



UNIVERSITY OF GUAM
UNIBETSEDÁT GUÅHAN
Board of Regents

Resolution No. 23-11

**RELATIVE TO AWARDING THE HONORARY DEGREE OF MASTER OF MICRONESIAN
TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE TO BASKAS MARK**

WHEREAS, the Board of Regents (BOR) is authorized to confer degrees;

WHEREAS, Baskas Mark is recognized and revered throughout the region as *Rapiniwog*, or grand master navigator, providing and teaching traditional navigation skills to his apprentices throughout the years, promoting the skills, knowledge, abilities, and values uniquely Micronesian and ensuring the continuity of traditional knowledge and a shared cultural seafaring legacy that has endured since the initial peopling of the Micronesian region in 4000 BCE (before the common (or current) era), resulting in the development of the UOG Traditional Navigation Certificate Program, which was made possible through the teaching and talents of Master Navigator Larry Raigetel;

WHEREAS, Baskas Mark has been a traditional navigator for over 40 years and is a 9th generation *Rapiniwog* master traditional navigator from the ancient Micronesian seafaring blood lineage of Haboilol in Polowat, Chuuk, who learned his navigational knowledge and skills through the school of Weriyeng, one of the two remaining ancient schools of traditional navigation;

WHEREAS, over the past four decades, Baskas Mark commanded 22 interregional short and long voyages, sailed over 200 voyages, and taught approximately 110 navigator apprentices in Polowat, Satawal, Lamotrek and Guam, eight (8) of which have gone on to successfully earn the title of Pairourou navigators. These include Ali Haleyalur, Lucio Libao, Sesario Pialug, Larry Raigetel, Joseph Sagileitig, Manny Sikao (dec.), Isaiah Yarroyfan, and Melissa Taitano. To date, there is only nineteen (19) existing Pairourou in Micronesia;

WHEREAS, as a grand master navigator, Markas Mark's skills, knowledge, abilities, character, and collective experience afforded him all rights and responsibilities of the honored title *Tau-Po*, who is solely able to invoke the Pwo2 ceremony, an ancient ritual marking the sanctification of all new *Pairourou* Micronesian traditional navigators. Being only one (1) of six (6) recognized grand master navigators in Micronesia, Baskas Mark has been a leader in guiding the development of Micronesian traditional navigation into the future and his lifelong contribution is both unprecedented and unmatched;

WHEREAS, Baskas Mark has a deeply rooted dedication to community service and is a leader and active member of the Polowatese Community Association of Guam, serving as the organization's President for ten (10) years planning, organizing, and participating in notable traditional navigation cultural activities and events sponsored by the University of Guam and the Guam Preservation Trust to connect island communities throughout the region. This includes organizing the historic voyage of three (3) canoes sailing from Polowat to Guam to commemorate the 12th Annual Festival of Pacific Arts (2016), and a *Hefaijai* ceremony and Pwo ceremony (2022) which are ancient Micronesian rituals never previously made accessible to the general public;

WHEREAS, Baskas Mark's contributions are especially impressive given the challenging life circumstances he overcame with financial poverty, and language and cultural differences. He inspired navigators throughout the region and is respected as an esteemed role model for his exemplary resourcefulness, creativity, determination, and strength of character. Coming from a remote Micronesian low-lying island area, the opportunity to seek higher education is often seen as an unattainable goal. Growing up in Polowat, his family did not have the resources to send him off

island for a better education. With twenty five dollars (\$25.00) in his pocket and a heart full of determination and curiosity, he left Polowat after completing the 10th grade for Weno, Chuuk, graduated from Chuuk Hugh School in 1988, moved to Guam where he worked as a dishwasher at the Sizzler's Steakhouse in Agana from 1988 to 1990 to save enough money to travel to the United States to further his education, and successfully graduated from Cheektowaga Community College in Salem, Oregon with an Associate's Degree in General Education;

WHEREAS, Baskas Mark's unwavering dedication and commitment to the traditional navigation discipline over four (4) decades demonstrates his love for the ancient seafaring practice, the people of his island homes of Polowat and Guam, and the Micronesian region. His contribution to the island community is immeasurable, both as a grand master navigator and as a career bus driver, safely and securely transporting generations of public school children, persons with disabilities, and the *manamko* (revered elders) for over twenty (20) years, embodying the University of Guam's core institutional values of respect, compassion, and community. He is an earnest, soft-spoken, hardworking family-man who values respect over righteousness, compassion over division, and community over self; and

WHEREAS, Baskas Mark's recommendation package has been reviewed by the Honorary Degree Committee; Faculty Senate Standing Committee on Faculty Excellence and Faculty Senate; Deans' Council; Senior Vice President & Provost; UOG President; and the Student Affairs, Scholarship, Alumni Relations, and Honorary Degree Committee, and recommend approval of the Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge honorary degree in traditional practices as *Rapiniwog* (Grand Master Navigator) to the BOR.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the BOR hereby approves to confer the Honorary Degree of Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge in traditional practices as *Rapiniwog* (Grand Master Navigator) upon Baskas Mark; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the BOR, along with the President of UOG, will confer said Honorary Degree at the Fañomnåkan 2023 commencement.

