

“It’s a Journey, Not a Destination”

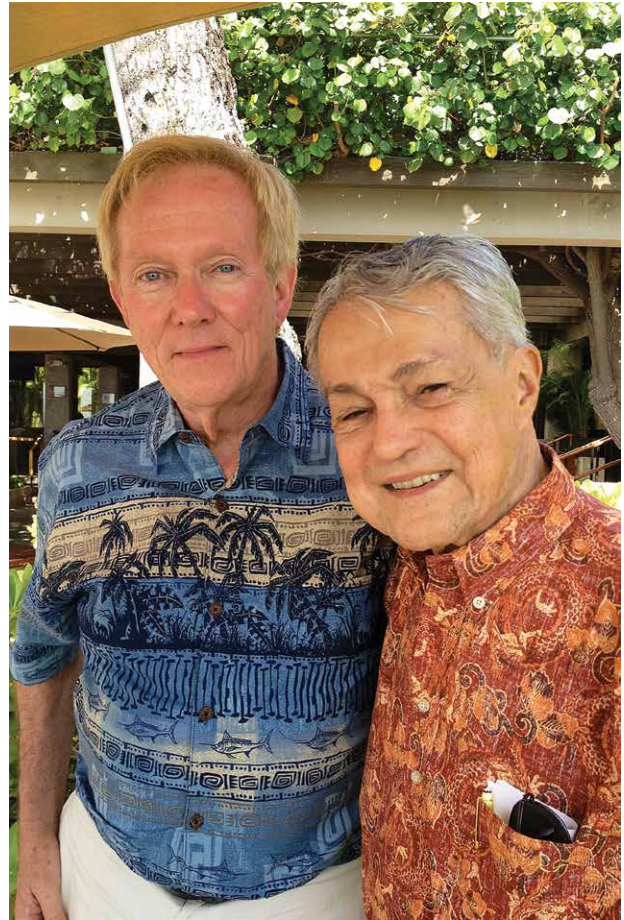
John Henry Felix '49

Despite a long list of lifetime achievements, Menlo College alumnus and Hawaii elder statesman John Henry Felix, '49, easily identifies the proudest moment in his life: when he became an Eagle Scout at age 14.

Through service in the Boy Scouts, Felix learned the inexplicable value of giving—and the joy of making a difference in the lives of others has remained with him as a lifelong passion. Felix’s record of global volunteerism and volunteer leadership is too lengthy to list, but among those of which he is most proud are his lifelong relationships with the Red Cross and the March of Dimes, his association with the founding of Hawaii Public Radio and, especially, his role as the head of the National Eagle Scout Association for Hawaii. And we could not forget his service to Menlo College as a former, valuable member of the Board of Trustees! His extraordinary contributions have been recognized through awards such as the International Red Cross Medal of Honor and the National March of Dimes Lifetime Achievement Award, among many others.

Felix has been just as ambitious in Hawaii’s local business and politics. His twenty-three-page CV details an astonishing array of past positions, including executive vice president and COO for the Hotel Operating Co. of Hawaii (now Outrigger Hotels); chief of staff for Hawaii’s first state governor, William Quinn; and owner of twelve restaurants. He also served as a Honolulu city councilman between 1987 and 2001, during which he introduced the state’s first smoking ban. Felix has also been CEO and president of Hawaii’s second largest health insurance provider, Hawaii Medical Assurance Association (HMAA), since 2006, providing affordable coverage for more than 42,000 employees at more than 3,450 small and medium-sized businesses in Hawaii.

John Henry Felix has been a generous donor to Menlo College for many, many years. He annually sponsors a beautiful “Hawaii Send-off” event in Honolulu for new freshmen coming from the islands, and, in 2010, made a three year commitment to sponsor a member of the Menlo faculty for a week of study each of the three summers at the University of Oxford’s Harris Manchester College. Felix earned his last master’s degree at Harris Manchester in 2005, and makes four trips per year to serve as their volunteer vice president of development. “Education has been continuing for me. It never stops,” he says. “It’s a journey, not a destination.”



President James J. Kelly and John Henry Felix '49 enjoy the Hawaiian sun at a recent gathering of Menlo alumni in Hawaii.

My Menlo College Reflections

When I first encountered Menlo’s bucolic campus I was a wide-eyed 16-year-old in an all-male, all-white student body, attending classes and participating in sports with a goodly number of very mature returning Veterans of WWII. Things have changed with the passing of time. Menlo is now coed and has a more diverse student body, ethnically and geographically, – all changes for the better. Certain things remain the same, however, the safe, park-like campus, and the caring, nurturing faculty, who work tirelessly to help every student reach their full potential. A Menlo education comes as close as possible to an Oxford tutorial and it prepared me well for my lifelong journey in business, community causes, public service, the U.S. military, education and diplomacy. I shall be forever grateful for this priceless gift. Thank you, Menlo College, for making it possible for me to lead a full and meaningful life. ~John Henry Felix '49