



DAMON & SHIGEKANE
ATTORNEYS AT LAW
406 TRUSTCO BUILDING
250 SOUTH KING STREET
HONOLULU 13, HAWAII

A Tradition of Excellence:

The Founding of Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert (1963-2023)

60 YEARS
Serving Hawaii





Introduction

Founded in 1963 by Frank Damon, a Hawai'i-born descendant of missionaries from New England, and Henry Shigekane, the son of Japanese immigrants, Damon & Shigekane pioneered new territory by crossing ethnic lines — a rarity in business at that time, even in a place as diverse as our island state.

In the sixty years since, the firm that is now Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert has been serving the people and businesses of Hawaii with the connections and capabilities of an international firm. We consider ourselves a full service, civil law firm. We provide legal services in the following areas, Appeals; Business & Commercial Law; Condominium & Community Association Law; Construction Law; Creditor's Rights & Bankruptcy; Immigration & Naturalization Law; Insurance; Land Use & Eminent Domain; Litigation & Dispute Resolution; Real Estate; Taxation; and Wills, Trusts & Estates, among other areas. We're the only Hawaii firm to be selected to be part of the Meritas network, an established global alliance of more than 183 independent, full service law firms in more than 92 countries committed to the highest quality benchmarks in the legal industry.

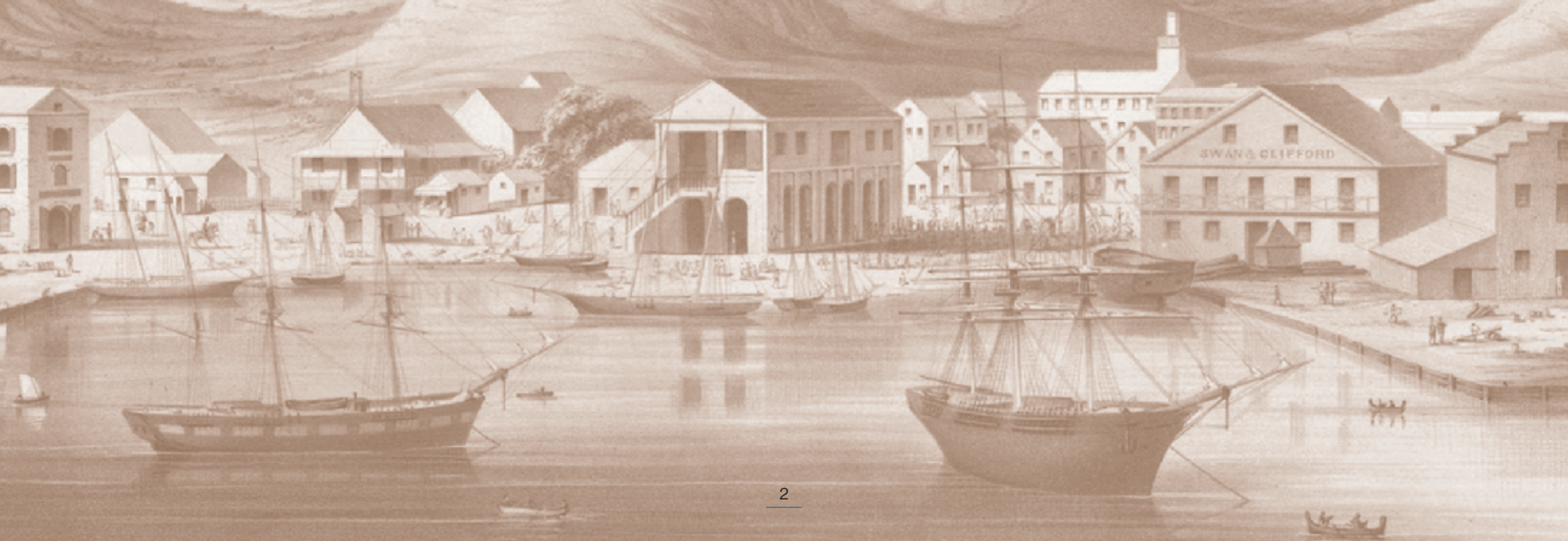
The traditions of our founders continue to this day, and we remain proud of our history of providing excellent counsel to serve the legal needs of our community. Representative of the diversity of our state, the firm is a fusion of cultures and backgrounds, and offers multidisciplinary resources for our clients.

What follows is a look at the unique history of our firm, compiled by those who worked alongside Frank and Henry, two remarkable professionals.

Our story owes a great deal to the fascinating and divergent backgrounds of our two founders. Although they came from vastly different upbringings, they honored and upheld common values and a common vision that made it possible for them to create a firm that is so much more than a business. Theirs is an account that is as inspiring as it is unusual, and symbolizes the vision and philosophy under which the firm operates to this day.

