

Aloha to all,

9 March 2016



Sonia after finding her new 'ohana.

Sonia Lien Vrooman Kahanamoku is dead. Born 20 September 1935, Sonia passed away on 9 March 2016 at *Bainbridge Island Health & Rehab*, Bainbridge Island, Washington, USA.

Sonia Lien suffered her first years of life from neglect and abuse, as well as bigotry from her birth family. Sonia's mother, likewise abandoned by her Southern racist family and with no support community, was unable to help her baby. From early on, Sonia exhibited all the psychopathology of *attachment disorder*, a condition of which at the time there was little understanding.

Music, and playing the role of entertainer, became for Sonia the art of her survival and the creative lifeblood of coping into adulthood. She continued to play, sing, and entertain those around her as she navigated a four year hitch in the Navy Hospital Corps. She received her honorable discharge DD 214 on 1 August 1958.

On 18 December 1964 Sonia married Stanley Orvis Lien, another step toward healing. Sadly Stanley passed away 18 August 1995. 15 years later Sonia discovered her Hawaiian roots and heritage, making joyful connection with her 'ohana in the Islands, and for the first time visiting the grave of her father, Samuel Alapai Kahanamoku. She wrote her story, with coauthor K. D. Kragen, *From Alone To Aloha: The Sonia Lien Story*, published in 2011 (alohasonia.com).

In the final days of her earthly sojourn, Sonia maintained her cheery self. She saw her last moments "as a new beginning," assuring those around her "all is well with my soul." As a survivor, artist, friend, delightful Hawaiian, Sonia amazed us all with her outlook on life, on death, her Aloha, her shalom. "My cancer, living with cancer is a blessing – a joy!" she once noted. "I appreciate the opportunity to visit with and care for others who visit me in my final days in this life." Right to the end she found ways to care about others, her visitors, her roommate in the bed next to her at the hospice.

A me ke aloha ke aloha ka i 'oi a'e, pomaika'i na mea apau, pomaika'i na mea apau (When there is ALOHA everything is blessed, everything is blessed).*



Sonia at 8 years old.

Cancer doesn't need to translate into fear. For some cancer is trumped by hope. This was Sonia Lien Kahanamoku. *From paradise to Paradise.*

Mahalo for Sonia's life. See her in the next. We thank the God for Sonia's kindness and love.

Aloha kākou.



2010 - Sonia Lien Kahanamoku welcomed home by Earl Maikahikinapamaikala Tenn.



Sonia visited her family island home the summer of 2015 for the last time, attending the 2015 Duke Paoa Kahanamoku Oceanfest Celebration & 125th Anniversary.

**Ekolu Mea Nui* - by Robert J.K. Nawahine