

the gift of Kiholo



Drew Erickson



John De Mello

ANGUS MITCHELL DONATES A SPECTACULAR BIG ISLAND COASTAL PROPERTY TO THE NATURE CONSERVANCY

Upon his death in 1989, legendary hair stylist and hair care product icon Paul Mitchell left several valuable Hawaiian properties in trust to his son, Angus Mitchell. Among them was an idyllic coastal parcel at Kiholo Bay on the North Kona Coast of the island of Hawai'i. The seven-acre site, which features freshwater-fed pools and abundant marine life, is where the elder Mitchell intended to build his dream house before succumbing to cancer at age 53.

"This parcel was my father's Eden—his Shangri-La," said Angus. "He thought it was the most beautiful spot on Earth, as do I. This land evokes a wonderful spiritual energy and beauty, and I believe I can best serve my father's intentions by having this land protected in perpetuity."

In a poignant ceremony last December, that's exactly what the younger Mitchell did—donating the \$6.5 million site to The Nature Conservancy. Suzanne Case, the Conservancy's Hawai'i executive director, called the donation "an extraordinary gift," adding that the Conservancy was "honored and humbled to play a role in its long-term care."

Situated along one of the most beautiful and remote stretches of coastline on the Island of Hawai'i, the Kiholo property is covered by two large, interconnected freshwater spring-fed pools that contain native species such as *bapawai* (mollusk) and *'opae* (shrimp). A 200-foot-long *'auwai*, or stone channel, connects the ponds to Kiholo Bay, which is rich with marine life and has a resident population of green sea turtles that use the inland ponds to feed and rest.

Paul Mitchell acquired Kiholo from the Hind family, which had purchased the land in the 19th century and planted a majestic grove of coconut trees near the shoreline. They sold the site to Mitchell in the late 1980s, a critical time in his life.

"The property became a comfort to my father and a place of healing as he fought cancer," Angus said. "During these months, he spent much of his time and energy planning the construction of his home and the restoration of the ponds. Sadly, he didn't live to realize that dream."

The Kiholo parcel abuts Kiholo State Park and a few small private landholdings. It is a culturally important site to native Hawaiians, especially those who continue to live in the vicinity and trace their ancestry back to the land. The area has been under the stewardship of the non-profit group Hui Aloha Kiholo. Going forward, the Conservancy will work closely with the group, the State and others to determine the best long-term stewardship of the land.

Now 41, Angus Mitchell has followed his father into the hair care business. He owns the Angus Mitchell Salon, Beverly Hills, and is co-owner of John Paul Mitchell Systems & Schools, a multi-million dollar enterprise that trains future stylists and markets professional hair care products.

"Letting go of Kiholo was difficult," he said. "But in life nothing belongs to you. You're born with nothing and you leave with nothing. At the end of the day, it is not about who you are or what you own, but what you give back. And the most incredible gift I could ever give back to the people of Hawai'i is this one special property that is Kiholo."



Guests gather for pule (prayer). Drew Erickson



Michelle and Angus Mitchell. Drew Erickson



Aerial view of the Kiholo property. Pictometry

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