For more about us, visit our award-winning website hawaiilawyer.com.

*Damon & Shigekane pioneered new territory
by crossing ethnic lines – a rarity in business...*



Chapter One:

“With Aloha,” C. F. Damon, Jr.

The Damon Heritage

The many influences of the Damon family on Hawai‘i can be traced as far back as 1842, when The American Seamen’s Friend Society in New England sent Frank’s great grandfather, The Rev. Samuel Chenery Damon, to Honolulu to take charge of the Oahu Bethel Church – the first church organization for foreign seamen, and to convert seamen to Christians. With the same warm, caring charm and spirit that has carried through each succeeding generation, the Damon family has fostered Christian values, community service, education and interracial harmony.

Beginning with Rev. Samuel Chenery Damon, those influences are seen in an unbroken Damon succession of four generations of Punahou School Trustees; creation of “The Friend” publication; and the founding of community pillars now known as the Mid-Pacific Institute, the First Chinese Church of Christ, the Kindergarten Children’s Aid Association, now known as KCAA Preschools of Hawaii, the Palolo Chinese Home, the East-West Center and the University of Hawai‘i’s William S. Richardson School of Law.



Francis Williams Damon



Mary Happer Damon

Frank Damon

Cyril Francis Damon, Jr. was born in Honolulu, Hawai‘i. Growing up as “Frank,” just as his grandfather was called before him, he recalls spending a lot of time with his grandmother, Mary Happer Damon, at her home in Moanalua, which resembled a house in China where she lived as a child. The daughter of a well-known American medical doctor and Christian missionary in the Canton (now called Guangzhou) region, Mary often sang lullabies in Chinese to the Damon grandchildren, and both she and Frank’s grandfather spoke Cantonese fluently.

Frank’s grandmother spent much time with Asian families, who joined the Damons for gatherings and celebrations in the Moanalua area. While the Damon family was upper class Caucasian, it didn’t occur to any of them that they were socializing interracially, which was uncommon at that time.

Opposite page top left: Seamen’s Bethel Chapel (Oahu Bethel Church) (built 1833), now “The Friend Building”

Opposite page top middle: The Friend Building (built 1887), 926 Bethel Street

Opposite page top right: Young Cyril Francis Damon, Jr.

Opposite page background: View of Honolulu Harbor c.1854

Words to Live By

Having heard his grandfather's life mottos growing up, Frank adopted them as his own. "Tackle the Dread" inspired him to take on the most difficult tasks, do his best and make things better for everyone. "Within the Four Seas, all Men are Brothers" was another, which reminded him of the fraternity of all human beings. These mottos would continue to drive Frank throughout his life, the formation of his law partnership with Henry Shigekane, and their practice of law in Honolulu.

"Tackle the Dread" and "Within the Four Seas, all Men are Brothers"

A Special Homecoming

Frank left Hawai'i in August 1941 to attend a New England prep school, where he played football. He missed home, his family and friends. After three, lonely years on the mainland, he was finally able to return home to Hawai'i, the earliest he could do so due to wartime restrictions. After receiving a call one day from Matson about a ship that was leaving the next day, he enthusiastically accepted. The trip home was filled with great experiences and memories as he shared a small cabin with eight (8) other men including Honolulu businessmen, James Dole and Charlie Pietsch.

Frank was overjoyed to be home – being away made him realize what a special place Hawai'i was, and how the relationships that were cultivated were close to his heart.

One fond memory of Frank's was going to Honolulu Harbor. At that time, the passenger ship was the main mode of transportation off island. Frank and his father often walked toward the harbor on Maunakea Street, which was lined with Hawaiian women who sold lei. The women would sell to people who were going to welcome guests or bid farewell. His father would always buy multiple lei from the lei sellers and would then give them away. The boat harbor was a memorable sight, full of streamers and lei. The Royal Hawaiian Band's music made for a dramatic and tearful atmosphere. Local boys dove for coins tossed into the harbor by passengers of the S.S. Lurline and the S.S. Matsonia.



Frank Leaves Home Again

When Frank arrived home the war was still raging. So, in 1944 he joined the U.S. Navy where he served for two years. After his discharge from the Navy in 1946, he continued his education at Yale University.

Gaining Valuable Experience with Senator Hiram Fong

From Yale, Frank moved westward to the University of Colorado Law School. After graduating, he returned home and passed the Hawai'i bar exam in 1954. His first job was with the large Honolulu law firm of Smith, Wild, Beebe & Cades. Frank practiced law there for five years. When Hawai'i became a state in 1959, one of its new senators, Hiram L. Fong, asked Frank to serve as his administrative assistant in Washington, D.C.