Adopted this 27th day of April, 2023.



Liza J. Provigo, Chairperson

ATTESTED:



Thomas W. Krise, Ph.D., Executive Secretary

Honorary Degree Candidate and Recommender's Information Form

Name of Candidate: Baskas Mark

Title: President Organization: Polowatese Association of Guam

Mailing address: [REDACTED]

Email address: [REDACTED] Contact number(s): [REDACTED]

Honorary Degree Sought for Candidate:

- Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LL.D. (h.c.))
Awarded for outstanding scholarly achievement in law or for exceptional service to the University or the community at large. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
- Doctor of Humane Letters, *honoris causa* (D.H.L. (h.c.))
Awarded for outstanding achievement in the humanities, social sciences, or in the performing arts, of a scholarly or creative nature. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
- Doctor of Business Management, *honoris causa* (D.BM. (h.c.))
Awarded for outstanding achievement in business or for exceptional service to the University or the community at large. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
- Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge
Awarded to an indigenous expert in a field of traditional knowledge. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.
Note: Honorary Degree of Master[s] of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge will be made during Fañomnåkan Commencement exercises effective Fañomnåkan 2010. No more than one (1) such award may be made per year (BOR Resolution 10-16).
- Bachelor of Community Services, *honoris causa* (B.CS (h.c.))
Awarded for exceptional service to the University or the community at large. Shows a high order of significant or lasting achievements or contributions over time or over a lifetime of achievements.

Candidate's Emergency Contact or Next of Kin Information

Name: Larry Raigetel

Mailing address: [REDACTED]

Email address: [REDACTED] Contact number(s): [REDACTED]

Recommender's Information

Per policy, a recommender must be from at least one of the categories below:

- Member of: Current or former UOG Employee
 Current UOG Student or Graduate (alumni) of UOG
 Current or former Board of Regents

Name of Recommender: Melissa Taitano

Email address: [REDACTED] Contact number(s): [REDACTED]

Relationship to the Candidate: Former navigation apprentice and professional associate

Melissa Taitano, PhD
Assistant Professor
Richard Flores Taitano
Micronesian Area Research Center
UOG Station
Mangilao, Guam 96923

November 18, 2022

TO: UOG Board of Regents' Honorary Degree Committee
FROM: Melissa Taitano
RE: Honorary Degree Recommendation for Mr. Baskas Mark

I am honored to submit the following nomination of Mr. Baskas Mark for the honorary degree of Master of Micronesian Traditional Knowledge.

Mr. Mark has been a traditional navigator for over 40 years. He is a 9th generation *Rapiniwog*¹ master traditional navigator from the ancient Micronesian seafaring blood lineage of Haboilol in Polowat, Chuuk, and learned his navigational knowledge and skills through the school of Weriyeng, one of the two remaining ancient schools of traditional navigation. The source of Mr. Mark's knowledge can be traced back to *Mweranbwe* Suda and the more well-known *Murlap* Hipour, who first reopened the sea lane between the central Caroline islands and the Marianas, documented in Dr. David Lewis's 1972 publication *We, the Navigators, The Ancient Art of Landfinding in the Pacific*. Mr. Mark has been a resident of Guam for over 30 years.

Over the past four decades, Mr. Mark has commanded 22 interregional short and long voyages, sailed over 200 voyages, and taught approximately 110 navigator apprentices in Polowat, Satawal, Lamotrek and Guam, eight (8) of which have gone on to successfully earn the title of *Pairourou* navigators. These include Ali Haleyalur, Lucio Libao, Sesario Pialug, Larry Raigetel, Joseph Sagileitig, Manny Sikao (dec.), Isaiah Yarroyfan and Melissa Taitano. To date, there is only nineteen (19) existing *Pairourou* in Micronesia.

¹ The hierarchy of Micronesian traditional master navigators is as follows (highest to lowest): *Mweranbwe*, *Murlap*, *Rapiniwog*, and *Pairourou*.

Mr. Mark is recognized and revered throughout the region as *Rapiniwog* or grand master navigator. Having taught traditional navigation skills to his apprentices throughout the years, he has promoted the skills, knowledge, abilities, and values uniquely Micronesian and ensured the continuity of traditional knowledge and a shared cultural seafaring legacy that has endured since the initial peopling of the Micronesian region in 4000 BCE. This is his most lasting contribution to the discipline and is evidenced in the development of the UOG Traditional Navigation Certificate Program, which was made possible through the teaching and talents of his apprentice, Master Navigator Larry Raigetel.

