

**Biographies of the candidates in the election for the 2025 HSBA Board follow. Online voting will start in early-mid October, and election results will be announced at the in-person Annual Meeting on December 6, 2024.**

## **VICE PRESIDENT CANDIDATE**



Kristin Izumi-Nitao

Since 2015, I have been fortunate to have served you as an Oahu Director and Secretary. In the course of this time, I have gained an understanding of the membership and operations of the HSBA such that I have decided to run for the Office of the Vice President for 2025. This decision is largely inspired by the leadership of HSBA's next two presidents who have a clear vision of the mission, priorities, and values of this organization that I would like to build upon.

My professional background is one of diversity in the public sector. For the past fourteen years, I have served as the Executive Director of the Hawaii Campaign Spending Commission which is responsible for administering the Hawaii laws that govern campaign finance for state and county elected offices. Through this position, I have connected at a national and international level with my colleagues who belong to the Council of Governmental Ethics Laws where I served for four years on the Board of Directors as well as chaired the Nominating Committee. I have also worked on conference planning for multiple conferences for the Council of Governmental Ethics Laws which led me to co-chairing this year's annual conference in Los Angeles. Previously, I have worked for the Judiciary at the Hawaii Supreme Court and First Circuit Court of the State of Hawaii, the Honolulu Prosecutor's Office, and the Department of the Attorney General where I have been fortunate to have gained experience in appellate review, criminal prosecution, civil litigation, administrative law, drafting and testifying on legislation, advice and counsel, grant writing, training and education, and management/administration. I have also served in various capacities on community boards and have appreciated the sense of fulfillment and importance of voluntarism.

In looking at the HSBA mission, I believe that I have served in positions that unite and inspire members, promote justice, serve the public, and always look towards improving the communities for which an organization is founded with transparency and accountability. Having just participated in HSBA's strategic planning process under the leadership of HSBA's next two presidents, it is clear that HSBA, like many other professional and community organizations, must address and evolve with a changing social, economic, political, environmental, and legal landscape as well as consider the varied needs and expectations of its membership. If elected, it is my hope to continue addressing these challenges to build a strong foundation to lead HSBA into a positive future.

I humbly ask for your support in the upcoming HSBA election for the Office of Vice-President. Mahalo nui loa!

## **SECRETARY CANDIDATE**



Erin Kobayashi

I am a founding partner of Lukela & Kobayashi, LLP, a family law practice. I have had the privilege of serving as an Oahu Director for the HSBA Board since 2019. If elected, I intend to continue to work on improving and expanding the benefits and services provided by the HSBA while reinvigorating member engagement. I also serve as a member of the Judicial Administration Committee, the Treasurer of Hawaii Women Lawyers, and was recently appointed as Co-Chair of HSBA's Member Benefits Committee.

## **TREASURER CANDIDATE**



Lanson Kupau

Admitted to the HSBA in 1992. Served as a Family and District Court judge, witnessed first-hand the dedication and compassion that Judiciary staff and judges place in each matter before them. Privileged to have worked with the most talented attorneys and staff at the Public Defenders' Office, Reinwald O'Connor & Pleydon, Kobayashi Sugita & Goda, Rush Moore, and Bronster Fujichaku Robbins. Currently a partner at BFR focusing on civil litigation and trials, and chairman for the Board of Directors for Damien Memorial School. If elected, I will do my very best to uphold the standards of the HSBA and its members.

## DIRECTOR CANDIDATE – EAST HAWAII



Geraldine Hasegawa

Having served as an HSBA Director for many years, I am familiar with the board's responsibilities and the difficult issues it faces. During my tenure as a director, I have coordinated CLE programs and have pushed for more inclusiveness of neighbor island attorneys. As chair of the Transitioning Lawyers Committee, I have worked to provide critical information to our members. The HSBA has continued to increase its webcasting seminars and has made positive changes to address neighbor island issues. I am committed to representing the needs and concerns of my East Hawaii constituents and would be honored to continue to serve as your representative.

