WHEREAS, the Hawaii Venture Capital Association is celebrating its 30th anniversary and has honored the entrepreneurs of 2017, whose ingenuity, spirit of innovation, and discipline have benefited us all, at the 18th Annual Entrepreneur and Deal of the Year Awards Gala; and

WHEREAS, entrepreneurs are not easily defined, as they are women and men, old and young, and from many walks of life. They are visionaries and people of passion that have the ambition, drive, and talent to take an idea and create a market where none existed before; and

WHEREAS, since its founding in 1988, the Hawaii Venture Capital Association has stood as a nexus for entrepreneurs, capital and investment, and networking opportunities in Hawaii, fostering entrepreneurship through education and exposure to members of the business community and striving to grow a vibrant and successful venture capital industry in Hawaii; and

WHEREAS, Founder and CTO Olin Lagon and CEO Forest Frizzell of Shifted Energy received the Agriculture and Clean Tech Entrepreneur of the Year Award. This award honors one of two types of entrepreneurs: one whose company effectively develops or enhances clean technology that helps move society to a cleaner, greener future; and secondly, a company that further innovates upon current agricultural practices, helping local farmers, but also offering the possibility of global expansion; and
WHEREAS, John Komeiji, Chief Administrative Officer and
General Counsel of Hawaiian Telcom, received the Corporate
Intrapreneur of the Year Award. This award is given to an
individual who challenges traditions and assertively makes
changes in their company culture to ensure fellow employees are
engaged and are provided the platform to be intrapreneurial.
John Komeiji encourages employees to seize opportunities by
solving problems and utilizing resources to make innovation
happen; and

WHEREAS, Jim Reddekopp, Owner of the Hawaiian Vanilla
Company, received the Consumer Packaged Goods Entrepreneur of
the Year Award. The award is presented to the entrepreneur
whose company has consistently seen month over month increases
in revenue and customers with a consumer brand based out of
Hawaii. Jim Reddekopp's goal is to cultivate the best vanilla
in the world and provide the finest vanilla-related products
including vanilla coffee, beans, and more; and

WHEREAS, Sumil Thapa, Chemical Engineer at Oceanit, has
accepted the Social Impact Entrepreneur of the Year Award on
behalf of Oceanit, Kamehameha Schools, and the Altino Coding
team. The award celebrates those entrepreneurs and companies
that have contributed to non-profits or community efforts and
that have shown leadership, innovation, and commitment to be a
part of efforts to solve our state's toughest problems; and

WHEREAS, Brian Goldstein, Founder and CEO of Noa
Botanicals, received the Deal of the Year Award. This award
recognizes the Startup Paradise company that received the
largest financial deal during 2016. Noa Botanicals is a
licensed medical cannabis dispensary in Honolulu that has raised
over $11 million in a first round financing that included equity
and a small amount of debt. Noa Botanicals defeated 32 other
applicants to win one of three medical dispensary licenses in
Oahu, is the first dispensary in the state to offer several
types of derivative products, and achieved a 5-star review
across all social channels; and
WHEREAS, Ian Wetzel, Investment Specialist at the Employees' Retirement System of the State of Hawai'i, received the Investor of the Year Award. This honor recognizes the most outstanding individual or entity that has contributed significantly to investing in the Hawaii startup ecosystem, not only in the literal "capital" definition, but also in terms of their investment in the community; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives of the Twenty-ninth Legislature of the State of Hawaii, Regular Session of 2018, that this body hereby recognizes the Hawaii Venture Capital Association as it celebrates 30 years of dedication and commitment to honoring Hawaii’s most innovative entrepreneurs, congratulates the winners of the 18th Annual Entrepreneur and Deal of the Year Awards, and extends its warmest aloha and best wishes for continued success in all future endeavors.

OFFERED BY:  

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