Forum

A Tribute to Dr. Dean Alegado

Island Connections, Department of Ethnic Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, with Rosie Alegado, and Davianna McGregor

The discussion revolved around the role that Ethnic Studies as an academic unit at the University of Hawai'i has played and continues to play in the community and on campus since its establishment in 1970. The guests focused on the Oceanic connections that Ethnic Studies has developed and its motto "Our Future, Our Way." Island Connections is a monthly television program produced by the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa's Department of Ethnic Studies that deals with local and global issues and their impact on Hawai'i's people. To learn more about Island Connections check out the website: https://ethnicstudies.manoa.hawaii.edu/

[music]

Ibrahim: Aloha and welcome to Island Connections. I am Ibrahim Aoude.
Dean T. Alegado, a farewell.

Ty Kāwika Tengan: Ke aloha no, Dean Alegado.

[chants in Hawaiian]

Ibrahim Aoude: With us to discuss and talk about the legacy of our comrade, I call him, Dean Tiburcio Alegado, is Davianna McGregor, Professor of Ethnic Studies and Director of the Center for Oral History at Ethnic Studies, and Rosie Alegado, Associate Professor of Oceanography. Both at UHM, and I am also at Ethnic Studies as well. So, Davianna first. You know, tell us your relationship with—over all of those years with comrade Dean.

Davianna McGregor: Aloha kākou. Dean Alegado came to Hawai'i from California and began to teach in the Department of Ethnic Studies, first as a lecturer and then as an instructor. And then as the department

gained more resources, he became a professor, and then, you know, and went through the different tenure procedures and everything and finished as a full professor. And he also, before he retired, he served as our director for several years and brought our department through many accomplishments—getting more resources for faculty to be hired and also seeing us through the transition from a program into a full department. And I'm a colleague of Dean, and we were married for ten years. And our daughter is Rosie Alegado, who is a professor here, Associate Professor of Oceanography.

And Dean, then, after he retired, he returned to the Philippines with his wife and family and was there with his parents, and they lived on their rice farm. And he then became the patriarch of their family and making sure that they were all overseen and taken care of and, you know, the proper distribution of the rice among the family members and such.

But while he was here, I was also, with Dean, we both were a member of the Katipunan ng mga Demokratikong Pilipino, which is for short, the KDP, the Union of Democratic Filipinos, and it translates—for short [to] the KDP, and that was an organization that formed when President Marcos declared martial law in the Philippines. And so, the organization formed to dedicate itself to overturning martial law that was being upheld by the United States government. So, we always said it was the U.S.—Marcos dictatorship because without the support of the United States and the air force bases and the naval bases there condoning the martial law status in the Philippines, that Marcos would not have had the support. So, we worked many years within, in the movement for democracy in the Philippines, together with other faculty from the university and the large community, and it was a difficult task in this community even though we say, "Well, there's a lot of Filipinos. They should be concerned about democracy in the Philippines." But Marcos was from Ilocos Norte, I believe, and so many of our—in our Filipino community—had come from Ilocos Norte and Ilocos Sur and had familiar relationships and ties with Marcos. And so, because he was their compadre and their, you know, their relative in many ways, there was a lot of support for Marcos that we saw in Hawai'i. So, it was a difficult process, but ultimately, with the assassination of Benigno Aquino, we see the downfall of the Marcos anti-martial law government. And then the organization we are part of continued to work for democratic rights of Filipinos, you know, especially in second language rights and in the schools and various immigration rights because, you know, when—in the Reagan years—there was this backlash against immigrants, so there are a lot of laws that had to be challenged, and so he worked for immigrant rights as well.

Ibrahim: Wonderful. And Rosie, you're his daughter, so . . . I know you from when you were, like, a small child.

Rosie Alegado: Yes, absolutely. I grew up in the Ethnic Studies Department. I have extremely fond memories of all the locations, from the time it was in the portables all the way at the back of East-West Road, to moving to Korean Studies, all the way to now it's at George Hall. And now my office is still at the end of East-West Road, and I feel very much close to where it once was, and I feel very comfortable there. But my decision to be a professor—I mean, it wasn't really a decision, it was a calling; [it] was completely influenced by seeing my parents both being professors and also being surrounded by, you know, aunties and uncles who showed that it was possible for somebody who is from a historically marginalized background to be in the university. So, it was so important. I consider it a privilege that I have, seeing that representation, and seeing it come to life and then having been instilled in me the, really . . . it's so necessary, hand in hand, to pair scholarship and activism and service to community. So, I really have... I was just on a talk the other day and, you know, we talk a lot in the scientific fields about objectivity and positivism and how that's so hard for Indigenous people to operate in quantitative fields, and I said, "You know, I never had to deal with that because I think critical theory was my foundation." So, you know, I just never even had to deal with all the baggage associated with objectivity because it was always critical theory. And one thing that my dad always, always would say to me growing up was how important it was to be a conscious element in society, to always be conscious of what was going on, and who the players were, and always question why was the system set up this way? Who was it meant to be for and how can we strive to transform and change it?