Accepting Senator Fong's offer was a difficult decision for Frank, as he had recently married and his wife was pregnant with their first child. But, they concluded this was an opportunity of a lifetime. "So, off we went to Washington. We had two children there." Senator Fong got Frank admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

Working with Senator Fong was an exciting time for Frank, and he became more engaged in politics and the changing of people's attitudes toward interracial relationships. Soon after arriving in Washington D.C., Senator Fong gave his first speech in the Senate chambers on immigration. Being an administrative assistant, Frank was able to stand in the back of the Senate chamber and observe the activities on the floor — a practice not allowed today. He remembers the room where the Democrats sat on the left side, and the Republicans on the right side, with an aisle between the two parties.



Senator Hiram Fong

Senator Fong was a Republican. Also, he was not just a Chinese person from Hawai'i, but the first Asian U.S. Senator. He spoke about immigration with such fervor and passion that he inspired others in the Senate. Some Democrat senators were so moved that they left their seats, crossed the aisle and sat on the Republican side. Eventually, half a dozen more Democrats joined their fellow Senators on the Republican side. Old timers told Frank they had never seen this happen before. Frank remembers that moment as it represented the growing acceptance on the U.S. Mainland of Asians and other people of different backgrounds.

Senator Fong, together with his friend Senator Oren E. Long, a Democrat and former Governor of Hawai'i, helped to create the East-West Center, which represented the world and Asia building relationships to work together. Frank worked closely with Robert Kamins, a University of Hawai'i professor and administrative assistant to Senator Long. The two would go to the different senatorial offices to garner support for the East-West Center. A strong bill was created with the support of both Republicans and Democrats, and the historic East-West Center was born.

Trailblazing a Path in the Local Community

Frank had planned to work just a few years with Senator Fong. When he returned home, he was asked by Governor William F. Quinn to serve in his cabinet as the State of Hawai'i's Director of Labor and Industrial Relations. Frank asked Governor Quinn "what good does this do for you politically? I'm a haole..." To which Governor Quinn responded, "We've worked with you and with Hiram for years and we know what you can do. And you kept in touch with our office the whole time, so I know I can trust you." So, Frank accepted.

On the advice of the Governor, Frank called on labor leaders in Hawai'i. He went to the offices of Jack Hall (of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union) and Art Rutledge (of the American Federation of Labor) – two of the most powerful labor leaders in Hawai'i. No labor director up to that time had ever come to see them in that capacity, and this gave Frank a special connection with both unions. Frank, as a Republican, served as the Director of Labor and Industrial Relations for the State of Hawai'i for about one year, until the election of Democratic Governor John Burns.



Cyril Francis Damon, Jr.

Taking the time to deliberate over what he wanted to do next, Frank talked with old friends and prominent lawyers, Dudley Pratt and Russell Cades. Despite his deep respect for both men, he turned down offers to join their respective firms. With his experience in Washington D.C. and the changing times of bringing races and cultures together, Frank wanted to try something different. He did not want to remain a part of the establishment. He wanted to be independent and to strike out on his own.

“We’ve worked with you and with Hiram for years and we know what you can do. And you kept in touch with our office the whole time, so I know I can trust you.”

Chapter Two:

Harvesting Success: Henry Shigekane

As mentioned, Frank and Henry are two unique individuals from very different backgrounds and upbringings. Their lives remind us that success is not merely granted by the opportunities we are offered, but rather by what we do with them. Henry Hideo Shigekane truly epitomized this adage. Born into an immigrant, plantation family, Henry's hard work, diligence, superior intellect, and determination led him to achieve great things, both personally and professionally.

The Shigekane Heritage

Henry was born in Hilo, Hawai'i. Henry's parents were both immigrants from Japan. His father, Shigezo, came to Hawai'i to work in the sugar cane fields of Olaa Sugar Company on the Big Island of Hawai'i, while his mother, Fuji Akao, came to the Big Island to join her parents in Ka'u on the Big Island (her father was already working in the sugar cane fields). Henry's father eventually left his work on the sugar cane plantation to join an importing firm in Hilo, and it was there that he settled with his wife to raise a family of nine children, of which Henry was the sixth.

For most, early school years meant attending classes from fall to spring, followed by a long break during the summer to play. But as they grew older, many were recruited to work in the pineapple fields on Oahu, giving them a chance to earn money. Henry was one of those Hilo boys recruited to work in the pineapple fields in Kunia, Oahu. The boys lived in Kunia housing — which were like barracks, with a common bathroom. While some may think it was a rough life, the boys enjoyed their times together, both at work and at play. The experience was eye-opening and a memorable one for all of the Hilo boys, who were exposed to life in the “big city” of Honolulu during the weekends.



Henry Shigekane

Their lives remind us that success is not merely granted by the opportunities we are offered, but rather by what we do with them.

