



**Mark Taira**  
**CEO, King's Hawaiian**

Mark Taira grew up learning about the family bakery business that is King's Hawaiian. The son of founder Robert Taira, Mark worked side-by-side with his relatives, doing just about every job there was to do, from decorating cupcakes and cookies as a young boy at the family's original bakery in Hilo, Hawaii to mixing dough, baking, and delivering bread, to managing the production schedule. Today he serves as chief executive officer (CEO) of King's Hawaiian, which includes wholesale bakery operations and retail restaurant/bakery units.

King's Hawaiian stands for Hawaiian values, including hospitality, integrity and a devotion to family. These values and Aloha Spirit are woven fast into the fabric of an organization that has come to span far beyond Hawaii's island shores, and strong family involvement has played an important role in its success. Today, the thriving company employs 14 family members, representing three generations, as well as an extended *ohana* (family) of employees.

Like all members of the Taira clan, Mark has worked to uphold the values that his father embodied, including his uncompromising commitment to quality. He has steered the company according to his father's vision and with his family has achieved over 30 years of continuous success.

While the values he learned from his father have been invaluable to Mark, he supplemented them with coursework, earning a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Southern California. His formal education provided him with the skills to orchestrate the distribution of King's Hawaiian products, constantly evaluating the ever-changing marketplace and making necessary changes in strategies and internal operations to ensure that the needs of customers are met.

In keeping with the spirit of giving that is an essential part of island culture, Mark and King's Hawaiian have made generous contributions of both time and resources to numerous charities, including the Make a Wish Foundation and Go for Broke, an organization which helps to preserve the legacy of Japanese-American veterans of World War II. This year, King's Hawaiian proudly sponsored the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

Along with overseeing King's Hawaiian's complex operations, Mark is leading a new generation of Tairas growing up in the business: his own children and several nieces and nephews. All of them benefit from lessons handed down from Robert, and Mark provides some teachings of his own. To start, he has taught them his own personal motto: "Do your best or don't do it at all."

###