

November 4, 2009
Hiroshima-Honolulu Sister City Relationship 50th Anniversary Celebration
Welcome Dinner

Mayor Hannemann's Greeting

Good evening and Aloha!

It's my privilege and pleasure to join with Mayor Akiba and our friends in Hiroshima. We come from Honolulu, we are very proud of this sister city relationship, and we have been looking forward to our trip here for many months.

I come with a contingent of government officials led by our Council Chair Todd Apo and our Council Member Gary Okino. We come with members of our 50th Anniversary Sister City Relationship (Committee) led by Chair Wayne Miyao, that have been working very hard to make preparations. And also I come with officials of the Honolulu Japanese Chamber of Commerce.

You see this is not just a relationship between two cities. This is a relationship between two fine chamber organizations. This relationship really signifies what sister cities should be about. It should be about cultural exchanges, it should be about opportunities to engage in business and trade, and at the end of the day it's about friendship that brings people together.

Hawaii is proud of the fact that so many of our citizens of Japanese ancestry trace their roots back to Hiroshima. That's why this sister city relationship is so important, because it draws upon the past as we look to the future and continue to build upon another 50 years of outstanding and meaningful relationship.

Let me tell you Mayor Akiba, the schedule that was outlined for us today was so beneficial and meaningful, I wish everyone in Honolulu had a chance to see what we saw today; from the cranes that we witnessed that came from all over the world, including schools from Honolulu, to the opportunity to visit the Peace Museum and to see first-hand what your relatives and friends experienced many years ago, to the opportunity to lay a wreath to commemorate this very special occasion, and to the fun things of going to see your new baseball stadium.

I can hardly wait for the next two days, because I know that the best has yet to come. You know our cities enjoy a few things in common. Number one, we're tied together by the emphasis on Peace, our Spirit of Aloha. And you have two Mayors who were educated in Boston and two Mayors who love to sing.

So let this be the beginning of a new era of our Sister City Relationship. We look forward for Honolulu and Hiroshima for many many more years of a fruitful and meaningful relationship that will be the model of all our sister city relationships.

I just don't want our Council Chair and Council Member to see anything more in the city council chambers here, because they're taking back too many ideas of the lovely chambers, the fact that the Mayor has to sit through all of the council meetings. So we're not going to see that tomorrow Chairman Fujita.

I look forward to this evening of food and fellowship.

Domo arigato gozaimasu.