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American Samoa's 124th Flag Day 'Ava Ceremony



On April 16, 2024, the Office of Samoan affairs spearheaded the 'Ava ceremony as a part of the 124th Flag Day celebration for American Samoa at the Su'igaula o le Atuvasa in Utelei. Distinguished guests invited from off island were present to witness and participate in this sacred tradition. Tofā To'oto'o Tauese V. Sunia took the lead, while members of the Office of Samoan Affairs conducted the customary 'Ava ceremony.

The esteemed guests, upon receiving the 'Ava cup during the ceremony, expressed their gratitude briefly in a few Samoan words, despite not being familiar with the language. Dr. Aaron Sala, Executive Director of PACfest conveyed his appreciation for representing both American Samoa and Hawaii, expressing his honor in Hawaiian and by stating, "I am honored to be called a son of Samoa." Honorable Governor Lemanu P.S. Mauga, in his turn, expressed heartfelt thanks to all attendees for accepting the invitation to celebrate with American Samoa. Lt. Governor La'apui E.V. Ale shared about the origin of the 'Ava and the significance of the tradition to the Samoan people. Consul Fata Brian Kaio shared his deep admiration for the American Samoan people and conveyed best wishes from our neighboring Island of Samoa. The ceremony was truly memorable, with each guest participating in one of the cherished Samoan traditions.

Tofā To'oto'o Tauese V. Sunia concluded by emphasizing that the most important value in Samoan culture is "Respect," a principle demonstrated during today's 'Ava Ceremony.

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