Left: Brentwood's incoming Head of School, Dr. Timothy Cottrell, and his wife Hiroko, at the Parents Association's winter-themed benefit in March

GETTING TO KNOW DR. COTTRELL

To our incoming Head of School, a community that lives its values is the ultimate gift to students.

Growing up, Dr. Timothy Cottrell, Brentwood's next head of school, worked in his father's standardbred horse racing stable and on his mother's family farm. Two to three dozen horses, tens of thousands of chickens, and about 1,000 acres were more of a focus than school-work — so much more that the absences and tardies he accumulated in his senior year required a faculty vote to let him receive a diploma.

Needless to say, things changed when he arrived at college, with the work ethic learned on the farm transferred to study. When Dr. Cottrell says that an educational path can be "super nonlinear," he is not sharing an abstract philosophy. He is speaking about experiences that have helped frame a compassionate and empathetic perspective about today's students' highly organized and, at times, over-subscribed lives.

Despite relaxed expectations, the academic lightbulb shone many times in high school, but it became a beacon at Syracuse University, where Dr. Cottrell discovered that learning excited and energized him. It still does. Just ask him what he does for fun, and he may confess that for Dr. Cottrell, education — his own and others' — is his favorite pastime.

Considerable teaching prowess showed up early: he was a natural, and at Princeton, where he earned a master's and PhD in chemical engineering, Dr. Cottrell received the Excellence in Teaching Award three times as well as the university-wide Association of Princeton Graduate Alumni Teaching Award. His first career move, however, was not to a school. Blending interest in education and an entrepreneurial streak, he founded Princeton Teaching Associates Software in 1994, focusing on educational software. From the multimedia *I Ching* to SAT preparation software, he and his team received many industry awards.

The transition to independent schools began with the Lawrenceville School in New Jersey, where he was Chief Communication and Information Officer

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Right: Dr. Cottrell speaking with Sophia S. '29 at the BCIL Innovation Challenge

Opposite page: Dr. Cottrell (with Board of Trustees Vice Chair Laura Dudley) greeting a parent at Brentwood Strong, the Parent University event focused on trauma support after the LA wildfires

and taught science. He split time between Lawrenceville and Silicon Valley, but schools — and students — captured his heart and fed his desire for a mission-driven life. Indeed, the teaching that earned recognition at Princeton would become a lifelong focus — and remains a favorite aspect of his career. In his current role as head of ʻIolani School, he has taught physics, differential equations, leadership, renewable energy systems, and climate change. Once at Brentwood, he'll teach in the Upper School. He can't imagine not teaching.

In recent years, Dr. Cottrell has led two very different schools, demonstrating that principles of good leadership can straddle widely varying goals, populations, and philosophies. For six years, he led the Harley School in Rochester, New York, a progressive pre-K-12 school with about 500 students. It is a nonsectarian school with, among other distinctions, a center for mindfulness and empathy education created as a result of Dr. Cottrell's first Edward E. Ford Foundation Educational Leadership Grant.

For the last 13 years, he has led ʻIolani School in Honolulu, a K-12 school with 2,200 students, grounded in the Episcopal tradition and regularly heralded as the best private school in Hawaiʻi. He helped fortify ʻIolani's reputation as a center of innovation and excellence that nurtures students who are both academically talented and morally grounded. For Dr. Cottrell, community and values go hand in hand with rigor. "Genuinely caring about each other is the essential bond throughout any high-achieving school," he said. "It allows a highly competitive, outward-facing experience to be coupled with a highly supportive and nurturing inward-facing experience."

At ʻIolani, Dr. Cottrell furthered his commitment to independent schools acting in service to their community. His second Educational Leadership Grant from the EE Ford Foundation created ʻAina Informatics Network, an initiative to expand modern genomics education throughout Hawaiʻi. With ʻIolani as the hub from which to teach teachers and deploy laboratory equipment, ʻAina Informatics has become a network of nearly 50 public and independent schools that annually undertake statewide community science experiments and individual student research projects, which have won awards at the world's most prestigious science competitions.

Dr. Cottrell envisions outreach initiatives here at Brentwood, too. "Brentwood's commitment to the VA and many service partnerships is a strong basis from which to create new, outwardly facing programs that make a tangible, positive impact on the LA community," he said.

It is an understatement to say that Dr. Cottrell enjoys his work. His interests include Buddhist psychology, deep-sea fishing, and a love of horses ("I'll be the #1 fan of the equestrian team," he said). But first and foremost, his favorite activity is learning something new. He recently picked up a new programming language to learn bioinformatics (for fun), but learning on the job qualifies as entertainment too, in Dr. Cottrell's world.

There was plenty to learn when he moved to Honolulu from Rochester, and understanding the unique culture of Hawaiʻi and ʻIolani School has been key to his success. The experience enormously influenced this East Coast native and the evolution of his leadership style.

"By and large, leadership on the continent has a tenor of 'prove what you know, and then an organization will show that it cares,' whereas leadership in Hawaiʻi is grounded in 'we will care about what you know, when you show that you care,'" Dr. Cottrell said. This, coupled with Hawaiian values such as aloha and kuleana (accountability for one's actions and the well-being of the community) and an Eastern focus on collectivism and achieving with humility and gratitude, has shaped his core leadership priorities: caring and responsibility toward others, community above self, and the power of teamwork.

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Now he and his wife Hiroko are ready to embrace and gain understanding of Brentwood's culture and its place in LA. They will be watching carefully and listening. "Leadership, "Dr. Cottrell said, "requires self-awareness and the ability to step back, listen, and learn."

Don't be surprised if some of the values and perspectives he's come to live and lead by during his time in Hawaiʻi are openly shared and evangelized. Said Dr. Cottrell: "Community, culture, and how they are expressed by the values with which we treat each other provide the most authentic social and emotional learning a school can offer, and also often the most valuable lifetime gift students take away from their educational experience.

"We hope to share some of what Hawaiʻi has taught me," he added."Goodness knows, our world could use more aloha."

— GAIL FRIEDMAN