

From: George Balazs <itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, March 30, 2023 7:49 AM
To: Andy Collins - NOAA Federal <andy.collins@noaa.gov>
Subject: About Honu Heros - from George's viewpoint

Aloha Andy, Friend & Colleague- you recently wrote and asked-

"Aside from your awesome self, who else would you highlight as a sea turtle hero in Hawai'i or the Pacific more broadly. We are looking to integrate some of these profiles into our sea turtle exhibit."

My Response-

I can only speak to Hawaii when answering. I seriously doubt there's any person or persons one could point to as a regional (Oceania) Honu Hero. So, here's the Hawaii story I have for your consideration. Please recall that I'm now 80, I've lived through all the early years of honu conservation struggles and conflict (e.g. late 1960s- mid-1970s) and so far, my memory remains intact hence confident I know what I'm talking about. However, it is indeed **my perspective on history** and I don't expect that to match what today's NOAA (NMFS as it was back then) wants or thinks history should be bio-politically for your exhibit (said respectfully). So, with that preface I'll continue.

First, one would need to have some idea, some definition, of what a "sea turtle hero in Hawaii" (Honu Hero) would be. That's easy for me because- again- I lived through it all- past up to the present (late 1960 to 2023). Let me say what I feel a Honu Hero...is not. Such a person is not solely a researcher of sea turtles, no matter how deep in scope or magnitude that person's research may be. Research and writing journal publications, in itself, gives no heroism in saving sea turtles, in my view. In fact, most all researchers are paid salaries for their work to do research. And/or are awarded an advanced degree for their research. Journal articles, and advanced degrees, are great for and within the academic science community. And to obtain employment therein. But aside from

that, almost no one reads the publications, nor pays attention to them **to take action after reading them**. Not even today's NOAA and FWS managers/regulators. So, what then is a Honu Hero to me? It's most often an assemblage of people, each doing things independently in their way and style, taking bold steps to speak 'out of the box' openly saying things and taking actions that are in need of being heard and done on behalf of honu in desperate need of help. Saying and doing things, in spite of repercussions they may face by the mainstream public opinion and government authorities that generally have no interest in, or lack the courage to address, what clearly needs to be done. A Honu Hero feels fear from public opposition, outcries, and subtle discrimination by government-empowered people that can adversely affect their life and career. But, in spite of feeling this fear, move forward anyway to say and do what's needed.

Given my above views I can say with certainty that here in Hawaii, after the close of the 1970s, there have been no Honu Heros. Only those of the past that did what was needed at a time that was difficult for them to say and take action, but did so in spite of the risks.

Here are 13 of the fine brave folks of the 1970s, and of all time, that are among My Honu Heros. And they should be yours and everyone that appreciates and cares for Hawaii's turtles- **no matter which end of the spectrum that appreciation and care is located**. Each has a story of their own that may never be told. But will always be remembered by me. Only two are still with us today. May God Bless Them All and the Many Others deserving that I've not listed here.
Mahalo, ghb

Alan Ziegler, Frank Radovsky, Ruth Gay, Jean King, Rene Sylva, Hilde Cherry, Arnold Howard, Anson Chong, John Carroll, Linda Balazs, John Bardach, Philip Helfrich, Michio Takata.

Note I served in the 70s as the "glue and the grease" for rallying the community to cease the senseless mining of honu for commercial purposes. I was 'called' to do that, almost against my will, by the above 13 True Honu Heros.

From: Andy Collins - NOAA Federal <andy.collins@noaa.gov>
Sent: Wednesday, March 22, 2023 9:35 PM
To: George Balazs <itsahonuworldinhawaii@hotmail.com>
Subject: Re: LOST message--- darn

And don't get all modest on me George!!!

On Tue, Mar 21, 2023 at 4:53 PM Andy Collins <andy.collins@noaa.gov> wrote:
Sure will do. And I have a request for you.

Aside from your awesome self, who else would you highlight as a sea turtle hero in Hawai'i or the Pacific more broadly. We are looking to integrate some of these profiles into our sea turtle exhibit.

Andy Collins