
Honoring
Dr. Alan Garson
Distinguished Educator



Dr. Alan Garson is a resident of the Big Island for 46 years. He retired from the Department of Education in 1995 where he served as a teacher and coach, a high school principal, and District Superintendent. He was the Principal of Hilo High School for seven years, 1979 – 1986.

Among the programs implemented during his tenure, were the Career and College Guidance Resource Center, the In-school suspension (nick-named “jail” by the students), the first computer lab (1981), and the term “Viking Pride” which was initiated for Homecoming in 1981. One of the interesting, (and probably least known), facts was the setting of graduation dates with the Waiakea High Principal, Robert Bean. Since 1980 was Waiakea’s first graduating class, Waiakea was given the first choice of dates that year and all even numbered years, and they chose Saturday night. Hilo High was given the first choice of dates in odd numbered years. Hilo High has always chosen Friday nights, and Waiakea has chosen Saturdays!

Some notable achievements at Hilo High during his term were a State Baseball Championship, a state diving champion and two runners-up, the HHS band marched in the Rose Bowl Parade, and of course, many BIIF championships. The academic emphasis focused on preparing students for college, as well as the world of work. In 1990, under the auspices of the Hawaii Island Chamber of Commerce, and along with Barry Taniguchi of KTA, and the late Mits Sumada of Hawaii Community College, he was one of the founders of the Business-Education Partnership (BEP), a non-profit organization whose goal was to prepare Big Island youth for entry into the world of work. Hilo High was one of the first to implement the BEP classes.

His personal attachments to Hilo High are many, including his spouse, Priscilla (Class of 1958), and grandchildren – Jacquelyn Walkabout (2006 grad), Carmen Garson-Shumway (currently a Senior), and Kai Garson-Shumway (Sophomore). Carmen runs cross country, played soccer for three years, and is currently the holder of three Hilo High girl’s track records – 800, 1500, and 4 x 400 relay. Kai runs cross country, plays on the Varsity soccer team and also runs track.

Following his retirement from the DOE, he was the Hilo Division Director for Casey Family Programs, a Seattle-based, private foster care agency, for nearly four years from February, 2000 – Jan 2004.

Alan is also the owner of G & G Consultant Services, providing educational and management training. He is the former chair of the Hawaii County Workforce Investment Board.

As an active member (46 years) and a past president of the Akaka Falls Lions Club, he served as the District Governor of Lions in the State of Hawaii, 2009-2010.

He received his B.A. degree from Occidental College in Los Angeles, his M.A. from Cal-State Los Angeles, and his Ed. D. from Arizona State University.
