

Guam: Fishing Crosses Party Lines



Chris Dueñas



Therese Terlaje



Amanda Shelton



Tina Muña-Barnes



Sabina Perez



The Guam fishing community's hopes are high with the recent election.

COVID-19, high gas prices, an itchy inflation, shipping delays and shortage of essential products have hurt local families. And as the saying goes, "When there is a crisis, folks go fishing!" Folks turned to fishing to provide sustenance and protein to their families and some much needed dollars in their pocketbooks just to make ends meet. The election of some key senators who have demonstrated support for Guam's fishermen brings hope for legislation to protect our fragile natural resources so fishing for sustenance is maintained.

Chris Dueñas (R), a long-time fisherman, boat owner and supporter of the Guam Fishermen's Cooperative Association, is in for another term and may again serve as Minority Leader. Reelected Speaker Therese Terlaje (D) has been a strong supporter of Guam's fishermen and the Co-op. She regularly joins fisheries meetings in the community and at the Co-op. Amanda Shelton (D), also back in, has a family home right on the water, and her late father Sonny, was a long-time fisherman and Co-op supporter, in addition to fabricating lures and importing boats for sale. Vice Speaker Tina Muña-Barnes (D) has been a friend

to fishermen for years and an advocate for making Guam a transshipment hub for tuna once again. Sabina Perez (D), reelected, is also a strong supporter of fishermen, joining the Council's Advisory Panel meetings when items on the agenda need her input.

Governor Lou Leon Guerrero and Lt. Governor Josh Tenorio have also demonstrated their generous support of all fishermen with contributions of thousands of dollars towards the building of a new Co-op facility.

Biba Peskadot! 🐟

Guam May Soon See Consistent Supply of Fresh Locally Caught Fish

In the 1980s through the late 1990s, Guam saw a fish transshipment value of more than \$94 million. Very little of the fish made it into Guam's economy. In fact, Guam's Bureau of Statistics and Plans reported in 2018 that Guam imported 99% of its seafood, valued at more than \$29 million.

Fast forward to 2022. Fumi Kajiyama, an entrepreneur whose roots hail from the old Mangilao Retail Store and whose father, Takayuki Kajiyama, was a Guam fishing pioneer, is looking to provide a consistent supply of fresh local seafood. Back in the day, his father owned a boat with enough deck space to start a trolling and deep bottomfish fishery, mostly for local markets. He had a working knowledge of Japanese fishing methods and he was generous in sharing his knowledge. Unfortunately, since his passing, no one stepped up to take over the activity. But now his oldest son is looking at filling the void.

Fumi was raised and educated in Guam. With his younger brother and sister, he ran the Mangilao Retail Store after their

parents passed away. He graduated from the University of Guam (UOG), but his passion remains in fishing.

From a young age, Fumi joined his father on the boat plying for anything that took their lures and bait. And they were quite successful at it, too. Old man Kajiyama became a household name amongst Guam's seasoned fishermen. Young Fumi enjoyed his adventures fishing from a boat. In fact, in a 1982 fishing derby, Fumi won the yellowfin tuna category with a huge 134.5-pound fish—a Guam derby record that he held for many years.

Council staff caught up with Fumi recently to ask about his vision to bring fresh fish to the local Guam market.

I've known you to be a fisherman ever since we were young. How did you get started fishing?

I love the ocean and enjoy the thrill of catching the big one.

You fished the cliffs behind UOG and along Glass Breakwater at night. Each time you and your friends carried such heavy loads of gear, including heavy car batteries. So obviously you are very passionate about fishing. What fuels your passion for fishing?

I guess accompanying my father on his boat fishing all day, all night and sometimes over several days, left an impression on



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