

Old Friends

Noel TRAINOR

>> At the age of 14, Noel Trainor got his start in the hospitality industry, spending summers at a hotel in his homeland, Ireland.

It's an industry he stayed with, and one that later took him to far-flung places, including England, France, Switzerland and the Caribbean. Eventually, a job offer from Hyatt Regency Waikiki brought Trainor to Hawaii, where he's remained ever since — most notably as general manager of Hilton Hawaiian Village Waikiki Beach Resort for 24 years.

These days, Trainor is focusing his efforts on a new venture: Savoy Consulting LLC. Drawing from his years of experience and knowledge, Trainor offers consulting services to those in Hawaii's hospitality industry. With services that range from strategic planning and outsourcing to union negotiation, training and staffing, sales and marketing, and more, Trainor describes the business as solution-oriented.

"They have situations or they have difficulties — challenges that I have experienced before, and so I'm able to give them solutions," he explains.

He also describes his role as a "connector." Because of the relationships he has formed and fostered through the years, Trainor finds himself in the unique position of bringing people together to resolve problems or provide a service.

And while he used to shy away from any such admission, Trainor now confesses that he does indeed miss working at a hotel.

"I miss the daily challenges, I miss the employees and I miss the colleagues," he says. "In Hawaii, there's just a great association of hotel management and executives. They work very well together, and that's the best-kept story — how much they do and support the community."

Trainor — who appeared on *Midweek's* Sept. 17, 1997, cover — knows this well, too. Since 2009, he has served as Honorary Consul of Ireland. He also



Photo from NOEL TRAINOR

established Hawaii Foodbank Hotel Coalition and Oahu Visitor Industry Partnership, and has worked with YMCA, Bishop Museum, Kids Voting Hawaii and many more.

It's a mindset he credits to time spent at Hilton Hawaiian Village. There, management strongly was encouraged to keep active in the community and, says Trainor, it was just part of the employee culture, thanks largely to founder Conrad Hilton.

"(Hilton) said, 'A Hilton in every community and a community in every Hilton,'" says Trainor. "There was never any hurdle or challenge to not go above and beyond on behalf of the community."

Trainor also has been known for his involvement with University of Hawaii School of Travel Industry Management, for which he previously served as executive adviser, and has played a role in fundraising events, programs and curriculum. Now, TIM will honor Trainor with its Distinguished Service Award March 31, when the school celebrates its 50th anniversary with a "Celebrate a Legacy In Tourism" gala.

"I'm humbled and honored," says Trainor. "There are many other people who are more deserving of this award than I am.

"When I think of all the colleagues and mentors that I've had in Hawaii, many of them ... should be getting this award."

"Celebrate a Legacy in Tourism" will take place at 5:30 p.m. March 31 at Sheraton Waikiki. The gala also will pay special tribute to Hawaii Five-0 executive producer Peter Lenkov and its original creator, the late Leonard Freeman. Tickets still are available and may be purchased by calling 956-8946 or emailing dftz@hawaii.edu.

— Jaimie Kim