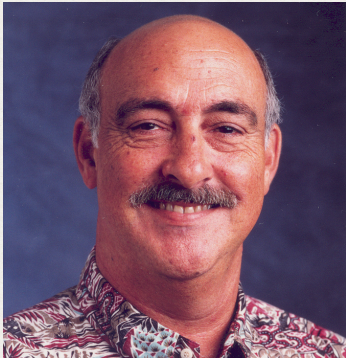


## LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT - HOLO PONO AWARD



**Harry A. Saunders**  
President,  
Castle & Cooke Hawai'i

**D**URING A REMARKABLE CAREER that now spans nearly five decades, Harry Saunders has learned the ins and outs of real estate development from the bottom up. He was 25 years old when he joined Castle & Cooke in 1975 as a salesperson for Mililani Town, the company's flagship project and Hawai'i's first master-planned community. Harry Saunders ascended to his current position in 2001, and along the way gained experience in land planning; entitlement; site design and construction; project management; construction; and even warranty and customer service well after the completion of a project.

During his tenure, Harry Saunders has overseen 15 development projects, and the company has provided 13,616 homes for Hawai'i families, of which 6,879 were affordable homes. He has learned from, and provided input to, five Hawai'i governors and 13 mayors: 7 on O'ahu, 3 on Maui and 3 on Hawai'i Island. Harry Saunders

also has been instrumental in setting a path of diversification needed to sustain Castle & Cooke into the future. He spearheaded the company's expansion of agritourism with the development of Dole Plantation and was very involved in converting the island of Lāna'i from a single-industry pineapple plantation into a visitor destination with two hotels and golf courses while also overseeing the island's operations and civic services.

A native of Hawai'i and a product of Hawai'i's public school system, Harry Saunders upholds a deep passion and commitment to make Hawai'i a better, sustainable, enjoyable place for those who live here.

NAIOP Hawaii asked him to share other highlights of his career.

### **What was it like being involved in the development/sales for Mililani Town, Hawai'i's first master-planned community?**

**HS:** Working for the developer first as a salesperson, then sales manager then onto a larger role in all the operations of Castle & Cooke Hawai'i was a great opportunity to learn not only the people side of our industry, but I was able to learn from some of the brightest and most talented people in the industry with a long history in Hawai'i. I got to see many aspects of community development, in both the residential and commercial sectors.

### **Did you ever imagine you would still be at Castle & Cooke 45+ years later – and leading its Hawai'i operations?**

**HS:** I never thought I'd be with the company this long and never considered running the Hawai'i operations for 20+ years. When I was first hired and going through the onboarding I remember the director of human resources discussing the benefits of the company

such as health care and the pension plan that I totally tuned out. I was 25 years old, in perfect health, and retirement was not even in my thoughts. Just goes to show how much you know at 25, as I'm still here! I still haven't figured out retirement, so I guess it'll be a while before I truly understand the company retirement benefits.

### **What have you found most rewarding about your work?**

**HS:** The opportunity to work with so many amazing and smart people, both within our company and throughout the community. I have been able to help complete one huge community (Mililani) and start another master-planned community (Koa Ridge), all for the residents of Hawai'i. I have overseen land management of large tracts of agricultural lands and helped to promote agriculture in Hawai'i. I was smart enough to heed the wise counsel of one of my main mentors, Mr. Wally Miyahira, to give back to our community via involvement in the many non-profit organizations serving our community. I have greatly enjoyed working with many boards including Chamber of Commerce, Hawaii Business Round-table, Hawaii Nature Center, Bishop Museum, Hawaii Employers Council, Military Affairs Council, UH Foundation, and HomeAid Hawaii.

At the end of the day, I have never been bored and love the challenge of giving back to our home state of Hawai'i and its people.

### **Is there a "secret" to your success that others might learn from?**

**HS:** Love what you do, do it with patience, do it with persistence, do it with integrity and honesty, and always greet the day with a smile and a laugh, and don't stop.