

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Daniel Nāho‘opi‘i

Born on June 7, 1966, Daniel Nāho‘opi‘i (he/him) is of Kanaka ‘Ōiwi and Chinese descent. The middle of three siblings, Daniel grew up in Kapahulu and Kaimukī on Winam Avenue close to the Ala Wai with his brother Michael Kalani Nāho‘opi‘i and sister Sandy Moana Siu Jun Nāho‘opi‘i. Their mother, Bertha Lee Nāho‘opi‘i, and father, Samuel Pa‘ahao Nāho‘opi‘i, Jr., instilled in them a deep sense of kuleana and taught them the importance of giving back to their community. After graduating from Kamehameha Schools, Daniel left home to earn his B.S. in Engineering at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. After spending time in the continental U.S., he returned home to pursue his M.B.A. at the Shidler College of Business at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. Daniel currently serves as the Chief Administrative Officer as well as the Interim President and CEO of the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority (HTA).

In this interview, Daniel talks to us about his family’s connection to Waiale‘e and his thoughts on kuleana lands. He explains that the work done by North Shore Community Land Trust and UH Mānoa to preserve Waiale‘e is similar to how he envisions a regenerative approach to tourism. Daniel shares with us his hopes to shift old narratives about tourism to one that will put the spotlight back on the local community members. He also shares about his involvement in hula and the Maunalua and Kuini Pi‘olani Hawaiian Civic Clubs.



INTERVIEW INDEX: Daniel Nāho‘opi‘i

00:00:00 - 00:00:37: PRE-INTERVIEW CONVERSATION AND SOUND CHECK

00:00:37 - 00:01:43: INTRODUCTION

Date: 10/7/2023. Location: Shidler School of Business. Interviewers: Pualani Smith-Kauhane, Alejandra Rivas, Kenji Cataldo (not present), Dianne Shen. Verbal Consent.

00:01:44 - 00:05:00: CHILDHOOD

Born June 7, 1966. Grew up in Kapahulu Kaimukī. Memories from pre-school (St. Marks), Kapahulu theater. Life revolved around parks. Mother worked full time and active in community events.

00:05:00 - 00:08:30: FAMILY 1: PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS

Mother (Bertha Lee) grew up in same area. Grandmother lived with them. Kapa‘a Waipoli side from Kaua‘i. Father (Samuel Pa‘ahau Naho‘opi‘i, Jr.) grew up ‘A‘ala and went to St. Louis. Mother went to Roosevelt. Paternal grandfather moved to Kapahulu. Relationship to parents. Close but they didn’t hover.

00:08:30 - 00:12:56: FAMILY 2: ANCESTORS, SIBLINGS, HOLIDAYS

Ancestors from father’s side from Moloka‘i. Stevedore. Grandfather left hard work in lo‘i. Moved to O‘ahu. Mom’s side Chinese. Great-grandparents first generation. School teacher. Bound feet. Siblings. Brother (Michael Kalani Naho‘opi‘i). KIRC. Went to Kaho‘olawe in high school. Sister (Sandy Moana Seyujun). Board of Water. All live in Kapahulu. Chinese New Year. Parents not big into celebrating. Joint birthday parties with brother. Go to other houses to celebrate.

00:14:27 - 00:17:18: HULA

Hula. Parks and Rec programs when young. Exposed at Kamehameha Schools. Wayne opening hālau. Invited to join Robert’s. Merrie Monarch. Supports Robert’s concerts. Professionalism.

00:17:18 - 00:20:50: HAWAIIAN AND CHINESE EXTENDED FAMILY

Stories passed down in family? Moloka‘i. Some family from Ka‘ū. Back and forth between Moloka‘i and Lana‘i. Fireballs. Chinese side in older Hawai‘i. Culture of that time. Speak Hawaiian and know culture. Rules with clans on Chinese side. Kids had to be taken by paternal side after divorce. Extended family connected to Waiale‘e.

00:20:50 - 00:25:10: EDUCATION

Liholiho Elementary. Kamehameha Schools (intermediate and high). College: Northwestern University. Grad school: MBA at UH. Nosebleeds in elementary. Cold at Northwestern. Hawai‘i club to buy warm clothes. International focus for MBA. Scholarship. Internship in Japan. State of Hawai‘i office in Japan.

00:25:10 - 00:29:10: WAIALE‘E LAND OWNERSHIP

Family plots. Map. Shows plots owned by mother. Messy ownership. Mother owns half of interest. Other half split by many people. Land Commission 2816. Kahaleipu and passed down. Son and daughter get half each. Lines of inheritance. During WWII everyone lived in town. Mother was hanai-ed by uncle.

00:29:10 - 00:33:29: EARLY MEMORIES AND CHANGES IN THE LAND

Hardly visited. Stop by. No one lived out there. Moepono family lives next door. Swam in ocean. Fish pond doesn't drain anymore. Didn't used to be that much water. Changes in land. Beach erosion. Limu 'ele'ele. Wedding business. Windmills.

00:33:29 - 00:39:50: FAMILY RELATIONSHIP TO WAIALE'E AND TO 'ĀINA

Not many family stories about Waiale'e. Taxes. Considered resort land. Reclassified as agriculture land. Never worked. No infrastructure. Everyone lived in town. Plans for future of that land. Cost. Title and ownership. Bringing in infrastructure. Mother never had plan. Other families at Waiale'e. David Auwai. Claire Hughes. Connection to Waiale'e is commitment for kuleana land not to be sold. Relationship to 'āina. Used to go up to La'ie, Hau'ula to visit Aunty/Uncle. Mother respects the land. Grandfather said don't get carried away. Teachers used to live at the land in Waiale'e.

00:39:50 - 00:42:10: KAHO'OLAWE

Kaho'olawe. Went one time to PKO side with brother. Now brother is on KIRC side. See damage that humans can do. How hard to restore. Feel the pain of the land. Feel more connected to Moloka'i. Went to Kaho'olawe in group. People from Kamehameha Schools. College kids. Plantings. Cleanup. Roughing it.

00:44:26 - 00:49:40: CAREER IN TOURISM AND INTERNSHIPS

Hawai'i Tourism Authority. Path into tourism. MBA. Only Japanese business in Hawai'i is tourism. Early experience of tourism. Grew up in Waikīkī. Residential not just tourism. Space for everyone. Internships across Pacific. Shift tourism. Want communities to be able to take advantage of tourism. New Zealand: the tribes own much of tourism. Benefit economically but run in same way. Similar to Native American tribes. Looking at integrating culture and history. Tonga, in South Pacific: sustainable tourism. Regulations. Bring in more ideas.

00:49:40 - 00:53:17: GOALS AND CHALLENGES AT HAWAI'I TOURISM AUTHORITY

Communities tell own story. Difficult: not all communities want to. But give opportunity. Want visitors to see Hawai'i in different way. Not resort but culture, environment. Still looks like resort. Residents haven't shifted either. Everyone has to come along. Past 10-20 years. Marketing research. Went to private company. Came back to HTA. Challenges in Hawai'i. A lot of stakeholders and politics. Want substantive change. Move in right direction.

00:53:17 - 00:59:45: COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND CIVIC CLUBS

Ala Wai Watershed Association. Halloween flood. Mānoa not safe from flooding. Sustainable practices. Ala Wai Watershed Collaboration. Bunch of people working in this area. Army Corps plans were big retention walls.