Tough Lessons Lead to Ultimate Success

When Henry started his public school education, the then territorial Department of Education had established two sets of schools: regular public schools for the greater majority of children and English Standard Schools for those children proficient in English, mainly Caucasians. Henry, speaking only pidgin English and a smattering of Japanese, attended the regular public schools. At that time in Hilo, the English Standard School ended after the sixth grade and its graduates were funneled into an intermediate school along with students from the regular public schools, due to the town's small population. However, these students coming from the English Standard School were set aside in a special classroom apart from other students in the seventh grade, and this division continued throughout high school.

Not by his choice, but because of Henry's special intellect, his sixth grade teacher enrolled him in this special classroom made up of graduates from the English Standard School, even though he could only speak pidgin English. This separated him from his former classmates and friends. This was a startling and, as it turned out, an agonizing change for Henry as he was then made aware of his deficiency in language skills – he was the only one in the class speaking pidgin English. However, this daily embarrassment did not last long as all schools in Hawai'i were promptly closed following the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. When schools reconvened in March of 1942, new laws mandated that students attend the schools closest to their homes in case of any further military attacks. Henry was happy to be back in the general public school in his neighborhood for the remainder of his seventh grade year. By eighth grade, Henry was once again placed in the same classroom with the students from the English Standard School, contrary to his desire.

In each school at that time there was a designated "homeroom," where students engaged in classroom activities other than typical school learning. In the eighth grade, each homeroom had class officers. It was during this time that class officers would lead the homeroom in collecting money to buy war bonds and war stamps to support the war effort. To his great surprise, his homeroom classmates chose Henry as president, which required him to stand before the class and conduct a meeting daily. His use of pidgin became a glaring embarrassment to him. This forced him to improve his speech, which he did, and for which he credits and thanks his classmates. "I thought that was an amazing thing. . . And, they really gave me the shove, which no other thing or person could have done for me at that time, except these kids from that school." Henry overcame speaking pidgin by going home with his books and reading aloud to himself over and over, until he got the speech patterns corrected and it sounded right. This was a defining event in his life.



After graduating from Hilo High School, Henry, lacking adequate funds to attend a mainland university, enrolled at the University of Hawai'i. With his eye still on a mainland college, he took on a job as a busboy, baker, yardman and general errand boy at the Queen's Surf Restaurant in Waikiki. With the help of his philosophy professor, he was later accepted at Yale University with a partial scholarship and he set off for New Haven, Connecticut on a chartered air flight and a Greyhound bus ride paid for with his hard-earned savings.

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Henry and Frank Meet

When Henry arrived at Yale, he was overwhelmed by the architecture of the Gothic buildings in the city. He had never seen or been surrounded by such buildings. And, it wasn't just the buildings — the environment was different, the people were different and the food was different. He was homesick and thought he made a terrible mistake going to the mainland. But, toward the end of the semester, things started falling into place and he began to feel not only comfortable, but to love his new surroundings.

A popular hangout was the college post office where many Yale students would go to collect and send their mail, and send their laundry home to be washed and mailed back. As a result, there was an electric atmosphere at the Yale post office, especially on Fridays and Mondays.

There were few Asians attending Yale in the mid-1940s. One day while Frank was at the post office, he noticed the young Asian man and asked him, "Are you from Hawai'i"? Henry confirmed that he was, and the two talked about home. Because Frank was a year ahead of Henry, he took time to show Henry around the school and occasionally dropped in to check on Henry in his dorm and make sure he was doing alright.

On one occasion, Frank asked Henry if he was interested in going skiing with him and Frank's brother, Gordon, at their cousin's lodge in Vermont. Henry was excited because he had never seen snow. They all drove to Vermont and Henry went skiing for the first time. It was a memorable experience for both and further established their lifelong friendship.



Henry Goes to Harvard Law School

After completing his undergraduate work at Yale, Henry applied for and was accepted at Harvard Law School. It was also in Massachusetts that Henry married Joanne Holmes.

Law school was a challenge for Henry, although he enjoyed Harvard and the surroundings. He did not quite catch on to what they were trying to teach him in law school, until it clicked later while he was practicing law in Honolulu. When he returned to the islands, it was not to Hilo but to Honolulu, the site of the Hawai'i bar exam.



Returning to Hawai'i and Starting a Career

At that time, the bar exam was usually scheduled in September and the results were not announced until near the end of the year. To provide for his young family (then three in number) during this period, Henry sold Fuller brushes, door-to-door. In January of 1955 the results of the bar examination were published and Henry was one of the fortunate 55 percent who passed. Frank then sponsored Henry before Hawai'i's Supreme Court for admission to the bar. Fortune smiled upon him, again, when he landed a job as a law clerk to one of Hawai'i's Federal District Court Judges. From there, Henry went to work at the territorial Attorney General's office as a deputy and, then, to the Office of the Corporation Counsel at the City and County of Honolulu.

