

# Resolution

No. 24-132

## EXTENDING CONDOLENCES TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE LATE FORMER COUNCIL CHAIR GLADYS COELHO BAISA

WHEREAS, Gladys Coelho Baisa, a former Maui County Councilmember and Chair, passed away on March 11, 2024, at the age of 83; and

WHEREAS, Gladys was a remarkable person who had a profound impact on many lives and organizations in the community; and

WHEREAS Gladys was born on August 13, 1940, in Pā‘ia, Maui, Hawaii, to Thomas and Virginia Coelho, was a third-generation resident of the island, and had one sibling, Virginia Coelho Scheeline; and

WHEREAS, at 16 years old, clearly already destined for fame, Gladys was crowned Miss Maui High, wearing a red sequined gown, white gloves, and hibiscus in her hair; and

WHEREAS, Gladys graduated from Maui High School in 1958, where she was the class valedictorian and a member of the National Honor Society, and

WHEREAS, she went on to earn a Licensed Practical Nurse Certificate from St. Francis School on O‘ahu and an Accounting Certificate from Maui Technical School; and

WHEREAS, Gladys married the love of her life, Sherman Baisa, in 1965, and she eventually became the mother of two sons and one daughter, seven grandchildren, 12 great-grandchildren, and one great-great-grandchild; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, Gladys began a distinguished career at Maui Economic Opportunity, Inc., demonstrating her strong work ethic, management acumen, and compassion, eventually leading her to the top of the organization, serving as MEO’s Executive Director from 1983 to 2005; and

## Resolution No. \_\_\_\_\_

WHEREAS, during her tenure with MEO, Gladys helped establish and oversee some of Maui County's most-cherished and most-needed family and community services, including the Being Empowered and Safe Together (BEST) program to reintegrate former inmates into the community and the MEO Business Development Center Microenterprise program to provide help low-income and disadvantaged residents start businesses, generate jobs, and strengthen the economy; and

WHEREAS, while at MEO, Gladys also mobilized kūpuna to support their own well-being with transportation, health, and other services; and

WHEREAS, Gladys served on the Maui County Council as the Councilmember for the Pukalani-Kula-'Ulupalakua residency area for the maximum limit of five consecutive two-year terms, from 2007 through 2017; and

WHEREAS, during her Maui County Council tenure she chaired the Planning Committee, Land Use Committee, the General Plan Committee, and the Water Resources Committee, led the passage of the Bed and Breakfast Home ordinance, oversaw approval of development entitlements for the new Kihei Police Station, and shepherded adoption of the first Maui Island Plan; and

WHEREAS, she served as Chair of the Maui County Council for the 2013-2015 Council term, during which she initiated projects to promote civic engagement and to unite the four counties in advocating for local governments' authority at the State Capitol; and

WHEREAS, in a *Maui Time* cover story on August 24, 2016, Gladys discussed "the joy" of serving on the Council and reflected on the opportunities to learn and serve that she enjoyed in her decade as a Councilmember; and

WHEREAS, after leaving elective office on January 2, 2017, Gladys went on to serve as the Director of Water Supply and as an Executive Assistant in the Office of the Mayor; and

WHEREAS, Gladys was immortalized in 2018 when she was enshrined at Akakū's "Walk of Heroes," at which time she said:

**Resolution No. 24-132**

I'm honored to be a hero at Akakū. I've always liked to bring people together to focus on a goal. I'm Ms. Fix It! If there's a community problem, I'll find a way to get involved because that's what aloha is all about. If you want to do it well, you must commit your life to the job. My advice to the youth of today is to focus on appreciation. Be kind and do what's right; and

WHEREAS, Gladys served as a beacon of light to Maui County leaders young and old, empowering others to have faith in themselves and what they can accomplish in their communities; and

WHEREAS, as a retiree, Gladys delighted in spending time with Sherman, her husband of 59 years, her many blood relatives and hanai children and grandchildren, and her dear friends, including many she would visit in Mexico; and

WHEREAS, former Council Chair Gladys Coelho Baisa's dedication to public service and tireless efforts to support Maui County helped to improve the lives of our community members for generations to come; now, therefore,

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

1. That it extends its condolences and deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the late former Council Chair Gladys Coelho Baisa; and
2. That certified copies of this Resolution be transmitted to her husband, Sherman Baisa, Sr.; her children, Alfred Baisa, Sherman Baisa, Jr., and Gay Naleieha; the Executive Committee of the Hawai'i State Association of Counties; the Honorable Richard T. Bissen, Jr., Mayor, County of Maui; the Honorable Josh Green, M.D., Governor, State of Hawai'i; the County's delegation to the State Legislature; and the State's delegation to the United States Congress.

INTRODUCED BY:

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

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ALICE L. LEE