

April 7, 1976

"Common sense is in spite of, not the result of, education."

The Dean spoke of legal scholars and books who first to the shores of Hawaii came. Of young and not-so-young men and women, who out of many eminently qualified souls were all well-qualified to complete law school. Of a law school that was to be new and fresh and relevant. Of great promise. Of lofty ideals. Of students taking an active role in shaping their learning experiences. He was eloquent and sentences were convoluted; time stood still and each thought to himself that it sounded so good that he must be saying something important. Or was he? It didn't much matter, the same speech with sentences slightly re-arranged would be heard again. And again. So off we went, some back to work, others up the hill to the temporary faculty offices to find out what was behind the beard, etc.

With a great spirit of aloha, students had signed up to decorate the buildings. (By the second semester, some of us had even cracked the color code, but by then it was too late.) A picnic was organized (by Tony?), but except for a few who would make a determined effort to bend faculty ears, really didn't break the ice.

And then it was Tuesday, September 4, 1973 and there was no turning back. We met in the large classroom for the first time and heard more speeches. We broke up into seminar groups and, for better or for worse, met a seminar leader who would, in the next four weeks, twist many minds for perhaps longer than was healthy. After a brief "show and tell" about our own perceptions of what a lawyer is, we assembled on the walkways overlooking our "courtyard" to ceremoniously begin the law school (again?) in a drizzle. Kaupena Wong chanted a prayer. A maile lei was cut. The Dean spoke (again). The Chief Justice spoke. It all sounded pretty serious, and, in retrospect, the C.J.'s quote from Frankfurter (the judge) seems especially relevant:

"Lawyers better remember they are human beings, and a human being who hasn't his periods of doubts and distresses and disappointments must be a cabbage, not a human being."

We have no cabbages in the third-year class.

So off we went for the next 3.8 weeks to our respective seminars. Our problem was the Kahaluu Flood Control Project, so at least we started off with a problem that was Hawaiian. Was that to raise false expectations? Our groups were nominally evenly divided and were to represent a developer, Life of the Land, a community group, a land-owning trust, and the City. Our readings were the Hawaii Observer. Was this really law school? An almost real problem, with almost real people and no "law" books. To sit around most of the morning and part of the afternoon and b.s. with law students, who, by definition, must be articulate. It seemed too easy and everybody had a share.