

A Personal Biography
Jonathan Kay Kamakawiwo'ole Osorio

I am a scholar of nineteenth century political and social history in Hawai'i and have written a book *Dismembering Lahui* which details the colonization of Hawai'i as a slow and insinuitive process that heavily depended on Hawaiians being converted to the law. I have also been a constant activist and advocate for Hawaiian self-determination, attending and organizing protests and demonstrations for Hawaiian language immersion schools, protection of the land from military abuse, in opposition to imperialism, including American imperialism and I submitted an intervention at the Permanent Forum for Indigenous Issues at the UN calling for decolonization in Hawai'i. I am a full professor on the faculty at the Kamakakūokalani Center for Hawaiian Studies where I have developed and taught classes in history, law as culture, music as historical texts, and research methodologies for and from indigenous peoples. I am a composer and singer with a history as a Hawaiian music recording artist since 1975.

I am a faithful husband and an engaged father who has sent all of his children to public schools unless or until they were admitted to the Kamehameha Schools, coached AYSO soccer for four of my children and have fostered and adopted our latest child. I am a Christian, or more specifically a Lutheran (ELCA), which is important to me since our brand of Lutherans tend to be religious skeptics and fiercely independent politically.

I think that Hawaiian sovereignty is about restoring our faith in the law and its ability to restore justice and fairness. I think it is much less about acquiring resources and much more about protecting them and assuring the survival of these islands for the generations to come. I think it is about safeguarding our right to live, speak, think and behave as Hawaiians and to teach our children that they may be Hawaiians and not Americans if they wish. I think that the Hawaiian sovereignty movement will ultimately produce a nation and government devoted to peace and disarmament, careful management of our lands and waters, and protective of the cultural diversity that has defined this place. I don't really see that these aims are compatible with federal recognition and believe that our people should work for a much greater vision: the restoring of full independence under a multi-ethnic nation state that is culturally Hawaiian. I do not believe that such a nation, honoring public service, personal responsibility, sharing and non-violence would appeal to everyone.