

# Opinion

## The Maui News

### School name can be learning experience

I wish to reply to the letter from Mr. Ernest Paki Cabatingan Jr. (Jan. 27) concerning the naming of the new Upcountry high school. He was responding to a previous Maui News article in which I was quoted. I would like to make two points.

1. In the article I was quoted as saying that I did not feel the name necessarily needed to be Hawaiian, especially if it will be a name that can not be easily pronounced. Lahaina's Princess Nahi'ena'ena Elementary School was cited as an example.

Mr. Cabatingan, a former student of mine at Maui Community College, was right to correct me. He eloquently asserted our need to preserve the heritage of Hawaii.

In a recent telephone conversation, Mr. Cabatingan reminded me of a day several years ago. During class I told him and his classmates that if they didn't understand a new English language term, they should go to the dictionary and look up its



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meaning or pronunciation. He correctly told me that I and others in our community should make the effort to learn the meaning and pronunciation of Hawaiian words and names.

It was not the first time that I have learned something important from students or former students. I agree that the Hawaiian culture is our host culture in these beautiful Hawaiian Islands. I also agree that residents who are uncomfortable with the Hawaiian culture and language are advised to learn them. After all, the Hawaiian language is an official language of our state.

2. As to the actual name for the new school, let me share some thoughts. Many high schools are named for their community or area. Certainly an appropriate name would be "Haleakala High School," since the students will be coming from communities surrounding the "House of the Sun." The school site itself has many views of majestic Haleakala. A problem: There already is a Haleakala School in Kula, though it is not a "high" school.

"Upcountry High School" (in Hawaii's other official language) would nicely reflect the extent and diversity of the students' communities, the lovely rural setting, and the majestic slopes of Haleakala.

Some others have suggested the names of "Colin and Margaret Cameron High School." Both of these leaders were fine people who did much for our community. I was fortunate to work with both

of them and have fond memories of them. However, we already have one high school named after a prominent land-owning family. Given our multicultural community, it would seem inappropriate to use the names from only one ethnic or racial group in the naming of our most visible educational institutions.

On the other hand, we may wish to perpetuate what we have learned during these past few weeks. We have all become increasingly aware of the injustices that were done to the people of the Hawaiian nation 100 years ago. For many people the tragic events of a century ago were unknown because our educational system neglected to teach us about them. It would be most fitting to use the name of the new school as an aid to education about Hawaiian history.

It would be a wonderful tribute to immortalize the name of a gifted leader by naming the school "Queen Liliuokalani High School." We will thus guarantee that future generations of students will never forget the overthrow of the Hawaiian nation. Alternatively, we may want to commemorate our own island's rich heritage with a name from Maui's royalty. Maui's King Piilani has been suggested by Charles Kauluwehi Maxwell.

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