

Revised Nov. 2022

*Transcript of 2010 gubernatorial inaugural speech by Governor Neil Abercrombie, delivered on December 5, 2010. Transcribed from a Thinktech broadcast by Perry Arrasmith, 2022, under the auspices of the School of Communication & Information, University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa.*

## **The 2010 Inaugural Address of Neil Abercrombie December 5, 2010**

Aloha. Aloha.

All of us are grateful for our mothers and fathers. I have had the good fortune in my life to be blessed by the presence of three of them.

My mother Vera June, was laid to her final rest yesterday as we were able to gather for the first time in many years, all of our family, in one place.

On this occasion, of this inauguration, our family from across the country was able to gather at my mother’s beloved Hilton lagoon, where for many many years she lived in Waikiki at the Hilton Lagoon apartments.

She came to all of the fundraisers, all of the events, loved every minute of it, and wanted to be laid to rest finally in Hawaii nei.”

I was blessed two times. First by being able to marry Nancie Ellen Caraway. And I thank her from the bottom of my heart today for the firm foundation and support she has provided me.

But there was a bonus to that, and she’s here with us today in the front row. My mother in law, Ellen Caraway, whom I love and who has loved me and Nancie all these years. Thank you, Ellen. Thank you, Ellen. We love you.

And I said that I hit the trifecta. And I’m happy today to say that my hanai mother is here, Agnes Coppa of Waianae. Aunt Aggie Mamo—I love you. My brother Kamaki—I love you.

There are so many to thank. I realize the futility of trying to do it. So all I can bring today is my heart that is full.

Never did it occur to me when I arrived in paradise some fifty-one years ago that I would stand here today.

Revised Nov. 2022

Many of you know that I try to begin my day with a time of meditation. Generally but not always I begin with Dietrich Bonhoeffer—the German Pastor and Martyr who was executed by the Hitler Regime just before the end of World War Two.

He wrote in his testament to freedom on the meditation for today, “the need for joy—I am so happy to see it. Since ancient times sorrowfulness of the heart, resignation has been one of the deadly sins.

Psalms 100, Verse 2 says “serve the Lord with gladness. This is what our life has been given to us for. Joy belongs to the living. It does not deny stress that we are subject to. But joy opens closed doors because joy overcomes anxiety and need.”

The sun rose this morning bringing a new day. What becomes of this day is in the hands of all of us. On this day, as Brian indicated, we begin our work, creating sustainable economies, investing in our people, building strong communities.

Yes, our first job is to accelerate the economic recovery, restoration of good jobs, create good jobs, capitalize on new opportunities. Work smarter, work in partnerships to optimize our results.

Yes, we’ll face challenges, but we’ll not let these become excuses. Instead our driving message will be make it happen and make it happen by working together.”

Make it happen by working together. Our actions will speak for themselves. When we do what we say we will do, we will restore confidence in our government—in our government—and in ourselves.

But before we can begin this work today we need to take a moment to reflect on those who came before us, who overcame the challenges of nature, economic struggle, war, discrimination. They provided us with the opportunities that we have today.

So we must engage each other, I think, with encouragement. We must do our best every day to act with aloha in our hearts.

I have said this election was not about me. The other person that I turn to often in these moments in meditation is the Dalai Lama. And his meditation for today said if you can help others with sincere motivation and sincere concern, this will bring you more than good fortune — more friends, more smiles, more success. If you forget others and forget their rights or neglect the others—the welfare of others, ultimately you will be very lonely.

Revised Nov. 2022

That I think is the great message of aloha. The great message of lokahi. The great message of the foundation of Hawaii nei by its Polynesian ancestors.

We're island people. We understand the necessity of working together, of pulling together. We understand perhaps better than others what nature has provided for us. We understand that we must work together as island people in order to bring the full measure of what paradise has promised to us.

We need to bring what Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in prison, facing death: a sense of civic courage. The necessity of drawing on the best each of us has, working with each other, to see to it that we live up to the legacy of Hawaii nei.

And we need, as well, as those of us who have been given authority by virtue of the faith and trust placed in us by your votes—a public conscience. A public conscience.

When Frances Perkins was made the first Secretary of Labor by FDR—the first woman to serve in any capacity of that nature with that authority with those obligations, she brought to that office, she said, a sense of a public conscience. That is the message of aloha as well.

I earlier noted the sun rose today and brought a new day. The campaign has ended. The transition has concluded. The challenge awaits. With gratitude in our hearts for this day in paradise we move forward.

Imua Hawai'i.

—