Community plan instead. Want to see change. Need groups. Civic Clubs. Issues for Native Hawaiians. Indigenous knowledge, techniques, and tools. Structure of Civic Clubs. Member of Maunalua Civic Club. Scholarships. Maunalua focused on fisheries. Calendar for cycle of fish. Queen Kapi'olani Club. Hawaiian language focus. Ahupua'a signs.

00:59:45 - 01:04:50: FUTURE OF WAIALE'E

Future plans for Waiale'e. More integrated and sustainable. Not just farm, educational too. Some place for people to stay. Some recreation. Not very involved with Land Trust. Went 2-3 times to work days. Donated native plants. University plans? Supported use for education. Want to grow and be used not just for show. Space for communities to have learning experiences. Integrated. Tough for Land Trust. Want to see University give to Land Trust. Integrate unused State Land. Food for thought for own land.

01:04:50 - 01:05:39: PHOTO OF MOTHER AND CLOSING

Found photo in COH archive.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Daniel Nāho‘opi‘i (DN)

Mānoa, O‘ahu

October 8, 2023

BY: Alejandra Rivas (AR), Pualani Smith-Kauhane (PSK), Kenji Cataldo (KC),
Dianne Shen (DS), and Micah Mizukami (MM)

DS: Alright so this is an interview with Daniel Nāho‘opi‘i for the North Shore Field School at Waiale‘e. The date is October 8, 2023, and the time is 11:18AM. So today we are at the Shidler School of Business at the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa. And the interviewers are Alejandra Rivas, Pualani Smith-Kauhane, Kenji Caltado [Cataldo], Dianne Shen, and Micah Mizukami. So Daniel, thanks so much for being with us here today.

DN: No problem.

DS: We’re really excited to have you and have an opportunity to just hear your stories and your life journey. Um and so we’re gonna be rotating interviewers today and it’s going to be a recorded conversation, so just once again for the record—

DN: Okay.

DS: Do we have your consent. . .

DN: Yes, you have my consent.

DS: Awesome. So we're gonna be rotating interviewers like I said, so to start us off today we will have Pua start.

PSK: Alright. Alright so mahalo for coming again.

DN: No problem.

PSK: So we’re gonna start with the childhood area, just from the beginning and stuff. So can you share with us about your childhood and when you were born and where you grew up?

DN: Oh okay, so I was born in June 7, 1966.

PSK: Okay.

DN: And I grew up in Kapahulu. . .

PSK: Okay.

DN: . . . Kaimukī.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: Let's see what else. So on—childhood home was on Winam Ave. Winam and Hunter. My brother still lives there. We spent most of our time in that area, also down towards uh Kapahulu Avenue, the library, Ala Wai, where else, Pākī Park, Ala Wai Elementary. That whole area. The beach, you know, Waikīkī Beach. That was where I grew up.

PSK: Oh cool. So yeah, you described that. Do you have any vivid memories of this time in your life? Like any kind of memories you want to share with us?

DN: Um. Well I think, I went to school in that area as well. So I remember going to preschool. You know, back then, we would walk home from preschool and umm so that was St. Mark's Preschool. The church is still there. The school's still there. And there used to be a Kapahulu theater right—I don't know what's there know. That would have been I think where the ramen place is or something. But anyway there used to be a theater so we used to walk by in the afternoon and sometimes they would let us go in and watch movies in the afternoon.

PSK: Oh that's so great.

DN: That's what I liked about Kapahulu. It's very uhhh [pause] very friendly place, you know. And back then, life kind of revolved around the park.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: A lot of people used to do park stuff. There was always Parks and Rec programs in the afternoon and all kinds of things. Crafts and shell making, ukulele class, whatever, there was also stuff to do at the park, or you just hung out at the parks. So that's what we always did, or go to the library.

PSK: Yeah, awesome, okay. Let's see. Who had the greatest influence on you as a child or as an adult during that time? You think.

DN: Umm I think my mother.

PSK: Yeah?

DN: Yeah. She was always around for us. Umm she worked full time—she was actually a police woman—but she would finish early, pick us up, and do things with us for a little bit. Set us up, and you know, she would go back to work, finish out the day. So—and then in the evening, she was also very active in community activities, events, so we would go with her. And it's very—that's how we grew up. We didn't—nothing had to be structured. We just kinda went along wherever our parents went, you know? It wasn't anything specific for us. We just kinda went along as a family wherever things happened.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: I think my mother was the most influential because she was always with us. . .

PSK: That's great.

DN: . . . even though she was working, yeah.

PSK: Yeah, that's great. It's always good to have at that time family, so important and wherever you guys go, you guys all go.

DN: Yeah.

PSK: Yeah? Awesome, okay. Yeah, tell us a little bit about your mother and your father and their names?

DN: Okay, so my mother is Bertha uhhh her middle name is Siu Jun. Her maiden name was Lee. So she grew up in the house that we grew up in as well. So my mom's been living there for many years. So ummm and yeah she grew up in that area as well in Kaimukī and Waikīkī. My grandmother was living there as well at the time. So my grandmother lived with us in the back. There was a smaller house in the back, and she lived with us as well there in that smaller house. And then her family—I mean mainly there but the main family comes from Kaua'i on the Kapa'a and Waipoli side. Yeah. That's where my grandmother came from. And um. . .

PSK: Ohhh.

DN: Yeah. My dad, his name was Samuel Pa‘ahao Nāho‘opi‘i, Jr. And then, so he grew up kind of mixed bag. I think he grew up in—oh what is that called now? ‘A‘ala. ‘A‘ala. . .

PSK: Yep.

DN: . . . so downtown area, yeah he grew up over there. And he went to St. Louis [School]. Oh and my mom, she went to Roosevelt [High School]. She was—because my grandmother was a teacher, she went to English standard school.

PSK: Oh wow.

DN: So that would be—what was it back then—Jefferson and Stevenson and then Roosevelt.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: My dad went to St. Louis. And he grew up in ‘A‘ala, but my grandfather—later they moved to Kapahulu, I think when he was already older, but then my grandfather always lived in Kapahulu when I knew him, so we used to stay at his house which was closer to Pākī Park and Ala Wai Elementary. So we would stay with him in the summers and the afternoons and (inaudible) as well.

PSK: That area is nice and it’s so kid friendly.

DN: It’s kid friendly but it’s flat. (Laughs.)

PSK: Yeah!

DN: You can walk wherever you want and it doesn’t matter. (Laughs.)

PSK: Right and you can see everybody because it’s all level too. . .

DN: Yeah.

PSK: . . . like you can see where the children are at all times which is really good.

DN: Yeah.

PSK: Ah that’s awesome! Okay, let’s see, what was your relationship with your parents?

DN: Oh we were all very close family.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: There's my parents and my older brother and my younger sister. We were all two years apart. So we did everything together pretty much. So, I can't imagine what—how to describe that relationship, you know. They were always—it's an interesting relationship because it's not like they were hovering parents either. You know, we had our sports and activities. They just dropped us off. (Laughs.) They couldn't be bothered. But it's a good way. I mean, they would support us, but they didn't have to be there all the time. They could trust that we would be with other people or we could handle our own. . .

PSK: Yeah.

