



Dr. Thomas Kosasa, shown here with a specialized microscope that can image embryos, has been an advocate for maternal health in Hawaii, as well as a pioneer in fertility treatments.

## FERTILITY SPECIALIST, AVIATOR DONATES \$1.2M TO SCHOLARSHIPS

**T**HOMAS KOSASA (MED'69) delivered his first baby while a first-year medical student at Dartmouth. Nine-thousand babies and 46 years later, Dr. Kosasa is giving back to the school through a \$1.2 million gift to scholarships so today's students can pursue the kind of ground-breaking medical career he has enjoyed.

"Dr. Kosasa's generosity in establishing an endowed scholarship fund will benefit medical students for generations to come," says Interim Dean Duane Compton, PhD.

A renowned infertility specialist, Kosasa is also a professor of obstetrics and gynecology and chief of the division of reproductive endocrinology at the John A. Burns School of Medicine at the University of Hawaii. He was born and raised in Hawaii and came to Dartmouth as an undergrad so he could learn how to ski, something his parents deemed "too dangerous." He didn't tell them he also learned how to fly on one of the college's three planes, or that

he started driving racecars; they were already unhappy about his chosen field of architecture.

His grandmother was more liberal and released him from working in the family's pharmacy-and-convenience-store business over summer vacations by sending him to Europe to study art. He'd spend a week in a museum, pick up a handful of postcards, and mail one to her weekly from a Greek island.

Kosasa didn't become an architect, nor did he sign on as a pilot for United or join the family's thriving business—the famous ABC stores of Hawaii. He enrolled in Dartmouth Medical School

***"Driving, flying, and surgery all require skill and precision."***

where, in addition to delivering babies, he played on the Virgin Surgeons volleyball team, which beat 24 fraternities and 26 dorms in the 1968 intramural tournament. He also flew cargo planes at night and drove racecars on weekends.

"Driving, flying, and surgery all require skill and precision," Kosasa explains.

It's with skill, precision, and curiosity that Kosasa has made medical discoveries with far-reaching clinical applications. While still an undergraduate, Kosasa received a National Science Foundation grant through the Department of Chemistry to work in the field of nuclear magnetic resonance. He continued this research in reproductive endocrinology during a fellowship at Harvard Medical School, ultimately unlocking the key to detecting changing blood levels of human chorionic gonadotropin (hCG), which is used to confirm pregnancy and enabled the development of rapid pregnancy tests.

After completing military service, during which he set up an infertility clinic at Fort Benning, Georgia, Kosasa returned to Hawaii, where he has been practicing, teaching, and researching ever since. In Hawaii, he even combined his interests in maternal health and aviation by establishing an ambulance service to fly women in labor from outlying islands to the maternal-fetal intensive care unit at the Kapiolani Medical Center.

Kosasa has devoted his life to helping people have babies and to teaching new doctors. His gift to Geisel honors both the medical school and his family's tradition of giving.

"Philanthropy," he says, "comes from the heart."

DEBORAH LEE LUSKIN