



A President From Hawaii

By Dr. Linda Hancock

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email office@drlindahancock.com

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Dr. Carolan and Joanna Carolan have prepared a beautiful book that shows the influence Hawaii had on Barack Obama who grew up there and subsequently became the first President from that state.

The less than seventy pages are not only beautifully illustrated but also clearly state the values held by the Hawaiian people, in their language as well as in English. These include:

1. Education: Obama went to school at Punahou and is known as being "askamai" or smart. He has stated that his experience there gave him support and allowed him to grow and prosper.

2. Religion: Even though the eight islands that make up the Hawaiian chain are small, there is always room for churches to be built by people of different faith backgrounds. The word "Mana" describes the Hawaiians belief that divine spirit or power is in every person, rock and flower.

3. History: Before Hawaii became the fiftieth state of the United States, it was ruled by a monarchy. Hawaii has had both positive and negative experiences over the years. For example, War began when Pearl Harbor was bombed by the Japanese. Olympic Gold has been won and now one of the Hawaiians has become President.

5. Tradition: The lei is a garland or necklace that is made from flowers, shells, leaves or other materials and given as a symbol of affection or respect. This is just one of the ways that the Hawaiian people demonstrate their uniqueness.

4. Environment: Because of the rainfall, Hawaii has had great success in growing sugarcane and other crops. The Hawaiians also enjoy the lush and tropical surroundings that they have that include mountain and ocean. Everyone is taught to protect and care for the land as a duty.

5. Family: Everyone in Hawaii is treated like family (Ohana). Each child is cherished and elders (kapuna) are honoured. Obama was particularly influenced by his maternal grandmother who set a good example and sacrificed for him. He often refers to the multi-cultural diversity in his own family. His sister is half Indonesian. His brother-in-law is Chinese. Some brothers and sisters are African.

6. Attitude: Mahalo means respect and thank you. From a young age, Hawaiian children are taught not only to use the word but understand its meaning. Kokua means helping get something done and Obama has learned to encourage people to work together because that is the Hawaiian way. They also value working things out resolving conflict, talking, listening and forgiving.

This interesting book also has a CD on which the main storyline is narrated and Hawaiian music is sung.

My daughter bought this book for me when she was on vacation in Maui. I have greatly enjoyed the simple but beautiful way that the authors have told the story not only of Hawaii but also of the way that Hawaii has influenced Barack Obama who became the first President to be born in Hawaii (kama aina means native-born).

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