

KEKUNI BLAISDELL

A TRIBUTE

Beyond a doubt, Dr. Kekuni Blaisdell was an incredible scholar, activist, thought leader, and loving photographer of friends and colleagues at every event. And even more humbling to remember is his aloha for so many of us as a kind and generous mentor, never afraid to challenge—and champion—our ideas.

Tireless in his efforts to raise Kānaka Maoli in academia, medicine, politics, and community, Uncle Kekuni generously shared his ‘ike in numerous presentations and publications. In 2004, I was blessed to work with him to publish his essay, “I Hea nā Kānaka Maoli—Whither the Hawaiians?” in *Hūlili*. The essay is based on a speech Kekuni gave at the 2004 Research Conference on Hawaiian Well-being. It still gives me chicken skin to recall that evening, experiencing Kekuni and Dr. Pualani Kanahele exchanging oli from across the KS–Hawai‘i dining hall. The air was electrifying, with an outpouring of aloha and kupuna wisdom, forever changing us and that place. We are fortunate to have captured his speech on video and to have published it in *Hūlili* Vol. 2.

We now reprint Kekuni’s essay in Vol. 11 as part of a tribute to a great man whose legacy for our lāhui continues to increase in both strength and prominence. Mahalo me ke aloha palena ‘ole!

—Shawn Malia Kana‘iaupuni