DN: . . . you know, afternoons. I mean, it's kinda like latchkey but because it's pretty safe we used to wander around the neighborhood. But yeah they were never there in the afternoons. They gotta work so yeah.

PSK: Like how they say, it does take a village to like. . .

DN: Yeah.

PSK: . . . just watch everybody and that way you feel safe. That area is definitely—like Kaimukī and Kapahulu, those areas were very safe with regard to just letting your kids out and stuff like that. (Laughs)

DN: Yeah so we always had close relationships yeah.

PSK: Yeah. Well that's good. That's super good. Okay, let's see. Who were your ancestors on your father's side and where are they from and what did they do and what were they known for?

DN: Ancestors? So going way far back.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: So um, my father's family, both my grandfather and my grandmother are from—originally from Molokai on the east end so that's Halawa Valley and that area. And even—maybe even farther into the way deep valleys, Pelekunu and Wailau, like that so—

and from that area, they were—well my grandfather was a stevedore but he moved—they moved actually to O‘ahu. And like my grandfather, he’s so funny, he always says, he doesn’t know why all these young people wanna do lo‘i and taro patch. (Laughs.) He ran away from that. He didn’t want to be in the taro patch every day. . .

PSK: Oh wow!

DN: . . . eight hours. He said, “Don’t, don’t do that.” So yeah. Because. . .

PSK: Wow, that's interesting.

DN: . . . they would do it day and night, right?

PSK: That’s really cool. . .

DN: They would have to be in the morning when they get up. When they come back from school, everything, and it’s hard work, so he said, “Don’t do that.”

PSK: Yeah.

DN: So it’s kinda funny, but yeah. So they did and then they moved to O‘ahu. I don’t know if they met here on O‘ahu or they knew each other before but they’re both from Molokai. Yeah.

PSK: Oh wow that’s so interesting.

DN: Yeah.

PSK: That’s interesting that your grandfather said that, like don’t be in a lo‘i, just yeah go work. (Laughs.)

DN: Go work. He said—yeah he was a stevedore, he said, “It’s too hard being in a taro patch.”

PSK: Yeah, oh yeah. That’s awesome.

DN: And then my mom’s family, they’re Chinese.

PSK: Yep.

DN: So, but my grandmother was born in—on Kaua‘i as well, so I mean, it’s previous to that. Maybe my great-grandparents were the ones who came over.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: Yeah. So I forgot what town, but you know, in southern China. We have the whole book and everything (inaudible). Yeah

PSK: That’s great.

DN: And she—like I said she was a schoolteacher. She told me couple stories, like you know back then, especially the women, like her mother and whatever had all bound feet when they came over, yeah?

PSK: Right.

DN: So she would have to—they didn’t work. I mean, my great-grandmother didn’t work, so my grandmother would take care of her and stuff like that.

PSK: Right.

DN: Yeah.

PSK: Wow! So your great-grandmother had bound feet.

DN: Yeah.

PSK: That’s fascinating. That’s really. . .

DN: So only the men back then worked. Yeah, so. . .

PSK: Yeah, that’s. . .

DN: But they grew up, you know, on Kaua‘i. I think it’s rice back then. It was all rice.

PSK: Right.

DN: Yeah but rice and taro and stuff like that, yeah.

PSK: Okay. Wow, that's interesting. That's so cool. What about your siblings? Their names and—you guys were close growing up but if you could elaborate a little bit more about that, if that's okay?

DN: Oh okay. So first is my brother. He's the oldest. Um his name is Michael Kalani Nāho'opi'i. And he currently is the executive director—I think that's what it's called—of KIRC, which is the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission. And he's pretty much been involved in Kaho'olawe for a very, very long time. I remember when we were in high school, he had gone, one of the first student groups to go.

PSK: Okay.

DN: That's how it got him interested. And then he went away to school. He went to the Naval Academy, Annapolis, yes. . .

PSK: Okay.

DN: . . . so he's a Naval Academy person. So he was in the Navy. And at some point along the way, the Navy assigned him to Kaho'olawe, because remember it was owned by the Navy or run by the Navy at that time. They assigned him to that. So he's always been involved in Kaho'olawe, in the cleanup and stuff like that since then. Yeah.

PSK: Okay.

DN: And then my sister is two years younger. Sandy (pause) I can't remember right, what is it? Moana, I know her Hawaiian name is Moana. Moana Siu Jun. And she works for the Board of Water Supply as an engineer—project engineer I think.

PSK: Okay.

DN: People who look down the hole. I don't. . . . (Laughs.) Umm yeah and she—my brother and sister both live really close to my mom, all there in the Kapahulu, Kaimukī-Kapahulu area. Yeah.

PSK: Oh good support.

DN: Yeah.

PSK: Board of Water supply is hot topic right now. . .

DN: Yeah it is. (Laughs.)

PSK: . . . with everything, yeah? So, oh that's awesome. Okay. That's—wow that's—you have a fascinating family.

DN: No. (Laughs).

PSK: Your family got all kinds of stuff going on. Okay. So how did your family celebrate holidays? And any favorite memories from there?

DN: Celebrate holidays?

PSK: Yeah.

DN: (pause) Well, just did the holidays. . .

PSK: Or the special occasions. Like how would you guys like—could be birthday or. . .

DN: Ah well, we did the Chinese holidays but not all of them, just big ones. Like Chinese New Year. . .

PSK: Yeah.

DN: . . . stuff like that. That's about it, so regular holidays.

DS: Or any like family traditions maybe?

PSK: Yeah.

DN: You know, to be honest, my parents were never big into celebrating things so much. Yeah, we had birthday parties. My brother and I are born a day apart, you know, two years and a day apart, so we always had joint birthday parties which sucks. (Laughs.)

PSK: Oh!

DN: But um yeah we shared one cake. . .

PSK: Oh wow!

DN: . . . and sometimes people would give us one present for the two of us. It was kinda junk.
(Laughs.)

PSK: Yeah. Poor thing.

DN: Oh you know we always had birthday parties in the garage, garage party yeah? With the family and they have a lot of friends and stuff so we always had that. Yeah, that's how they celebrated. But nothing big. Christmas is okay, you know. Typically we wouldn't host too many parties at our house. We would go to other people's houses for New Years and—for Christmas and New Years, yeah.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: Yeah, that kind of stuff.

PSK: Oh that's great. I know it sounds like me. My family always went to places.

DN: Yeah.

PSK: So I feel like, we never had to clean up. We just help clean them—clean up for them and then we just go home.

DN: (Laughs.)

PSK: Ah, okay, um, let me see, when did you become interested in hula?

DN: I don't know. Like I mentioned, in the Parks and Rec's stuff we learned some hula during summer fun and after school programs way back in elementary school, and then I gone to Kamehameha and they had class there and stuff. I have always been exposed to hula along the way. And then what happened—I think when I was 25 or so um—some other friends and associates uh—Wayne Chang was opening up a hālau and so he told me, and I knew Wayne for a while now cause he was working at Kamehameha Schools for a while now, and he said we should come out and be with him. So we were with him for a while then he decided to close his hālau, and then uh, and through Wayne, I met Robert, and then later Robert invited me to join his hālau. So I have been involved that way, yeah.

PSK: Oh, okay, that is great! Um, let's see. Do you have really good memories or some highlights of hula that you want to talk about?

DN: Hula?