During this period, Henry's family had grown to five, with the arrival of another daughter and a son. And, during this time, he was regularly in contact with Frank, mainly through a reading club started by the latter with a nucleus of Yale alumni who met monthly.

After years of governmental service, he went into private practice with Morio Omori, Matsuo Takabuki, and Dan Inouye, who was at the time a congressman. Henry's association with that firm was cut short when Wallace Fujiyama asked Henry to help him at his firm since Fujiyama's partner, Walter Chuck, had become ill and could not work. It was there that Henry was exposed to a variety of private law practice cases. When Walter Chuck recovered from his illness, he returned to the firm and he, Wally Fujiyama and Henry prospered.

It was the early 1960s and the civil rights movement was shaking the entire nation. While there were many Asians who lived in Hawai'i, the majority of the top business people were Caucasians and there remained a sharp line between the two groups.

Chapter Three:

Hawai'i During the 1950s and 1960s

Prior to the 1950s, the local economy was largely dependent upon sugar cane, pineapple and, of course, tourism and the military. The local economy and social structure were still highly influenced, if not controlled, by a few large companies as they had been for many years.

Individuals outside of the power structure were forced to bind with each other to form ethnic-based banks to obtain loans. Judges of Hawai'i's Supreme Court and Circuit Courts were appointed by the federal government, and many organizations and country clubs in Hawai'i were race- and gender-biased with limited, if any, Asian or female representation.

Following World War II and during the Korean Conflict, veterans under the GI Bill and others coming out of indentured labor plantation environments sought higher education, business opportunities, and economic independence. These war veterans and other students with college, graduate and professional degrees started returning to Hawai'i during the 1950s, as significant political, social and economic changes were occurring.



Left: Pedestrians crossing Hotel Street and Fort Street (1950)

Middle: Fort Street before it became a pedestrian mall looking mauka (mountain view) from King Street (1959)

Right: The water fountain at the entrance to the Honolulu Airport was lit up at night with orange lights (1960)

In 1954, Democrats took over the Hawai'i Legislature for the first time and created a political power block of "locals." In 1959, when Hawai'i became a state, all kinds of doors opened, providing many new opportunities to the ordinary citizen. Hawai'i also began electing its own public officials. Instead of being appointed by the federal government, Hawai'i's state court judges began to be appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Hawai'i State Senate.

The Winds of Change Begin to Blow

This was a significant change to our court system as the new cadre of judges had different views, backgrounds, and political affiliations than their federally appointed predecessors. There was literally a change of judicial complexion. Representatives of the Big Five and other powerful economic groups had to start dealing directly with legislators coming from a contract labor plantation background.



With these changes, the playing fields started to level. Compared with other states in the union, Hawai'i was racially tolerant and sensitive. However, the playing fields for Hawai'i businesses, the legal profession, social organizations and clubs, as well as society itself, were still not close to being as level as they are today.

The 1960s saw the adoption of the Civil Rights Act, and President John F. Kennedy's initiatives and encouragement for young people to get involved and to cause a positive change. Further, in 1963 Dr. Martin Luther King delivered his "I Have a Dream" speech.

Then came the Vietnam War, government protests, a movement towards individual rights and freedom, and the beginning of the "anything goes" carefree life style. In Hawai'i, progress was slow, although the armor had been pierced and change had been set in motion.


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I HAVE A DREAM
MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.
THE MARCH ON WASHINGTON
FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM
AUGUST 28, 1963



Top: President John F. Kennedy greets Peace Corps Volunteers. Left: A crowd of over 200,000 gathered on Washington Monument (rear) mall for March on Washington during which Martin Luther King delivered "I have a dream" speech (1963).



C. F. DAMON, JR. AND HENRY H. SHIGEKANE

ANNOUNCE

THE FORMATION OF A PARTNERSHIP

FOR THE PRACTICE OF LAW

UNDER THE FIRM NAME OF

DAMON & SHIGEKANE

406 TRUSTCO BUILDING
250 SOUTH KING STREET
HONOLULU 13, HAWAII

TELEPHONE
566-168

Chapter Four: A Partnership is Born

In 1963, both Frank and Henry were at a point in their lives when they were not sure what they were going to do next. The political, economic and social environments, and the opportunities for equality for all citizens of Hawai'i in 1963 contrasted sharply from Hawai'i today.

It was at this juncture that Frank proposed to Henry they form a law firm. This was not something Henry had ever thought of or considered. Although they were now in the same profession and equals as lawyers, the two men came from very different family backgrounds and social classes. "You know when that happened, when Frank proposed that, I really thought . . . Gee, this is really adventurous for somebody like him to turn his back on that kind of thing being a partner in a big law firm." Henry felt that joining a law practice with Frank, whose favored background was so different from his own, was daunting. From Frank's point of view, forming a law partnership with Henry was a promising challenge – based on their prior relationship, friendship, trust and Henry's personal qualities and abilities. That Henry was of Japanese ancestry was never an issue, as Frank, being ahead of his time, was color blind and held true to his grandfather's motto: "Within the Four Seas, all Men are Brothers."