As a grand master navigator, his skills, knowledge, abilities, character, and collective experience afford him all rights and responsibilities of the honored title *Tau-Po*, who is solely able to invoke the *Pwo*² ceremony, an ancient ritual marking the sanctification of all new *Pairourou* Micronesian traditional navigators. To date, there are only six (6) recognized grand master navigators in Micronesia. As such, he is a leader in guiding the development of Micronesian traditional navigation into the future and his lifelong contribution, to that end, is both unprecedented and unmatched.

Mr. Mark also has a deeply rooted dedication to community service and is a leader and active member of the Polowatese Community Association of Guam. He has served as the organization's President for ten (10) years. In this capacity, he has planned, organized, and participated in notable traditional navigation cultural activities and events sponsored by the University of Guam and the Guam Preservation Trust to connect island communities throughout the region. This includes organizing the historic voyage of three (3) canoes sailing from Polowat to Guam to commemorate the 12th Annual Festival of Pacific Arts (2016), a *Hefafai* ceremony and *Pwo* ceremony (2022). The *Hefafai* and *Pwo* ceremonies held in August and September of this year, respectively, are ancient Micronesian rituals never previously made accessible to the general public. He was instrumental in successfully planning, organizing, and executing both events.

Mr. Mark's unwavering dedication and commitment to the traditional navigation discipline over four (4) decades demonstrates his love for the ancient seafaring practice, the people of his island homes of Polowat and Guam, and the Micronesian region. His contribution to the island community is immeasurable, both as a grand master navigator and as a career bus driver, safely and securely

² The *Pwo* ceremony is an ancient Micronesian ritual to anoint Micronesian traditional navigators. The anointment of navigators is required to earn all traditional navigator titles, with accompanying rights and responsibilities.

transporting generations of public school children, persons with disabilities, and the *manâmkô*³ for over twenty (20) years. As an apprentice and associate, I can attest, without exaggeration, that through his actions and words, Mr. Mark embodies the University of Guam's core institutional values of respect, compassion, and community⁴. He is an earnest, soft-spoken, hardworking family-man who values respect over righteousness, compassion over division, and community over self.

His contributions are especially impressive given the challenging life circumstances Mr. Mark has had to overcome. For many people of remote Micronesian low-lying islands, the opportunity to seek higher education is often seen as an unattainable goal. Growing up in Polowat, his family did not have the resources to send him off island for a better education. With \$25.00 in his pocket and a heart full of determination and curiosity, he left Polowat after completing the 10th grade for Weno, Chuuk. After graduating from Chuuk High School in 1988, he moved to Guam, where he worked as a dishwasher at the Sizzler's Steakhouse in Agana from 1988 to 1990 to save enough money to travel to the United States to further his education. Tenacious in pursuing this endeavor, he successfully graduated from Cheektowaga Community College in Salem, Oregon with an Associate's Degree in General Education.

His personal story of overcoming extraordinary challenges presented by financial poverty, and language and cultural differences are exemplary of his resourcefulness, creativity, determination, resilience and strength of character. With this hard-earned experience and insight, he has inspired navigators throughout the region and is respected as an esteemed role model.

As the University of Guam continues to better serve the island community and region through efforts outlined in the Para Hulo' Strategic Plan, with the specific goal of becoming a research institution centered on Island Wisdom, consideration of Mr. Mark's nomination would be an invaluable contribution to the University's endeavor and commitment to increasing institutional cultural competency and relevance.

³ CHamoru word used colloquially for "revered elders".

⁴ The values of respect, compassion and community are core institutional values expressed in the UOG Statement of Respect, Compassion and Community, developed by the *Inadahi yan Inagofli'e* Council and subsequently approved in February 2022.

BASKAS MARK

EXPERIENCE

1999 – PRESENT

BUS DRIVER, KLOPPENBURG ENTERPRISES, INC.

Responsible for safely transporting of school children, persons with disabilities, and senior citizens.

1996 – 1999

DECKHAND/CREW MEMBER, KLOPPENBURG ENTERPRISES, INC.

Responsible for loading and unloading supplies, maintaining ship equipment, and assisting with watch-keeping duties.

1996 – 1999

DISHWASHER, SIZZLER'S STEAKHOUSE

Responsible for clearing tables, washing and drying serving dishes, plates and platters, cutlery, and cookware for the restaurant.

EDUCATION

JUNE 1992

ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE, CHEEKTOWAGA COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Salem, Oregon

General Education

JUNE 1988

GRADUATE, CHUUK HIGH SCHOOL

TRADITIONAL SKILLS

As a *Rapiniwog* navigator, I have earned the following titles and developed and mastered relevant skills traditional skills:

- *Senap*, Canoe Carver
- *Wahu*, Sky and Seas Prognosticator and Influencer of Weather and Currents
- *Itang*, Orator
- *Houhafei*, Traditional Healer
- *Houbwang*, Traditional Builder