PSK: Yeah, hula.

DN: There are so many. I've been dancing for so long. But um I think everyone talks about Merrie Monarch now. We don't go that often, but when we do it takes a lot of practice. Much more than people realize. You know, and most of the people in our hālau are older. Getting the time off can be very complicated and—but at the same time, we learned a lot not only the hula but how to prepare the materials, the implements, if we need to make implements ourselves, making lei and things like that yeah, learning oli [chanting], and um so I think, our hālau because is not so—because Robert performs often—Robert Cazimero—so we support his concerts and shows, so I think that is good, um because it gives us a little bit of air of professionalism for these professional shows as opposed to performing in a public community thing. We always did professional shows, the um, what is it . . . the shell or the Hawai'i Theater and things like that, so that's good. Really complex and stressful (laughs). But you do develop a good camaraderie and family you know, amongst the other your other hula brothers there.

PSK: Your other family?

DN: Yup, that is my other family.

PSK: Yeah, okay, um let's see . . . What stories have been passed down in your family like any kind of whether it is like um, families like historically, like what grandma told you? Grandpa told you? Or anything that kinda sticks out in your mind? (pause) Other than traditional stuff like, "Oh you know when..." Like that.

DN: Well, you know there are some weird ones you never know if it is real or not. But um . . . like on my Hawaiian side, like I mentioned from Molokai right? Mainly but, um I know my grandfather used to say somewhere there's some family comes from Ka'ū . . .

PSK: Umm.

DN: . . . Big Island and they came over at some point. I don't know when they came over during Kamehameha or something like that so they moved over there. I also know that people went back and forth between Molokai and Lāna'i so that's kind of interesting stories.

PSK: Umm.

DN: But they used to tell us stories about you know they have that uh . . . you know what is that called . . . the fireballs.

PSK: Umm.

DN: Akualele, he used to talk about that cause they lived in the country, but you know my grandmother used to talk about that, my Chinese side, back then it was really common in Kapahulu, they used to see them all the time.

PSK: Fireballs!?!

DN: Yeah

PSK: Wow!

DN: (Laughs.)

PSK That is amazing!

DN: Yeah! (laughs) they used to see them all the time! And they see the fireballs, and they kinda lived with that.

PSK: Wow!

DN: So you know, like it is interesting on my grandmother side even though she is Chinese, and my aunts, my grand aunts and stuff, because they grew up in that older Hawai'i, you know everything, they did a lot of Hawaiian things cause that was just part of, that was the culture at that time, that is the base culture.

PSK: Right.

DN: They could speak Hawaiian, definitely, they would do that, and um they would know a lot of cultural things, you know, that was interesting. . .

PSK: Whoa!

DN: Yeah, I don't know what else . . . there some really weird—oh not weird, but like um on the Chinese side, is very Chinese so, they follow these rules with clans and things like that you know, so at one point my cousins uh cousins, my mom's cousins whatever, there

was a divorce or something, but since the kids were kids of the father or one of the brothers, the kids had to stay with the father, not the mother yeah.

PSK: Oh wow!

DN: Yeah! So they went and took the kids so my grandmother raised a bunch of kids.

PSK: Oh wow!

DN: Yeah (laughs) because you know, I don't know what happened, but her brother didn't want to raise the kids, but it has to stay with the family, so she ended up raising, so we have some close relatives yeah.

PSK: Oh!

DN: Kind of more like my mom's uh sisters or a little bit older.

PSK: Oh wow!

DN: Yeah.

PSK: Oh, so they are like your extended family?

DN: Yeah, we have a lot of extended family, that is why we ended up with this Waiale'e property as well.

PSK: Oh!

DN: Cause of the extended family situation..

PSK: Oh wow, that is so fascinating!

DN: (Shaking his head agreeing)

PSK: Okay, so now we are gonna do um, the educational section.

DN: Education section.

PSK: Yeah. . .

DN: Okay.

PSK: Okay so, tell us about your education? What schools you attended elementary to high school?

DN: Elementary?

PSK: Yeah (laughs).

DN: Okay, (smiling) I went to Liholiho Elementary which is up on 8th and 9th Ave—somewhere around there—yeah, in Kaimukī there. Uhh intermediate, I moved to Kamehameha at that time so I stayed through high school yeah.

PSK: Okay, and then? Oh sorry.

DN: College . . .

PSK: Yeah.

DN: So I went away to Northwestern, Chicago, Evanston, north of Chicago for undergrad, and then graduate school—there was a break. Then I came here to UH for grad school in the MBA program.

PSK: Awesome! Okay. Did you have any fun school experiences when you were a kid (laughs)?

DN: Oh in elementary school?

PS: Yeah.

DN: I don't know. . . oh but I used to get bleeding noses (laughs) long, it would stop bleeding so I remember I used to always have that, that nerdy kid with the bleeding nose. Yeah I used to always get that.

PS: Yeah, cause of the weather?

DN: It was hot, yeah, dry, so uh I would always have to go to the nurse (laughs).

P.S. Oh you poor thing!

DN: (Laughs.)

PSK: And then um, so what are the highlights? Umm what was something exciting for you like in your undergraduate when you were in Chicago?

DN: It's cold.

PSK: Yeah?

DN: So one of the things. I would come home. I would come home for Christmas break yeah, so it would be here sunny, at the beach, 80 degrees,

PSK: Uh huh.

DN: 70-80 degrees and then you go back and then it would be like a snow storm or a deep freeze, and you are like minus 10, minus 20, one time we had minus 50, you know, right after we come back. So you go from nice and warm to super cold. . .

PSK: Oh.

DN: . . . within a time period.

PSK: So you had two sets of clothing?

DN: Oh yeah! You carry everything! And then when we first moved there, there was a—we had to—there was a Hawaiian club of course. The main reason for the Hawaiian club was to actually take people shopping to buy their winter clothes, right, because nobody knows how to buy winter clothes, right? How thick or whatever you have to do and the quality.

PSK: Yeah.

DN: So they would—they would take everyone out from Hawai'i.

PSK: Oh that's good!

DN: It was the most important thing they did (laughs).

PSK: Oh my gawd, whoa, and then um, you were here for your graduate studies?

DN: Yeah.

PSK: At Shidler, which is really cool. What were some highlights that you can tell us about?

DN: Well, I did the International Program combined with ah, James, the school out in Hawai'i Kai.

PSK: Okay.

DN: It was a Japanese-focused MBA Program. So, most of the students in my cohort were scholarship recipients and I got a scholarship too. So we came from different places around Asia. So, everybody had a scholarship, and I had the one from Hawai'i, and you know each of the Asian countries, they also had a scholarship. So it was neat meeting everyone from all over, you know and uh, and the kind of um perspective they brought, yeah.

PSK: Oh wow, nice!

DN: Then we did an internship, so it was a quick program, 15 months or something and the internship and we did the internship in Japan, yeah.

PSK: You went to Sophia?

DN: Oh no, we just did an internship so everybody was assigned to a company.

PSK: Oh wow! Interesting!

DN: Oh I don't know, I can't remember anymore . . . a month? month in a half? It was longer than a month. I wanna say three months but it cannot be that long, yeah.

PSK: And what did you guys have to do for the company?