Ibrahim: Yeah, we will have a segment played by Jon Okamura recalling his relationship to comrade Dean.

Video segment begins

Jonathan Okamura: My first recollection of Dean was in the mid 70s after he came to Hawai'i to teach in the Ethnic Studies program. I saw him in downtown Honolulu at Fort Street Mall. He had his megaphone, which he often used when he was speaking to crowds, and he was talking about the martial law regime of the dictator Ferdinand Marcos at that time, and then he switched to Ilocano because Dean was Ilocano from Zambales. And he started talking to the old timers, because a lot of old timers used to gather at Fort Street Mall to talk story during those days; you know, these are guys who worked on the plantations after coming to Hawai'i in the 1920s. And he was trying to explain to them about what conditions were like under Marcos in the Philippines, and this was a real tough sell to an Ilocano audience. And that was his predicament in many ways, with the majority Ilocano population in Hawai'i boosted by post '65 immigration. The thing I reflect upon is when Dean left Hawai'i to return to the Philippines, the

Filipino community sponsored this big banquet at a hotel in Waikiki, and several people—several 100 people—came out to wish him well. Filipinos called it "despedida." That would have been inconceivable, say 25 years previously, when Marcos came to Hawai'i or going into the 80s when he came to Hawai'i—after being forced out of the Philippines; so things had changed around completely for him now being viewed very much as a community leader for a larger Filipino community and not just the anti-Marcos movement.

Video Ends

Ibrahim: I want to play another segment before we go to you folks, Davi and Rosie. Amy Agbayani recalling her relationship with Dean Alegado.

Video begins

Amy Agbayani: I first met Dean in anti-Marcos demonstrations. He was the clear leader of our Hawai'i group because he had good national contacts as well as good contacts in the Philippines, and Dean really was able to articulate clearly, in Ilocano and English, the issues that we had to fight to be a good anti-Marcos movement. And so, Dean was one of those people who could do everything, actually. He was able to help. We, as a community, we distributed flyers, and we leafleted in Kalihi. We had panel discussions. We demonstrated at the Capitol, at the airport, outside of Washington Palace because the Filipinos in Hawai'i were very, very important to the anti-Marcos effort, because Marcos, as you know, ended up living in Hawai'i and dying in Hawai'i, and the Filipino community in Hawai'i right now is the second largest ethnic group in the state. But a significant majority of those Filipinos at the time, and still, are very supportive of Marcos because he comes from the same Ilocano region as they did. So, having someone like Dean quietly and competently help us was very important.

Ibrahim: Another thing, Davianna, we talk also about his contributions, you know, scholarly contributions. Also, you mentioned a few things about that [regarding] the department and the development of the department. So, could you talk to that, please?

Davianna: Yes, I think the Ethnic Studies program arose from the community and students demanding that the University of Hawai'i have a history of Hawai'i's people and all the ethnic groups—Native Hawaiians, Filipinos, Chinese, Japanese—and to accurately reflect the major contributions that all of our ethnic communities have contributed to the economy and to the society in Hawai'i. And so, when we began Ethnic Studies in 1970—we're celebrating our fiftieth anniversary in a year-long celebration now—we had to write a lot of the histories. Dean did contribute to the history of the Filipino community in Hawai'i through his research, his writings, and his

work. As the program developed, there were two periods where the university actually tried to get rid of us in periods of economic recession. The first was right after the end of the Vietnam War, and there was a really big recession here in Hawai'i. They, the university, had recommended that we be disbanded and dismantle the program, so we had to organize to continue the program. And that was in—I think it was 1973 or '74. Dean was not here yet. And then the next time there was an effort to dismantle the program was in 1977 or '78. Dean was here by then, and he was important with our whole department in organizing the community and our faculty and our alumni to put together the proposals to justify the continuation of the program.

We were able to get permanent status at that point. The next important juncture in the evolution of the program was to achieve offering a bachelor's degree through the department. So, when the program started, we were offering our degree through Interdisciplinary Studies—or I think it was Liberal Studies.

The students would have to pick and choose courses from Ethnic Studies and other courses, other departments, to put together their major, but with having our own Bachelor of Arts program—and this was under Dean's leadership at the time—now students can take and continue to major in Ethnic Studies, and they can also minor in the department as well as get a certificate. And most recently, through the efforts of our professors Rod Labrador and Monisha Das Gupta, we also have now a bachelor to master's program where you can major in Ethnic Studies toward a master's in Education and have an accelerated program. But the foundation was laid through Dean. We still needed additional full-time positions. A lot of our faculty were still on halftime positions because we didn't have the resources, so he was integral in working with legislators, some of whom had been Ethnic Studies majors, or had been teaching in the department as lab leaders when they were in university. Dean was instrumental in making sure that we got the resources through the legislature for those courses, including the Black Studies course that we now have.

