

# FACULTY LECTURE SERIES

## SHARING OUR WORK AND KNOWLEDGE

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october  
1  
FALL 2014

Hawaii's "Ceded Lands": The  
Ongoing Quest for Justice in  
Hawai'i  
- Williamson B.C. Chang, *Professor of Law*

The "ceded lands" are government and crown lands that were set aside by Kamehameha III during the Mahele. Of the 4 million acres of lands in Hawaii, these lands amounted to 1.84 million acres. After the overthrow, the Provisional Government and the Republic of Hawaii confiscated the crown lands—lands meant for the monarchy—for their governments. When the United States annexed Hawaii in 1898, it took possession of all these lands. During the Territorial period, the United States kept certain lands and "ceded" the remainder to the State of Hawaii. At statehood, those lands were held in trust for five beneficiaries including native Hawaiians.

While Hawaiians may disagree about many issues, they do agree and unite around their responsibility and kuleana for the aina. The loss of the "ceded lands", as a result of United States intervention is a source of continued discontent. Similarly, the loss of Alii lands by the leasehold conversion act, held constitutional by the United States Supreme Court in 1984, remains a major grievance.

Professor Chang will speak about the nature of Hawaiian claims to both the "ceded lands" and Alii lands.

**11:30am - 12:30pm**  
**Hamilton Library, Room 301**  
*Admission Free | Refreshments Provided*



Professor Chang is the longest serving member of the William S. Richardson School of Law faculty. He is a graduate of Princeton and "Boalt Hall" the law school at the University of California at Berkeley. After graduation he clerked for a United States District Court Judge in Hawaii—Dick Yin Wong. He began teaching in 1976. During his career he taught many courses, taught at many law schools and was Senior Fulbright Scholar in Australia. He was a Special Deputy Attorney General representing Chief Justice William S. Richardson in a number of major property rights cases in Hawai'i. He was also a senior legislative counsel to the Senate Select Committee on Indian Affairs in Washington and litigation director of the Native Hawaiian Advisory Council, a non-profit devoted to assisting Hawaiians and farmers with their water rights claims. He is well known for his work in water rights and was secretary to the commission that drafted the State Water

Code. He has taught many courses, including Water Rights, Business Associations, Conflicts of Law, Native Hawaiian Rights and has started a new course on the creation of a Hawaiian Nation: "To Grow a Nation."

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