



# HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

## RESOLUTION NUMBER 304

HONORING HAWAIIAN HOME LANDS LESSEE,  
WILLIAM PUNAPAIAALAIKAHALA KENOI

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi was born on November 9, 1968 to Clayton Philip and Nancy Kenoi in Kalapana, Hawaii; and,

WHEREAS, on July 1, 1986, Clayton Philip Kenoi was awarded an agricultural lease at Lot 6, Hawaiian Home Lands, Makuu Farm Lots, situated at Makuu Popoki and Halona, Puna, on Hawaii Island; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi graduated from Waiakea High School and the University of Massachusetts Amherst where he met his wife, Takako; and,

WHEREAS, during his time on the East Coast of the United States, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi interned for Hawaii U.S. Senator Daniel K. Inouye, which resulted in a life-long friendship based on mutual respect and admiration; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi returned to Hawaii and successfully completed his law degree at the University of Hawaii at Manoa William S. Richardson School of Law and after passing his bar exam, served as clerk to Judge Richard K. Perkins of the Eighth Division of the First Circuit; and,

WHEREAS, determined to fight for the many Native Hawaiians over-represented in the judicial system, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi served as a



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deputy public defender in the Appellate, Family Court, Juvenile Criminal and Adult Family Court Divisions; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi became a co-lessee of Lot 6 at Makuu Farm Lots on January 15, 1999 upon the untimely passing of his father, Clayton Philip Kenoi; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi returned to his beloved Hawaii Island in 2001 to work as the Executive Assistant to Mayor (and former high school football coach) Harry Kim, a position he held for the next seven years; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi ran for elected office for the first time and was successful, becoming Mayor of the County of Hawaii in 2008; and,

WHEREAS, the mortgage crisis and ensuing recession forced budget cuts and furloughs for Hawaii County for most of Mayor Kenoi's first term; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi's committed to ensuring Hawaii Island was a place for "safe, healthy communities" full of "beautiful families"; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi utilized Community Development Block Grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development to upgrade all County Parks as accessible under the American with Disabilities Act; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi utilized HOME funds from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development to create workforce housing known as Kamakoa Nui in Waikoloa Village; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi utilized Community Development Block Grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development to construct Na Kahua Hale o Ulu Wini, a 96-unit facility in Kealakehe, Kailua-Kona for affordable rental and transitional shelter; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi utilized American Recovery & Reinvestment Act funding to complete the Ane Keohokalole Highway (often referred to as the new backbone of Kona) that linked Palani Road and Hina Lani Street; and,



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WHEREAS, in 2011 Mayor Kenoi completed construction on the \$50 million West Hawaii Civic Center, an eight-building, LEED-certified County complex that brought county department staffing to West Hawaii constituents; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi utilized \$3.1 million of Community Development Block Grant funding from the U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development to provide a covered play court for the Panaewa Hawaiian Homestead community; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi was re-elected to a second term in 2012 and in 2014, became known as the “Iron Mayor” for completing the grueling Ironman triathlon; and,

WHEREAS, in late 2015 Mayor Kenoi was diagnosed with a rare form of leukemia called myelofibrosis; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi continued to work diligently to serve the families of Hawaii Island through the end of his term in 2016, resulting in more than 20 parks and playing fields being added during his tenure; and,

WHEREAS, Mayor Kenoi’s final park opening as mayor was on December 6, 2016, at the newly renovated Mauna Kea Recreation Area (now known as the Gilbert Kahele Recreation Park), a park the County of Hawaii received from the State’s Department of Land and Natural Resources; and,

WHEREAS, after his term as mayor ended, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi underwent several blood transfusions, bone marrow transplants and aggressive chemotherapy to treat his leukemia at City of Hope in Duarte, California, before returning to his wife and children on Hawaii Island; and,

WHEREAS, despite the success of his aggressive cancer treatment, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoi experienced heart and lung failure but continued to focus on his family, his friends and his community, never turning away anyone who had questions about their own political ambition or requests for advice on shaping public policy; and,



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WHEREAS, just three short months ago William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoï gave an inspirational speech on overcoming crises through opportunity at the Chamber of Commerce Hawaii 170<sup>th</sup> Conference and Virtual Summit; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoï's last public speech was at the inauguration of Hawaii County Mayor Mitch Roth and the County Council in December 2020, stating to all who listened that, "...by chasing perfection, we reach excellence"; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoï's closing remarks at said Hawaii County inauguration was from Joshua 1:9 of the Holy Bible, "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go"; and,

WHEREAS, on January 26, 2021, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoï passed away at his home in Volcano, surrounded by his wife of 25 years, Takako, and their three children: Justin, Liam and Mahina; and,

WHEREAS, William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoï lived his life as a successful example of Prince Jonah Kūhīō Kalanianaʻōle's dream to rehabilitate native Hawaiians; and,

WHEREAS, both William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoï and Prince Jonah Kūhīō Kalanianaʻōle shared the gift of oratory, charisma, intelligence and a deep personal commitment to their Hawaiian people and communities;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the undersigned, duly recognized as the chairman and members of the Hawaiian Homes Commission, on this 16th day of February 2021, do set forth their hand to recognize, honor and memorialize the life of William Punapaiaalaikahala Kenoï; and,

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be transmitted in its entirety to his wife, Takako, and their three children: Justin, Liam, and Mahina; and to his sisters: Patricia K. Chin, Mary K. Kenoï-Okajima, and Rosanne K. Sai.



# HAWAIIAN HOMES COMMISSION

ADOPTED THIS 16th day of February 2021, at Hale Pono, Kapolei, Hawaii, by the Hawaiian Homes Commission in Regular Meeting assembled.

OFFERED BY:

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William J. Aila, Jr., Chairman

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David Kaapu, Member

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Randy Kalei Awo, Member

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Pauline Namuo, Member

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Zachary Helm, Member

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Dennis Neves, Member

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Patty Kahanamoku-Teruya, Member

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Russell Kaupu, Member

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Michael Kaleikini, Member