

From Alone to Aloha – The Sonia Lien Story



The Kahanamoku family were prominent Hawaiians. Duke was an Olympic gold medalist (1912, 1920 & 1924) and Sheriff of Honolulu in 1934, the year before Sonia was born. Younger brother Sam was a famous singer, swimmer and surfer, and an Olympic bronze medalist in 1924.

In 1934, Winifred C. Powell, a naval officer's wife living in southern California, met Duke and Sam at a social gathering in Los Angeles.

A subsequent brief affair between Winifred and Sam Alapai Kahanamoku took place on the cruise ship S.S. Lurline sailing to Hawai'i from Los Angeles on December 7th, 1934. A year later, September 20, Winifred Powell gave birth to a full term baby girl in Long Beach, California. The infant had characteristically dark, Polynesian skin. This is her story.

Surfing the wave of her life, an ordinary person coming out of extraordinary circumstances.

My name is Sonia. Because of old Southern family bigotry I was rejected at birth. I was only four when I became a ward of the court. The state of California placed me in homes and institutions professing to practice religion, but my spirit was broken in the name of God. Yet I never gave up hope that somewhere there had to be a kinder God. I suffered sexual abuse and abandonment and exhibited classic symptoms of attachment disorder and PTSD. By the time I was fifteen I was angry and rebellious. Having lived in foster homes and group homes, I never knew the feeling of belonging to a loving family. I never thought about my Hawaiian roots.



Author Sonia Lien, 8 years old

"In Hawai'i, we greet friends, loved ones or strangers with aloha, which means with love. Aloha is the key word to the universal spirit of real hospitality, which makes Hawai'i renowned as the world's center of understanding and fellowship. Try meeting or leaving people with aloha. You'll be surprised by their reaction. I believe it and it is my creed. Aloha to you."

Duke Paoa Kahanamoku

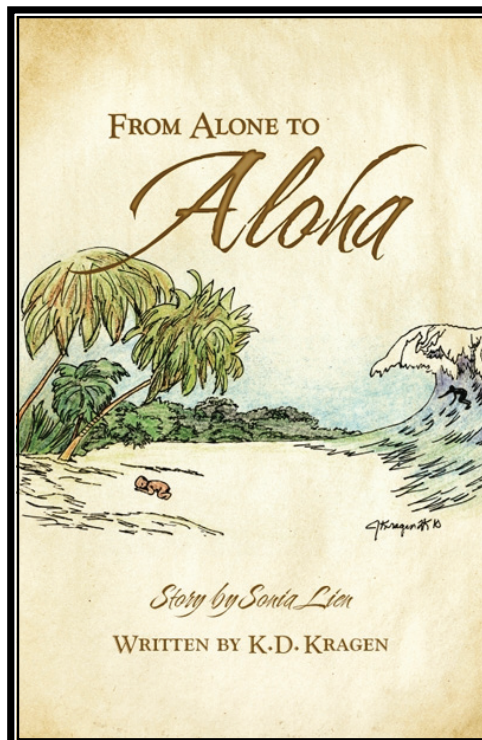
(This message was printed on the back of Duke's personal business card and on the bronze plaque with Duke's statue at Kuhio Beach in Waikiki.)

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I give credence to the strength and character I inherited from my real father from Hawai'i, Sam Kahanamoku. The Aloha that he and his family professed as their creed lived and thrived in me as I struggled in those early years. And it remains today, through the Grace of God. On 24 August 2010 I celebrated my healing and reconciliation in Hawai'i at the 120th birthday anniversary of Duke Paoa Kahanamoku.

From Alone To Aloha is the story of the life of Sonia Lien (1935-), musician, performer, survivor. This story chronicles a journey of hope from the destructiveness of bigotry to the defeat of bigotry.

This story is also a faith journey, from the searching heart of a mystic, broken child to reconciliation with her Creator, from abuse and abandonment to healing and joy, from profound loneliness to profound celebration and reunion with lost family. *Aloha kākou.*



Contact Information



Let me entertain you!

Sonia Lien
Keyboard/Vocalist

Musical memories of the 30's, 40's and 50's

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