

Hawai'i Democratic congressman Mark Takai dies

By Cathy Bussewitz

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Representative Mark Takai, a first-term Democrat from Hawai'i, has passed after battling cancer.

Takai, 49, died at home surrounded by his family. The cause of death was pancreatic cancer, said Rod Tanonaka, Takai's chief of staff.

Born on Oahu, Takai served in the state House of Representatives for 20 years before he was elected to congress, first winning his statehouse seat at age 27. He served as a longtime lieutenant colonel in the Hawai'i Army National Guard for more than a decade and was deployed to the Middle East as part of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In congress, he sat on the Armed Services and Natural Resources committees.

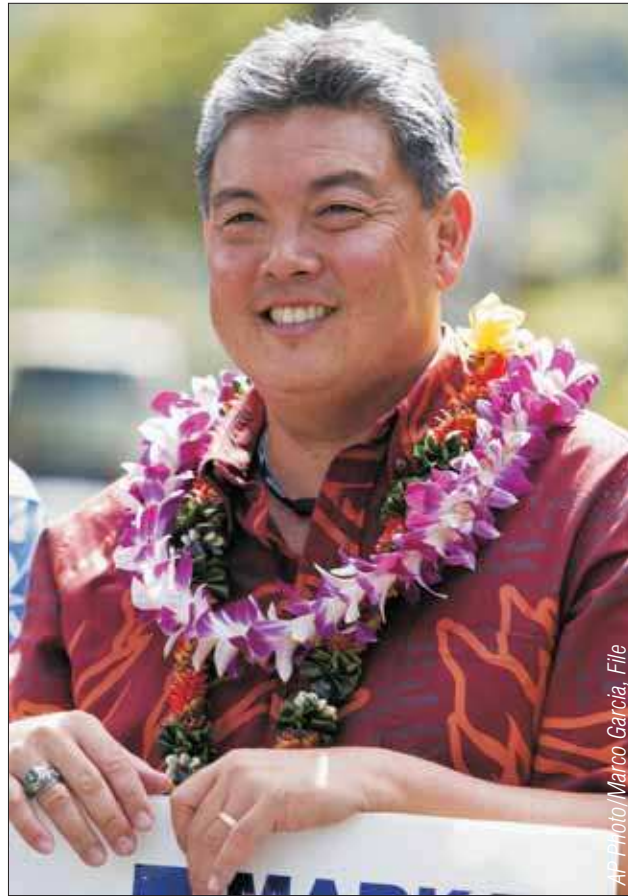
"Mark humbly and effectively served the people of his state House and Congressional districts," Hawai'i governor David Ige said in a statement. "In the often tumultuous world of politics, he has been a shining example of what it means to be a public servant."

Takai was first diagnosed with cancer in October and initially expressed optimism that he would recover. But in May he announced he would not seek re-election after he learned the cancer had spread.

Takai's passing was mourned among his colleagues in Hawai'i and Washington, with politicians recalling his gentle, kind nature.

"All of us were moved when he announced his cancer to Vice President Biden and the members at the House Democrats' Issues Conference earlier this year," said Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, in a statement. "Mark confronted his diagnosis with the spirit we all hope we would share when facing such an awful disease. As we mourn the loss of our friend, we draw fresh resolve to find cures."

U.S. representative Tulsi Gabbard, who served with Takai in congress, the Hawai'i Army National Guard, and the state legislature, said Takai had "a servant's heart,



AP Photo/Marco Garcia, File

full of aloha."

"No matter where he was, he always kept his service to Hawai'i's people at the forefront of his actions," Gabbard said. "Mark's smiling face and ready laugh will truly be missed, but the impact that he made through his life of service to the people of Hawai'i will always be remembered."

Hawai'i superintendent of schools Kathryn Matayoshi remembered Takai as a staunch advocate for public schools who pushed tirelessly for education funding and resources.



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais, File

POLITICIAN'S PASSING. House speaker John Boehner of Ohio (right photo, far right) administers the oath to representative Mark Takai (right photo, second from left), during a ceremonial re-enactment swearing-in ceremony on January 6, 2015, in the Rayburn Room on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. With them are Takai's wife Sami and their two children, Matthew and Kaila.

Takai is survived by his wife, Sami, and two children, Matthew and Kaila. "The Takai family thanks the people of Hawai'i for their support during this difficult time," said a release by his office. His family requested privacy.

"This is the deepest of losses and one that I feel very personally because of my friendship with Mark," said U.S. senator Brian Schatz (D-Hawai'i). "Throughout his life, he was all about serving the people of Hawai'i. He gave so much, and had so much more yet to give."

Ige's office was researching next steps to determine how a replacement would be named, spokeswoman Jodi Leong said.

The Hawai'i Office of Elections will likely hold an election in November for a replacement to serve the remainder of Takai's term, which would have ended in January, said spokeswoman Nedielyn Bueno.

Bussewitz reported from Honolulu. AP writer Andrew Taylor in Washington contributed to this report.

Father of fallen Muslim soldier blasts Trump at convention

By Bradley Klapper

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The father of a Muslim-American soldier killed in Iraq recently posed a question to Donald Trump: Have you even read the constitution?

To rapturous cheers, Pakistan-born Khizr Khan fiercely attacked the billionaire businessman at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, saying that if it was up to Trump, his son never would have been American or served in the military.

Khan said Hillary Clinton, by contrast, "called my son the best of America."

The address was the latest effort by Democrats to highlight their diversity and criticize Trump's most contentious plans. Beyond his proposed wall across Mexico, the billionaire businessman has threatened to ban Muslims from entering the United States if he becomes president.

Capt. Humayun Khan died in 2004 when a car loaded with explosives blew up at his compound. He was 27 years old.

Honoring his son, Khizr Khan pulled a copy of the constitution out of his suit pocket and offered to lend it to Trump.

"Look for the words 'liberty' and 'equal protection of law,'" he said while standing next to his wife, waving the paperback document vigorously.

"Have you ever been to Arlington cemetery?" he then asked. "Go look at the graves of brave Americans who died defending United States of America. You will see all faiths, genders, and ethnicities. You have sacrificed nothing."

Khan, who moved to the U.S. in 1980, said he and his wife were "patriotic American Muslims with undivided loyalty to our country."

"Like many immigrants, we came to this country emptyhanded," he said, believing that with hard work he could raise his three sons "in a nation where they were free to be themselves and follow their dreams."

Trump, Khan argued, was imperiling that ideal with his smears of Muslims, women, judges, and other groups.

He urged Muslims, immigrants, and all patriots to "not take this election lightly."

"Vote for the healer," Khan said, "not the divider."

Khizr Khan, the father of fallen U.S. Army Capt. Humayun S. M. Khan, holds up a copy of the constitution of the United States while his wife listens during the final day of the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia, on July 28, 2016. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)





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