DN: So, you know, just like an intern, I ended up going to the state of Hawai'i. They had an office, it was so funny cause I came right back in a circle. But, there was a State of Hawai'i office at that time and they kinda helped businesses with transactions and get information about the state, things like that.

PSK: Oh, that is very good. Um that's it, yup I think that is everything.

DS: Okay so I think we are going to be moving on to part three. Alejandra will be interviewing you, so we are going to take a short break.

DN: Okay.

PSK: That's awesome!

DN: Okay.

DS: All right. So we are back and we will resume and our next interviewer is going to be Alejandra.

AR: Yeah. So, talking a little bit more about your connection—you and your family's connection to Waiale'e and that 'āina. So you shared with us in the pre-interview that your family owns two or now five plots in Wailale'e, so can you share that map with us please?

(unfolds map)

DN: I don't know how you wanna do this but there's the map.

AR: Oh, wow. Oh that's so cool.

DN: And the yellow marks are the properties that my mother owns. And then I think everybody went to that day, the community day (asking interviewers), and I think this is the road that comes in off of the freeway. Or off the highway.

AR: Yeah.

DN: Because this is the state property.

AR: The school?

DN: Yeah. And then all that stuff that's been doing. I don't know if you walked over to the other side where they had the fishpond?

AR: I didn't.

DN: So they cleared this up really nice. So this, the fishpond, is here.

AR: I think I might have worked in the lo'i.

DN: On this side?

AR: Yeah

DN: Yeah, they're all on this side, yeah.

AR: Oh oh. Cool that's super dope.

DN: So, and it's kind of messy in the ownership. So my mother owns actually only half of the interest. And then there's a whole bunch of people who own the other half of the interest and there's... yeah (laughs).

AR: (Gasps) Is that family tree?

DN: No, this one is... Oh, yeah, it's a family tree of the other side that owns some of the interest in the land. Yeah. So there's all kinds of notes and things in here. Yeah.

AR: Great, that's super interesting. Do you mind telling us a little bit about, I guess, how your mom or how your family came into that land?

DN: Okay. So according to this document, um, it's part of a Land Commission Award 2816, it says. Royal Patent 1328 and it was given to Kahaleipu—I don't know when the date was—but it was passed down from Kahaleipu and they came all the way down. So it gets divided at some point where the son and daughter both get half each. And then, um, my mom's side—I think from Pele, so it goes to—she inherited it from her uncle who was actually my grandmother's brother in law. My grandmother's sister's husband. So that's how they got the land. Yeah, and then my mom had taken care of that family. She was actually... I think when we were talking about that extended family she—during the war, because this is way out in the country—they came in, the family came into town and we lived in town and my grandmother and my mother lived in town. So everybody lived at the house in town, you know, for work and stuff like that because everybody's working at Pearl Harbor or wherever it is during the war time, right? And so she ended up becoming, uh, their favorite... thing... niece or whatever. Yeah, it's kind of hānai-ed because he had two sons, but no daughter. And so I think my mom became their hānai daughter. So we were always very close to that uncle, my great uncle who had the land. And then I think at some point he decided to give it to her. Yeah.

AR: That's really beautiful. What kind of like... what are your earliest memories of that 'āina or going out there to visit?

DN: We would hardly go out. But every now and then we would stop by and go look at the beach. From all the time that I remember, nobody was living up there. They said at some point earlier, maybe some of the teachers who worked at the school across the street may have cottages down that area. I don't know if they were on our land or other land around that area. Yeah so we would always go down, check out, you know, view at least once a year, we'd just stop by, yeah. There was always that other family the... I call them the Moeponos, but I don't know what their name is now. But it's the Moepono family that lives right next door, and they're still living there. I think it's the only family living there. I don't know if you got to meet them.

AR: No, I don't think so.

DN: Yeah. So they're at the end of the... (looks over map) I went to visit them that day too at the opening. I walked down this way (points to map). Because I walked, I walked along the beach. I came down the road and walked along the beach. And they live over (points to map) here. Right, yeah.

AR: Oh, right next door?

DN: Yeah, right here in this area. We live right there. So they still live there. They have a house, a lot of dogs (laughs), gardens and, you know, farming over here in this area. Yeah.

AR: Super dope. Did you ever, like, swim in the ocean or have any beach days. . .

DN: Oh, yeah, of course. The water's beautiful. And then I remember when we were small, the water, actually, you know, it's a fish pond, but it has to drain right? The water has to come out. So it used to drain, I don't know where, but we were trying to look for it that day I was walking by, because I was told that it doesn't drain any more. And that's one reason why everything is flooded, because the fish pond isn't draining. So it's not going out into the ocean, the water is not going out. And so everything is kind of... it looks like there's a lot of water all over, but when I was growing up it wasn't that much water. It was mainly here. And then there used to be a gate that the water used to flow out. So that's why they said everything's kind of flooded now.

AR: Interesting. Do you remember when that kind of changed?

DN: No, I don't remember.

AR: No?

DN: But I know we were trying to look for it again. Yeah.

AR: That's so cool. Then when you were out there, just to visit every year or every once in a while, like, what kind of stuff were you noticing? Like mauka and makai? Like changes as time went on?

DN: Um hmm. I mean, the beach has pretty much—it's been eroding. The—you know this road, right? It had a lot more beach and a lot more space from the road to the beach. And now, you know, it sits up high, right? And that area is eroding back closer and closer. There used to be a lot more trees on the end, especially here in front of our property. And you'll see when you look at it, it's, um, it's eroded quite a lot since when it was there. So it kind of just drops now.

AR: Mm, interesting.

- DN: What else? Like I mentioned, we used to have a—wherever the water used to come out, we used to always pick the limu ‘ele‘ele. I don't know if you know what that is. The dark green limu? Yeah, so used to always pick it there, but now there's none, they said. And I was talking to some other people and they said, yeah, they don't know where it is anymore. Well because the water's not flowing. Yeah. And we never went on this end because it's kind of far (laughs). We always stayed on this side of the thing.
- AR: Definitely. Stay close to home.
- DN: And then there's some kind of wedding business over here, yeah? I don't know if you guys went all the way down there, but this property over here, it's like—and you'll see people have weddings. They cleared it out and they made a big wedding business and stuff. And events and whatever. I don't know if it's legal or not, but it's there. And never had those big windmills before, right? Now you see the windmills all over when you look up, never had that before. Yeah.
- AR: Yeah, jarring. When you were growing up, did your mom ever talk about or tell stories about Waiale'e or that kind of 'āina, like would it be...?
- DN: Not much, because she said, you know, it's—even from her uncle had it, gave it to her, he didn't do anything with it and gave it to her and said, you know, whatever, it's okay. No one ever made the initiative to kind of do anything to develop it. So it's more that it was just there, but she has to pay all the taxes. All I remember is one time the taxes were going up, and so they had to reclassify it. I remember her talking about that. So, because the area is right on the beach, so at one point they were considering that resort land because it's really close to Turtle Bay. So the taxes were going up so she had to reclassify it as ag[ricultural] land or something. Yeah, so I think they went and borrowed a horse and put the horse on the land and they pulled the taxes there. They took pictures and told the tax guy to come look and then they called it ag. It's not ag.
- AR: Do you know why that land was never worked or developed?
- DN: Just takes too much effort, you know? There's no infrastructure, so you would have to bring everything in. Yeah. And she always said, you know, she didn't want to like—she worked in town, we all lived in towns and she's like “oh we have to go out every week?” You know? Can't just leave it—not abandoned but—you know, just unoccupied because somebody's gonna break in, right? So somebody always has to be there, and nobody wanted to commit to being up there in the country all the time. Yeah.
- AR: Do you or your family have any plans for the future or any visions for those plots of land?
- DN: I mean, we keep talking about it. Well, maybe we'll clean it up and maybe build a couple of, you know, beach house or something. Maybe there's a retreat. Who knows? It's just the cost, right? And then we have to resolve the title and ownership first. Resolve the title and ownership. That'll cost—legal cost. And then bringing the infrastructure for

whatever, electricity, water, you know. Yeah. Clearing the road or something. And if it keeps—now with all these changes in rules, right? And so we're so close to the beach, they might push us really far back, in which case the land—there's not much land left to put something on. So, yeah.