## DIRECTOR CANDIDATE – MAUI



Jacob Lowenthal

I was born and raised on Maui, where I live with my wife/business partner and two children. I am co-founder and managing partner of Lowenthal & Lowenthal, practicing plaintiff's civil litigation throughout Hawaii. I have served as Hawaii State Bar Association's Maui Director since 2018. Previously, I served as the President for Maui County Bar Association. I am a former federal delegate for the U.S. District Court of Hawaii and a board member for the Hawaii Association for Justice. Since fall 2023 I've assisted in the recovery of our Maui community Lahaina and Upcountry fires.

## DIRECTOR CANDIDATES – OAHU



Steven Chow

Partner, Fukunaga Matayoshi Ching & Kon-Herrera. Graduated William S. Richardson School of Law 1981; Adjunct Prof. William S. Richardson School of Law 1998-2004. Member: HSBA (Secretary 1995, Director 2001-present) and ABA. I will continue to work to improve HSBA benefits, increase community education and ensure the HSBA is responsive to its membership. I have been the co-chair of the Judicial Administration Committee since 2012 which coordinates the annual Bench-Bar Conference and Forums that brings together members of the HSBA Bar and the judiciary to discuss topics and issues to help improve the judicial system



Chastity Imamura

I am an administrative hearings officer with the Office of Dispute Resolution. I was admitted to the Hawai'i bar in 2002 and worked as a Deputy Prosecuting Attorney for sixteen years before moving to my current position. I have just completed two terms as a member of the Committee for Equal Access to the Courts (CEAC) and am also a board member for the government lawyer's section. I am active with the Courts in the Community program and have been McKinley High School's mock trial team coach since 2018.



### Ronette Kawakami

William S. Richardson School of Law, class of '85. Admitted to the Bar, October 1986. Law Clerk to the Honorable Marie N. Milks, 1986-1987. Deputy Public Defender 1987-2013. Associate Dean for Student Services, 2013-2021. HSBA Board Director and Secretary 2000-2013. Most recently as HSBA Board Director, 2023-current. Hawaii Judicial Selection Commission, 2015-2021. Courts in the Community volunteer. I can contribute more than a decade of experience serving as a Director and Secretary, the institutional knowledge that comes with said experience, plus a commitment to making the best decisions that benefit our membership, the legal community, and community as a whole.



### Thomas Michener

I'm a proud graduate of Richardson's part-time program and of UH. I clerked for Justice Pollack, worked at the Honolulu prosecutors office, and am at the AGs handling financial and public corruption cases. I also teach a white collar and cybercrime class at Richardson. As a government lawyer, it sometimes feels that we're a bit removed from HSBA. If elected, I will work to provide better value to folks in government service while also serving the needs of all O'ahu bar members. I'd also like to find innovative ways to enable Richardson graduates to choose government service on all islands.



### Arsima Muller

I am a partner with Carlsmith Ball LLP. I have been a member of the HSBA since 2006. In February 2024, I was appointed by the HSBA Board to serve as Oahu Director, and I am currently seeking to serve a full term. I am an active participant in various community organizations and expect to do the same with the HSBA. I volunteer in the Self-Help Center and the HSBA's Legal Line Hotline. I serve on the Hawaii State Civil Rights Commission. I am also on the boards of Legal Aid Society of Hawaii and We Are Oceania.



### Paul Naso

The strength of any governance board is the competence and diversity of its members. Differing perspectives are good and ensure problems and challenges are resolved on the merits. I believe my unique experience and perspective benefit the board and its membership. Perspective: As a General Counsel, I balance both legal and business interests, often serving as a liaison between competing interests to find common ground, if possible, but to ultimately solve problems. Experience: For over nine years, I worked with General Counsels to reconstitute the Corporate Counsel Section. I have also served as HSBA Treasurer and director for the past 6 years.



### Zale Okazaki

I have presently served 2 terms on the HSBA board and am running for a third. I have served as fundraiser chair for at least ten years and presently serve on the Awards Committee. I am also on the Hawaii Women Legal Foundation Board and the Friends of the Family Specialty Courts Board. I am a partner of the law firm Chong Nishimoto Sia Nakamura & Goya and have practiced since 1990.