4-15-1969

Statues of Father Damien and King Kamehameha

Mike Mansfield 1903-2001
ACCEPTANCE BY SENATE MAJORITY LEADER MIKE MANSFIELD OF THE
STATUES OF FATHER DAMIEN AND KING KAMEHAMEHA

Tuesday, April 15, 1969 - 4:00 p.m.
Rotunda, U. S. Capitol

The men and women portrayed in stone in the Capitol are an inspiration to the countless Americans from all parts of our nation who visit this building each year. To this honored group, we now add the sculptured figures of the two remarkable men who have been chosen for inclusion by the people of Hawaii. They typify the greatness in diversity of the Fiftieth State. From their lives, generations of Americans will derive a sense of the character which makes Hawaii what it is today, a great contributor to the strength and progress of the Union.

It is fitting that the men who are honored, today, were a European and an indigenous Hawaiian. In their different national and racial origins they mirror the melting-pot as it has existed so uniquely in the Fiftieth State. In Hawaii, races not only live in harmony with races but more and more, and in a higher sense, they live without race.

The man responsible for the political integration of the Hawaiian Islands, King Kamehameha, and the man who exemplified the humanitarian spirit that characterizes Hawaii, the Belgian Father Damien, richly deserve the honor we pay them on this occasion. Kamehameha the Great was determined in war and just in peace. He brought the warring islands for the first time under one rule. He reigned with wisdom--understanding well the needs
and aspirations of his peoples. He led them to higher levels of economic
well-being and political stability by encouraging agriculture, industry,
and efficient administration, and by the active seeking of friendship with
foreigners to whom he extended Hawaii's traditional aloha, a heart-felt
warmth of welcome to the stranger. For his acts of enlightened leadership,
Kamehameha I is remembered with respect and admiration throughout the State.

The supreme Christian charity of Father Damien will remain a
profound inspiration to Hawaiians, to all Americans and to mankind. Dedi-
cated to the service of God and to all of God's children, Father Damien
devoted his life to the victims of leprosy on the Island of Molokai. There,
his compassion and tireless self-sacrifice brought physical comfort and
spiritual hope to the afflicted and the dying. For his reward, he accepted
with religious ecstasy his own death as a leper.

These were great men of a great State. I am honored to accept,
on behalf of the Capitol, therefore, the sculptured likenesses of King
Kamehameha the Great and Father Damien who will, henceforth, represent
the State of Hawaii in Statuary Hall.