Opposite page: Announcement of Damon and Shigekane Law Partnership

Opposite page background: Aerial view of downtown Honolulu (1960), (1) Damon Shigekane's first office, Trustco Building, (2) second office, Melim Building, (3) third office, Clifford Building, (4) future site of Bishop Square's Pauahi Tower, current office.



Trustco Building

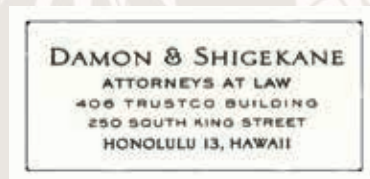
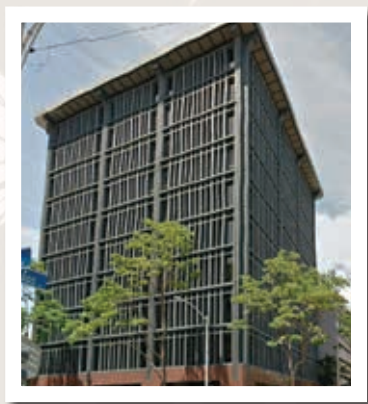


Melim Building

Because of their long-standing camaraderie and mutual respect, the idea took shape for the two college friends to start their own law firm. And that they did. The law firm of Damon & Shigekane opened its doors in 1963. Damon & Shigekane was formed as one of the first, if not the first, multi-racial law firms in Hawai'i. At that time, major law firms in Hawai'i had few, if any, Asian or women lawyers and very few or none as partners. In this regard, Frank and Henry, though unwittingly so, were pioneers in advancing racial harmony and equality in the legal profession in Hawai'i.

Thus was born the firm of Damon & Shigekane in a little office in the Hawaiian Trust Building, with three cubicles and a secretary shared by the two of them. They set one rule to follow: Damon & Shigekane would not borrow money from any financial institution for operations; both Frank and Henry and those succeeding them would work hard to make sure the firm prospered with keen financial planning. Frank's correspondence always signed off with his closing trademark salutation "With Aloha," which truly embodies the spirit of the business he started with his friend.

While their backgrounds could not have been more dissimilar, the law practice they established truly exemplified how their aspirations, abilities, philosophies, contributions, work habits, temperaments and different styles complemented each other to shape what has become Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert. The firm moved from the Hawaiian Trust Building to the Melim Building on the Makai-Diamond Head corner of Queen and Richards Street in the late 1960s and, then, to the 10th floor of the City Bank Building on the Mauka-Ewa corner of Queen and Richards Streets in 1973. After adding space on three additional floors and not being able to consolidate its office spaces and integrate the quickly advancing technology, the firm moved in 1985 to the Pauahi Tower of Bishop Square (1003 Bishop Street) where it presently occupies the entire 16th floor.



Where were you in 1963 when...

The U.S. Postal Service officially inaugurated zip codes

Gasoline was 25 cents a gallon

Martin Luther King delivered his famous "I have a dream" speech

An artificial heart was implanted in a human for the first time

The Apollo space program was launched

Chapter Five:

Welcoming, Passionate, Compassionate and Growing Law Firm

Both partners, with different personalities, were similar in that they truly welcomed new employees to the firm as ‘ohana. They both loved what they did and diligently worked long hours to gain the trust and confidence of the firm’s existing and potential clients. In those days, long work hours (including working on Saturdays) were just a matter of course, as everyone in the office just worked without giving much thought to whether we were working too hard – this was before the term “quality of life” was coined. All of the firm’s attorneys worked the billable hours and many other hours together without realizing how much time had passed, because everyone genuinely enjoyed working with each other.

As keeping time records and billing by the billable hour became the norm in the legal profession throughout the country, including Hawai‘i, the firm’s administrators had a difficult time making Henry conform to this tedious chore. Henry liked to bill for the job and what it was worth, and what he thought he was worth. So, before the terminology even became part of the lexicon, our firm was already exercising alternative billing practices. In many ways, this little shop was ahead of its time while at the same time being a part of its era.

If any of the firm’s employees needed any help, whether it was trying to get a child into a private school, a personal problem or, perhaps, a small loan, the founders were there to help if anyone asked. If Frank and Henry said they would help, their support was always unwavering.

In one instance, Henry urged a young attorney in the firm to get appropriate life insurance to protect his family, which included a new baby, generously offering to pay the premiums for one year of life insurance to protect his employee’s young family. To the founders of the firm, family was a cornerstone of life that needed to be nurtured and protected, and they always led by example.



