



Rick Blangiardi



Keith Amemiya



My Drift

Title: Mayor Race 2020

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The most important Hawaii race is the 2020 Honolulu mayoral election that will determine the Mayor of the City and County of Honolulu for the 4-year term commencing in January 2021. Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, the state of Hawaii and especially Honolulu has more problems to deal with than anybody can remember. Here is a partial list of the primary issues the new mayor is going to be faced with:

- **People are out of work and broke**
- **Many businesses are closing for good**
- **Need to get the tourists back to Hawaii and the economy going again**
- **The cost of living has always been too high**
- **Homelessness is out of control**
- **Honolulu rail costs keep going up with no completion date in sight**
- **Traffic congestion keeps getting worse**
- **Hawaii has a meth drug epidemic**
- **Oahu is running out of places to dump our garbage**
- **There are junk cars and trash all over the place**
- **Climate change – Hawaii's beautiful beaches are disappearing**

If you are one of the few people who read my articles without any interest in Hawaii, you can probably find something better to do than reading about our mayor candidates. Bye.

The purpose of this article is to provide information about Rick Blangiardi and Keith Amemiya so that us Oahu voters can elect the best man for the job. I will try to be unbiased which should not be too hard since I like both candidates. However, by the end of the article, I (and you) will know who I'm voting for. We will start with a bio for both Rick and Keith. Then we will try to figure out how they stand and how they plan to fix or improve those issues listed on the previous page. If I don't like their approach, I will let you know and provide my suggestions.

Rick Blangiardi Bio

Early life

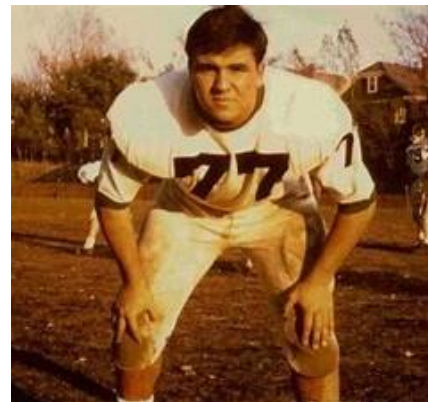
Blangiardi (age 74) was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts on September 15, 1946, to parents who immigrated to the United States from Italy. Rick grew up in Cambridge and lived in a "three-decker" tenement house in working-class Cambridge. He is a "BIG" Red Sox baseball fan and remembers watching baseball legend Ted Williams play at Fenway Park which was a little over 3 miles away in Boston.



Cambridge Tenement House

College and Football

Blangiardi signed a letter of intent to play college football for Boston College, but when his father, a munitions expert in the United States Navy, was transferred to Naval Station Pearl Harbor, he chose to attend the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Blangiardi played football for the Hawaii Rainbow Warriors as a linebacker and was a letterman for Warriors in 1965 and 1966.



When his mother moved back to Massachusetts, Blangiardi transferred to Springfield College, where he played for the football team and completed his Bachelor of Science in physical education and biology in 1969. Shortly after

that, he returned to Hawaii and from 1972 through 1976 he served as an assistant coach for the Rainbow Warriors under head coaches Dave Holmes and Larry Price. Blangiardi was the defensive coordinator and associate head coach under Price. He earned a Master of Arts in educational administration at the University of Hawaii in 1973.

Media Jobs

Blangiardi loved his job as an associate head coach but, with a child on the way, the \$15,000 annual salary wasn't cutting it. A colleague in local television told him that his work ethic could pay off in that field, so Blangiardi jumped to KGMB as an account executive in 1977, working his way up to general sales manager in 1984.

Blangiardi's first general manager job was at KHNL in 1984, before taking on top spots at KING Seattle and KPIX San Francisco. Blangiardi took on a somewhat unlikely role in 1999 when he became president of the Telemundo (Spanish) station group. He spoke no Spanish but knew TV operations and could relate to people from different cultures. "They perceived that I was a culturally fluent guy, based on the years I lived in Hawaii," he says. After three years in that role in Los Angeles, Blangiardi came back to Honolulu, running various stations, including KGMB, and taking over the combined operation in 2009.

