



# County of San Mateo

## Inter-Departmental Correspondence

---

**Department:** BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
**DISTRICT 5**  
**File #:** 22-605

Board Meeting Date: 8/2/2022

---

**Special Notice / Hearing:** None  
**Vote Required:** Majority

**To:** Honorable Board of Supervisors  
**From:** Supervisor David J. Canepa, District 5  
**Subject:** Appointment to the Arts Commission

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Recommendation for the appointment of Hiram Reno Anoa'i to the San Mateo County Arts Commission, representing District 5, for an initial partial term ending December 31, 2022.

### **BACKGROUND:**

The Arts Commission was created to promote and encourage the arts, to serve in an advisory capacity to the Board of Supervisors, to prepare and update the County's strategic and cultural plan, and act as a liaison with arts organizations in order to ensure collaboration and coordination related to culture and art activities in San Mateo County.

### **DISCUSSION:**

Hiram Reno Anoa'i is being recommended to serve on a seat representing District 5, formerly held by Manufou Liaiga-Anoai. Approval of this appointment would be for an existing partial term ending December 31, 2022.

Hiram Ali'ioaiga-Reno Anoa'i, warmly embraced as "Reno" by family and friends, is a proud Daly City native and second generation Samoan-American. He is a son of two humble community servants, and a sibling to six, two of whom are now his angels. A proud product of both public and private education, Reno is an alumni of the South San Francisco Unified School District, and Serra High School in San Mateo. He earned his Associates of Arts degree in Communications with a Certificate in Critical Pacific Island Studies from the College of San Mateo in 2018 where he graduated with honors as a second-generation member of PTK - Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society, while also serving as the President of the Pacific Islander Learning Community, the Mana Program. He furthered his education at the University of Hawai'i Manoa, attaining a Bachelor's in Critical Pacific Island Studies with a minor in Samoan Language. Reno also participated in the school's multi-cultural club, the Pacific Islander Christian Club called Hui Poly, and was an officer for the Samoan Arts and Cultural Club called Fealofani O Samoa. During his 2 years at UH, he, along with 5 other students from the

diaspora, realized that as Pacific Islander students, they weren't getting the support that they needed from the University and from their community, so they founded a Pacific Islander Learning Community called Fale Manoa, geared toward improving retention rates, supporting PI students by offering financial aid workshops, scholarship writing workshops, housing support and connections to local food banks.

Reno is currently a professional touring musician under Mana Entertainment, which is a non-profit that aims to develop and support upcoming artists from marginalized communities. His last two hit records have hit #1 on the iTunes charts and currently spins on the radio throughout the Pacific. He also has been a coordinator for Pacific Islander Community Partnership, founded in 2009 which is a non-profit that serves as a conduit for Pacific Islanders in advocacy, education and empowerment. His most recent project as coordinator was organizing and hosting the annual Polynesian Heritage Awards.

Since the age of 15, Reno was able to merge his passion for arts and culture by serving as the music director at Camp Unity, a free Pacific Islander Summer Enrichment program that provides a quality and viable option for low-income families in the San Francisco Bay Area. Through this program, Reno has taught 8,000+ youth cultural language, performing arts, vocal and instrumental music and history.

In 2015, Reno was afforded the rare opportunity to become a finalist on the nationally televised show, American Idol. It was through this experience that he realized the importance of having access to programs that intentionally teach and prepare youth for the stage. When being told several by times by the producers and fellow contestants from around the world that they were unaware of who Samoans were, he was also strongly encouraged to share his culture, and eager to learn the cultures of others in hopes that they could find commonalities in who they are and what they come from.

While on tour, Reno remains heavily invested in the Bay Area youth, specifically in the area of arts and culture. This past semester he was contracted by North San Mateo County's YEEE! (Youth Empowerment, Entrepreneurship & Employment) as a guest local artist to support in teaching high school interns the art of song-writing, song production, studio recording, recording music videos and marketing the release of a single. He was also contracted by the San Francisco Unified School District's Native Hawaiian Pacific Islander program as a tutor and cultural teacher, where he worked directly with students from grades 2-12, to support their academic goals and cultural awareness as Pacific Islanders in America.

While Reno Anoa'i is more commonly known as a singer/songwriter, his heart's work is rooted in social justice advocacy. Like his parents, he was welcomed into the public service arena at the young age of 8, where he vividly remembers creating signage for the protest against the nation of Chile to free the island nation of Rapa Nui. Reno likes to say it was from this moment that he knew his culture and his passion for arts was his breath of life, keeping him grounded and pushing him forward. His main goal is to "inspire others to pursue and fight for their dreams, while reminding and encouraging one another to lift as we climb. For in life, our greatest honor is to serve our community."

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

None.