Hospitality

Going the Extra Mile

I have learned a number of things during my 58 years in the hospitality industry. One is that while many days are routine, if hectic, sometimes we get a memorable opportunity to have a profound and lasting impact on the lives of our guests and fellow employees. One of those opportunities presented itself recently.

It started on Kauai this past May and ended on Oahu in June, but the story really goes back about 74 years to 1931, when a young Navy aviator, Lt. William M. McDade, stationed at Pearl Harbor, married his sweetheart, Ellen Keeney of Fargo, North Dakota, at Honolulu’s St. Andrew’s Cathedral. A son, William C. McDade, was born in 1933, while the couple was stationed in San Diego, and two years later, the family returned to Honolulu and lived on Judd Street. In 1936, then Capt. McDade led a group of 12 PBY seaplanes in a 24-hour, non-stop flight from San Diego to Pearl Harbor, a daring “first” at the time.

Young Bill McDade fell in love with Hawaii, and when I met him at Stanford University in the early 1950s, we had a lot to talk about. After he graduated from medical school and established an orthopedic practice, we kept in touch. Bill liked to return to Hawaii for vacations and was one of the original investors in the Kiahuna Plantation condominium project at Poipu, Kauai.

This past May, Bill was staying at Kiahuna Plantation with his wife Carol and other family members, when they were all involved in a terrible automobile accident. Carol was severely injured and, after stabilization at Kauai Veterans Memorial Hospital, was transferred to Queen’s Medical Center in Honolulu for further treatment.

During that time, members of our ‘ohana at the Kiahuna Plantation, Outrigger Waikiki, OHANA East, and OHANA Waikiki West went out of their way to help the McDades cope with their situation until June 3, when Carol had recovered enough for the family to return home to San Diego.

Recently, Bill wrote me to express his appreciation and say thanks to our ‘ohana for all the courtesies extended to him and his family. His letter, reprinted below, is heartfelt and inspiring. I want to add my own thanks and congratulations to all those who worked together to assist the McDades. It was, indeed, a moment when we had an opportunity to meaningfully impact lives, and everyone involved truly rose to the occasion. It is a great story, and I am pleased to be able to share it with the readers of Saturday Briefing.

I spoke with Carol on the telephone the other day. She is still somewhat weak but making steady progress, and she was able to have dinner at a restaurant this week, her first outing since the accident. The entire McDade family is looking forward to returning to the Kiahuna Plantation before too long. We’re looking forward to having them back, fully recovered from their ordeal.

Dear Rich:

I cannot thank you personally, all of the personnel in the Executive Offices
and the personnel at the OHANA East, OHANA Waikiki West, and Outrigger Waikiki enough for all playing such a large part in assisting us with our accommodations while we were in Honolulu during a very stressful time.

On Kauai, Mr. Ron Morin of the Outrigger Kiahuna Plantation and his staff were extremely helpful in getting our children moved out of their condominium and actually assisted in moving our bags out of our own condominium. They helped to keep everybody organized so that our family could make a quick trip as soon as possible to Honolulu, where Carol was hospitalized at Queen’s Medical Center after she was air evacuated from Kauai Veterans Memorial Hospital.

In Honolulu, we had our entire family coming and going from the mainland to be present for Carol’s support. It turned out that they were needed and appreciated so much, and you made it so much easier for all of us to have wonderful hotel rooms where we could place our tired heads at night. I think the fact that I had such a nice environment to return to at night and during the day and to simply get my mind off the everyday events really helped to keep my head above water as I went through the initial difficult weeks with Carol’s injury and recovery.

After we moved from the Outrigger Waikiki to the OHANA Waikiki West, our housekeeper, Janelle [Chong], discovered my wife’s diamond pendant, which had been mistakenly left in the room safe. It was a very special piece of jewelry that I had given my wife some 25 years ago, and it had great sentimental value. The pendant was safely returned to me and is now back in Carol’s possession. This touching episode of honesty was so much appreciated by Carol and our entire family.

The personnel at the front desks of every Outrigger or OHANA hotel we stayed in seemed to know about what had happened to Carol and our family. They were all so helpful, not only in their thoughtful and sensitive comments, but in assisting us with sending and receiving faxes and other forms of correspondence that were required during this difficult time. Marie Casciato, Candace Reinhardt, Perry Sorenson, Chuck Kelley, and so many others from Kauai to Honolulu all played such a big part in making a difficult time easier.

Carol is recovering nicely here in San Diego. She is able to take short walks and do a little gardening. Her activities are increasing very day.

Aloha and Mahalo,
Bill McDade