High Praise

This week, I “went back to school” and, while attending class, was warmly thanked by several VIP customers who wanted to tell me about the exceptional service they had received from Outrigger and OHANA Hotels & Resorts. The stories are inspiring and very much worth sharing with our ‘ohana.

My “school” was a two-day course at the University of Colorado’s Leeds School of Business, attended by approximately 125 heads of companies who gathered to brush up on their skills in leadership, particularly in the area of developing future markets.

As I arrived in the classroom, one of the attendees sought me out to say what a wonderful experience he had recently had at the Outrigger Waikiki on the Beach. He spoke in glowing terms of the facilities, but said that what made the biggest impression on him was the hospitality shown by every person he met on property. It was something he said he would never forget.

Not long after that, I listened to retired Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Charles C. Krulak speaking on “Leadership—Battlefield to the Boardroom.” During his highly distinguished, 35-year military career, he did two tours of duty in Vietnam and experienced some of the most difficult combat situations imaginable. He rose to be Commandant of the Marine Corps and led the 225,000 men and woman of the most storied military force in the world. He retired in 1999 and is now the vice chairman of MBNA America Bank, N.A.

Gen. Krulak described gripping battlefield situations he had personally experienced in Vietnam as a platoon leader and later, as a captain. Through these experiences, he defined his vision of character and its vital components—selflessness, moral courage, and integrity. Now in the civilian world, he demands the same qualities of those with whom he works at MBNA. He feels leadership and character have played a vital role in making that company the largest independent credit card issuer in the world and, according to Business Week, the “number one best bank in the S&P 500.” He received a standing ovation.

I introduced myself to Gen. Krulak, and he smiled as he shook my hand saying, “As you probably know, I was stationed in Hawaii for many years and know your company very well. Mildred Courtney! Now, there’s a lady. I cannot say enough about her and all that she and your company have done for the military in Hawaii.” (Mildred is the Military Liaison for Outrigger and OHANA Hotels & Resorts.)

Gen. Krulak also said that he has been a lifelong friend of Bill Henderson, Vice President Business Development for our company, and asked that I give his regards to both Mildred and Bill as soon as possible.

All in all, I finished the day full of ideas, inspiration, and pride, knowing that so many people in our company are doing an absolutely outstanding job of serving our customers. I was particularly pleased to hear Gen. Krulak say that we are making a real difference in the lives of the men and women of our armed services.

Well done, everyone. Keep up the great work. And oh yes . . . Mildred and Bill, Chuck says “hi”!