Ibrahim: Rosie, I'm sure you read a bunch of your dad's writings, so could you say something? How that impacted you?

Rosie: I think one of the ways that it most impacted me was to be able to understand the roles that Filipinos played in, you know, who we are today as a multi-ethnic state. So, understanding the importance of the plantation workers, you know, in their strikes on Kaua'i, and the struggles that they went through. And, of course, the evolution of a community through time, as you said. When my father first came to Hawai'i, it was very difficult to penetrate into because he was very anti-Marcos, and they were very pro Marcos. And that, of course, was an evolution of community that had been brought as contract laborers, and then you know, moved on. And continuing to see that my father was very much interested in labor migration movements and was also

very concerned with the impacts of labor happening in CNMI. He continued to be very much interested in trying to bring those issues to the fore and connecting them with, immigrants and immigration here as well as in the Philippines.

Those issues very much resonated with me, and I think that it's very important for us to not only see Hawai'i as Hawai'i, but as a network to the rest of the Pacific and to kind of see those iteractions with the Pacific and with the Philippines—how Hawai'i has played a role in that. So, I think [it was about] understanding the greater influence of how we all interact with each other and should try to work together in the future. Now we're pivoting more towards climate change, and it's again interesting to see how these different peoples who have been interacting with each other in the Pacific. How can we continue to build solidarity and move forward into a collective future?

Ibrahim: Yeah, wonderful.

Davianna: I wanted to talk about the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, CNMI. And because they are a commonwealth of the United States, they can have a US label for their products, and China had built several textile factories in the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas, and particularly in Saipan. And because they could get that US label, but were also just a commonwealth, they could pay less than minimum wage. And so, China not only set up the textile factories there; they also had Chinese workers that were sent to Saipan, and these women were in dormitories and just kind of captive in these factories. These women were working long hours under kind of penal, semi-penal conditions. You know, if you look at the factories [they] were all behind these barbed wire fences. And Dean was able to organize here and with people in Saipan, but especially, he had to work with Senator Akaka—who was on the committee that had to deal with immigration—to change the legislation so that Saipan now has to pay the minimum wage. Of course, when that happened, China did close down those factories, so it had an impact on the community, but it was really, you know, hard working conditions for those people and almost servitude on their part. It really needed to be dealt with.

Ibrahim: Yeah, that's true. I'm gonna play three segments, one after the other, about the impact of comrade Dean on the department and on the people he worked with.

Video segment begins

Ulla Hassager: You could go to him with anything in the long periods he was a chair. He was very good at listening and suggest solutions, and . . . He actually helped me through some pretty difficult years, workwise, and also family-wise, having moved from far away from the other side of the globe to Hawai'i. It was really important to have that

support and understanding. Also, taking time to make sure that I follow U. H. procedures and stuff, some of them completely new to me. So, he was really instrumental in that, but he was also always ready to laugh and have fun, and that was really something that I appreciated. His door was open; [you could] come talk, share some jokes, do something fun. And he would travel, and whenever he went to the Philippines, he would always bring back little gifts to all of us. I think it wasn't just me [laughs]. He would bring back gifts, amazing kinds, just small things, but he took the time and energy to think of all of us was amazing.

Ty: You know, I do recall that when we were getting the A. Q., the Ah Quon McElrath Fund for Social Change, up and running and organizing that first event, he was very active in ensuring that that went well and connecting the right people in the community and bringing all of them together. And so the most I got to work with him on something more community focused was on the A.Q.—the first initial dinner and bringing community together to honor her legacy of social justice and ensuring that, you know, if we're going to take [it] on as a *kuleana*, as a responsibility for Ethnic Studies, that we do it well, and we do it in a way that is grounded in her own commitments to empowering those who are marginalized and also with a broader view, right? Especially thinking through labor, but also all the different ethnic groups in Hawai'i that need to come together and work for social change and transformation.

Monisha Das Gupta: I think we found a lot of common ground in terms of both of us studying immigration, both of us being really interested in transnational circulation of labor and capital. And, you know, he was the first person who introduced me to Unite Here, Local 5. I remember him stopping at my office and that time you were at the portables, and he said, "You know, you're sort of interested in unions and workers so why don't you come and check out Local 5?" And Local 5 was a very well recognized AFL-CIO affiliated union. I was working with taxi workers and domestic workers who are more sort of following the worker center model. They hadn't affiliated. They had lots of critiques of traditional union politics. So, I kind of went very reluctantly, sort of sharing my reservations about traditional unionism. And you know, at that time, I didn't quite—I thought all unions were sort of bureaucratic unions. His taking me to Local 5 was my first exposure to an organizing union.

Video segment ends

Ibrahim: So, on that, Davi, what can we say about that?

