

**V. Rice V. Cayetano Race Forces an  
Uneasy Reconciliation Process  
By Trustee Colette Y. Machado**

**RICE v. CAYETANO**  
**Race Forces an Uneasy Reconciliation Process**

By: Colette Y. Machado  
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In the aftermath of the Rice arguments, Hawaiians are regrouping and strategizing their next move. Freddy Rice and his supporters want us to believe that they are protecting the rights of all U.S. citizens by refusing Hawaiian people their fundamental right to vote. And, many in the Supreme Court agree. Their basic assumption is that a native Hawaiian's right to vote for OHA Trustees is inherently racist and therefore discriminatory. Their underlying theme is that native Hawaiians should assimilate rather than be afforded the right to self-determination. Those assumptions ignore over 100 years of racially motivated oppression and political and economic exploitation of Hawaiians.

Rice urges all people to ignore the political, spiritual and cultural significance of native Hawaiians. Rice and the Court want all of us to believe that our plight is a natural adjustment to society's demands. However, blaming Hawaiian struggles on poor personal choices neglects the subtle yet sophisticated form of institutional racism that has become common place in the real Hawaiian world.

Observers now believe that OHA's election process will be held illegal. They are urging Hawaiians to focus on the December 1999 Federal "reconciliation" process based on Public Law 103-150.

Reconciliation is crucial, but it will take time and cannot be accomplished in such short order. Hawaiians should be uniting and strategizing how we will heal our people, bring them to good health, nurture them spiritually and politically and prepare them for the days ahead.

The Rice case is manini compared to all of the struggles that we are facing. There will always be the argument of Race vs. Political Class.

Whatever the case, Hawaiians should not be pressured to bargain for "reconciliation" or scraps at the bottom of the Federal and State governments' table.