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Day 3 Highlights of the Samoan Heritage Week

On June 17, 2024, the third day of the Samoan Heritage Week at Keehi Lagoon was a celebration of international culture, community, and tradition. The event paid tribute to the various international cultures embraced by our Samoan community members. Tofa To'oto'o Tauese V. K. Sunia welcomed the guests to commence the evening program. The invocation was delivered by Senior Pastor Headrick Hunkin.

Honorable Senator Togiola Tulafono served as the guest speaker for International Night. Senator Tulafono championed the establishment of Samoa Heritage Week during his tenure as Governor of American Samoa. He elaborated on the three aspects of "*o le a le uiga o le Samoa Heritage Week?*" (What is the purpose of the Samoa Heritage Week?) He highlighted three key points in his remarks:

1. "*O le uiga muamua o lo'o pito i luma, Samoa.*" The first meaning comes from the first word Samoa. It all begins with your name. Your identity.

It is first in saying your name "I am Samoan." Second is our language - The Samoan language features different dialects that are utilized based on various situations, relationships, and levels of status. One is the common dialect spoken loosely in the community, the other is the dialect spoken by untitled men, another is spoken by individuals bestowed chiefly titles, but all these dialects are intricately intertwined in the religious language's diglossia.

2. "*Aga'ifanua.*" Your culture. "*O le fale'aoga sili lea e tutonu o le Samoa. E o faalogologo ma va'ava'ai*" (The quickest way to learn about the culture is by attending a Samoan faalavelave event to listen and observe). Tulafono encouraged Samoan youth to engage in

cultural events, fully immerse themselves in the experience, and absorb as much knowledge as possible. This is crucial in preserving our culture.

3. *“Tu ma aga.”* Your Tradition. Tulafono went into the iconic Samoan battle cry, familiar to many. Often heard within family and friend circles, *“Chooahoo!”* is an exclamation of celebration or excitement. Tulafono concluded with an encouragement for the youth to embrace and take pride in their Samoan identity, culture, and traditions."

Following the Honorable Senator Togiola Tulafono’s enlightening speech, various organizations performed on stage, representing diverse cultures.

Another day brought together people from all walks of life to celebrate the vibrant culture of the Samoan people. The event highlighted the beauty and diversity of Samoan heritage while fostering a sense of community and connection among attendees. Each day of Samoan Heritage Week spotlights the richness of Samoan culture and underscores the community’s commitment to embracing cultural diversity.

American Samoa Delegation Returns Home

After two weeks away from families and friends, the day finally arrived for the Amerika Samoa team to return back home. The American Samoa team covered nearly fifteen programmatic areas, with Choral and Dance being the largest group in the delegation. Governor Lemanu P. S. Mauga expressed his heartfelt appreciation to everyone who represented Amerika Samoa at the Festival of Pacific Arts and Culture held in Hawaii. He thanked the entire delegation for their dedication and hard work.

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