

ASSOCIATION OF HAWAIIAN CIVIC CLUBS

A RESOLUTION

No. 2019 - 5

REMEMBERING THE LIFE OF HELENA KAIMILANI BRAY WOOD

WHEREAS, Helena Kaimilani Bray Wood, affectionately known as Aunty Helena, was born on January 17, 1920, to David Kaonohiokala “Daddy” Bray from Honolulu, O‘ahu and Lydia Maunahina Dusson “Mama” Bray, from Hāna, Maui, she was the youngest of six children; and

WHEREAS, shortly after she was born her mother became ill, and Helena was sent to live with her Uncle Ben Dusson and Aunty Marianne Dusson at their family home in Hāmoa Village, just a few miles south of Hāna, Maui, and what was to be temporary turned into 14 years; and

WHEREAS, she enjoyed her life in Hāmoa, spending her days swimming, catching fish, playing with her cousins, running through the cane fields and helping with the family farm, growing taro, sweet potato and other vegetables; and

WHEREAS, she spoke ‘ōlelo Hawai‘i at home and English in school, and became fluent in both languages growing up, and living what she called a simple life in paradise; and

WHEREAS, in 1934, she was summoned back to Honolulu to join the Bray Troupe which included the entire Bray ‘ohana, who were deeply committed to reviving the Hawaiian way of life with lū‘au, singing, hula, chanting and prayer, and they performed throughout Hawai‘i, aboard cruise ships, and on the mainland; and

WHEREAS, in 1939, she graduated from Saint Andrew’s Priory, worked for the navy and continued to dance with Bray Troupe becoming more involved with the family’s rich Hawaiian heritage and ancient spiritual and priestly traditions and their genuine faith in Hawai‘i’s destiny; and

WHEREAS, World War II was changing life in Hawai‘i, but the Bray Troupe entertained greeting Navy ships at dockside, dancing hula, a great moral booster; and

WHEREAS, it was at a performance at the Navy Officer’s Club in Pearl City that Helena met her future husband Lt. James L Wood; and

WHEREAS, Helena and James are married in 1945, and following James' discharge from the Navy, they settled in San Diego; and

WHEREAS, the war ended and life was good, and Helena becomes a homemaker, mother of two children, Larry and Dianne, and a German shepherd dog named Duke; and

WHEREAS, Helena was very involved in their lives and activities; and

WHEREAS, while her children headed for college, Helena decided she will go back to college and attended San Diego State College along with Larry, and she graduates in 1969, Larry graduates in 1970, and Dianne, two years later; and

WHEREAS, in 1969, she joins the "Hui O Hawai'i of San Diego" which become a very important part of her life; and

WHEREAS, the hui is a non-profit organization founded by a group of Hawaiian musicians eager to share music, fun, food, family and most importantly the perpetuation, preservation and promotion of the Hawai'i culture, its history, language, songs, hula, chants, stories and crafts, for Aunty Helena her life was coming full circle, returning to the tradition of the Bray 'Ohana; and

WHEREAS, in 1981, she was elected President, having served in lesser offices previously, and over the years she participated in many club events and formed many close and precious friendships among the club members, for like herself many were from Hawai'i and for a variety of reasons made their home in San Diego and having children born and raised in San Diego; and

WHEREAS, Aunty Helena was employed by the Point Loma World Travel, and was able to travel all over the world with James, and plan trips for family, friends, and clients; and

WHEREAS, although she loved to travel, she loved coming home and tending her garden which was full of her plantings of orchids, dendrobiums, gardenia and plumeria and other tropical; and

WHEREAS, she won 2nd place for her dendrobium plant entered at the San Diego County Fair, and she was also member of the San Diego Plumeria Society; and

WHEREAS, in 1994 she joined 'Ahahui Kīwila Hawai'i O San Diego, to support the vision of Prince Kūhiō and club efforts to send kamali'i to attend Kamehameha Schools Exploration Program in Honolulu and Nā Pua No'eau program in Hilo; and

WHEREAS, in 2008, Aunty Helena received the Kukui Lama Kū Award representing the Mainland Council of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs at the Annual Association Convention; and

WHEREAS, Aunty Helena continued to carrying on the Bray family traditions to insure that future generations would learn and enjoy the Hawaiian culture, in the spirit of aloha; and

WHEREAS, on May 4, 2019, the Hawaiian Music Hall of Fame honored the Bray ‘Ohana, (David K “Daddy” and Lydia “Mama” Bray) as one of the 2018 class of inductees, representing the Bray ‘ohana in attendance was Aunty Helena’s son Larry and wife Cristie along with other Bray cousins.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, by the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs at its 60th Annual Convention in Lahaina, Maui, in the malama of Welehu and the rising of Lā‘au Pau, this 16th day of November 2019, remembering the life of Helena Kaimilani Bray Wood; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs remember her with a moment of silence; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a certified copy of this resolution be transmitted to Larry Wood, ‘Ahahui Kīwila Hawai‘i O San Diego, and Hui O Hawai‘i of San Diego, as well as the Governor of the State of Hawai‘i, President of the State Senate, Speaker of the State House of Representatives, Chair of the State Senate subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the State House subject matter committee on Hawaiian Affairs, Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Office of Hawaiian Affairs, and all County Mayors.



The undersigned hereby certifies that the foregoing Resolution was duly adopted in the malama of Welehu and the rising of Lā‘au Pau on the 16th day of November 2019, at the 60th Annual Convention of the Association of Hawaiian Civic Clubs in Lahaina, Maui.

Handwritten signature of Hailama V. K. K. Farden in black ink.

Hailama V. K. K. Farden, President