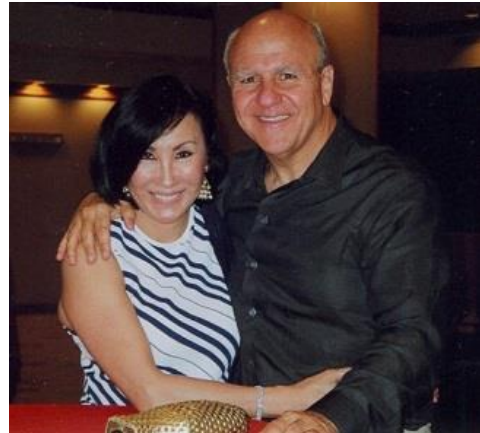


Fox affiliate KHON dominated the Honolulu market for decades. But the imposing resources of KGMB-KHNL and KFVE, along with a sales force crafted in Blangiardi's image, pushed Hawaii News Now—featuring a newsroom of 65 cranking out 40½ hours of news a week—to the top of the Honolulu heap.

Family

Currently, Rick Blangiardi is married to his beautiful wife, Karen Chang. He has been married to Karen for over two years now as they exchanged vows in September of 2018. Rick's wife is a former executive for Charles Schwab and American Express. It is estimated that their net worth is around \$10 million dollars.

Blangiardi has three grown children, all of whom were born in Hawaii (Matt, Ryan, Laura) from his previous marriage.



Rick Blangiardi and Wife Karen Chang

Retirement and Politics

After more than four decades in the broadcasting industry, Hawaii News Now President and General Manager Rick Blangiardi retired on January 15, 2020.

Blangiardi announced his candidacy for Honolulu mayor on Wednesday, February 12, 2020.

Some General Information

- Blangiardi is 5 foot 8 inches tall and will not disclose his weight.
- He does not play golf. He says he does not have an extra 5 hours to spend on the golf course.
- Political Party: “I’m an independent. Always have been. I am liberal in some areas and conservative in others, and I don’t believe either party can lay claim to all of the best ideas in every area. That’s why I like the fact that City & County offices are non-partisan, because we need the best solutions no matter where they come from. “

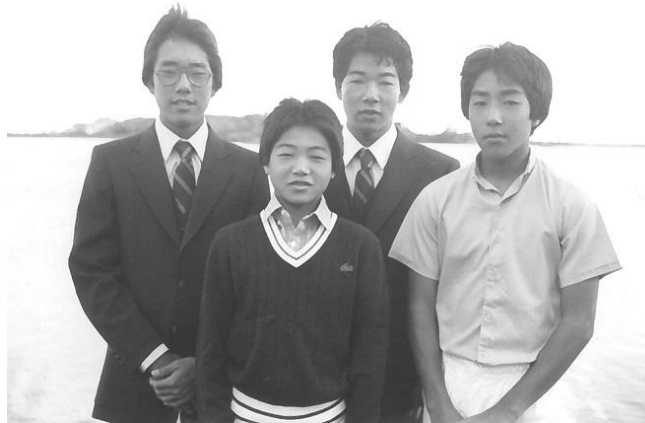
Campaign Slogan



Keith Amemiya BIO

Early life

Amemiya was born in Hawaii on the island of Oahu on September 1, 1965 which makes him 55 years old. Keith grew up in Hawai‘i Kai, where he played sports and went to public school through the 10th grade. When Keith was young, his mom’s mental health began to decline and his parents eventually divorced. Keith went to live with his maternal grandmother until his best friend’s family adopted him into their home. There, Keith became like any other member of the family—doing chores on the weekends, taking a summer job at Dole Cannery, playing sports after school, and going to Punahou thanks to the generosity of his hānai family. Keith was cared for and loved by others, an experience that shaped his views about community and generosity.



Young Keith Amemiya on the left

FYI – I looked up hānai family. Hānai is a term used in the Hawaiian culture that refers to the informal adoption of one person by another.

College

Keith paid his way through the University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa bussing tables, delivering legal documents as a messenger, and unloading shipping containers for a trucking company. Amemiya received his bachelor’s degree in Business Administration in 1988 and Law (Juris Doctor) degree in 1991.

Work experience

1991 to 1998 – Employed as an attorney specializing in civil litigation.

