



Dr. Nathan Honda Class of 1975

Please tell us a little bit about yourself and include the year you graduated.

I graduated from Konawaena High School in 1975, a major milestone that marked the beginning of a journey filled with learning, growth and gratitude. I grew up in Honaunau on my family's farm and attended Honaunau Elementary School, where my early education laid a strong foundation for my future. Looking back I have great appreciation for our teachers, who instilled in us a love for learning, and for my friends and classmates from diverse backgrounds who enriched my school experience. Their influence has shaped who I am today.

Where do you live now? What do you love about it?

Currently, I reside in Whittier, California, which is part of the Los Angeles area. Some of the things I love most about living in Whittier are the people, sense of community and incredible climate that allows for year-round outdoor activities. There's always something happening, from community events to cultural festivals and sports events. It feels like a place where I can truly enjoy life, but I also find myself longing to spend some time in Kona where my roots run deep.

Describe your career path since graduating from Konawaena High.

After graduating, I enrolled at the University of Hawaii at Manoa,

where I majored in biology with aspirations of pursuing a career in medicine. I went on to attend Tulane University School of Medicine in New Orleans and completed my internship at Oregon Health Sciences University in 1983. Following my internship, I specialized in Pathology, completing my residency at Harbor UCLA Medical Center. Along the way, I was fortunate to marry my wonderful wife, Helen, and together we raised two incredible children, Alexander and Michelle. My career took me from the military, where I served as a medical service officer in the United States Air Force in Florida until 1992. We moved back to California where I served as the laboratory medical director at Whittier Presbyterian Hospital. After a fulfilling 36-year career in medicine and pathology I retired with a heart full of gratitude and a desire to explore new adventures including traveling abroad, being a lifelong learner and prioritizing my health and wellbeing.

What was your most memorable experience at KHS?

There are many cherished and interesting moments from my time at Konawaena High including of course, the many extracurricular activities and events. One thing that stands out is the 1973 earthquake that shook our school. It was quite frightening for all of us sitting in the classroom waiting to see if the school was going to collapse on us, Yikes! I also have somber memory of the old gymnasium burning down which was a very sad day in KHS history. But that gym was so old and out of date it had to go anyway. A happy memory was the construction of the beautiful new gym. I believe we were only the second class to graduate in that building. The colorful mural on the outside depicted the cultural landscape of the community. Over the years the painting faded but I was happy to see it had been restored.

What advice would you give to Konawaena High School students?

While I may not feel qualified to dispense wisdom given how informed and educated today's students are, I would encourage them to always challenge themselves. Life is filled with learning opportunities and it's crucial to embrace these experiences. Resilience is key—when faced with obstacles, it's important to keep moving forward and learn from every situation.