Davianna: Well, it reminded me how we got to work with Ah Quon McElrath. It was when we were trying to get legislation—trying to get the International Longshoremen Warehouse Union, ILWU, which

represents longshore workers, as well as hotel workers and plantation workers until the phasing out. But we worked with them to try to get a resolution opposing the Marcos dictatorship. It was very difficult, because most of their workers at the time were Filipino, and still are, both from the hotel sector and the plantation sector. So, we worked with Ah Quon to try to get that resolution passed. We feel there was some repercussions from that because it brought to attention some of the cannery workers—this cannery workers' union in Seattle. Two of the leaders who were members of the KDP and in the ILWU leadership in the Seattle Cannery Workers Union were assassinated by the Marcos dictatorship with support in the United States, and this was documented in civil trials that followed. There were civil trials of those who ordered the assassination and who paid for the assassination. So, we did that kind of work, but also, in doing the work with the union, Dean worked with someone from the KDP, who was in cultural arts, to write a play called *Ti Mangyuna*, *Those Who Lead the Way*. And the play depicted the struggles of the plantation workers to organize and to come together. It's centered on a couple, actually, a Filipina woman who fell in love with a Japanese man. And then there were these tensions because of the 1919 strike when both Japanese and the Filipinos walked out; the Filipinos went back to work and settled first. The play tried to depict these ethnic racial tensions within the workforce and how that played out in the organizing, and how eventually, people had to come together and work and overcome those racial differences that had been promoted by the plantation itself, trying to divide the working class in Hawai'i. It showed those racial tensions and how that play was utilized in the workforce and how they eventually were overcome to organize the successful 1946 sugar plantation strike where all the plantations on all the islands went on strike together.

So, it was a beautiful way to take the research he had done about plantations and the situation in organizing and working and putting it into a popular form. The play toured to all the islands, sponsored by the ILWU, and went to the different union halls and was performed to a lot of a success, and it became successful and popular. So that's one of the things I remember in terms of different ways to organize within the working communities and with labor. But he also then later helped—When Local 5 had a strike—organizing students to go on and help walk the lines in support of the hotel workers as well. And ourselves when [laughs] when the professors went out on strike. That year, the professors and the teachers both went on strike and he was our precinct leader, so to speak; he organized the picket line down in the quarry where they enter to go to the football stadium, so he was also active in our University of Hawai'i Professional Association as well.

Ibrahim: Yeah. And before I go to Rosie, I want to go to a segment from Amy's, and then I'll have Rosie comment on that.

Video segment begins

Amy: Then we decided we really had to become permanent in many, many ways. And Dean and, of course, Davianna and others were there. So basically, I knew Davianna before she met Dean, I think. And I am very close to, I really enjoyed meeting their daughter, Rosie. As you know, Rosie, is now an Associate Professor at U. H. Manoa, and people don't realize that she got the $4 million COVID lab grant that is actually helping the state of Hawai'i in this time of COVID. And she's been also helping us in a number of community efforts, in addition to her scholarly work, so she's following both parents. For example, just establishing the Filipino Community Center—that required federal monies as well as money from the state and the community and so Dean did help us with the Filipino Community Center in his own way.

Ibrahim: Yeah, so, Rosie, [are] you following after your parents? [laughs] Yeah? So could you say something because—you know why I'm saying that—because people kind of separate between the so-called hard sciences and the social sciences and humanities. And I remember you just said, "it's a matter of critical thinking that might connect both together." So could you say something about that and about the grant and how it relates to the community?

Rosie: Sure.

Ibrahim: with the Oceanography and social and the hard sciences?

Rosie: Yeah. Well, I think that being raised in the Ethnic Studies Department, and I really do consider myself being raised there, I remember going there a lot after school and kind of being a mini T. A. for my parents—having to, you know, make lots of copies for their class [laughs] and do all the handouts and kind of help them; I can't help but kind of soak in all of the teachings and the theory and the theoretical frameworks. And during the summertime, also being around for all the teacher institutes and having the benefit of going on all the geopolitical tours and the field trips. So, it really is second nature to want to do things in service to community and to do things for the community. I think that's really how I was raised by my parents—my parents are grassroots organizers and their philosophy was, we just take you. Well, if I wasn't going to my grandparents' house, I was going out with them. I was also on the picket line, you know, I was also going out to all these events. So, it wasn't anything that I felt like I had to step very far outside of my comfort zone to do.

Trying to help the community is really what I was raised to do by my parents. So, when COVID happened, or is continuing to happen, I immediately felt that we needed to—I had been looking at what was happening on the continent and seeing that there were all these mutual aids. I had seen that there were these universities, specifically

University of Washington and UC Berkeley, who had leveraged the expertise that they had on campus to begin to provide more testing capacity for their communities. And I immediately saw that Hawai'i—because were always at the end of a very long global supply chain—I knew that we were going to be under capacity and under resourced on the one hand, and on the other hand, all it would take would be a small group of tourists to come in with the disease to really ravage our local communities. And we had low capacity in the hospitals. I felt that it was very critical that we use this motivation and example of these schools on the continent, schools that were public universities, just like us, that had resources, just like us, to begin to mobilize and create these opportunities. I put out the call, and I saw who was willing to help, and there was one other professor, Dr. Vivek Nerurkar, who is Chair of the Tropical Medicine Department, and he said, "Yeah, let's do this. I want to do this, too." And it was scary because, you know, I didn't have all the expertise it took to know what it even meant to set up a clinical lab. And we're good partners, because he has the expertise, and I had really great community connections, to be honest, because of my parents, and because of the Ethnic Studies Department and all the good work that had been done.

