



Top Investigative Reporting and Online Journalism Awards Best business and Government Reporting



Log in | Register

Acura Clearance Sale
Get your Free Quote Today!
Reply.com

ASTON K-Class Pass for Kama'aina
For Reservations - Use Promo Code: **KAMA**

Thursday, February 17th, 2011 | Posted by Jim Dooley | Print This Article



BY JIM DOOLEY



Neil Abercrombie on the Campaign Trail (Courtesy daylife.com)

Engineering consultant Dennis Mitsunaga's company gave \$30,000 to Gov. Neil Abercrombie's inauguration "because I was so happy he won," Mitsunaga said today.

Mitsunaga gave twice as much as any other donor to the Abercrombie Inaugural Ball and the donation came on top of \$54,000 in political contributions made to Abercrombie's gubernatorial campaign by Mitsunaga and 15 of his employees and relatives, campaign spending records show.

Mitsunaga and his wife also gave \$50,000 to the Hawaii Democratic Party for its general election advertising campaign last year that helped Abercrombie and other party candidates.

Nikki Love, head of the local chapter of Common Cause, noted that the inauguration cash gifts are not classified as campaign contributions and do not have to be publicly disclosed. Abercrombie made the list public voluntarily.

"Disclosure of these donors may not be required by law, but it should be. We commend Gov. Abercrombie for voluntarily releasing the names, and it is a good step in the direction of greater transparency for money in politics," said Love.

She noted that Mitsunaga's \$30,000 gift to the inaugural was five times higher than the maximum political contribution allowed under state campaign spending laws.

"Perhaps we should consider disclosure as well as maximum dollar limits on inaugural donations," Love said.

But Mitsunaga said he didn't consider the \$30,000 a political gift nor was he trying to burnish his chances at landing consultant contracts from the Abercrombie administration.

When the inaugural ball - held December 9 at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel - was being organized, there was some doubt that enough money could be collected to reserve the hotel space, Mitsunaga said.

"First it was going to be at the Sheraton, but then Neil wanted to go the Hilton," said Mitsunaga, who noted that his longtime office manager, Terri Otani, helped with the inaugural preparations.

"They needed so much money in hand to reserve the place, so that's why I committee the \$30,000," said Mitsunaga.

He said he was so generous in his financial support of Abercrombie because the governor "is such a terrific guy."

"I really like him," continued Mitsunaga. "I've known him 20 years. I supported him since he was in Congress."

Mitsunaga said he first met Abercrombie when both men worked on the election campaign of Gov. Ben Cayetano, a close friend of Mitsunaga.

"He's just a straight shooter. He tells it like it is. I just really like him," said Mitsunaga of Abercrombie.

The list of inaugural donors released by Abercrombie's office yesterday detailed nearly \$672,000 given by private donors.

Money left over after expenses will be donated to charities including the Hawaiian Humane Society and Meals on Wheels, according to Abercrombie spokeswoman Donalyn Dela Cruz.

Mitsunaga and Otani were investigated but never charged in the state Campaign Spending Commission's investigation of "pay to play" campaign contributions linked to government consulting jobs.

The pair in 2004 underwent private polygraph exams to demonstrate their innocence.

Mitsunaga's companies, including Mitsunaga & Associates, received millions of dollars in consulting work from the Cayetano administration and even more from the administration of Gov. Linda Lingle. The company received virtually no city work when Honolulu Mayor Mufi Hannemann was in office. Hannemann opposed Abercrombie in last year's gubernatorial primary election.

An earlier version of this story incorrectly reported that Mitsunaga's company received no work from the Lingle administration.

Share the knowledge!



Short URL: <http://www.hawaiireporter.com?p=30285>



Jim Dooley

Jim Dooley joined the Hawaii Reporter staff as an investigative reporter in October 2010.

Hawaii's most comprehensive real estate search
Prudential
Locations LLC
START SEARCHING

WINNERS' CAMP
HAWAII LEADERSHIP ACADEMY
Life Skills Training for Teenagers
Personal & Academic Success

Computer Repair
Computer Upgrades
Data Recovery
Virus Removal
Networking
Up + Running Computers
Call 383.6212

HAWAII REPORTER
On the Radio every morning at 7:05 a.m. Listen In!
The Rick Hamada Program
830 AM on the Radio
KHVV
NEWS RADIO 830



Before that, he has worked as a print and television reporter in Hawaii since 1973, beginning as a wire service reporter with United Press International. He joined Honolulu Advertiser in 1974, working as general assignment and City Hall reporter until 1978. In 1978, he moved to full-time investigative reporting in for The Advertiser; he joined KITV news in 1996 as investigative reporter. Jim returned to Advertiser 2001, working as investigative reporter and court reporter until 2010. Reach him at Jim@hawaiiireporter.com
Jim Dooley has written 351 articles for us.



The Sexiest Celebrity Butts



A Better Way to Fill Your Next Prescription



How Penny Stocks Create Millionaires Every Day



15 Celebrities With Ugly Spouses



Testosterone Booster Takes GNC By Storm

Comments

There are no comments posted yet. [Be the first one!](#)

Post a new comment

Enter text right here!

Check Spelling

Comment as a Guest, or login: [intensedebate](#) [WordPress.com](#) [twitter](#) [facebook](#)

Name Email

Subscribe to

Recently Commented

- ▶ **Larry McElheny**: Guest C like a press release for Pleadwell...
- ▶ **Brad**: Dentist get a bad reputation when patients talk badly about them to other patients. Before technology allows so...
- ▶ **Maverick**: Being "Radioactive" can be such a burden to your supporters, especially during an election year.
- ▶ **best essay service**: Lovely and pretty photo shoot. I love to provide best essay service for all students who needing...
- ▶ **daniel**: Well, is anyone else surprised of how little this lasted?

Recently Added

- ▶ Interview: Jim Fuller, Founder of Rifle Dynamics, Part 1
- ▶ Ridiculously small steps lead to a healthier lifestyle
- ▶ Driverless Cars? Yes, GoogleCar, iCar, etc. are Closer than they Appear
- ▶ Hawaii County Mayors Still After Surcharge Authority
- ▶ District Court's Rail Compliance Order in Honolulu Rail Case – ASlam Dunk
- ▶ Ground Broken for New Courtyard by Marriott Laie Hotel
- ▶ The White House 'Jumped the Shark'
- ▶ If Spying on Senate is So Bad, Why is it OK For Them To Spy On Us?
- ▶ How to Hide Billions in Taxpayer Money and Get Away With It
- ▶ PBS airs statewide Spelling Bee



Recent Stories

- ▶ Interview: Jim Fuller, Founder of Rifle Dynamics, Part 1
- ▶ Ridiculously small steps lead to a healthier lifestyle
- ▶ Driverless Cars? Yes, GoogleCar, iCar, etc. are Closer than they Appear
- ▶ Hawaii County Mayors Still After Surcharge Authority
- ▶ District Court's Rail Compliance Order in Honolulu Rail Case – ASlam Dunk

Recent Comments

- ▶ **LARRY MCELHENY ON** Ground Broken for New Courtyard by Marriott Laie Hotel
- ▶ **BRAD ON** Dentist Sentenced for Medicaid Fraud
- ▶ **MAVERICK ON** Diva for environmentalism under investigation for violating Hawaii conservation law

Polls

Who will you support for Hawaii Governor in the 2014 election?

- Mufi Hannemann, Independent candidate
- Neil Abercrombie, incumbent, Democrat
- David Ige, Senate Ways and Means Chair, Democrat
- Duka Aiona, former Lt. Gov., Republican
- None of the above

[View Results](#)

