

*This month's Family Connection features the Hirai family and it is written by Steven Hartley, an unexpected Hirai. Steve's mother Lorraine Hirai is the niece of Henry Tetsuo Hirai who inspired generations of Hiraies to pursue the law. There are seven Hiraies to date who have been active members of the Hawaii Bar. Steve Hartley contemplates these many connections in this month's Family Connection!*

In a relatively small and isolated legal market like Hawaii's, the need for civility and professionalism is magnified by the legal culture that has been developed over generations. As young lawyers are taught in law school, we need to be careful what we say and do because "everyone knows everyone" here. In other words, "don't talk stink" about each other.



Steven Hartley

As an army brat, I was raised largely on the mainland. I returned to Hawaii in 1988, completed my undergraduate studies at the University of Hawaii and then received my Juris Doctorate degree from the William S. Richardson School of Law in 1996. At that time, I wasn't fully aware of my family's connection and contribution to the legal profession in Hawaii. Of course, with the last name of "Hartley", I wasn't immediately associated with my mother's maiden name of Hirai. As I would later discover during family gatherings and discussions with colleagues, the Hirai family has had an active presence in the Hawaii Bar for many years. Although I was a Hartley, my family connection ran deep through my mother Lorraine Hirai whose uncle, Henry Tetsuo Hirai (JD# 227) was amongst Hawaii's pioneering "Living Legend Lawyers."

My great-uncle, Henry Tetsuo Hirai was the first in the family to enter the legal profession in the 1950s. Uncle Henry was born in Kealia, Kauai on January 29, 1924. After graduating from Kauai High School in 1942, Uncle Henry joined the Army and worked under General Douglas McArthur in the Pacific Theater. He returned home and attended the University of Hawaii. Following his graduation in 1950, Uncle Henry attended the University of Michigan where he received his Juris Doctorate degree in 1953. When he returned home to Hawaii, he started his own law practice, Mirikitani and Hirai, where he remained for 14 years. In 1979, Uncle Henry was appointed as a per diem District Court Judge and served in that capacity in Family Court through 1985.

Among the many young attorneys that Uncle Henry trained during his career was his daughter, Anna Hirai. Anna graduated from Punahou in 1973 and Georgetown University in 1977. She received her law degree from Boston College in 1981. After practicing with her father from 1981 through 1983, Anna moved to Arkansas where she was in private practice until 1997 when she returned home to Hawaii. Anna has been the Assistant Administrator of the Honolulu Liquor Commission since 2006.



Richard Hirai

Uncle Henry's two nephews, Richard and Brian Hirai, also followed the path he set in the law. Richard, who was also born and raised in Kealia, attended Kapaa High school before obtaining his undergraduate degree from the University of Hawaii. Richard received his law degree from Hastings College of Law and began his practice in Hawaii in 1967; like his uncle, Richard is also considered a Living Legend Lawyer, his JD Number was 820. Before starting Hirai, Lum, Tomita & Higa, Richard worked as a Deputy

Corporation Counsel and as an associate with Chuck & Fujiyama. Richard passed away in 2011; but before he passed, he and his eldest son, Craig formed Hirai & Hirai.



**Brian Hirai**

Richard's brother, Brian Hirai, was also born and raised in Kealia, Kauai and graduated from Kapaa High School. Brian received his undergraduate degree from Drake University in 1974 and his law degree from the University of Pennsylvania Law School in 1977. Brian initially practiced law in the mainland; he was with the law firm of Ballard Spahr Andrews & Ingersoll for 18 years. Brian returned to Hawaii in 1996 and joined McCorrison Miller Mukai MacKinnon and is currently a partner there.



**Craig Hirai**

Richard's sons, Craig and Todd Hirai, were also inspired to pursue law. Both attended and graduated from Punahou. Craig received his law degree from California Western School of Law and Todd from Hastings College of Law, like his father. Before joining his father's practice, Craig worked as a deputy prosecuting attorney for 6 years. Todd later joined the family practice after working as an associate attorney at Damon Key



**Todd Hirai**

Leong Kupchak Hastert for several years. Craig and Todd continue their father's practice at Hirai and Hirai.



**(left to right) Sharlene Hirai, Brian Hirai, Lorraine Hirai, Richard Hirai**

My mother, Uncle Henry's niece and sister to Richard and Brian also continued the legal tradition through me. Although I carry the name Hartley, I was inspired by the generations of Hirais that preceded me. I saw my uncles at work and recognized the value and importance of their work and decided to pursue law. After receiving my law degree from the William S. Richardson School of Law, I worked as an associate at Stirling & Kleintop. In 2000, I became a partner of the firm and continued there until 2004. In 2004, I moved back to Indiana and practiced family law in Bloomington, Indiana for a year before deciding to return home to Hawaii. In 2006, I joined Lockwood and Hartley; and in 2009 started my current firm of Hartley & McGehee with my law school classmate and partner, Elsa Fay Menor McGehee (whose family was profiled in the February edition of Family Connections). With our four associates, all proud graduates of the William S. Richardson School of Law, Elsa and I have continued our dedication to helping local families in our practice.

In all, including myself, seven members of the Hirai family have been active and productive members of the Hawaii State Bar since 1954. This is surely a family legacy that is shared among many here in Hawaii. It also illustrates and highlights the importance of civility and professionalism within the entire bar. Here in Hawaii, it's not just that everyone knows everyone, but also that we are all family in one way or another. In the 19 years that I have been practicing law, I have met many attorneys and judges who knew or know members of the Hirai legal family. The civility and professionalism that they practiced has definitely shaped my practice and legal life in countless ways. In the end, all we have is our reputation and that means everything. This is why it so important to always remember the old local adage of, "no talk stink" in the practice of law.