And so, people were very much willing to help us. When the opportunity came—having written so many grants to try and fund my work, as we all know, as scholars we have to do—that experience really came in handy and [was] leveraged, and we were able to write a grant to see what it could take. Our clinical lab is based at JABSOM, and it's very unique to other clinical labs. So, when you go to the doctor, you might get a, you know, your blood drawn for diabetes or to see if you have high cholesterol, and those tests get run at two major labs on O'ahu. It's either DLS, Diagnostic Lab Services, or CLH, Clinical Labs Hawai'i. And the JABSOM Tropical Medicine Clinical Lab is not in the business of doing those.

Our purposes are really only to: number one, for this pandemic, to serve and provide increased health access to the people of Hawai'i, and then [number two] to use the fact that we are interfaced with researchers at UH, to prepare for the coming new emerging infectious disease threats that are on the horizon. We do things that other clinical labs don't do. So, for example, we have done over twenty-six outreach events where we have leveraged our connections with communities. So, we test at public housing; we test regularly at, like, Palolo Public Housing. I was just there this Saturday, to help test residents, primarily who are new immigrants, right? They're Pacific Islanders, they're Vietnamese, who normally might be underinsured or have just have poor access or have distrust. And so, I took the lessons that I've learned from my parents and other people in Ethnic Studies. There's natural distrust, which makes sense from historical and medical inequalities and problems with many of these communities. I took what I learned from my parents, and I built these trust relationships with partner organizations who are already servicing the communities. I've made

partnerships with the local churches, with the Filipino community, with other groups who are already servicing these people. For example, working with Auntie Amy, we partnered with the Filipino CARES Community Project. We tested at, not only the FilCom Center, [but] we also provided testing at Catholic churches across the island of Oʻahu. And these are the kinds of out-of-the-box thinking, I think, that are really necessary to be able to protect our communities and provide that kind of access that is necessary to keep us all safe.

So, I think it's really important because it shows that you can have technology and science serve the people. But it has to be with the community, of course. You cannot do research on community. You cannot do research to the community. And that's a very important aspect as a hard-science kind of STEM researcher; I think there's been a long and not great historical legacy of people not doing things in consultation with community or for them and not understanding what the real issues are. And that's why it's so important to marry those efforts with things in critical theory because we can then go to the communities and see what are the problems that they believe are most important to them, and what can we do to bring our technology and science to help them out?

Ibrahim: Yeah, wonderful. Before I go to Davi, I just want to run one more segment. And my comment on the science, technology, engineering, and math is that through civic engagement, Ethnic Studies is active in having the relationship between community and STEM. So, before we go to Davi, I want to go to a segment by Jon Okamura. We play that and come back.

Video segment begins

Jon: Dean spent his sabbatical at the legislature, essentially as a lobbyist for Gene Awakuni to get legislators behind funding the building of UH West Oʻahu, and that was successful. The campus was eventually built. It resulted in this really increased enrollment of Native Hawaiians and Filipinos to college. They're the two largest groups at U.H. West Oʻahu, and their enrollment has continued to increase almost every year since the campus was built compared to their underrepresentation historically; it continues to the present at U.H. Manoa, by his efforts at the legislature, during his sabbatical, too. He sacrificed his own sabbatical to do this. And this will continue, I have no doubt at U.H. West Oʻahu because of the population of those communities in that part of the island. When Dean came to Ethnic Studies in '75, there was already a "Filipinos in Hawaiʻi" course; I met Evelyn Hernandez, who was teaching it. But Dean made it a very popular course and continued to teach, perhaps for 30 years, until he left. I think one of his lasting contributions was developing the Ethnic Identity course. He was the one that introduced that course, which continues to be taught every semester, and has become one of the most popular courses that we

offer. But my personal connection also with Dean, in terms of the department, was he was the first one among the faculty who invited me to give a guest lecture in that Ethnic Identity course, which I eventually also taught regularly. And this happened after I came back to Hawai'i in '83. I was unemployed, looking for a job, and, you know, Dean contacted me and asked me to give a lecture on local identity in his course so that was kind of like one of my first connections (besides Franklin Odo) with the department. Certainly, [it was] the first time I lectured in an Ethnic Studies course, so I really appreciated that gesture he made at that time. But I also can mention his contributions to Philippine Studies at the U. H. Manoa campus, because he served as director, I think, maybe around 2006—around the time of the 100th anniversary of Philippine immigration to Hawai'i. I might have got that wrong, but I know he raised a lot of money to hold events in celebration of that event. And he kind of straddled Filipino American Studies/Ethnic Studies and Philippine Studies through his research and writings. His dissertation was on international Philippine labor migration, for example.

