FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 20, 2021

NHLC SELECTS NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation (“NHLC”), a private nonprofit corporation, serving as Hawai‘i’s premier Native Hawaiian rights non-profit law firm, is pleased to announce that Ms. Makalika Naholowa‘a has been named its new Executive Director. As Executive Director, Makalika will work with the staff at NHLC to ensure the continued effective delivery of NHLC’s legal services to Native Hawaiian individuals and communities in need and lead NHLC’s long-range planning, program evaluation, business and finance operations, communications, governmental and community relations, fundraising and development.

As we celebrate over 47 years of dedicated service and commitment to the Native Hawaiian community, NHLC is honored and humbled to continue its noble mission of perpetuating, through legal and other advocacy, the rights, customs and practices that strengthen Native Hawaiian identity and culture. In so doing, we are proud, privileged, and excited to announce that Makalika joined the firm on December 6, 2021.

Makalika is an experienced practitioner and legal leader. For the last eight years she’s worked for Microsoft Corporation, and there she held numerous positions, including service on the legal department’s senior leadership team as the Chief of Staff for the General Counsel. Across four roles, Makalika lead and managed the company’s groups responsible for legal operations, legal procurement, trademarks, legal business management, and the department's pro bono, legal internship, and business continuity management programs. As a part of this work, Makalika gained experience leading strategic and complex legal projects requiring deep cross-functional collaboration and diverse disciplines such as government affairs, finance, human resources, communications, engineering, compliance, tax, auditors, and enterprise risk management. Before working at Microsoft, Makalika practiced at the law firm Perkins Coie LLP in Seattle. Makalika studied law at Columbia Law School and holds a degree in Computational Mathematics from Arizona State University.

Makalika is committed to NHLC’s mission to protect and advance Native Hawaiian identity and culture. She has been a long-standing supporter of NHLC and a leader in the indigenous legal community. Her past service includes nearly a decade of leadership roles with the National Native American Bar Association and work as a legal clerk serving Tonya Gonnella Frichener, a former North American Representative to the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues. She is a lifetime member of the Native Hawaiian Bar Association, and Makalika is a haumāna hoʻoponopono studying under Kumu Lynette Paglinawan.
Ms. Naholowa’a replaces NHLC’s former Executive Director, Ms. Summer Sylva, who NHLC previously announced has taken a role joining the Biden Administration as a Presidential appointee to the U.S. Department of Interior, serving as the Senior Advisor for Native Hawaiian Affairs to U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland. We, again, congratulate and support Summer’s work in federal service, strengthening ties between the US government and indigenous communities across the country.

NHLC Board President Mark Kawika Patterson states that “we are extremely excited and grateful that Makalika has joined the NHLC and strongly believe that she will meaningfully contribute to the growth and expansion of the quality legal services that the NHLC already provides.” Patterson goes on to state that “on behalf of the Board of Directors and the staff and attorneys of the NHLC, we bid a fond mahalo and a proud aloha to Summer as she embarks on this new chapter of her career and service to the people of Hawai`i in the Biden Administration in Washington DC.”

**About NHLC:** The Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation was founded in 1974 with a mission to perpetuate, through legal and other advocacy, the rights, customs and practices that strengthen Native Hawaiian identity and culture. NHLC carries out its mission by integrating native values into the practice of western law and jurisprudence. A just Hawai‘i, guided by Hawaiian values. Our work ensures that Native Hawaiians can maintain their integrity and their values as an independent native people. Going to court, though only one means of engaging in that pursuit, is how NHLC strives to achieve that vision. We focus on helping Native Hawaiians to navigate and prevail in the U.S. legal system.

For more information, visit NHLC on:
- [www.nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org](http://www.nativehawaiianlegalcorp.org),
- LinkedIn: [https://www.linkedin.com/company/native-hawaiian-legal-corporation/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/native-hawaiian-legal-corporation/),
- Instagram: [@nativehawaiianlegal](https://www.instagram.com/nativehawaiianlegal/), or
- Facebook: [@nativehawaiianlegal](https://www.facebook.com/nativehawaiianlegal).

You can also contact NHLC by phone at (808) 521-2302 or email at info@nhlchi.org.