

Judge Samuel King turns 90 without missing a step or beat

Don't be misled by the fact that Judge Samuel Pailthorpe King is 90 years old.

Or that he walks with the help of a cane. And he is blind in one eye and has been since he was 6 years old. He still drives his own car and goes to Oahu Country Club, where he has been a member for over 50 years.

He is bright and cheerful and still hearing cases.

Sam King has just finished co-authoring a book, "Broken Trust," with Randy Roth. It is an incredible Bishop Estate history of trustees' greed, corruption and self-serving.

Sam is a very likable personality. He is the kind of person you go up to first at a cocktail party because he always remembers your name and always has something interesting to say. He is of medium height, graying of hair, but with no physical heritage of his Hawaiian blood from both his mother and his father.

Sam laughed when I asked him about his recent birthday reception.

"I received a call from a gentleman who was organizing the annual meeting of federal judges," he replied. "I asked him not to put the meeting on April 13 because that was my birthday. Well, a couple of days later I received an e-mail saying to save April 13 because the judges were going to have a surprise birthday party for Judge King. Hah!"

It should be noted that at a cocktail party or public function Sam will be accompanied by his lovely wife, Anne. They have been married 62 years. His face lights up at the mention of her name.

"During the war, I was commissioned in the Navy as an intelligence officer," he recalled. "I was stationed initially in New Orleans, which was as far away from the war as you could get, and I wanted more action. There was a chance to study Japanese at the Naval language school in Boulder, Colo. I applied and was accepted.

"Among the students was Anne, an officer in the Waves and a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of Smith College. I had my first date with Anne on June 3 and I asked



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her to marry me and she said the equivalent of "yikes" in Japanese and said to ask her next Wednesday, which I did. She said yes and we were married on July 8."

Sam was born in Honolulu, went to Central Grammar School and then to Punahou where he graduated in the class of 1933. He went on to Yale where he earned his undergraduate degree

and stayed on to get his law degree. He came home and passed the local bar exam. He had several jobs including teaching algebra and geometry at Punahou for one semester.

After the war, King came home and opened his own law office. Calvin McGregor was his law partner. Rebecca Berry, fresh out of secretarial school, was his secretary. Fifty years later she still is his secretary.

His father, who had served as Hawaii's territorial representative in Washington, was appointed governor of the territory of Hawaii by President Eisenhower and also served two years as trustee of the Bishop Estate. It was a time when Bishop Estate trustees were respected and established statesmen in the community. This was to change dramatically and Sam King was brought into the arena by friends of the Bishop Estate who wanted to block the appointment of Matsuo Takabuki as a trustee.

The effort to block Takabuki failed. Sam King went on to become a senior U.S. District Court judge.

But the fight around the Bishop Estate trustees was just warming up and Sam King was standing in the middle of it.

"Broken Trust" continues in next week's column.

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