

# Resolution

No. 25-213

## CONGRATULATING KUMU HULA IOLA BALUBAR ON 50 YEARS OF HULA EXCELLENCE

WHEREAS, Iola Balubar found her passion in hula at the tender age of six and learned from her mother's kumu hula and a respected figure in the hula community, Kumu Elizabeth Lum Ho, and later from other hula greats, Aunty Becky Kaopuiki, Kumu Johnny Hokoana, and Kumu Robert Kalani; and

WHEREAS, as a child, she danced at political rallies where her father, Richard Pablo Caldito, Sr., was the first Filipino American Democrat in public office in the United States when elected to the Maui County Board of Supervisors in 1956, and later served on the Maui County Council; and

WHEREAS, while her parents nurtured her love for hula, her mother, Dorothy Leina'ala Lovell Caldito, encouraged her to dance from her heart, for her kūpuna, and for her 'āina; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, to share her gift of storytelling through the beauty and grace of hula, along with encouragement from her husband, Richard Balubar, she opened Iola Balubar Polynesian Dance Studio in her brother's garage, which was later renamed Hālau Hula O Keola-Ali'iokekai in 1982, a name inspired by her sons – Keolaokekai and Keali'i – and by her husband and his family's love for the ocean; and

WHEREAS, Kumu Iola performed at beloved local island venues such as Maui Lu Resort, Intercontinental Hotel, Sheraton Hotel's Discovery Room, and Kaanapali Beach Hotel with the Puka Puka Otea; and

WHEREAS, Aunty Iola, as she is affectionately known by her many students, has spread aloha to communities across the mainland through her performances, including at Disneyland's Tahitian Terrace Restaurant, and internationally in Canada, Japan, and the Philippines; and

WHEREAS, her choreography blends traditional, classic, and contemporary Hawaiian and Polynesian music, incorporating Tahitian, Samoan, and Māori elements; and

WHEREAS, through her steadfast leadership, her award-winning hālau has participated in and earned top honors in numerous competitions in Las Vegas and San Francisco, the Merrie Monarch Festival on Hawai'i Island, and 34 appearances at the Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition on O'ahu, where her hālau captured two Master Keiki Hula titles; and

WHEREAS, Kumu Iola's creativity was honored last spring at the Maui Historical Society's Hale Hō'ike'ike held at the Bailey House Museum where her hālau's dresses and accessories from the past 50 years, which she designed herself, were featured; and

WHEREAS, Hālau Hula O Keola-Ali'iokekai is recognized for introducing keiki and kūpuna to hula and Tahitian dance, with many keiki becoming professional dancers who continue to perpetuate the Hawaiian culture and heritage; and

WHEREAS, at age 79, Kumu Iola continues to share aloha, whether through solo performances or with Gracious Ladies, a St. Anthony Church hula group; and

WHEREAS, generations of dancers, musicians, audiences, and community members honor and celebrate her 50 years of hula excellence; now, therefore,

**BE IT RESOLVED** by the Council of the County of Maui:

1. That it congratulates Kumu Hula Iola Balubar on 50 years of hula excellence;
2. That it expresses deep appreciation for Kumu Iola and all members of her hālau, past and present, for perpetuating the Hawaiian culture through hula; and
3. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to Kumu Hula Iola Balubar and Hālau Hula O Keola-Ali'iokekai; the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i;

**Resolution No. 25-213**

and the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of  
Maui.

paf:25-26Reso:25-318a:mnm

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Alice L. Lee', written over a horizontal line.

ALICE L. LEE