



KENNETH F.C. CHAR

Ken Char is one of those influential leaders in Hawai'i tourism who didn't start out on a tourism career track. In fact, following World War II, he earned a degree from the University of Hawai'i and then a law degree from the University of Pennsylvania and in 1951 he began his career with Castle and Cooke, one of Hawai'i's Big Five companies.

Ken had the foresight to see that tourism would be the leading industry in Hawai'i's future and realized that successful airlines would be critical for success. In 1959, Aloha Airlines tapped Ken's managerial talents and he became Administrative Vice President for Aloha and—one year later —Executive Vice President for the airline. The job was a challenging one, and Ken was instrumental in turning the finances around from a million dollar deficit to a three million dollar profit. Fueled by that success, Ken was named president of Aloha in 1965 and presided over the expansion of its services.

Ken retired from Aloha in 1981 after twenty two years of service. But retirement didn't last long. Following the first ever post-war dip in visitor arrivals, Ken was recruited as president of the Hawai'i Visitors Bureau (HVB) with a charge to develop more consistent funding for the organization and revamp its marketing programs.

Ken's passion for tourism prompted him to work for the establishment of the University of Hawai'i School of Travel Industry Management. He served as Chairman for the TIM School Advisory Board as well as for the Board of Governors for the East-West Center. His commitment to the School continues to this day through the Kenneth F.C. and Aileen Char Scholarship and sponsorship of a professional program for tourism studies for travel professionals from China.