Video segment ends

Davianna: Yeah, I think Dean was, at heart, a nationalist, a Philippine nationalist. Even though before coming to Hawai'i he had been raised in California, he was born in the Philippines and he spent, you know, his best years in the Philippines growing up and always returned with his parents there. So he had always intended to be able to go back and retire in the Philippines and to do work there in his community and among his family, of course, in [inaudible] in Zambales. And he did for a time lead the Philippine Studies program and, as Jon pointed out, he was looking at labor migration out of the Philippines, not only to the US in Hawai'i, but also to Saudi Arabia and to other parts in Asia and Singapore, and [also looking at] the remittances that were being sent back to the Philippines. So that, even though the Philippine economy was not as prosperous as other economies in Asia, because of the labor remittances that were being sent back, it was artificially supporting and infusing the Philippine economy and giving it a sense of prosperity because of the labor service and remittances that Filipinos are doing in other parts of the world. So, I think his studies on transnational migration are quite a breakthrough to understand the important role that overseas Philippine workers play in the internal economy; even though they're external, they become part of the internal economy in the Philippines. His work in that way straddled Filipino Americans as well as the Philippines. And he understood that the Filipinos are in a diaspora and continue to maintain very strong ties with the homeland. And so, the whole question of identity—as Filipinos coming to Hawai'i—it's very much more a diasporic identity of adjusting to a new society, but also maintaining that pride and identity in their homeland and feeling that nationalism to really identify [with]. So many of the

people that became involved in the Marcos or anti-Marcos movement were Philippine immigrants, but they kept—they felt this great loyalty and connection to their people in the Philippines, to uplift them, that they became very active in trying to overthrow that fascist regime and reinstate a democracy.

Ibrahim: Okay, wonderful. I'm gonna go to Ty Tengan's segment. And then we'll talk more.

Video segment begins

Ty: You know, he was writing about the ways in which the Filipino community in Hawai'i was both its own distinct group but also still very connected with other communities in the Philippines, as well as more broadly, in the US and in the Pacific. I know, at least in the Pacific, I believe one of the articles he co-authored was on Filipino labor in Palau. I might need to go double check on that one. But it was with that notion that these connections continue in important ways that are not only about remittances and sending money back, but the ways in which communities thrive and are interconnected and interdependent across space and time. And this is, I think, an approach that really helped us as we were later, after he left, but I think partly in debt to his thinking, trying to conceptualize an oceanic Ethnic Studies, which is also very much about communities across space and time, but [that are] still connected [in] important ways and for us by Oceania, and by the Pacific, which, as was the case and still remains the case, for Filipinos and Filipino communities, a connective force that helps us to also maintain that global perspective while also really honoring and supporting local struggles.

Video segment ends

Ibrahim: Yeah, so I want to go to Noel Kent before we go to Davianna.

Video segment begins

Noel Kent: He was an excellent Chair. I think his qualities, the fact he was empathetic and open to various colleagues—I mean, you never had a sense that if you approached him in his office or someplace else, you were not welcomed. So, I think he was a really exceptional Chair, and he devoted the time and the effort needed to do the chairmanship, and he kept us going. Those were years when, you know, the Ethnic Studies program has always been imperiled by certain forces, and anybody who's Chair—you were Chair for a while, Ibrahim—and you know that it's a real challenging job. You basically have a number of different masters to satisfy and the administration and also the faculty and our faculty. Also, we work with outside communities, so there's that, too, and Dean could work with everybody. I mean, that's part of

his leadership and the gifts that he brought to the leadership, that he could work with community people, he could work with colleagues, he could work with administration, too, and they respected him. And they took him very seriously as our leader. And that made a huge difference to the success and the ability of the department to sustain itself. So, Dean gets a lot of credit for the fact that we are still there and we are still doing the teaching and carrying out the mission that we've always had. In terms of courses, yeah, we overlapped on some courses—like Identity and a few other courses—and once in a while, if I needed some help, I would ask, you know, to maybe to look at his syllabi, just to see what he was doing, and he was always very, very happy to share and to make suggestions if he felt that I was asking for suggestions.

Ibrahim: Yeah, Davi? And then we ask Rosie—briefly, because we are running out of time.

Davianna: You know, in our department, we do a lot of talking in our hallways, and I remember Dean loved popcorn. He always—The smell of popcorn always emanated from his room—and he'd bring it to our meetings. And so, it just was a way of warmth. We all felt warm and comfortable. And we could all sit around and eat popcorn and talk about our problems, [laughs] and how are we going to solve them. But he was, you know, instrumental. When we lose a professor, a professor goes away, it's always a challenge. How do we retain that position? And because he worked so well with so many people in the community and in the university, we were able to retain those positions, the Japanese course position, the Chinese course position, and importantly, the Black Studies course positions.

