

From the Pacific Business News:

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## Family-Owned Business Winner: John Mullen & Co.

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John Mullen & Co. Inc., which was founded in 1959 by John and Margaret Mullen, is an independent adjusting firm specializing in claims investigation and adjustment for insurance companies. The company became incorporated in 1963, and now has 85 employees.

“We measure our growth success not by numbers, but instead by the stability of our relationships with our partner clients and our very special employee family,” J. Terry Mullen, the company’s president, told Pacific Business News.

Mullen succeeded his father, John, as president of the firm in 1990.

“Terry Mullen, following in his parents’ footsteps makes sure that the staff at John Mullen & Co. truly feel as though we are a part of the John Mullen & Co. ohana,” Christina Griffith, the company’s claim’s manager, said in her letter in support of the nomination. “From taking time to chat with every employee, to personally addressing and signing birthday cards for every employee, Terry shows he truly cares about his employees as if they are his own family.”

Mullen’s daughter, Sara, joined the company as a director in 2013, and has continued to grow the company culture.

Faced with competition from Mainland companies with different labor costs and taxes, Mullen said striving for excellence in customer service, as well as strong legal and cultural knowledge, are what make the company successful.

“Our mission of kinaole, which means doing the right thing at the right time for the right reason, is done in all we do,” Mullen said. “I believe this philosophy builds strong, longstanding partnerships with our clients, employee longevity and an outstanding reputation in our industry.”

Earlier this year, the Hawaii Small Business Administration named John Mullen & Co. as its Family-Owned Business of the Year.

**What steps will you be taking to grow the business over the next year?** We’re always thinking growth, however, we’re very conscientious about our growth process and methodology. Growth to us means partnering with the right clients who like us, want to keep learning and striving to be the best in their fields, as well as contributors to our community.



TINA YUEN

J. Terry Mullen holds up a baby photo of his daughter, Sara, left, who joined the company as director in 2013.

Our growth steps center around offering our services and expertise to potential and existing clients who share similar values and objectives as we do. We look for partners rather than customers, organizations who collaborate to solve issues, and those who also trust our expertise and accept our guidance.

**What was your biggest business challenge over the last two years? How did you overcome it?** We have been doing business continuously in Hawaii since 1959.

As time passes, with the advent of technology and with our roles as consultants to our clients evolving at the speed of light, and as our long-time employees begin to retire, finding the next generation of professionals was critical to our success. We were very fortunate to have leaders before us who planned for the future. We have invested time and resources in making sure we planted seeds assuring a continuous succession and generations of professionals.

**In what ways does being a family-owned business give you a competitive advantage?** One of the primary advantages is that decisions are made right here at home in Hawaii. We don't answer to share or stockholders or report to a corporatized home office in another part of the world. We work closely with our clients on the ground and arrive at timely, relevant solutions to their matters. We are also a "flat" company as far as the structure of our organization. Our clients have direct access to decision makers and the many professionals who support them.

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## **John Mullen & Co. Inc.**

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