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Hawaii Department of Public Safety Director Ted Sakai Wins Award as Outstanding Corrections Director in the Nation

The Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA) has selected Ted Sakai, Director of the Hawaii (HI) Department of Public Safety, as the Outstanding Director of Corrections for 2014.

ASCA established the Michael Francke Award in 1992 to recognize an outstanding ASCA member in the nation and that member's dedication to corrections. On January 17, 1989, Michael Francke, then Director of the Oregon Department of Corrections, was murdered by a former inmate as he left his office in Salem. The award serves to celebrate Michael Francke's contribution to the field and his support of ASCA.

ASCA's current President and Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Corrections, Christopher Epps, made the award announcement, stating: "This year's recipient has many decades of service in the field of corrections and is both liked and respected throughout the field. This person's candidacy was supported by many nominations from a wide variety of persons and organizations ranging from the Governor, key governmental officials throughout the state, public and private entities responsible for offender reentry efforts in the community, and even one person in the community who had a very powerful interaction with our recipient many years ago. It was evident that this year's recipient has made many contributions over the years and even more importantly has touched a number of lives throughout his service as Director. He has an uncanny ability to not only lead effectively, but also cares for others as demonstrated by his record of service."

Ted Sakai commenced his career in corrections in the 1970s and has worked his way up the ladder in a variety of executive positions in the State's corrections system, to include Administrator of corrections programs and Warden of the Waiawa Correctional Facility (WCF). From 1998 to 2002, he served as the Director of the Department of Public Safety

(PSD) and came out of retirement when he was asked by Governor Neil Abercrombie to again assume the position in June 2012.

Upon his return and current tenure with PSD, Mr. Sakai has led Department efforts to expand programs for inmates, tighten security, improve staff recruitment, and promote staff wellness. Since the Justice Reinvestment Act was signed into law in June of 2012, Director Sakai has continued implement of system changes that reduce recidivism, generate savings, track restitution payments and gradually return Hawaii's mainland prisoners home.

Representing a significant achievement for the Abercrombie Administration, Kulani Correctional Facility in Hilo was reopened in July 2014. The reopening restored much needed jobs to the community, kept taxpayer dollars in the state, and added vocational training and substance abuse treatment programs through partnership with community providers and other state departments. In working with the elders from Hawaii to develop programs based on traditional Hawaiian values, reopening Kulani is a major part of the gradual step down process needed for these inmates to successfully reintegrate back into their communities.

Previously, Ted's lifelong career has been similarly marked by outstanding leadership and accomplishments. As Warden at WCF, he tightened security and expanded treatment programs for inmates. In addition, he worked with community agencies to implement innovative programs to help inmates develop parenting skills and bond with their children. Using restorative justice techniques, Ted launched a program to help inmates reunite with their families; and the HI State Legislature recognized him in 2004 by naming him Advocate of the Year for Children and Youth.

During his first term as PSD Director under Governor Ben Cayetano, he was able to make the necessary corrective actions to have a consent decree lifted from the Oahu Community Correctional Center. Ted spent countless hours working with the community, legislature, courts and other departments to ensure the Department of Public Safety's message was heard and understood.

Ted assisted in developing the Going Home project, whose mission is to reintegrate former offenders into the community and the workplace. This Consortium consists of more than 50 public and private entities and their representatives with a statewide network of over 250. He was helpful in guiding this Consortium on issues of housing, education & training, co-case management, health and wellness, job readiness and community relations.

Ted was also an active and supportive player in the planning and development of the Maui BEST (Being Empowered and Safe Together) program, restorative justice programs for offenders, and programs for children of incarcerated parents.

Ted actively serves his community through service as a member of the Interagency Council on Intermediate Sanctions, as a member of the Board of Directors of the

Hawaiian Legacy Foundation, the KEY Project, Read to Me International, and the Hawaii Council for the Humanities. He also participates in ACA (American Corrections Association) and ASCA to keep his vision in line with what is being done nationally in the field of corrections.

Based on his achievements in the corrections field, his service to the state of Hawaii and its citizens' well being, his active participation in ASCA, and his outstanding leadership skills, Ted Sakai is more than deserving of this 2014 Francke Award.