*Pauahi Tower of Bishop Square
(1003 Bishop Street)*

Opposite page bottom middle: City Bank Building



Henry with Diane Plotts and Christopher Hemmeter of Hemmeter Investments in the 1970's



Frank relaxing



President Jimmy Carter, Diane Plotts and Henry at the Hyatt Regency on Maui in the 1980's

Different Work Styles, But a Common Philosophy

Their personal styles, temperament, and work habits were not similar, other than their insistence on doing the job right and doing what was right. Frank was orderly, organized, detailed, and methodical. His secretary sharpened his pencils daily and carefully kept his calendar. Frank took care of the office details as the Chairman of the Board of the firm as well as his many clients, large and small. He was predictable and set in his ways, even as a young man, and always the classy, warm, polite gentleman who was somewhat formal, but whom no one could dislike. This has never changed.

Henry was the impulsive, no nonsense, slash-and-burn, then move on type. He was as quick as a samurai and a devastating opponent in the courtroom or at a Public Utilities Commission or other administrative, contested hearing. He used a fountain pen, which he could usually find in the mess on his desk. One could readily see that Henry, who appeared to be low key and relaxed with his pipe in one hand and billowing smoke rising, was really a lawyer constantly thinking, and a genius in action. Henry was the consummate attorney/entrepreneur, advising and working with development clients as their attorney and, in some cases as their business partner, in creating the Honolulu of today, especially the Hawai'i Kai and Waikiki areas. When Henry retired from practicing law with the firm in 1978, he went in-house with his development partners Christopher Hemmeter and Diane Plotts for a period of time, before retiring completely from the law profession and business. Always extremely sharp and quick, Henry would often surprise those around him by what he did or didn't do. He could be very engaging and charming — if he wanted to be. That has never changed either.

Ethical Conduct Critical

The firm's founders never wavered from the principles of fair play and ethical conduct. Frank was a strong and active advocate for the regulation of ethical conduct among attorneys in the Hawai'i State Bar Association (HSBA). He helped to create and cultivate a system in the HSBA of regulating ethical conduct among attorneys, which continues today. Neither Frank nor Henry would budge from what was right and proper. Winning a case or making money was never a justification to deviate from this principle. This has been a persistent hallmark of the firm, and the firm and its employees have always played it straight in the legal profession and in business, and will continue to do so. Ethical conduct, as exemplified by the firm's founders in their personal lives as well as in their law practice, has been a major factor in Damon Key's success and sound reputation in the legal community and the community at large.

Fiercely Independent

Henry once said one advantage of being a lawyer is being able to choose for whom to work. He knew what good fortune it was to be able to pick and choose clients, and remain independent. It was easy to spot when either Frank or Henry was stuck on a point. Yet, there was always a way to negotiate a compromise that would make the most sense for the group. Working an acceptable profit allocation among the partners, sharing the use of support staff, selecting offices and parking spaces, and similar issues were always easily resolved between, and by, Frank and Henry, which has led others at Damon Key to follow their example.

A Positive Force in Hawai'i's Community

Frank was more the face of the firm in the community, as Henry supported causes more quietly. When Frank served as the Hawai'i State Bar Association President in 1968, an influential businessman sought to integrate The Pacific Club, which to that point had excluded Asians from its membership. Although this practice was consistent with those of some other social clubs and organizations in Honolulu, it was very inconsistent with the racial demographics in Honolulu. Frank strongly believed continued racial segregation was unacceptable. He was asked to name two highly respected Hawai'i attorneys, one Japanese and one Chinese, who could not be denied membership to The Pacific Club for any reason but race. Frank provided the names and, over the objections of some members, Frank's nominees became The Pacific Club's first Asian members. This helped to break similar barriers at other institutions. Having seen the wisdom and courage of its decision in 1968, The Pacific Club has now honored its first two Asian members with lifetime memberships.

The firm's founders never wavered from the principles of fair play and ethical conduct.

Additionally, both founders were committed to giving back to the community of which the firm was a part. Frank was an ardent supporter of education-related causes, serving as a trustee for his *alma mater*, Punahou School, as well as for Mid-Pacific Institute. Frank's contribution to Punahou School included creating the school's Foundation for Study in Hawai'i and Abroad, an exchange and travel program under which students could broaden their cultural horizons through first hand experiences. As a testament to the consistency with which Frank exemplifies the ideals of service to Punahou School and the community, he was awarded the 2009 "O" in Life award by the Punahou Alumni Association, the highest honor bestowed by that organization.

