Massachusetts. Got my master's in public policies. Public policies-slash-affairs. And when I went there, I worked with the courts in the probation department as a case worker, probation officer, for a federal grant administered by the court there. I fell in love with that place because the court was one of those courts in the state of Massachusetts which was a model court experimenting with a lot of different programs. They had a lot of funding coming from the federal government and Department of Justice to do a lot of these different types [of programs] heavy on the substance abuse, DUI [driving under the influence]. I was there for almost, sheez, maybe nine years. Became very much involved, got promoted. And then, one of my responsibilities at that time was to go and teach these programs. Because we put it together, we actually work it, then we went out as part of the grant to be technical assistants for the Department of Justice in these programs around the country. So, we went out there and we did teaching, and so forth, and these crime conferences, modeling the program and so forth.

And one day, Hawai'i came to Boston. Kenneth Ling came. Kenneth Ling had since become the director of courts [i.e., family court director, state of Hawai'i]. Okay. They came and saw me. And it was kind of weird, I said, "Wow." Like coach, student, mentor. You know. (WN chuckles.) And they asked if I wanted to come home. Just about during that time I had finished my graduate school. I enrolled into---I got into law school and I was in New England School of Law for the first year. And I was working full time and going to night school. All of my school was nighttime, working full time. And then that opportunity came. Law school was not working out as good as I wanted it to. And my wife said, "Well, we can stay here another four years," (laughs) "finish up, or you can go home and see what we can do."

And we had coming home always in mind after doing some preparation in Boston. So I said, "Ahh, we go home." We arrived here probably in 1991 or [199]2 and worked with the family court. And meanwhile, I had a call if I was interested in this job [i.e., United States probation officer, United States district court]. I said, "Shoot. With that pay, shoot." (Laughs) I was working too hard at family court. And it was just brutal. And I applied and went through the process and got accepted. And this is where I am. Now, what I do---one of my greatest love is giving back to the community. And I do that for the Samoan community in particular, I'm open to any communities, but more so for the Samoan community 'cause they're the ones that are suffering a lot, in the area of crime, in the area of cultural assimilation problems. And, I've done some conferences, I do ongoing radio and television programs (with) the Samoan community (and) with friends of mine. And try to do something, create programs, what we feel would be appropriate in addressing a lot of these abuse crimes, cultural scoop, whatever it is. And I've been able to associate and put together a very good team of Samoans who are qualified, college educated, professors, lawyers and things, just to say, "Let's give something back to the community." And that's where I am to this day.

So, you know, you say "Pālama Settlement"—I'm the biggest supporter of Pālama Settlement. And to me, if somebody asked me, because I'm in this business of thinking what programs (are) appropriate, right? I've worked---I've done some things with [University of Hawai'i criminologists] Gene Kassebaum and Meda [Chesney]-Lind.

WN: Yeah.

FT: Whose husband [Ian Lind] also went to [University] Lab School.

WN: Right.

FT: You know. They're real---I'm big fans of theirs. We constantly talk, conversation when something comes up. And if someone asked me about "What do you think would be a good program for these kids?"

And I've always said, "If you study the model of Pālama Settlement during my period—I don't know where it is now, but during my period—if you're looking for an effective program, that's the program." I've always wondered why communities such as Wai'anae, Waimānalo, where these pockets don't have programs, (don't have) a model (like the Pālama Settlement Pākōlea Program) that works. And if you look at the history of people that went through the settlement, every single one will tell you that Pālama Settlement had made a big impact on them. You know, so. I'm a real big supporter of that program.

WN: Is funding a problem in terms of not having, in Pālama Settlement not being . . .

FT: Big issue. Very big issue. It's funding, prioritizing the services and so forth. And it's like every other program. Pālama gets the big share, too, of the big donators. But, you know, I say one of my biggest thing is that there are so many programs now than ever before. And they're all chipping away at the lion's share. And the question really is, are they effective? I don't believe they are. A lot of them, to me, sometimes survive on just government money, grant money, and the government doesn't really go out and monitor the effect on the. . . . Pālama Settlement, maybe it was better when it was just not too many, and just one. Where people would go and get the whole treatment right there. And I'm in the business and I deal with these treatment programs. And it's good to have a lot anyway for people to have access to, but when they ask about my experience, I have to tell, "Well, this is my experience," and I know a lot of other people (chuckles) would say the same thing. They've been through my experience, right? But funding is always a big problem.

WN: You see Pālama Settlement continuing on into the future?

FT: I hope so. It would be a big loss, because its mission in the beginning was to service this kind of community. And when you look at the issues, why the immigrant groups, and why these people are the way they are. It means that if you look at the population of those that are in prison, they come from these communities. Poverty is the issue. They don't have the educational background. They don't have the employment. They're filled with substance abuse, mental health cases. Those are poverty-related issues. The settlement was there to at least address a lot of those issues, you know. Begins with the family, and so forth. Right? You also got to have a place that will serve the whole family, you know? And that's what the place was all about. You had your recreation there, where one did not have a problem with family, but had a problem with [a lack of] recreation. You can go there and utilize them. And also be able to tap on all the other services that are there. They used to have the dentist there, they used to have the doctors there, they used to have everything there. Personally, I think it can survive. I'd like to see it continue to survive. I truly believe it can survive despite the funding problem, even more so.

I think really, the problem is---a lot of the problem, to me, is more out of coordinating the services; utilizing some of the services that are free, anyway. Utilizing the University [of Hawai'i]. I'm a big believer that the university should be part of the community, not only a

teaching institution. I've spent enough time in Boston to see that, where the learning institutions have taken sole operation of schools, public schools. It's amazing. And, you know, a place like Pālama Settlement can tap on the Department of Health, the University [of Hawai'i John A. Burns School of] Medicine and the School of Social Work. That's where people can gain experience. So if you (can) really coordinate enough resources, you can probably survive without too much funding. Yeah. So that's my thing.

WN: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW

Reflections of Pālama Settlement

Volume I

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