1998 to 2009 – Hawaii High School Athletic Association (“HHSAA”)

- Was Executive Director for 12 years.**
- Spear headed drive to raise \$1.5 Million in three months to save high school sports in 2009.**

- Donated \$25,000, with wife Bonny, to Roosevelt High School for new athletic scoreboard
- Brought De La Salle of Concord, CA, and Long Beach Poly CA, to play St. Louis and Kahuku at Aloha Stadium before 30,000 fans in 2003.
- Reunited the O‘ahu public (OIA) and private (ILH) school leagues to compete in regular season football after 48 years.



Former HHSAA chief Keith Amemiya (center) with OIA executive director Ray Fujino (left) and ILH executive director Blane Gaison (right)

2010 to 2012 – Executive Administrator to the Board of Regents – University of Hawai‘i.

2012 to present – Senior Vice President of Island Holdings which has five subsidiaries, including Island Insurance and Atlas Insurance Agency.

Family



Keith with son Christopher (college sophomore) and wife Bonny

Some General Information

Keith Amemiya: Political Outsider or Establishment Insider? You be the judge. Despite deep political ties to numerous state and local officials, Keith Amemiya says he is a proud democrat with a fresh perspective that Honolulu needs in the mayor's office.

He's the son of former Hawaii Attorney General Ronald Amemiya and the cousin of Roy Amemiya, Mayor Kirk Caldwell's managing director. And for years, Keith Amemiya has been a generous donor to the political campaigns of Hawaii's power players. Since 2007, he has donated \$63,400 to local and state political campaigns, according to state data. Over the years, Amemiya has given the most – \$12,500 – to Caldwell, followed by \$12,000 to Neil Abercrombie and \$7,050 to former major Mufi Hannemann.

Campaign Slogan



Keith Amemiya



The Good Hānai Son

Honolulu Mayors



Kirk Caldwell



Mufi Hannemann



Jeremy Harris



Frank Fasi

To be honest, I have been okay with all of Honolulu's mayors since I moved to Hawaii in 1970. Besides those pictured above, Eileen Anderson and Peter Carlisle were also mayors. Frank Fasi won elections as both a Democrat and a Republican. Peter Carlisle was an Independent. The rest are Democrats.

Overview of the 2020 Issues and Campaign Promises

Many of the current issues are the same ones Honolulu had 50 years ago when I came to Hawaii. For example, the high cost of living, homelessness, traffic, and drugs have always been issues and all of them have gotten worse over the years. All of our mayors have tried to fix or improve these problems, and all have failed. This is not surprising since every other big city in the United States has the same problems and they all failed to fix them too.



So, if you think Keith Amemiya or Rick Blangiardi is going to fix our problems, you are either very optimistic or crazy. Let's hope whoever gets elected can keep some of their campaign promises and keep Hawaii's problems from getting worse – a little improvement would be great.

Amemiya says he plans to use new, innovative solutions along with a fresh perspective to deal with Honolulu's issues. As an executive of a local business, he says he understands how to act decisively and collaboratively. And as mayor, he will bring right people together to solve O'ahu's biggest problems.

Blangiardi says it's very simple and very clear. My only agenda is you and what matters to you, your family, your neighborhood, and your livelihood. I'm not beholden to any special interests, donors or political party. I'm an independent and I will represent the interests of all voters, Democrats, Republicans and independents alike. His top priorities are economic recovery, homelessness, rail, housing for local families, and community safety – and he will stand by them.

Let's start with one of the biggest problems the world has ever faced – The **Coronavirus Pandemic and the economic fallout** it has caused.

Rebuilding Honolulu's economy after COVID-19.

Rick Blangiardi: This will be my single highest priority as Mayor. I bring a lifetime of successful experience working turnaround challenges and rebuilding failing businesses. We need clear, decisive leadership to restore confidence and get more and more people back to work.

Many Businesses in Hawaii have Closed for Good



Monterey Bay Cannery Restaurant



Like Like Drive Inn

Keith Amemiya: WE MUST RE-ENVISION THE FUTURE OF O'AHU. COVID-19 has forced us to confront uncomfortable truths. Families had to wait for hours to get food. Workers had to wait for weeks in frustration and agony for their unemployment checks. But what we also saw were communities figuring out ways to feed their neighbors in need. Everyday heroes are responding to the call to provide immediate supplies, relief, food, shelter, empathy, and aloha.