AR: Does your mom ever have any dreams or did she ever talk about—

DN: She never thought about it.

AR: Never?

DN: No. But she said, "You guys do what you like." Yeah, so she didn't want to anymore. She said, "Yeah, no need," for her. Which is fine living Kapahulu. (laughs)

AR: That's funny. So you mentioned knowing some of the other families there and Wailale'e. Did you ever like—what do you know about them, or did you ever kind of be in community with them or spend time with them?

DN: Uh, the only close family that we know are the Moeponos there. There used to be different people, same family, but different people before. I remember that. There used to be some flight attendants. Or somebody was a flight attendant and they used to live there. So I remember that. That's all I remember. And I know another person, David Auwai, who is a Moepono, and he said he grew up over there. And I know him, but they live in Makaha now. So, he has some stories, he said, because he grew up over there. But, yeah, that's what I know about the people there since we don't go out that often.

AR: Yeah.

DN: And then I also talked to another friend of mine, Clare Hughes. She's a nutritionist. She's always writing things, um, much older, but she said she grew up there because her father—and I can remember he worked at the school or he worked at the university site, but yeah.

AR: Yeah. How would you describe your relationship to that 'āina, or if there's any places in particular where you feel more connected. Like would that be the beach, or...

DN: I think just the general commitment to trying to preserve kuleana land so it doesn't get sold. That's the main connection I think that our family has: that we don't want it sold, but it's become very difficult because we have to pay the taxes every year. Yeah. So I think that's the main connection. I mean, in terms of the place, it's a beautiful beach. It's isolated. There's nobody around, right? Yeah, so.

AR: So how does your mother kind of talk about 'āina? Just 'āina more broadly, like as a relationship?

DN: Oh. I don't know. I mean, she grew up—even though, you know, she grew up in town, we were at that side of the island every weekend. Every weekend we would go up, visit her aunt and uncle and spend the whole day. So we were always there in Lā'ie, or Hau'ula or something on that side, you know. We always—my dad, my grandfather used to always fish, go squidding and stuff like that. So we do that in the morning—this is Sunday—Sunday morning we do that and then we go over to my aunty's house, uncle's house and hang out with the rest of the family over there. I mean, she respects the land, I think. Yeah, I don't know. It's—you know, our family hasn't—like I mentioned before, right? My grandfather always said, you know, "Don't get too carried away because it's really hard work." (Laughs) Yeah, I don't know if I can say there's any strong tie, but at the same time, we understand and respect. Yeah.

AR: Were there any stories passed down? Maybe from that hānai uncle to your mother that she knew about or that she would tell about Waiale'e?

DN: No, only that, you know, she mentioned about—there's a lot of—the teachers used to live on that property. And then when you read things, you know, read some stories about how it used to be a lot more taro and stuff growing up in there and things like that. Yeah.

AR: Super cool. So, your brother is the executive director of the Kaho'olawe Island Reserve Commission, as you were saying. Have you gone to Kaho'olawe?

DN: I went one time, quite a while ago. I haven't been back since. It was good, we went on the, uh, the other side, what is that? The PKO side? Protect Kaho'olawe 'Ohana side? We went with them. My brother was there too, though. He was leading the program and stuff like that. So, yeah, you know, we had to swim in, bring our own stuff. I don't know if you have done that, but now he's on the other side, so they have nicer places that they boat right in (laughs), but that's a whole other story. But yeah, I mean, it's good. I think everybody should go to see what the damage that can happen when humans, you know, disrespect the land and think it's bombing practice and how hard it is to then restore, you know, property because some of it's washed away and the water tables broken and everything. So it takes a lot of work, and yet still there's a lot more to do. But, you feel the pain of the land there, yeah. But, like I was telling my brother, I don't go that often because I don't really have a strong connection to that. Because we have connections to, you know, Waiale'e and the Molokai. I feel more connected to the Molokai—my family over there—so yeah.

AR: What kind of stuff did you do while you were there? Did you have any kind of like, relationship building like that?

DN: Yes, we went with a group—I can't remember who was in our big group—some people from Kamehameha Schools and teachers and administrators. We had some people from some health programs. And of course, I think some college kids came along too. We did some plantings up on top, building water retention, things that the water would float down and hold so the plants could grow a little bit, yeah. Did some cleanup around the

area. Yeah, it's good. It was roughing it back then. I remember we had to build our own little lean-to thing, you know, with the tarps and stuff like that. Yeah.

AR: That's so interesting. Oh, that's wonderful. Yeah. Just to finish up this section about Waiale'e, I guess overall, like, what does Waiale'e mean to you?

DN: You know, I look at it as a way of preserving a... preserving or setting a path for a new type of Hawai'i, you know? Where the landowners can make decisions on their own. I'm really happy that the university supported this nonprofit and with the—what is it—North Shore Land Trust, you know, stepping in and taking care of some parts of the land and then integrating some of the land owners to do some of the decisions, right? And change the way you look at it without—at first, I was very apprehensive because on the North Shore, I was really worried that they were going to turn it into a big park. Which is kind of unfair to the landowners because—just because everybody else over there has no park, it doesn't mean they should take away the land from the land owners who are originally there. We didn't ask the other people to come, right? So, you know, the early days were all about, “Oh yeah, there needs to be more recreation and more open space for us people who live on the North Shore.” Like what? Why did you guys move here if you didn't have any open spaces and you knew there wasn't going to be anything here. So, you know, they were trying to take away what we were doing. And I think now it's a little bit better, you know, utilizing the land and developing things for the way the land should be used. You know, I really feel that it's up to the landowners to decide, but also to use the land the way it was used in the past as well. And using the land to me is more important than letting it sit open for some recreation or something like that. That's not a good use of land to me. We don't really need so much recreation, we have plenty of ocean. Why can't people just go to the beach? I don't know why we keep building parks. Go to the beach! (laughs)

AR: Yeah, That's beautiful. Thank you so much.

DS: Awesome, well thank you Alejandra. I think I will take over from here. And it's a good segue because I really liked what you said about building a new path for a new type of Hawai'i. And this section, we're going to be sort of be covering your career and what you do now. Um, so in our pre-interview, you shared with us that you are currently the Chief Administrative Officer and CEO of Hawai'i Tourism Authority.

DN: Right.

DS: We were curious what led you to your current role and your experience working in tourism so far.

DN: Oh why I got into tourism. . .

DS: Yeah.

