



**‘IMILOA**  
Astronomy Center of Hawai‘i

**For Immediate Release**

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***‘Imiloa Astronomy Center Of Hawai‘i  
Names Kālepa Baybayan Associate Director***

**Hilo, Hawai‘i** – ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center has announced the appointment of Chad Kālepa Baybayan as its new Associate Director. ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center is an informal science center honoring Maunakea by sharing Hawaiian culture and science to inspire explorations.

“I am delighted to announce this new appointment,” said Ka‘iu Kimura, Executive Director of ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center, “Kālepa will play an important role in leading this institution as it develops new programming, new experiences and new educational initiatives to help us fulfill ‘Imiloa’s challenging but important goal to share astronomy with a Hawaiian perspective.”

Baybayan, who was previously ‘Imiloa’s Navigator-in-Residence, will have new and expanded responsibility for all visitor experiences, planetarium, educational, exhibit, cultural and cultural landscape programming. The centralization of responsibilities under Baybayan will streamline the organization, and integrate the Center’s many program offerings.

“I am honored to serve this institution as Associate Director and I look forward to helping us achieve our mission of being a center that combines culture and science to inspire a whole new generation of innovators and explorers,” said Baybayan. Baybayan started with ‘Imiloa in 2000 as a volunteer working on the Hawaiian content committee to develop the Center’s exhibits, and later accepted the Navigator-in-Residence position.

Baybayan is among an elite society of traditional wayfinding astronomers called “Master Navigators”. Skilled in the study of Hawaiian starlines and the celestial sphere, and trained by traditional Satawalese Master Navigator Mau Piailug, there are only 4 others in Hawai‘i who share the esteemed title of Pwo Master Navigator.

Baybayan’s background and vast knowledge of astronomy, ocean sciences, meteorology, environmental sciences, and cultural perspectives combine to create a unique and unparalleled skills set that officials are confident will steer the voyage of ‘Imiloa Astronomy Center in a fortuitous direction.

Called by his Hawaiian name “*Kālepa*” (*The Ruffling Sails*), he resides in Kona with his wife, Audrey.

A 1974 graduate of Lahainaluna High School, Kālepa Baybayan holds a master’s degree in Education from Heritage College, an undergraduate degree in Hawaiian studies from Ka Haka ‘Ula O Ke‘elikōlani, College of Hawaiian Language at the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo, and is a US Coast Guard licensed captain. Kālepa is a fluent speaker of the Hawaiian language and has served as captain and navigator aboard the Hawaiian deep-sea voyaging canoes Hōkūle‘a, Hawai‘iloa, and Hōkūalaka‘i.

Baybayan has been an active participant in the voyaging renaissance since 1975 and has sailed on all major voyages of the Hōkūle‘a throughout Polynesia, Micronesia, the west coast of North America, and Japan. His most recent voyage as captain and navigator aboard Hōkūle‘a took him and a Hawaiian speaking crew from Okinawa to Yamaguchi prefecture.

He volunteers for the Hawaiian language revitalization non-profit, ‘Aha Pūnana Leo Inc., Māhele Honuakai, *Exploration Sciences Division*, serving as their designated captain and navigator aboard Hōkūalaka‘i, the newest of a fleet of deep-sea voyaging canoes that are symbolic of the growing interest among local Hawaiian communities in the voyaging arts.

In March of 2007, Kālepa along with four other Hawaiian men were recognized for their contributions to preserve and perpetuate the voyaging arts through their commitment as practicing navigators and educators, and were initiated into Pwo, the exclusive society of practicing deep-sea navigators in a ceremony performed by their teacher, Master Navigator Mau Piailug, from the Carolinian island of Satawal. The ceremony symbolized the passage of

young navigators into the elite hierarchy and society of the Traditional Master Navigator and it is the highest honor that this oceanic society can bestow as recognition of navigational competence.

**‘Imiloa Astronomy Center of Hawai‘i** is a world-class informal science education center located on the University of Hawai‘i at Hilo campus. ‘Imiloa is a place of life-long learning where the power of Hawai‘i’s cultural traditions, its legacy of exploration and the wonders of astronomy come together to provide inspiration and hope for generations. The Center’s interactive exhibits, 3D full dome planetarium, native landscape, and programs and events engage children, families, visitors and the local community in the wonders of science and technology found in Hawai‘i. It is open to the public from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday (closed Mondays). For more information, visit the website at [www.imiloahawaii.org](http://www.imiloahawaii.org)

**The University of Hawai‘i at Hilo** is a comprehensive university with five degree-granting colleges, six master’s programs and three doctoral programs. UH Hilo strives to integrate culture and science, offer hands-on learning opportunities to its students and use the Island of Hawai‘i as a natural learning laboratory. Enrollment has doubled since 1980 to nearly 4,000 students coming from all fifty states and more than 40 countries. Please visit [www.uhh.hawaii.edu](http://www.uhh.hawaii.edu).



**Figure 1 Photo Courtesy of ‘Aha Punana Leo**

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