Our island's ability to rise above divisiveness, build bridges, and tear down barriers is ultimately what will allow us to thrive as a community. Now we must carry these lessons and entrepreneurial action into our recovery as a community.

Jerry: I give Rick Blangiardi the edge on this important issue. I think his kind of business experience and his ability to make the “hard” decisions will allow our state to get back on its feet faster. No matter what Keith Amemiya says – he is a Democrat and the powers to be in this democratic state will have some influence over his actions.

The High Cost of Living in Hawaii

Both candidates agree that the primary thing that is causing the high cost of living is housing. The average price of a home on Oahu is \$850,000 dollars and \$430,000 for a condo. Most first-time buyers cannot afford to buy a home.

Keith Amemiya: Hawai'i has been in a housing crisis for decades. But the same solutions suggested today and for previous decades have never been implemented by a generation of politicians. Keith says he has put forward a comprehensive “Housing For All Plan” that seeks to close the 22,000 unit gap to meet O'ahu residential needs. His housing plan seeks to prioritize development for O'ahu residents, stop illegal vacation rentals, build homes for communities that need them the most, and stimulate the private sector to build homes in the urban core.



The average house in Mililani on the island of Oahu sells for around \$850,000

Rick Blangiardi: Fast-tracking housing projects locals can afford. We need responsible development, but our old approach to creating affordable housing is not working. I will streamline the planning and permitting process to save time and money for builders and get construction underway faster.

Jerry: Again, I agree with Rick Blangiardi. Most housing for all plans don't work. You just can't give houses to the poor and the homeless. Our state would be broke in no time, and overrun with poor and homeless people from other states and countries.

Homelessness is Out of Control – What do you plan to do about it?

It seems like in every election year, the homeless problem becomes a major issue. This year is no exception and since Hawaii and our nation is in the middle of the Coronavirus Pandemic, there are and will be many more homeless people to worry about.

Here are some homeless statistics:

Hawaii (population is about 1.4 million) and there are about 8,000 homeless people on any given night. The rounded breakout by county:

Honolulu (Oahu)	4,500
Maui	1,500
Hawaii	1,400
Kauai	600

The number of homeless people has doubled since 2010. The number of homeless people living on our beaches has tripled. Let's take a closer look at who these homeless people are:

- 3200 (40%) have some sort of mental illness
- 3200 (40%) are veterans
- 3200 (40%) have alcohol or drug use problems
- 2800 (35%) have chronic health conditions
- 2400 (30%) are families (1600 children)
- 1600 (20%) have jobs
- 1600 (20%) other homeless men
- 640 (8%) are homeless youth (12-17)
- 160 (2%) other homeless women

You don't have to be very good at math to figure out that these numbers add up to more than 8,000 and the percentages add up to more than 100. This means that many homeless people have multiple problems and fall into several categories. For example, there are a lot of veterans with some sort of mental illness, other chronic health conditions and also have a drinking problem. Most of the homeless youth have drug use problems. Many homeless family members and other homeless people have jobs but can't make enough money to get housing.



Homelessness is bad in Hawaii especially in metro Honolulu and on the western leeward coast. If you don't believe me, just take a ride around downtown Honolulu and out to the Leeward Coast towns of Nanakuli, Waianae, and Makaha.

Rick Blangiardi: Stronger action to help the homeless. This includes a “tough love” approach to street enforcement, but also means we need to build treatment and housing facilities for the drug addicted and mentally ill, who truly can't take care of themselves. And we need more community partnerships to aid and house families. No one should ever be penalized for being poor.

Keith Amemiya: The primary barrier to addressing houselessness is the lack of affordable housing for O'ahu residents. With over 22,000 units needed on O'ahu, coupled with one of the highest housing costs in the country, even the lowest cost units are out of reach for many of O'ahu's residents.

