



# Gathering Place

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## Protect island culture -- stop the lawsuit

I AM A MOM. I am a mom to a 4-year-old Hawaiian boy. His name is Kawika. He and other children like him are the potential victims of David Rosen's efforts ("Lawyer's search for clients to sue Kamehameha raises questions," May 23). His father and I plan to apply him to Kamehameha Schools next year. We pray he gets in. There are not nearly enough spots for all the Hawaiian children who apply. There will be even fewer if Rosen has his way.

I also am Hawaiian. I grew up with all the stigmas and stereotypes of being Hawaiian. I was made fun of in school (I am not a KS graduate). I am still never helped when I go shopping. People think I'm not as smart as my white or Asian peers. Anyone who thinks racism against Hawaiians no longer exists in Hawaii is obviously not Hawaiian.

This is not to say all non-Hawaiians are racist against Hawaiians. Few local people are, for true local people, people varied in their ethnic backgrounds and cultural experiences, appreciate the beauty of diversity. And they leave it alone. I love the Cherry Blossom Festival, but I would never think of entering because I am not Japanese. That is respect. That is appreciation for the traditions of an ethnic group different from my own. That is what it means to be a part of this local culture. Kamehameha Schools, the Narcissus Queen Pageant, the American Japanese League -- these are all facts of life in Hawaii. And they are all exclusive to certain ethnic groups. They are so those cultures can celebrate and perpetuate their identities. It's a wonderful and amazing thing.

THE ATTACK against Kamehameha Schools is an attack against Hawaii and our local culture. Rosen typifies the trouble-making elitist haole who has historically stolen lands and the kingdom from the Hawaiians in the 1800s and brought Asian laborers here under slavlike conditions during the plantation era. Rosen also was one of the attorneys who attempted to dismantle the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in the Arakaki lawsuit.

Interesting how he didn't mention these things in his biography/commentary Sunday in the Star-Bulletin Insight section.

Rosen's ties to individuals like William Burgess reveal

his true nature: one of intolerance and greed. It is deeply disturbing because it is the antithesis of everything Hawaii stands for: aloha, tolerance, generosity. These are the things I'm standing for when I stand against Rosen. I'm a "mixed plate/poi dog" -- Portuguese, Hawaiian, Chinese, English, German. My mother is haole. So is my husband. Neither is an activist. Each has been to only one protest. They were to support Kamehameha Schools.

This really is not about Hawaiians. This is about Hawaii and our local culture. Are we a culture of diversity and tolerance, or are we a culture that allows people like Rosen to consistently attack us and attempt to make us into one amorphous group in his own image?

I believe we are people of many histories, ethnicities and cultures who share one local culture -- and it is time for all of us to stand and defend that culture.

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