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POLYNESIAN FOOTBALL STARS TO VISIT STUDENTS AT KAIMUKĪ AND CAMPBELL HIGH SCHOOLS

HONOLULU – Alabama Crimson Tide quarterback Tua Tagovailoa, “Juju” Smith-Schuster of the Pittsburgh Steelers, Ronnie Stanley of the Baltimore Ravens, and Outland Trophy Winner Penei Sewell of the University of Oregon are part of a group of Polynesian Football Hall of Fame honorees who will speak at two public high schools in Hawai‘i this Friday, January 17.

This is in conjunction with the induction of the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame’s Class of 2020 and the Polynesian Bowl, which will occur on Saturday, January 18.

The Friday events are as follows:

Campbell High School

91-980 North Road, ‘Ewa Beach

Location: Gymnasium

8:15 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Speaking: Tua Tagovailoa, Frank Manumaleuga, David Dixon, AJ Epenesa, Vai Sihakema, and Jesse Sapolu

Kaimukī High School

2705 Kaimukī Avenue

Location: Auditorium

8:45 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.

Speaking: “Juju” Smith-Schuster, Ronnie Stanley, Penei Sewell, Haloti Ngata, and Dominic Raiola

“Hawai‘i Tourism is pleased to support the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame and Polynesian Bowl as an important part of our sports marketing. Sports bring welcome exposure for the Hawaiian Islands, expand our roster of visitor experiences, and showcase the caliber of athletic talent in Hawai‘i and this region,” said Chris Tatum, president and CEO of the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority. “Many of the honorees have strong ties to Hawai‘i so it provides a wonderful opportunity for our local community and youth to be involved in a major way.”

“The HLTA is assisting the Hawai‘i Tourism Authority by creating opportunities for the recipients of sports tourism funding to engage with our young people and inspire them to aspire to great things in their lives,” said Mufi Hannemann, president and CEO of the Hawai‘i Lodging & Tourism Association. “We’re following the model we employed with the Los Angeles Rams and Los Angeles Clippers, where the teams participated in clinics and other outreach programs to encourage young people to study hard and participate in sports and other activities.”

“We’re grateful to Kevin Kaplan of the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame and Principals Jon Henry Lee of Campbell and Jamie Delacruz of Kaimukī and Campbell High Schools for their involvement in making this first-ever event possible,” Hannemann added.

The Polynesian Football Hall of Fame honors Polynesia’s greatest players, coaches, and contributors to the game. It was established in 2013 and is permanently located at the Polynesian Cultural Center. It was established by Super Bowl champions Jesse Sapolu and Ma’a Tanuvasa. Honorees are enshrined during the annual Polynesian Football Hall of Fame Week. The Polynesian Bowl is televised live on the CBS Sports Network.

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About the players who will visit the schools:

Campbell High School:

Jessie Sapolu is a co-founder of the Hall of Fame and bowl game with Ma’a Tanuvasa, former Denver Broncos great. He was born in Samoa and moved to Honolulu in his youth. He is an alumnus of Farrington High School and the University of Hawai’i, where he was a three-time All-WAC selection. He joined the San Francisco 49ers as an offensive lineman in 1983 and spent his entire 15-year career with that organization. He was selected to the Pro Bowl in 1993 and 1994 and earned All-Pro honors in 1994 and 1995. He is one of only six 49ers to have earned four Super Bowl rings (1994).

Vai Sikahema, a board member of the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame, was a running back and kick returner for a number of NFL teams, including the Cardinals, Packers, and Eagles. He was inducted into the 2016 Polynesian Football Hall of Fame. Sikahema was born in Tonga and was the first Tongan to play in the NFL. He attended high school in Arizona and played college ball at Brigham Young University. During his senior year, he helped lead the Cougars to the national championship. He was named to the Pro Bowl in 1986 and 1987 and after his retirement from the NFL became a popular sports and news anchor in Philadelphia.

Tua Tagovailoa is the former starting quarterback for the University of Alabama Crimson Tide. He is a two-time (2018 and 2019) Polynesian College Football Co-Player of the Year Awardee. While in high school, the ‘Ewa Beach resident and Samoan signal-caller led his Saint Louis Crusaders to the Hawai’i state football championship before joining the Tide. As a freshman, his heroics in the national championship contest against the University of Georgia earned him the starting job the next season. He led the team to its fourth national championship game before falling to Clemson. Tagovailoa will forego his senior year at Alabama and has declared for the NFL draft where he is projected to go in the first-round.

