

NEWS RELEASE

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**Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument honors
Bruce Blankenfeld with 2018 Umu Kai Award**

(Honolulu, HI) On June 10, the 2018 Papahānaumokuākea Umu Kai Award was presented to Bruce Blankenfeld for a lifetime of educating Hawaii's keiki (children) and adults in sustainably interacting with Hawaii's ocean and reviving the art of traditional Polynesian wayfinding. The award, established by NOAA's Office of National Marine Sanctuaries for Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument, is presented to a Native Hawaiian cultural practitioner who invokes the spirit of traditional fishing practices and management while adapting to modern fishing environments.

The presentation was made at the World Oceans Day Celebration held at Ko Olina on June 10, 2018, which featured the Hawaiian language premiere of Disney's hit animated film "Moana."

"It is an honor to present Bruce with this special award," said Athline Clark, NOAA superintendent for Papahānaumokuākea. "He embodies the true spirit of a mentor, who inspires our next generation to actively be involved in learning about and caring for our ocean."

The award, named after the traditional Hawaiian practice of enhancing fish habitat, honors the legacy of the late Uncle Eddie Kaanaana, a Native Hawaiian who was the first recipient of the award in 2006. Other recipients include legendary Hawaiian Navigator and former Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Kamehameha Schools Nainoa Thompson, former Department of Land and Natural Resources Chair William 'Ailā Jr., Hawai'i Volcanoes National Park ranger and traditional ulua fisherman Clarence "Aku" Hauanio, and Uncle Mac Poepoe, a fisherman and community leader on the Island of Moloka'i.

"Bruce exemplifies all of the important values behind the Umu Kai Award," says Nainoa Thompson, president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society. "He has an exceptional, very rare, deep relationship with the ocean that is both learned and instinctual that has allowed him to become an extraordinary deep-sea navigator and a strong leader. We would not have been able to successfully complete the Worldwide Voyage without him."

In addition to being one of Hawaii's five "pwo" (master) navigators, Bruce served as crew training coordinator and captain on the epic Hōkūle'a Mālama Honua Worldwide Voyage. A long-distance paddler and coach, Bruce began his association with the Polynesian Voyaging Society (PVS) in 1977 and joined the groundbreaking 1980 voyage from Tahiti to Hawai'i as a fisherman. Since then, he has sailed more than 70,000 miles using traditional, non-instrument methods. He led Hōkūle'a's recent, extensive renovation, and is currently the Vice Chair of the PVS Board of Directors. Bruce is a popular and inspiring lecturer on Polynesian navigating, voyaging and

more



wayfinding. He is also a fisherman, paddler, coach and president of the Board of Directors of Hui Nalu Canoe Club, and long-time member and kayaker with the Hawai'i Canoe & Kayak Team.

Papahānaumokuākea staff presented Bruce with the 2018 Umu Kai Award for his outstanding efforts in mentoring and inspiring the next generation to take an active role in caring for our ocean. PVS played a short congratulatory video featuring friends, family, conservation leaders and students who have been touched by his efforts.

Images available at <https://goo.gl/SHhGjk>

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Papahānaumokuākea is cooperatively managed to ensure ecological integrity and achieve strong, long-term protection and perpetuation of Northwestern Hawaiian Island ecosystems, Native Hawaiian culture, and heritage resources for current and future generations. Four co-trustees - the Department of Commerce, Department of the Interior, State of Hawai'i and the Office of Hawaiian Affairs - protect this special place. Papahānaumokuākea Marine National Monument was inscribed as the first mixed (natural and cultural) UNESCO World Heritage Site in the United States in July 2010. For more information, please visit www.papahanaumokuakea.gov.

