

ReI Sunn Educational Fund

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: September 1, 2008

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Rell Sunn-Queen of Makaha to be Memorialized in Bronze Statue

Mission Viejo, Ca, September 1, 2008 - The Rell Sunn Educational Fund announces plans to create a life size bronze statue to realize the vision of The Queen of Makaha, Rell Sunn Throughout Rell's life, she embodied a sense of caring for those around her and a love of the ocean. This continual theme will be manifest in the statue designed by Lynn Liverton. The statue will feature Rell illustrating the famous toes-on-the-nose stance on her surfboard, with a Hawaiian sea turtle swimming underneath the wave. The cost of the statue is: 250K and we hope to have it completed by: 2010 The statue will reside in her beloved home of Hawaii. We will be seeking donations and hosting fundraising events to meet this goal throughout this year and into the next.

If you are not familiar with Rell Sunn's story, Rell was born in Makaha on Oahu in 1950, and was given the Hawaiian name, *Ka-polioka'ehukai*, meaning *Heart of the Sea*. During her life, Sunn was a pioneer in women's competitive surfing and water sports. She became Hawaii's first female lifeguard on the West Side of Oahu, an original member of the first women's professional surfing tour, one of the founders of the Women's Professional Surfing Tour, and founded the West Side Wahine Surfing Association in Hawaii.



Rell cared very much for those in her community, as remembered in how she would assist those in need by finding surfboards as well as guiding many young Hawaiians from troubled childhoods into promising careers in surfing through her yearly Menehune Surf Contest. Without her energy and compassion, many of the top Hawaiian professionals, from Kalani Rob, Bethany Hamilton, Carrisa Moore and Sunny Garcia, probably would not realize their dreams in becoming a sponsored surfer. This compassion is also evident in the historic "Rell's Motel"; her quaint home just one minute from Makaha, that was a sanctuary for wayward visitors. It was her mission for people to leave with more direction than they came.

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ReI was diagnosed with breast cancer in 1983, at that time her prognosis of live was estimate for only one year. She beat the odds everyday and Sunn continued to surf after her diagnosis, despite the pain and chemotherapy associated with the disease. Following her diagnosis, Sunn became a radio disc jockey and surf reporter, a physical therapist at a Waianae care home, and a counselor at a cancer research center.

She helped pilot a program for breast cancer awareness at the Wai'anae Comprehensive Health Center that involved educating local women about the causes and prevention of breast cancer. Sunn died on January 2, 1998 and over 3,000 people attended her memorial service, where her ashes were scattered in the ocean off Makaha.

ReI continues to touch lives with the traditional Children's Menehune Surf Contest, going strong for 33 years!. This contest assists in raising funds for various environmental, family and children's programs and now boasts multiple locations all over the world. She has inspired many with her giving spirit to the people of Hawaii and to where ever she traveled. ReI also has the respect of fellow surfers and waterman for sharing her skills and spirit of aloha in and out of the water.

Toward the end of her life, many people agreed that a life size bronze statue of her riding the waves should be created in the hopes of inspire others by her giving spirit. Unfortunately this dream has not come to fruition and needs your help to make the dream a reality. At this time the ReI Sunn Education Foundation and ReI's family is seeking assistance to realize this goal. Stay tuned for future events to raise funds and awareness throughout 2009. If you would like to help or seek more information please free to visit the website at: www.relsunn.com

Testimonial:

ReI Sunn, was beyond being a great surfer. Like Duke before her, she informally became an emissary for Hawaii wherever she went. Graceful in all ways human: attractive, feminine, athletic and vibrant, people were as naturally attracted to her as they are to the Islands. Everyone that came into her presence felt blessed by her true interest. She transmitted that focus so naturally and comfortably that it became a subconscious gift she left with you.

ReI was at home in the ocean in all ways, skimming over its surface on various traditional craft or swimming in the depths beneath the reflective boundary of sea/air, riding waves or harvesting its fruits, reading its moods, being comforted by her intimacy with its many rhythms. She was both a student and teacher, of all that and to all around her.

Her life represented the art of compassionate human existence. Aloha personified. She was so special. An honorary statue of ReI celebrates the love she gave to all of us; a female to balance the Chi of Duke's gentle aura.

***Sincerely,
Steve Pezman
The Surfer's Journal***

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