



DANIEL K. INOUE
INSTITUTE



December 30, 2025

Aloha friends, family, and members of our DKI ohana,

As we wind down the year and prepare for 2026, let us remember that our communities are stronger when we work together for the common good.

Today, too much of our politics is dominated by divisions so deep that legislating and governing are struggling to keep up with the needs of the people they serve. Partisan loyalties are too often displayed with anger and hate.

Decency, humanity, and bipartisanship were at the foundation of Senator Daniel K. Inouye's work representing Hawaii in Congress. He believed that good ideas were not political, and that he was elected to work with all members on either side of the aisle to deliver resources and results for the people of Hawaii and our nation.

The greatest testament to the Senator's commitment to legislating in a bipartisan fashion can be found in his forty-year friendship with Ted Stevens, the longest serving Republican in the history of the U.S. Senate.



Stevens and Inouye could not be more different people. Inouye was Japanese, born and raised on Oahu. Stevens was a child of the Midwest raised by an aunt in Los Angeles. Suffice it to say, they voted together 10% maybe 20% of the time. And, that was where they focused their collective energy – Defense, Oceans, Native Alaskans and Native Hawaiians. One of Senator's favorite sayings: "We can disagree without being disagreeable!"

Charlie Houy, who served as a staff member and later staff director on the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations from 1983 to 2013, worked for both men and perfectly captured their dynamic.

"Senators Stevens and Inouye would seem to have little in common," wrote Houy, in a reflection on his time working with the Republican and Democratic leaders. "Senator Inouye represented the progressive wing of the Democratic Party on most issues and Senator Stevens was a conservative."

Inouye had a "calm demeanor was rarely agitated and almost never angry" while Stevens seemed to be in a "near constant state of agitation with a fuse so short it could ignite with the slightest spark."

Senator Stevens enjoyed exercise, cigars, poker and fine red wine, Houy recalled.

Senator Inouye liked music, quiet reflection, fine dining, had given up smoking in the 1960's, and drank only a little alcohol.



“Despite their many differences, over the years a friendship blossomed and deepened between these two men of very dissimilar tastes, habits, and philosophies. They were the quintessential yin and yang,” Houy wrote.

Stevens and Inouye represented non-contiguous U.S. States that were often an afterthought on Capitol Hill. Both men were World War II Army veterans who fiercely provided for the needs of service members, veterans and their families.

Their most important legacy Houy wrote came from their leadership on the Defense Subcommittee.

Between 1989 and 2008 they led the subcommittee as Chairman and Ranking member switching back and forth between majority and minority roles five times.



“At each change they engineered a near seamless transition ensuring that Defense policy stayed on a steady secure path. By partnering together for those twenty years, they established and maintained an unprecedented bipartisanship in national defense, provided strong and steady oversight and, most importantly, kept our men and women in uniform, their leaders, and the nation’s security in good hands.”

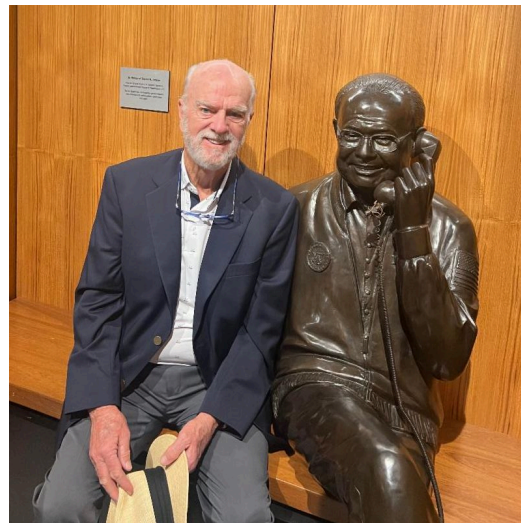
We are deeply thankful for your support and friendship as we continue to share the Senator’s legacy which remains both relevant and important in these tumultuous times. We are now our own 501c3 nonprofit so every gift — no

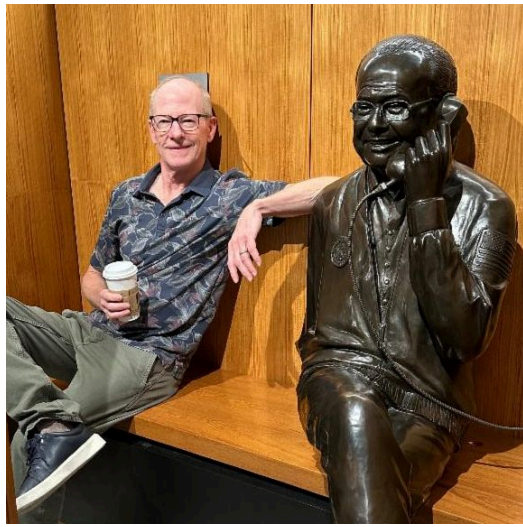
matter the size — will make a meaningful difference. Online donations can be made using this link — <https://dkii.org/donate>

As we start the New Year, let's embrace the values espoused by Senator Stevens and Senator Inouye. Let's believe in hope instead of hate. Let's put people before politics. And, let's come together in 2026 to provide all with the opportunity to live a wonderful life.

Aloha,
Jennifer, Sara and DKII Team

As a reminder, the bronze statue of our beloved Senator at the United terminal at the Daniel K. Inouye Airport is public for all to see, visit, talk story and take a selfie! Here are photos we received from the past year -- Congresswoman Jill Tokuda, Mike McCartney, former staff members -- Kirk Caldwell, Richard Collins, Peter Boylan, Peter Simons, Jennifer Sabas, and Sara Hamakawa; and little Booker, who never even met Uncle Dan!





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