DN: So, you know as I mentioned before, I had an MBA from here. And in Hawai‘i, when you want to do business, uh, it’s going to be tourism related and more importantly, even more so, because my focus was Japanese business. So the only Japanese businesses here are tourism related businesses. So that’s how I got involved in that. And then my area has always been kind of on the research and planning side because that’s my undergraduate degrees in those areas. So um, that’s how I ended up in tourism, and I’ve just been kind of going back and forth with that. And then I decided to come back to it, just the beginning of this year.

DS: Nice. And what was your experience with the tourism industry like growing up here in Hawai‘i?

DN: Uh. . . Well, I grew up in Waikīkī, right? So we always saw the visitor industry there. I didn’t think anything bad about it. And I think there’s always space for everyone, for people who work there. Uh, the people who grew up in Kapahulu—the people who live in Kapahulu, many of them work in Waikīkī or the areas around. And people forget that Waikīkī is also a residential area. A lot of people actually live in Waikīkī. So I think it existed pretty well together, you know. Um, and so when I look at tourism now, I feel that it can continue to exist together. Yeah.

DS: And you shared during our pre-interview that you had a lot of internships and different types of work experiences in tourism and other places outside the Pacific. Can you sort of share a little bit more about that and what you, what you were involved in?

DN: Okay.

DS: Yeah.

DN: Yeah. So one of the reasons why I wanted to continue education and such and then just doing these internships is to really look at tourism in a different way. We tend to only look at tour[ism]—we tend—I shouldn’t say, but we’re shifting, but especially in Hawai‘i and other places, it’s been kind of a mass market tourism. Right. I mean, there are niches of things, but I wanted to have communities take advantage of the economic development they can benefit from, from tourism. Or, develop new experiences that visitors can see the other side of, you know, how we live day to day. And so that’s why I got involved. I wanted to go see what other people are doing around the world. Right? So we spent—I spent—a month in New Zealand because a lot of the tribes there own tourism properties. But it’s really interesting. They do it. They don’t always integrate. They were shifting too, because they just bought the properties because they have the money just like a lot of Indian tribes do, too. They bought it, but they still operate it in a very traditional tourism mode. They just collect the money and the fees, and then it goes back to the tribes that the tribes benefit economically. But the experience is still very much you would never know it was owned by a tribe. Yeah. So a lot of the Native American ones on the continent are similar to that. Like if you go to I mean, they’re getting better. But, you know, a lot of the stuff that you do, like, where is that? Antelope

Canyon, Moab, that's all run by Navajo [inaudible]. But—or you go to all those casinos, Indian casinos, right? It's just, it's a casino owned by Natives, but it's not a native casino.

DS: Yeah.

DN: Yeah. So I wanted to see how maybe New Zealand was shifting and they were trying to, you know, they try to integrate more cultural values into the way they managed and they would try to shift to add more cultural history and things into what they're doing. So that's why we went down there.

DS: Nice. . .

DN: And then recently I went to Tonga. Similarly, they have a tourism ministry similar to ours and they're much smaller. So we were kind of exchanging ideas. They—the people in the Pacific—South Pacific—are much more into sustainable tourism, environmental issues, because small islands, right? So I wanted to learn more about how they do some of their work, how they put together regulations and such, yeah.

DS: Are there any, like future plans to do any more sort of like work outside of Hawai'i for you, like that?

DN: Yea, I'm sure. We would have to. I mean, we need to bring in more ideas. Yes, we'll continue to do that.

DS: What are some of your goals, projects, or changes that you'd like to see happen at HTA?

DN: I think the number one thing is to shift it so that we can have communities tell their own story . . . and that's the way they want to have it. It makes it difficult because not all communities want to tell their story or benefit, and um. But we have to give them that flexibility and freedom to decide, you know, um and then support them. And that's the hardest part, is like, what do they need to develop new products and things, new things to do for visitors? Or maybe it's more educational. And at the same time, we want visitors to look at Hawai'i in a completely different context. It's not a resort area. It's more a cultural and environmental area. You know, that's a tough shift, especially because we don't have everything. It sounds good on paper, but when they get here, it still looks like a resort because we ourselves as residents haven't been moving either, right? We haven't done that much environmentally and improving the way we manage our land, yeah? So until that happens, then the visitors are not going to make an effort, even though we tell them to do stuff, if they see everybody else dumping trash and not recycling in the hotel. You know what's, why should they? Yeah. So we've gotta make that big shift, and everybody has to come along.

DS: And how long have you been now at HTA?

DN: Just since January, this time around. Yeah. I was there ten years the last time that I left for five years and came back.

- DS: Can you sort of, like, share a little bit of your, the last career trajectory, like sort of explain or elaborate on your experiences the last ten, twenty years?
- DN: Oh, okay. So, like I mentioned, I'm always, I've always been in the area of marketing research and planning. So I was doing that at the Tourism Authority for ten years. I left to go work in a private company to look at um not just tourism but other, I wanted to do other industries, other areas, sectors, and community based. . . more community based stuff. But then I realized, oh I really like tourism better. So, I came back here. . . I ended up back at HTA.
- DS: Nice. Nice. And upon reflection over the years, what are some things you've learned working in this industry, and what's your vision for the future of tourism in Hawai'i?
- DN: Well, I think in Hawai'i, just in general, there's a lot of stakeholders and politics involved. You know, small island. So, things people have interests, and so it's hard to move and make change sometimes. Um that puts a lot of barriers up. And especially since we're a state agency, it makes it very difficult at times. But I think as I mentioned going forward, we want to support, and we want to make substantive change. I think in the past, HTA has been making small little steps, you know, here and there. But we've just got to make some substantive changes in certain areas and we just kind of have to focus maybe not do everything for everyone but just a couple of things that they could see that we're moving in the right direction, but then we need the support from everyone else, right? To change our community as a whole. Yeah. . .
- DS: Yeah. And I think um, you know, you're very involved in a lot of um sort of community efforts, and especially in your professional role. . .
- DN: Ehmm. . .
- DS: . . . but also just outside in your life too. So we're kind of, I'm kind of blending the next two sections but what are some community organizations you've been a part of?
- DN: So one of those is kind of related to this area is the Ala Wai Watershed, wait. . . Ala Wai Watershed Association. Um, but what it's looking at is, supporting long-term. . . while back right there was the big Halloween flood and that came to light and then people realized at that point it's like, you know, Mānoa, and the other areas are not safe from flooding. Just like, you know, we had fires, and that flood was only a fifty-year flood. It wasn't a hundred-year flood. So it could have been much worse. So the community has been looking at Ala Wai Watershed Association, is looking more at more sustainable practices in order to address some of the issues, some more—not building big dams and such—but kind of looking at environmental changes for that. And then I joined with that, and also HTA itself is supporting the Ala Wai Watershed Collaboration, which is a bunch of all these people working in this area. In Makiki, Mānoa, and Pālolo to try to resolve that, you know, addressing some of the, what's it—Army Corps had some big plans, but they were all like build retention basins and big walls. And everybody said, no, no, no it's

not going to work here. Yeah. So we tried to push from the community perspective, but also there's businesses involved too. Seeing if we have to raise funds in order to help develop some programs. So, all the schools are involved in that group as well.

DS: Um, so on that, like how did you become very involved in civic affairs or any civic clubs that you've been part of. . . ?

