



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

For Immediate Release: July 6, 2006

06-44

HAWAII STATE HOSPITAL PATIENTS REMEMBERED

HONOLULU – Today at 10:30 a.m. at Hawaiian Memorial Park cemetery in Kaneohe, Hawaii State Hospital (HSH) will conduct the fifth annual remembrance service for 667 patients who passed away at the hospital and were forgotten from 1930 to 1960. The service is open to people living at the hospital and in the community with mental illness, hospital staff, former patients and staff, and community members.

From 1930-1960 a State law prohibited using taxpayer funds to bury indigent patients who died while residing at the then-named Territorial Hospital. If unclaimed by family members, their remains were cremated at the hospital and the ashes stored in the basement of the Goddard administration building. With time the moist windward air degraded the warehoused containers. Ashes from broken containers eventually spilled onto the concrete floor and many of the affixed labels fell away or became faded or illegible.

Such was the state of affairs until early 1960, when public pressure on the First State Legislature resulted in funds being appropriated to properly bury the 667 at the then-new Hawaiian Memorial Park cemetery in Kaneohe. The ashes were placed in urns and respectfully buried in four concrete vaults at a sloping lawn at an edge of the cemetery. Two bronze plaques memorialize the names of a 540 known individuals. In addition, 127 “unknowns,” whose identification labels had become unreadable, were laid to rest as well.

Those in attendance will include patients, hospital staff, former patients and staff, mental health advocates, and community members with a connection to the hospital. Former HSH Chaplain Clarence Liu will deliver a meditation. Other highlights will include blowing a pu, music, hula, and reciting a Metta Sutra Blessing. The heart of the ceremony will be speaking individual names by certain patients from the hospital. Each year names will be read until all of the 667 have been remembered.

###

For more information contact:
David Sohmer
Hawaii State Hospital
Phone: 236-8219 (desk) or 247-2191 (hospital)
Email: desohmer@hsh.health.state.hi.us