



Robert Inn Wai Lau

NOV 9, 1926 - APR 2, 2025



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Robert “Bob” Inn Wai Lau, 98, passed peacefully on April 2, 2025 at Nakamaru Hale in Holualoa, Hawaii. While many remember his public service as a judge, he will be remembered most as a loving father, grandfather, brother, uncle and friend.

Born on November 9, 1926, in Hilo, Hawaii, Bob was destined for adventure. After graduation from Hilo High School, he joined the Army, serving in World War II in the Philippines. After the war, he attended Texas Christian University and Transylvania University, collecting lifelong friends along the way. During college, he hitchhiked across the US, often picked up when drivers noticed “Hawaii” on his Army duffel. He finished his education at Vanderbilt University—earning a doctorate in jurisprudence.

After university, he returned to Hawaii and served as District Judge of North and South Kona. He also established a private law practice across Hawaii island. Bob officiated countless wedding ceremonies, assisted with adoptions and consulted on legal cases into his 90s. Many clients became close friends, due to his kind heart and generous spirit.

Bob’s favorite pastimes included swimming, hunting, fishing, playing tennis and traveling. An avid traveler, he visited 47 states, 55 countries and crossed the world twice. He enjoyed Asia especially, journeying there over 30 times. His pursuits reflected his appreciation for other cultures, new experiences, and life's simple pleasures.

Bob’s humor, wisdom and peaceful nature will be deeply missed. He is lovingly remembered by his daughters Jodi Coetzee and Tiffany Lau, son-in-law Christian Coetzee; grandchildren Jacey, Ethan, Daniel and Seth Coetzee, and Kaden Lau; sisters Joyce Hew, Susie Loh, and Jeanne Seals; as well as beloved nieces and nephews. Bob was preceded in death by his parents Dick Yu Lau and Pui Chee Lau, and siblings Seet Lau and Wallace Lau.

Private services will be held at West Hawaii Veterans Cemetery.



Tribute Wall

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Brent Seals posted:

I was in junior high or high school and went to Puako for the first time. Uncle Bob took me snorkeling and we went out for awhile and then I saw the big drop off into the deep blue sea. I saw fish that I didn't know existed but it's was such a scary and memorable time....but I'm glad he shared that experience with me :)

April 15 at 1:29 PM



Memories only last if you share them

Join us in honoring Robert by contributing to a collection of shared memories.



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