DN: I think it's because, you know, like I've always wanted to see change . . . and I realized that you can't do it alone. You have to do it with groups, right?. . . So yeah, like civic clubs itself, that's more Native Hawaiian side. . . Um, and so with the Native Hawaiian Civic Clubs, we've been working to address issues related to Native Hawaiians. It's not always a Native Hawaiian issue though, . . . but things that may help Native Hawaiians going forward or try to have communities act more with Native Hawaiian values. Because the whole idea is, it's not just Native Hawaiian when you think about it, it's because we're on an island, . . .so it's Indigenous knowledge and techniques and tools and so we can accept that it makes more sense since those, those pieces of knowledge, were developed to sustain the island all these years. So we've gotta look back at some of those practices. You know. . .

DS: Can you tell us a little bit more about the Central Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs that you're also doing? Is that. . .

DN: Yeah, it's part of the civic clubs. Yeah. So there is an Association of Hawaii Civic Club that's, uh, at a national level. And then within that each island has a council and then the mainland has a council too, and those are made up of multiple clubs and then we have clubs. So the clubs themselves, um, . . .I'm in Maunalua Hawaiian Civic Club, and also Kuini Pi'olani Hawaiian Civic Club. Yeah. And a lot of them, you know, the clubs do programs and activities in their community. They also raise scholarships. You know, a lot of people have gotten scholarships from the civic clubs.

DS: Great, awesome. And, what are some important issues that your civic club has been involved in or something that's like. . . very important to you?

DN: So in the Maunalua Hawaiian Civic Club, they—we like to focus on fishing and things related to fisheries. So looking at, you know, at the Northwest Island, you know, . . . supporting the federal recognition of those creating into a fisheries, looking at um, we do a calendar, we support a calendar, so that kids and communities understand the cycle for fish and fishing and it's very community specific. It's actually down to the bays. They actually sponsor like there's one for out in the East Side and they hand them out in the schools. So we do for that one. And then for Kuini Pi'olani, it's more focused on Hawaiian language. And I'm not fluent and—I've studied but not fluent in it. But the organization is of the group in that club likes to focus on Hawaiian language issues. So one of them was pushing to have all public information officers. So people like the PR people in each state agency and, maybe even the county level, that they themselves, should be have some kind of knowledge of Hawaiian language, because a lot of publications and such need to be in Hawaiian now because there's so many native

speakers, especially the younger ones, right? And so communication has—you have to ensure that the communication is done properly. Yeah. So we've been trying to push that bill. I think I don't know where it is right now, but yeah.

DS: All right. And then we'll just have one more final question to take a quick break. Do you see the civic clubs having an active role with kuleana communities like Waiale'e?

DN: Yeah, actually, you know. . . you've seen those signs, Those ahupua'a markers. That's a civic club initiative. And we actually did a tour around all of the different ahupua'a, including Waiale'e, and picked up all of the people who still live in those areas who are originally from those areas. And we had little interviews and events. Everybody met each other. So yeah, so there's supporting in that sense.

DS: Nice. All right, nice. Well, we're going to take a quick break and we will be back.

DS: Okay, So we are back. All right. So we're going to go ahead and finish up just the last section. And Alejandra, you can take that away.

DN: Okay.

AR: Cool, cool. So, yeah, we would like to just talk a little bit about present and future plans as well for when and what do you hope that it will become in the future?

DN: I think for the area as a whole, something more integrated and sustainable. I think, you know, it's not just farmland, but it's education land at the same time. You should have some places for people to stay in. They think it's some recreation, of course, without ruining or losing its charm of being an isolated area. Yeah. Yeah.

AR: Yea, for sure. How much do you get involved with Waiale'e and the North Shore Community Land Trust?

DN: Not much.

(Group laughs.)

DN: I know they have a cleanup every month, right? Every month. And then they're there all the time. But, you know, I think the last time was—I've only been there two or three times. At the beginning when they were starting to do some of the restoration, I started to grow some plants from my house. . .

AR: Oh wow!

DN: And then I donated a whole bunch of plants. . .

AR: (Laughs)

DS: Nice. Nice! (Laughs)

DN: . . . said at least I could do that. Yeah. So I grew a lot of native plants and then sent it to them.

AR: That's so beautiful. What kind of plants?

DN: Um, some um hala trees because I had some hala growing in my front yard. Um, . . . some 'ahu'awa, which is kind of like a weedy plant that grows good in the watery areas and the marshy areas. What else was I growing? Some um, lolu palm trees as well. Yeah, I think, I never asked to see where the 'awa plants, but I know some of the hala are there. Maybe some of the lolu palms are.

AR: Cool. Um, what would you suggest that the university do with that land, since they still have the, you know, the contract for it?

DN: I think, I mean, I like where they're going in terms of making it a educational experience, you know? Um, I do, though, want to see it more, not just a place for show, but actually working and people living there. Maybe not, it doesn't always have to be monoculture. It seems like we're only growing the taro side, but, you know, gardens, there's a lot of other things that we could be looking at, and I don't know what actually does well over there besides taro. But, if we can support other cultural materials too, I think, you know, like wauke. I don't know what grows there, potatoes, things like that. . . And then also just having space for communities to have learning experiences. Yeah. . . Yeah. There's a lot that we can think about. Yeah. But I really want to see what should a more integrated approach like I was saying, that it's not just a farm where some people, some kids come once in a while. You know, people are living there.

AR: Kind of along those lines, what would you hope that the North Shore Community Land Trust do with that land?

DN: I think it's going to be tough because I don't know if they have full access to everything right. I think the university is giving them some time, but they didn't really turn it over completely right. So, I would like to see if the university is not going to use it, that they give control to the land trust. And manage it well. And integrate some of the other property around there. There's a lot of state land in that area that nobody's using. So can that also be integrated into this plan or across the street too. I don't know what's happening with all this stuff across the street.

AR: Okay, yeah. . . Beautiful. Okay. Is there anything you'd like to share that was not covered already in this conversation?

DN: No, no, but you know—but it gives me some food for thought about what we would do with our parcels. You know, I don't know what we're going to do. It really takes so much work. It will take families again. Okay, whatever. It's a lot of work and money. But if we can coordinate better with the nonprofit and the Land Trust, maybe we can take

advantage of what they're doing now and the redevelopment that it will help us as well. So we have to really think seriously about that. Yeah. Yeah.

AR: Beautiful. . . Thank you so much.

DS: Yeah. Awesome. . . Well, thank you so much, Daniel. And, I guess before to close up, we wanted to share a little something with you.

DN: Okay.

DS: So Micah, who is in our Center for Oral Histories, was able to actually find a photograph of your mom in our archives.

DN: Oh, for real?!

(Group laughs.)

MM: We were cleaning up, and um, . . .it kind of just fell out of the piles, and I was like oh, wow, we were meant to find it!

DN: Oh wow, that's so funny. Yeah. So what was that for?

(Group looks at and admires the picture.)

MM: She was interviewed for a Pālama Settlement project. . . in the 90s.

DN: Oh, okay. Yeah. . .

MM: Oh yeah, you can have that.

DN: Oh, thank you. I'll show her.

DS: Yeah. So thank you so much for your time. And I think that sort of wraps up our interview today.

DN: That's a nice picture of her. . . . (smiles while looking at the photo.)

END OF INTERVIEW