The Damon family's ties to Mid-Pacific Institute go back to Frank's grandparents, who were instrumental in the formation of what was then called Mills School. It served mostly Chinese boys. Mills School eventually merged with Okamura School and the Kawaihāo Seminary to form Mid-Pacific Institute. Both Frank and his grandfather were trustees of Mid-Pacific Institute, and today the current Damon Key President, Kenneth Kupchak, continues the legacy as the school's Chair of the Board of Trustees.

Frank's grandparents in 1892 also formed the Kindergarten Children's Aid Association (with Mother Rice) for Chinese boys. The organization today is known as KCAA Preschools of Hawaii, which provides preschool education to children of all ethnicities.

Frank has also been involved with organizations such as the Sun Yat Sen Foundation, Palolo Chinese Home, First Chinese Church and Kapiolani Hospital, now called the Kapiolani Medical Center for Women & Children. Frank truly embodies the spirit of community service.





Opposite page top: Frank Damon Punahou class of '44 with PAA President Mark Kam class of '80
 Opposite page bottom right: Under Pastor Francis Damon, the Mills Institute opened in 1892
 at his home on Chaplain Lane

Top left: KCAA Board of Trustees Resolution

Bottom left: First Chinese Church of Christ in Hawai'i

The Firm Six Decades Later

Following the examples and habits of our founding partners, for sixty years we have continued to operate our firm in a manner that encourages the individualism, imagination, entrepreneurship and, to some extent, the different and peculiar work methods of each attorney. Each of us is unique and each of us employs our creativity in our own ways to best serve our clients. The firm continues to be organized with enough administrative rules and policies to operate in an organized and uniform manner. Yet, administratively, there is a continued attempt to give each attorney sufficient space in which to maximize his/her unique abilities. This balance of centralized/decentralized management and organization was established to accommodate the distinct work habits, personalities and styles of our founders, and has continued successfully until today.

The firm started with just two attorneys and one support staff member, and has grown to include approximately 28 attorneys and 50 employees, and the only Hawai'i member of the Meritas global network of over 183 uniquely qualified, independent, full-service law firms in over 255 markets. Over the past 60 years there have been many changes in facilities, personnel and technology. For example, our website – www.hawaiilawyer.com – was first created in 1995, as one of the very first law firm websites.



*Each of us is unique and each
 of us employs our creativity
 to best serve our clients.*

Today, the employment opportunities for young lawyers have become virtually unlimited, unlike in 1963. Law firms now employ young lawyers and partners without regard to the biases of times past. Change is the word of the day and changes are occurring every day, not only in technology but also in the thinking, work habits, priorities and philosophies of the young lawyers, the legal profession, the business world and the community at large. Yet, many of the principles, ideals and lessons taught to us by the founders of the firm remain deeply ingrained into our present culture.



The Firm's Core Values:

- 1. Passion for Client Work** - Perform work for clients with passion. Keep the client's best interests in mind and perform legal work efficiently, competently, compassionately, and do the very best you can. Always conduct yourselves professionally.
- 2. Sense of Humor** - Be willing to laugh at yourself, laugh at others and have others laugh at you. Always enjoy what you are doing.
- 3. Integrity and Ethics** - Never compromise integrity or ethics. Always be fair and reasonable in decision-making and in taking action.
- 4. O'hana and Sacrifice** - Take care of your family and treat your employees and clients like family. Sacrifice for the good of the firm and its other members.
- 5. Acceptance** - Work cooperatively and well with everyone and accept their differences.
- 6. Community** - Contribute and give back.

Frank and Henry left the office each day proud of what they accomplished. We continue to follow their example today and carry forward their legacy of the true spirit of aloha.

Tackle the Dread.

Within the Four Seas, all Men are Brothers.

To learn more about Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert, our practices, and our staff, please visit us at www.hawaiilawyer.com.



Appendix / Photo Credits

- Cover Photo** View from Ala Moana Boulevard looking up Bishop Street (1966), photographer Nancy Bannick and the Hawaii State Archives
- Page 2** Top left: Seamen’s Bethel Chapel (Oahu Bethel Church) (built 1833), now “The Friend Building”
Top middle: The Friend Building, 929 Bethel Street (built 1887)
Top right: Young Cyril Francis Damon, Jr.
Background: View of Honolulu Harbor c.1854
- Page 4** Pier scenes S.S. Maui, Hawaii State Archives
- Page 11** Left: Pedestrians crossing Hotel Street and Fort Street (1950), Hawaii State Archives
Middle: Fort Street before it became a pedestrian mall looking mauka
(mountain view) from King Street (1959)
Right: The water fountain at the entrance to the Honolulu Airport was lit up at night
with orange lights (1960)
- Page 14** Aerial view of downtown Honolulu (1960), Hawaii State Archives
- Page 15** Trustco Building (1960), Photographer Nancy Bannick and the Hawaii State Archives





Damon Key Leong Kupchak Hastert

1003 Bishop Street, Suite 1600, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813, (808) 531-8031

