



CLASS OF  
1966

## Alifereti Cawanibuka

Nasinu Teachers College

### Qualifications

- Certificate in Teaching - Nasinu Teachers College, 1966
- Bachelor of Arts - Jiwaji University, India, 1975
- Master of Arts - Jiwaji University, India, 1983
- Post Graduate Diploma in Education - University of the South Pacific, 1999
- Master in Education Vacation Course - Pune University, India, 1983

Standing in queue just seconds before boarding the Boeing 707, 15-year-old Alifereti Cawanibuka fought against strong urges to leap and cheer with excitement. And he had all reasons for he had created history for his island home Kadavu. He was the first child to step off the island into the bright lights of Suva, the first to be flying on the first jet having landed in Fiji - a question he had correctly answered in his school exam- and the first to be part of the Fiji contingent of the World Jambo-ree meet in Lansdowne Bridge, NSW, Australia.

This taste of success had been possible due to his determination to excel in life by becoming a young scout. He realized it was essential to adapt to the survival skills while growing up on an island. Life skills learnt during fishing expeditions, normal chores such as carting water daily from nearby creek, collecting firewood, or attending to the family 'tei-tei' (garden) builds self-esteem, instills responsibility and leadership. These are some features which young Alifereti wanted to enhance, thus pushed him to join the Scouts while attending Kadavu Provincial School, Vunisea, Tavuki in Kadavu.

The lean, athletic built Alifereti didn't know that this decision would lead him to becoming the exemplary academic, sports and community leader he has become today. He is currently the Sports Development Advisor at FNU.

For a youngster who vividly reminisces about his first trip abroad, Mr Cawanibuka had made it his ambition to work hard, become a teacher and contribute towards the development of his nation.

**"It was my Scouts Promise which I haven't broken," said Mr Cawanibuka. "On my honour, I promise that I will do my best to do my duty to God and to the Queen, to help other people, and to keep the Scout Law," he recited.**

# FOREVER A SCOUT – UPHOLDING THE HONOUR IN ACADEMIC AND SPORTS

Mr Cawanibuka is the fourth in a family of five siblings and graduated from Nasinu Teachers College in 1966. He still remembers his first ride on a fibre boat with a 5.5 horse power Evinrude engine veering against the current followed by a 25 kilometer walk to Sote Village School in Verata, Tailevu - the first school he was posted at.

However, this strengthened his will towards his service. He undertook Bachelors and Masters Studies in India as a Commonwealth Scholarship Holder and gained promotions from Post Assistant Class 'B' Teacher to a Visiting Lecturer at the Nasinu Teachers College, Education Officer, Acting Senior Education Officer at Curriculum Development Unit, to the Principal of Nasinu Residential College which he served from 1987 to 1991 looking after the Foundation Year Programme at USP. His effort towards improving the education system was widely acknowledged and to achieve much greater, he decided to waiver migration options during the 1980s political instability.

“Migration was impossible because I owed to the nation to return the service. Many of my courses were sponsored by the government and I couldn't betray the people of Fiji,” Mr Cawanibuka said.

He furthered his education by undertaking courses in universities

abroad including UK, West Germany, Australia, Japan and India. Mr Cawanibuka was appointed as the Principal Sports Officer for Ministry of Youth in 1994, however he felt his heart tug towards Fiji College of Advanced Education where he rejoined as its Principal. He joined Fiji Institute of Technology in 2002 as its General Manager Corporate Services, and in 2006 in Academic Services.

Two years later, he became the Dean of Faculty of Humanities, Communication and Creative Arts. In January 2010, he acted as Dean, College of Humanities and Education when Fiji National University was established. In 2011, he was posted to Lautoka Campus as its New Head of School.

His work continued to impress his superiors and in 2012 was appointed Special Assistant to the Vice Chancellor. In 2014, he achieved his homecoming when he was appointed the Sports Development Officer for FNU.

Mr Cawanibuka is not only cherished as an academician but also a multi-talented sports personnel who tends to get his hands dirty by representing Fiji in many facets of sports. With his contributions, he is a representation of Godfather for sports in Fiji.

Mr Cawanibuka's sports career began during his schooling days at Ratu Kadavulevu School where he partook in the first XV team and won the Deans trophy in 1964. Mr Cawanibuka continued his rugby career playing local games.

However, his interest changed when he won the 110m and 400m hurdle events and awarded the best athlete in the All India Inter-University Athletics Championship in 1975. Since then he participated in many athletic events winning medals.

One of his most notable achievements in sporting arena was in 1979 when he was appointed the Organising Secretary for the 6th South Pacific Games. Mr Cawanibuka's coaching career includes that of the national athletics team, volleyball team, and the head coach of Fiji Sevens Rugby team in 2001, where they scooped gold at the first World Cup games in Japan. He also trained and provided assistant coaching tactics to the Fiji Sevens Rugby team at the South Pacific Games in Samoa in 2007 where they won gold.

As wine tastes better with age, Mr Cawanibuka's passion for sports has grown stronger with time. He has contributed immensely to the sports fraternity in Fiji from salvaging the sevens team in dire times to providing technical support.

For the past five years Mr Cawanibuka has been concentrating on developing the Fiji National University 15s and Sevens rugby teams. Ultimately, he dreams of FNU becoming the National Centre for Sports Development featuring the national team's training base.