Ibrahim: Yeah, popcorn did it's duty [laughter]. Rosie, anything?

Rosie: I'm laughing because I just had my popcorn snack [laughter] before we started. Popcorn is one of my favorite ones, too. And I was thinking I should take some popcorn to work, and maybe it's a good way to make some new friends [laughter]. But you know, I really have taken my dad's leadership style as a model. One thing that I have learned; I think that it is very important to try and work with everybody across campus, and particularly being in SOEST, I have used that as an opportunity to build bridges with other colleges and universities that haven't. So the example that I can provide is that we have had a really large outcry from the black indigenous people of color in the Marine Sciences, and much of that is rooted in the lack of cultural competency in SOEST. Because of the importance of doing that, I was able to reach out to the Ethnic Studies program who have really helped us, invited us to come attend your talks and seminars, and also have been guests at our departmental seminar, really illustrating that importance of standing together. And especially as we're going into these times of budget crunch and crisis, it's so important that we have

solidarity with one another. I know that recently, there was somewhat of a threat to the Ethnic Studies program, and I was able to get my Oceanography colleagues to rally around and support and say, "They helped us become a better department, and we have to stand by them." I think that is the kind of ethos that we really need to cultivate at the University of Hawai'i, and just any educational institution.

Ibrahim: Okay, wonderful. I'm gonna play another segment. Ulla and then Noel, and then we will wrap up by asking you a few things. Okay, we go.

Video segment begins

Ulla: Of course, I would be using these texts in my class, not only because he was the Chair of the department that I was teaching for, but because they are well done, very well researched and also not dogmatic, not too square. It was kind of opening up on community experiences and written in a way that appealed to students. His scholarship was important for the whole development of Ethnic Studies. I think, to me, it was a bit of a shock that he decided to leave. But I also fully understand his family relationship. But I do think he did as much as he could to have everything on track when he left. So, it wasn't like he left unfinished business in that way. And he probably thought that we could easily handle [it] or do fine in the future, and we did. We have some really great faculty with that specialization that he had.

Noel: If Dean was here, I would say, "Dean, it was a great pleasure to know you, and to work with you. It was a gift to work with you all those years, and I never saw you that I didn't feel that your presence and your persona comforted me and gave me a sense of belonging. And I want to thank you for that. You were a wonderful colleague, and you gave us, and our department, leadership when it needed it. And you impacted the lives of hundreds and hundreds of students. That's your legacy right there.

Video segment ends

Ibrahim: Rosie? How does that grab you, so to speak?

Rosie: Yeah, I mean, I had very much the pleasure and the aloha to take care of my dad at the end part of his life. And, you know, I think he really—even though he decided to go back to the Philippines, he always knew he had a home here in Hawai'i, and a part of his life would always be here in Hawai'i. And I think that's why also he came back. And, you know, [it's] just so emblematic of who he was, even though he was, you know, nearing the end of his life, when Ethnic Studies was under threat, he still was able to dictate to me his testimony for the Board of Regents and really emphasize and remind them, I think, he really

reminded the Board of Regents, [of] their commitment to the Ethnic Studies program and the impact that the Ethnic Studies program had and has had and will continue to have on the people of Hawai'i. So, I think that my dad really knew that his legacy was firm in everybody that he left behind, from his students to his family.

Ibrahim: Yeah, great. And Davi, I wanted also to ask you about the last testimonial that Dean did for Ethnic Studies.

Davianna: Yeah, it was amazing, because he was, you know, undergoing chemotherapy treatment. And he was very particular and intentional, in making a statement to the Board of Regents, that we can't phase out or stop our bachelor's program—which he had established, of course—but to remind them of the importance of Ethnic Studies to the University of Hawai'i, and because of the communities that have come together and are represented through the histories and the courses that we teach. And it's so important to the multiethnic students of our university. So that was really important. I just want to say that, you know, Dean has always been my best friend, one of my best friends, and we've always been working together in all the efforts for the Philippines, for Hawai'i, and for our students. So, I do miss him, but I'm so glad that he was able to retire early and enjoy, ultimately, what he wanted to do—to go back to the Philippines to live. I still haven't retired, [and] if he waited to retire like me, he wouldn't have had the chance and opportunity to live with his parents and go back to the rice farming and live in the Philippines. I'm so glad that he was able to have that part of his life, and a good part of his life.

Ibrahim: Good. He was versatile in his talents and his contributions were multifaceted and his legacy remains. And it shall be a guiding force for all of us.

Well, we wrap it up. Mahalo nui loa. Thank you. And for our viewers, and we'll see you next month. Aloha.

