Exhibit of Hawai‘i’s Labor History and Hawaiian Political Movements Through Law Library Includes September 2 Webinar

A unique UH Law Library exhibit that seeks to facilitate dialogue between the labor movement in Hawai‘i and the current Native Hawaiian Sovereignty movements, will launch as a digital exhibit at http://archives.law.hawaii.edu/exhibits/show/race-labor-indigeneity.

As part of the exhibit an online webinar has been scheduled for Wednesday, September 2, from 3-5 p.m. with a panel of community organizers and scholars discussing Hawai‘i’s labor history. Register for the webinar at https://bit.ly/0902hlabor.

The exhibit will showcase archival collections on labor history from the Center for Labor Education and Research at UH West O‘ahu, the Ethnic Studies Center for Oral History at UH Mānoa, and the William S. Richardson School of Law Library.

It will also look at whether the contemporary Hawaiian movements to protect lands have the same appeal to broader multi-ethnic communities that the early plantation-based labor movement did.

“We reflected on the history of the interracial labor strikes during the 1940s and 1950s,” said Ellen-Rae Cachola, one of several organizers that also included Leslie Lopez of UHWO and Micah Mizukami of UH-Mānoa. “We discussed how amazing it was for labor organizers to cross significant lines of racial and class division in order to unify to strike for unionization, better wages, and working conditions,” said Cachola.

“It must have taken a lot of work to build relationships and trust in a society that was organized according to the plantation oligarchic, hierarchical system that classified and divided on race, class and gender.”

Cachola said the exhibit’s mission is to foster discussion that brings together the histories of Hawai‘i’s labor movement and Hawaiian Nationalism movements. “We know that Hawai‘i has an illustrious labor history that challenged the oligarchical power structure of Hawai‘i during the Territorial era,” said Cachola. “The workers organized to challenge the political demographics and economic values of the state.

“The Hawaiian Sovereignty movement has also been a powerful force questioning the power structures that underlie the making of our multi-ethnic society today, and how the indigenous people have been affected.”

The online exhibit, which has also been sponsored by UH Mānoa SEED and the Hawaii State AFL-CIO, can be viewed at http://archives.law.hawaii.edu/exhibits/show/race-labor-indigeneity