

President's Declaration

Honoring the Late William Vincent "Rubak" Vitarelli, Ph. D., for his unprecedented services as an ardent and inspirational advocate of education and national pride of Micronesians, particularly the People of Palau, during the United States Administration of the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands.

WHEREAS, on January 19, 2010, at the age of 99 years, William Vincent Vitarelli, known to his family and friends as "Vit" or "Rubak" was called to his eternal rest at his home in Haiku, Maui, and that his funeral is scheduled to be held in Maui on February 1, 2010 (Monday, Palau time;

WHEREAS, Rubak Vitarelli was born in 1910 in New York City; and

WHEREAS, Rubak Vitarelli was awarded a Ph.D. from Columbia University in 1948; and

WHEREAS, during his lifetime William Vincent Vitarelli was an educator, architect and community organizer; and

WHEREAS, in 1949, Rubak Vitarelli was the first American educator to arrive in Palau starting what would be a life-long association with and dedication to the people of Micronesia; and

WHEREAS, while in Micronesia, Rubak Vitarelli worked as an educational administrator and community developer for over twenty-five years, mainly in Palau, but also in Guam, Saipan, Yap and the Marshall Islands; and

WHEREAS, Rubak Vitarelli dedicated his professional life to making education accessible to Micronesians; and

WHEREAS, Rubak Vitarelli served as Vice President for Research and Development at the University of Guam in the early 1970s and was a special advisor to the Belau Modekngei School, the independent alternative school in Palau established to perpetuate traditional skills and values; and

WHEREAS, in 1976 Rubak Vitarelli moved to Maui with his wife, Henrietta, and members of his family to establish a homestead on four acres of agricultural land and thereafter devoted his retirement years to an active life of designing and building homes, furniture making, farming, planting fruit trees, establishing a progressive community school, cooking and entertaining, writing, carving and painting; and

WHEREAS, even in retirement Rubak Vitarelli maintained contact with the people of Palau throughout the years and returned to Palau for several visits; and

WHEREAS, Rubak Vitarelli will be remembered as being a true renaissance man: a philosopher and independent thinker; an innovative educator and talented artist; an original and creative builder; a skilled organic farmer; a pacifist; a fighter for justice and truth; an advocate of self-sufficiency; a charismatic speaker and teacher; and a loving husband and father; and

WHEREAS, at the time of his death Rubak Vitarelli was survived by his second wife, Charlene Hardt; by his five children, Sandy, Margo, David, Don and Janice; by twelve grandchildren, Ward, Mark, Joe, Tom, Lynn, Marlene, Keobel, Hamada, Hayden, Kasumi, Mari, Sophie; and by fourteen great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Rubak Vitarelli was predeceased by his wife, Henrietta Taylor, and by two of his grandchildren, Heather and Eric; and

WHEREAS, the passing of Rubak Vitarelli is a great loss to his family, his relatives, his friends, to the people of Micronesia, and particularly to the people of the Republic of Palau.

NOW THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me under the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Palau I, Johnson Toribiong, President of the Republic of Palau, hereby declare a time of remembrance and mourning by our citizens for