In addition to increasing the supply of affordable housing for O'ahu residents, the City needs to embrace a greater role in addressing mental health. At least 300 of O'ahu's unsheltered community suffer from debilitating mental health issues. These are often the most visible with the least options and support available to them. The City should be helping them into appropriate residential care settings, not shuffling them between providers, jail, and the streets. Although healthcare is the state's responsibility, Keith believes the City needs to play a role to ensure its residents – both housed and not – have the opportunity for the quality of life they deserve.

Jerry: I agree mostly with Rick Blangiardi. **The state along with the City and County of Honolulu must get the homeless off of the streets.** By force if necessary. Crazy homeless people must get the needed treatment. It can't be up to the crazy person to decide if he or she wants it. Homeless people with drinking and drug use addictions should get the treatment they need. Pass new laws if necessary. If there are not enough homeless shelters or facilities, build some more. Help homeless families find work and affordable housing.

RAIL

The rail project was envisioned as a way to alleviate the traffic congestion plaguing the community. The goal was to build a light rail project that would make it easier for commuters to get from the suburbs of West Oahu and surrounding rural areas to downtown Honolulu.

Construction on the 20-mile route began in 2011 and was planned to be partially usable by 2018 with completion by 2020. However, due to numerous problems including a lack of planning, land issue questions, financial issues, and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) support, the rail project is not expected to be completed until 2025.

The cost of Honolulu's elevated rail line has increased from an initial estimate of \$5.1 billion to more than \$9 billion. The federal government has long since suspended payment of its share of the budget.



Honolulu (Oahu) Rail Construction Creeps Along

Keith Amemiya: Keith believes in maximizing mobility and efficiency. This means a variety of transportation opportunities based on community needs that ensure accessibility and affordability to all regardless of geography, age or economic status. This multi-modal system—rail, buses, cars, bikes, pedestrians—will make life predictable, navigable, and safe for our local families while eliminating our dependence on fossil fuels.

Rail is just one part of this solution, but it is the costliest and most problematic. Years of boasting and bluster and lack of leadership have turned it into an embarrassment for Honolulu. When Keith inherits the project as our next Mayor, he will take full responsibility for it. Keith believes it is important that the Honolulu Authority for Rapid Transportation (HART) ensure completion of the Ala Moana Center phase of rail to ensure the O‘ahu taxpayers won’t be stuck repaying hundreds of millions of dollars to the federal government. As

Mayor, Keith will aggressively call for increased transparency and accountability to avoid further waste and to uphold the public trust.

Rick Blangiardi: I believe in the goals of rail transit, but we need a total reality check on the actual costs to complete the full route. This is not the time for wishful thinking or empty promises, and I will not raise property taxes for the sake of the project. HART must be 100% accountable and stop wasting money.

Jerry: Keith Amemiya seems to have the best plan for Oahu (Honolulu) rail and other transportation needs. I'm not sure why they decided to end the rail line at the Ala Moana Center. I think if they can complete it to downtown Honolulu in the next couple of years without costing taxpayers more money, that would be good.

Social Justice, Systemic Racism, Police Reform and Crime

Rick Blangiardi: Neighborhood safety and First Responders. Our sense of security in our community has changed dramatically, following an alarming rise in neighborhood crime. I will support and fund our first responders: police, firefighters, and ocean safety officers, so they can do their jobs to protect us all.



Honolulu Police Department

Keith Amemiya: When Keith learned of the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the shooting of Jacob Blake, and countless other incidents, he didn't just see them as big problems "over there." He knows there are layers upon layers of structural inequality, injustice, and systemic racism right here. In Hawai'i, this bigotry is often aimed at Pacific Islanders, Hawaiians, Filipinos, and others who face bigotry and who are overrepresented in our prison population and homeless shelters.

Amemiya supports police reform that includes allocating more resources for mental health and substance abuse treatment, shifting funds to support services that pivot at-risk residents away from the criminal.

Jerry: I disagree with Keith Amemiya. I disagree with his systemic racism statements and his plan to shift funds away from the police department to support mental health and substance abuse treatment for criminals. I think U.S. cities should allocate and spend some money on training young people to respect authority and follow police orders.

Honolulu Police Chief Susan Ballard says the police department does not need reform. I agree. I think the police here on Oahu are doing a great job.

Amemiya's police reform plans are why the State of Hawaii Organization of Police Officers (SHOPO) endorsed Rick Blangiardi for Honolulu mayor.