Frank Manumaleuga, is a member of the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame class of 2020. Originally from Lā‘ie, the Samoan born Manumaleuga later moved to the mainland where he graduated from high school in Los Angeles and then played his college football at UCLA and San Jose State University. While at UCLA, he attracted the interest of legendary basketball coach John Wooden who also wanted Frank to play basketball for the Bruins. At San Jose State, he also participated in basketball and track. He starred for three seasons as a linebacker with the Kansas City Chiefs and three seasons in the USFL.

David Tukatahi Dixon, was born in New Zealand, and is the second Maori to play professional football after San Francisco 49er Riki Ellison. Following in Ellison's footsteps, he has been inducted into the 2020 Polynesian Football Hall of Fame. An active rugby player at one time, he attended Arizona State University before he played 13 professional seasons as a stellar offensive guard in the NFL for the New England Patriots, the Dallas Cowboys, and the Minnesota Vikings.

A.J. Epenesa, born in Oak Park, Kansas, earned high school All-American honors in both football and track in Illinois. He was highly recruited and ended up attending the University of Iowa where for three seasons he excelled as an All-Big Ten defensive lineman. Known for his strength and work ethic, Epenesa of Samoan descent, is projected as a first-round pick in the 2020 NFL draft.

Kaimuki High School:

John Sherman "JuJu" Smith-Schuster, who is of African and Samoan descent, is a wide receiver for the Pittsburgh Steelers. The Long Beach, California, native played college football at the University of Southern California and amassed 213 receptions for 3,092 yards and 25 touchdowns. Since joining the Steelers, he has 214 receptions for 2,900 yards and 18 touchdowns. In addition to numerous National Football League honors, Smith-Schuster was named 2018 Polynesian Pro Football Player of the Year.

Ronnie Stanley, an offensive lineman for the Baltimore Ravens, was named the 2019 Polynesian Pro Football Player of the Year. He is of Tongan descent. He played high school football in Nevada and lettered at the University of Notre Dame. He was a consensus All-American his senior season and was drafted by the Ravens. This past season, he helped lead the team to a 14-2 regular season record and did not yield a single sack. He was selected as a First Team All-Pro and named to the Pro Bowl.

Dominic Raiola, a 2020 inductee into the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame, was a center for the Detroit Lions. Of Hawaiian ancestry, Raiola was born in Honolulu and played at Saint Louis School. He attended the University of Nebraska, playing for the Cornhuskers from 1998 to 2000. He earned the Rimington Trophy as the best center in college football and was recognized as a consensus first-team All-American. He was drafted by the Detroit Lions in the 2001 draft and played in 219 games over 14 years for the Lions.

Haloti Ngata was a defensive tackle for the Baltimore Ravens and other NFL teams and is a 2020 inductee into the Polynesian Football Hall of Fame. He is of Tongan ancestry. He was born in Inglewood, California, attended high school in Utah, and played for the University of Oregon. Ngata was a second-team All-Pac-10 selection in 2004, first-team All-Pac-10 selection in 2005, and consensus first-team All-American. He was drafted by the Ravens in 2006 and helped the team to the victory in Super Bowl XLVII. He also played for the Detroit Lions and the Philadelphia Eagles.

Penei Sewell is an offensive tackle for the University of Oregon and was selected as the 2019 Polynesian College Football Co-Player of the Year. Sewell was born in American Samoa but moved to Utah as a teenager. He became a starter for the Ducks in his freshman year but missed half the season because of an injury. He returned as a starter in 2019 and led the Ducks to an 11-2 record and the Pac-12 Championship. He received the Morris Trophy and Outland Trophy, was named a consensus first team All-American, to the All-Pac-12 Conference First Team, and Associated Press Pac-12 Co-Offensive Player of the Year.

About the Hawai'i Tourism Authority

The Hawai'i [Tourism Authority](#) is the State of Hawai'i agency responsible for strategically managing its support of the tourism industry. Established in 1998 to support Hawai'i's leading industry and largest employer, HTA continually strives to help ensure tourism's sustainability and the benefits it brings to residents and communities statewide. For more information about HTA, please visit www.hawaiitourismauthority.org. Follow updates about HTA on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) (@HawaiiHTA) and its [YouTube Channel](#).

About the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association:

The Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association is a 700-member, statewide organization representing hotels, condominiums, timeshares, other lodging entities, suppliers, and related firms and individuals. HLTA is dedicated to supporting the visitor industry through education, political action, and membership benefits, and raising awareness about its contributions to communities throughout the state.

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