[instrumental Hawaiian music]

"Hoy Get Out of the Sun!": Filipinx Talk Story on (Anti)Blackness in Occupied Hawai'i

Aina Iglesias, Vernadette Gonzalez, Bryant De Venecia, Dean Saranillio, Lalaine Ignao, Marie Ramos, Romyn Sabatchi, Katherine Achacoso, Grace Caligtan, Paola Rodeles, Ellen-Rae Cachola, Malia Derden, Nadezna Ortega, Demiliza Saramosing, Catherine 'Īmaikalani Ulep, Domi Ulep, Kim Compoc

Series Description

In the summer of 2020, the Filipinx Hawai'i Collective, a hui of organizers, scholars, artists, and healers came together to address anti-Black racism in the Filipinx community in Hawai'i, the Philippines, and around the world. In their call to action for solidarity with the worldwide Black Lives Matter Uprisings, Filipinx community organizers hosted the four-part webinar series, "Hoy! Get Out of the Sun!": Filipinx Talk Story on (Anti)Blackness in Occupied Hawai'i Webinar Series. This webinar was held on Zoom and on social media platforms of Pusong Filipinx, a quarterly community market founded by Lalaine Ignao.

Below are links to the series along with the description for each of the sessions they hosted. https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1KP916Q1tmPFM5UlB9ayTaJSTqt1AVeQm

Session 1: Hawai'i Filipinx Call to Action: Black Lives Matter
Participants: Vernadette Gonzalez (University of Hawai'i at Mānoa), Aina Iglesias (Local 5), Bryant De Venecia (Local 5), and Dean Saranillio (New York University).

This session aims to examine why Black lives in the Hawaiian Kingdom, the Philippines, and around the world matter to us as Filipinx in Hawai'i. We aim to draw connections between our histories of oppression and legacies of resistance as Filipinx to those of our Black and Indigenous relatives in Hawai'i and across the globe. As diasporic Filipinx educators, healers, and organizers, we also aim to unsettle histories of anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity in our community and to return to the sea to imagine alternative futures of genuine security, peace, justice, and solidarity.

Session 2: Indigeneity and (Anti)Blackness in the Philippines
Participants: Marie Ramos (Decolonial Pin@y), Romyn Sabatchi (Kapiolani Community College), Katherine Achacoso (University of

Hawai‘i at Mānoa), Grace Caligtan (Decolonial Pin@y), and Paola Rodelas (Local 5).

This session provides participants with an opportunity to think about the historical and contemporary relationship between anti-Indigeneity and anti-Blacknesss in the Philippine archipelago. It will feature diasporic/Indigenous/Black scholars and organizers from Hawai‘i, Turtle Island, and the Cordilleras, reflecting on the historical legacy of intra-racial conflict and racial hierarchies in our communities. The panel also seeks to create language and have difficult conversations on how we might be in solidarity with one another to unsettle legacies of anti-Blackness and anti-Indigeneity in our communities to reimagine alternative decolonial futures.

Session 3: Anti-Blackness and Racial Politics in Occupied Hawai‘i
Participants: Ellen-Rae Cachola (UH Mānoa, Decolonial Pin@ys, Women's Voices, Women's Speak); Malia Derden (Pacific Tongues), Nadezna Ortega (UH Mānoa, LAING); Demiliza Saramosing (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities); Catherine ‘Īmaikalani Ulep (University of Minnesota-Twin Cities); Domi Ulep (Kalihi/Kaneohe).

The theme of this session focuses on (anti)Blackness and racial politics in occupied Hawaii. This presentation connects the history of (anti) Blackness and (anti)Indigeneity, largely informed and transformed by U.S. colonialism in the Philippines to Hawai‘i, where this legacy continues in the Filipino diaspora. It will discuss the complex social condition of Filipinos who were targeted and recruited to serve as cheap labor for Hawai‘i's plantation economy, a system tied to Kānaka land dispossession and the overthrow of the Hawaiian Kingdom. The plantation system was organized by a racial hierarchy that stratified Filipinos on the bottom and is maintained through the policing and control of Filipinos in social institutions like jobs, government, the criminal legal system, media, and popular culture. This presentation interrogates anti-Filipino racism and unsettles the contradictions of Filipino collaboration and resistance to colonialism and settler colonialism in Hawai‘i today.

Session 4: People's Budget for Peace and Survival: A Filipinx in Hawai‘i Perspective
Kim Compoc

In this presentation, we shift from a focus on racist attitudes to a focus on racist funding priorities. People in Hawai‘i say our police are different, so the demand to defund the police doesn't apply here. But if that's true, why do our police budgets so closely match those on the continent? Let›s come together to think about what a people›s budget should really look like. Anti-imperialist, anti-fascist movements in the Philippines are gaining momentum. Movements for Black Lives/

Abolition movements in the U.S. are gaining momentum. Aloha ʻāina movements in Hawaiʻi are gaining momentum. This is an important opportunity to integrate the best our movements have to offer to advance our agenda as progressive Filipinx in Hawaiʻi!