Honolulu Police Chief Susan Ballard

Climate Change or Global Warming

Keith Amemiya: Keith says that addressing the climate crisis is a social issue, a cultural issue, and a moral issue. If we fail to take our stand now, our children and our children's children will be left with disaster. We are long overdue for leaders with the political courage to lead based on science and values instead of just who profits.

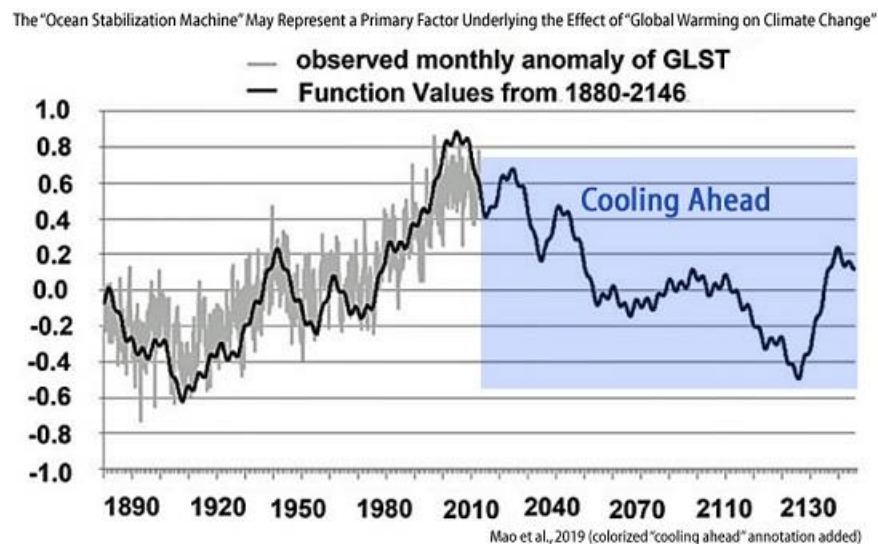
This work begins on Day 1 of an Amemiya Administration. Keith agrees with scientists that the state's goal of 100% clean energy by 2045 is not ambitious enough. Keith will bring all parties together to get a Climate Action Plan into law so that he and future administrations will be held accountable to take bold steps.



Rick Blangiardi: “The very real threat and manifestation of the weather events we are now experiencing are tied directly to climate change and must be treated as one of the most urgent issues our state faces. With eroding coastlines due to sea-level rise and disrupted weather patterns, the Hawai‘i that we know and love must be protected. Furthermore, our tourism-based economy is at great risk if we do not take immediate and concerted action.

I believe we need a “whole-of-government” approach, ensuring that all city departments, agencies, and employees are aligned in our common goal of reducing emissions, encouraging sustainable lifestyles and working together with our business community to transition to greener practices. I will work with scientists, environmental experts, and state and federal officials to make Honolulu the green city that it must become today, tomorrow and for future generations.”

Jerry: I think Keith or Rick will have many more pressing issues to work on rather than worrying about global warming where they can do little or nothing to change it. About all the government and Hawaii citizens can do is to follow clean air laws. The earth has been experiencing global warming and global cooling ever since God created the universe and the earth. Yes, I’m one of those “Climate Change Skeptics!”



In fact, global warming reached its peak in 2010 and we are now heading into a global cooling period. You better buy a warm coat!

RECAP

Rick Blangiardi	Keith Amemiya
Positive: Independent Proven leader Played and Coached Football at UH	Positive: Did a great job leading the Hawaii High School Athletic Association for 12 years. Proven leader
Neutral More conservative	Neutral Democrat – More liberal - Lawyer
Negative Lack of political experience	Negative Views on social justice and police reform

I think the race is about even. Amemiya is an established democrat and has the backing of the state democratic party. Blangiardi is new to Hawaii politics and is an independent. He is a proven businessman and has a large backing along many friends in the state. Honolulu and the island of Oahu will be in good hands with whichever candidate (Rick or Keith) wins the election.

References for Rick Blangiardi's and Keith Amemiya views on the issues:

<https://rickblangiardiformayor.com/issues/>

<https://www.keithamemiya.com/positions/>

VOTE

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