

Resolution

No. 25-102

EXTENDING CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE LATE CIVIC LEADER JONATHAN STARR

WHEREAS, Jonathan Starr, a long-time Maui resident and civic leader, passed away on March 5, 2025; and

WHEREAS, known in Maui County for his service with various State, County, and community boards, commissions, and organizations, Mr. Starr was also a licensed pilot, boat captain, amateur radio operator, beekeeper, woodworker, photographer, amateur historian, and bass player; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Starr was born on March 15, 1951, in New York City to a notable family whose business, Artkraft Strauss, created many of the greatest, most iconic, and dazzling 20th century electric signs in Times Square; and

WHEREAS, after leaving high school, he hitchhiked across the country working as a mechanic and then spent seven years at the Bihar School of Yoga in India, where he took a six-year vow of silence; and

WHEREAS, he then lived in Kenya and explored the backcountry by motorcycle before returning to New York, serving as Chief Operating Officer of the family business; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Starr first visited Maui in the 1960s, moved to Kaupō in 1985, returned to New York in 1988, and then returned to Maui in 1994; and

WHEREAS, he quickly became engaged in community events and public affairs, beginning a 30-year volunteer career in Maui County, including service as:

- Commissioner, Commission on Water Resource Management, State of Hawai‘i;

Resolution No. 25-102

- Chair, District 13, Democratic Party of Hawai‘i, in which capacity he met future President Barack Obama and served as a pledged delegate at two national conventions;
- Member, Kaupō Community Association, where he helped to rebuild the former Kaupō School to be a community resource center;
- Member, Kihei Community Association;
- Board President, Boys & Girls Clubs of Maui;
- Member, Maui Amateur Radio Club;
- Board Member, Wailuku Community Association and Maui Redevelopment Agency, where he promoted the revitalization of Wailuku Town;
- Chairperson, Maui Planning Commission, where he served during its review of the first Maui Island Plan;
- Member, Maui County Council’s Special Committee on County Governance; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Starr is survived by his 43-year companion in adventures and civic duty, his beloved wife, Helen Nielsen; his daughter, sister, nieces, nephews, and cat, Iao; and countless friends upon whose lives he made a lasting impact; and

WHEREAS, a memorial celebration for Mr. Starr will be held in Woodstock, New York, on May 17, 2025; and

WHEREAS, the people of Maui County have benefited greatly from Jonathan Starr’s community dedication, and his life should be honored and remembered; now, therefore,

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

1. That it extends its condolences and deepest sympathy to Jonathan Starr’s family and friends;

Resolution No. 25-102

2. That it appreciates Jonathan Starr's many accomplishments and contributions as a dedicated civic leader; and
3. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to his wife, Helen Nielsen; his daughter, Julie Torres Payne; his sister, Tama Starr; Jason Stenger, Board President, Boys & Girls Clubs of Maui; Kimberly Thayer, Chairperson, Maui Planning Commission; Shay Chan Hodges, Chair, House District 13, Democratic Party of Hawai'i; Dawn N. S. Chang, Chairperson, Commission on Water Resource Management, State of Hawai'i; the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i; and the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui.

INTRODUCED BY:

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Alice L. Lee", written in black ink.

ALICE L. LEE