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paid advertisement



### Our Honolulu

By Bob Krauss

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## All 'ohana to Pinky Thompson

**P**inky Thompson's family and friends said goodbye to him last week. Maybe you'd better change that to just family because Pinky couldn't tell the difference.

His son, Myron, told a story to explain how, to Pinky and Laura, family was whoever happened to be staying over.

Two friends from Punahou were visiting sons Myron and Nainoa when Gov. Jack Burns appointed Pinky to his Cab-

# Isn't doing a job with real heart what good work is about?

**S**he was dressed in a flower-print shortie-mu'u and a purple crochet vest, white ankle socks and brown sandals. She had on jade earrings, a jade pendant, jade bracelets, a jade pin — in all, about 20 pieces of jewelry, all jade.

I watched her come out of the doctor's office on the second floor of the complex, leaning heavily on her wheeled walker and careening precariously toward the winding cement staircase. It was like that movie moment when you know the hero is about to fall off the cliff. All the yelling you do at the screen won't stop the inevitable.

But then, a well-dressed, smiling man came up behind the woman and took her



### Lee Cataluna

Advertiser columnist

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arm. He steadied her as she took the stairs one-by-one, walker/right foot/left foot, walker/right foot/left foot. My heart started beating again. Disaster averted.

Ten minutes later as I was passing back the other way, the pair were still working their way to the car. They had gotten down the stairs without incident and were working their way across the parking lot, she steering the walker, he calmly steering her back in the right direction.

What a nice son, I thought. So kind and patient. He

probably took time off from work to take his mom to the doctor.

Then came the big surprise.

The well-dressed man led the frail little lady to the car. He made sure she was safe inside, smiled at her, closed the door, folded up the walker and put it in the trunk. As they pulled away, I got a better look at the car. It was a Charley's taxi. That man wasn't her son at all. He was a medicab driver.

In a recent column, I wrote about bad customer service, poor work ethics and the pervasive attitude of least-effort-required in Hawai'i. But, yes, there is the full spectrum of customer service in this state. While there are too many examples of people who sleepwalk through their jobs, on the

other end, there are those who put real heart into their work.

Sure, the cab driver was being paid to walk the woman to her car, but it was the way he did it, with care and good humor, that was so amazing to witness.

Another example, and then I'll make my point: the City's Sunset at the Beach program was a rainy, windy mess the last Sunday in December. The weather got so bad, the event had to be canceled midway through the movie for fear the 30-foot screen would blow away and knock somebody upside the head. The Hōkū award-winning musical group 'Aie'a was part of the pre-movie entertainment. The trio stood on stage in the gusting wind and dumping rain. They made jokes about the weath-

er, they huddled in close to the microphones to try to muffle the whoosh of the wind, and they played their instruments with fingers wet from the rain and numb from the cold. When the wind paused long enough for for you to hear them, they sounded great.

Pros know how to do a good job even when it's raining on their heads, even when the wind is threatening to carry off their guitars, even when ... whatever.

A number of responses to my earlier column on work ethics pointed out that where job performance is concerned, the onus rests on management and not front-line workers. If a business is managed poorly, the argument goes, employees can't be at their best.

Sure. Of course. But taken

so far, that becomes an excuse. What ever happened to pride in a job well done? What ever happened to personal responsibility? Aren't we big enough to rise above poor management and do a good job because it's the right thing to do? Isn't there honor to be found in doing a job well DESPITE all the reasons not to?

A reader passed along these words of wisdom from his father: "If you don't enjoy your work, you obviously have someone else's job." Something to ponder in this time of both high unemployment and personal introspection.

Lee Cataluna's column runs Tuesdays, Fridays and Sundays. Reach her at 535-8172 or [lcataluna@honoluluadvertiser.com](mailto:lcataluna@honoluluadvertiser.com)