

This month's interview features father and daughter Robert Grinpas and Ginger Grinpas. Robert is in private practice on Kauai and is also president of two companies – Grinpas Farms and A'ala Botanicals. Ginger is a deputy prosecuting attorney on Kauai.



Robert Grinpas, a graduate of the University of Arizona's law school, shares with us his experience for doing business – law-related and otherwise – on Kauai.

In addition to running your own private practice, you're also president of two companies. How do you divide your time between your different enterprises?

For about five years following Hurricane Iniki (1992) I spent most of my time getting the tropical flower farm business into production. In about 1998 I resumed practicing law for a significant amount of my time. Whatever I am doing in law has to take precedence over my other enterprises.

We started A'Ala (smells good) botanicals in 2011, with the purchase of a large (87 gallon bio chamber) steam distillation system. We distill plant materials into essential oils and hydrosol. The process can be completed in about seven hours, and can be done in about a 4 day advance preparation.

At this point I am taking on less law related projects and doing more projects related to the farm and A'Ala activities.

You have had experience working in the field of law in several states. Would you say that there are any major differences in mainland practice versus Hawaii practice?

It has been about 43 years since I practiced law on the mainland. I think it has been too long ago for me to make a meaningful comparison.

Did you ever imagine that your daughter would follow in your footsteps and go into law?

Ginger is a very talented artist, and for a while I thought she might do something as an artist. She was always an excellent student and she really got involved and did well in the Mock trial competition. I think from then on she had it in mind to go to law school so I certainly did imagine she might go into law.

You have been practicing on Kauai since the 1980s – Have you noticed any changes in the legal needs of the island in the last thirty years?

When I began my law practice on Kauai in 1982, we had one Circuit Court with one judge (Kei Hirano) sitting in Lihue. We had a small District Court courtroom in Lihue and had satellite District Court courtrooms around the island. Now we are centralized in one state-of-the-art

very nice location. We have several District Court courtrooms and three Circuit Court courtrooms and two Circuit Court judges. This may be indicative of the changes in the legal needs of our community. Perhaps a sad commentary is that in 1982, aside from the presence of the Sheriff, the Lihue Courthouse and the District Courts were completely open with no security whatsoever.



Ginger Grinpas, a graduate of the William S. Richardson School of Law, shares her thoughts on becoming a lawyer.

Was your father an influence in deciding to go to law school?

Yes, very much so. My father has always been a role model for me, and hearing stories of his various cases piqued my interest in law. I think that, from the age of 3, whenever I was asked “what do you want to be when you grow up,” I would answer “lawyer.”

The majority of your professional experience has been with the government. Is there any particular reason that you have been attracted more towards public work than to private work?

In my first year of law school, I had the opportunity to volunteer as a law clerk for the Honorable Chief Judge Randal Valenciano on Kauai. I really enjoyed the experience and was able to obtain a clerkship position with Judge Valenciano shortly after graduating from law school. While I was in law school, I initially wanted to work in private practice, in the areas of immigration, estate planning, or real property. I didn’t think I would end up working with the government, or doing trial work, but working for the Judiciary made me interested in criminal law. I have been working with the Office of the Prosecuting Attorney for two years now, and I really enjoy it.

You’ve done volunteer work with a high school mock trial team. Do you think that’s a good way for students to garner interest in the law profession? What do you think is the best way for a student to prepare themselves for law school?

When I was in high school, I participated in the Mock Trial program. I don’t think our team ever won, but I had a great time and I learned a lot. Being able to coach Mock Trial is a good experience because it’s a great way for the students to gain self-confidence, as well as learning about trial practice and public speaking. If a student is interested in law school, and particularly in doing trial work, the Mock Trial program is a great way to prepare and gain experience, since the Mock Trial competitions are held at the Judiciary and presided over by actual judges.

What would you say is your one guiding principle in your professional as well as personal life?

It's important to have balance, and to not let your work become your life. I have been dancing hula since I was a kid, and I try to make time for it, regardless of how busy I am. I also try to surf or get in the water at least once a week.