

# norm HWA

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NORM HWA THOUGHT he might spend his last day as the General Manager of Paramount Hotel Portland with his feet on the desk. It didn't quite pan out like that though. Instead, he was as busy as ever getting everything as tidy as possible for his replacement, Will Hobbs, in addition to preparing for his own next chapter as the new GM of the Maui Coast Hotel.

Before coming to the Paramount in 2006. "I came into this position understanding that the outgoing GM who had opened the hotel was beloved by everybody," he said remembering his first day. "And the staff made sure that I knew that."

Though he knew he had big shoes to fill, he admits, "I was stupidly overconfident. I really had no idea what I was doing," he said. "Murphy and Bashaw took a chance on me." To learn the position, Norm first developed a three-month plan to get his ducks in row. "That turned into six months, and then it turned into a year, and then five years... and even now you know, I leave not completely feeling like I finished my job."

Over the past 17 years Norm said that unequivocally, there's one thing that kept him coming back each day, even during tough times. "It's the people," he said noting that the longevity and loyalty of the staff is truly remarkable. "There's a hotel on every block in Portland and there's a hotel every two blocks out in the suburbs. There's no shortage of hotel jobs, but it truly is the people here that kept me engaged."

Looking to the future, Norm is delighted about his move to Maui. As big of a move as it is professionally, he admits that he was most nervous to have to discuss it with his family. Norm's wife will stay in Portland for one more year so that his older daughter can finish high school. After she graduates, Norm's wife and his younger daughter, who will be starting 8th grade, will join him in Kihei. "My youngest still says she's allergic to sun and sand," he said, but he thinks she'll warm to the idea and is already excited at the prospect of friends coming to visit. Norm is looking forward to downsizing and simplifying his life, as well as leaning into the Aloha spirit.

Norm knows that Maui will be a big change, but he wants the team to know, "I'm a nice guy. I think I'm very fair. I care about people. It's a long-term relationship for me."

Norm's first year in Hawaii has lots in store as the Maui Coast's expansion will wrap up this time next spring. He said it's an honor to be chosen to serve as its first GM.

Looking into the future, 50 years from now and beyond, the stamp he hopes to leave on its legacy is simple: "One thing that I always tell my managers and new hires is that you should always leave something better than you found it. I use the analogy about when you play golf and you fix a divot on the green; you fix one other divot too, so that you always leave things better than you found them. When you're a housekeeper and you clean a room, you leave it better than you found it. When you're an engineer, and you make a repair in one room, you find something else to fix in there and you leave it better than you found it. When I find that building, open and ready to go a year from now, my hope is that when my time comes to leave, that building will be in better shape than we found it."

As he wrapped up his last day in Portland, Norm said there were many emotions, after all, he's been there for such a long time. "I told my wife it's not fair that I have say goodbye to so many people and they only had to say goodbye to one."

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