



DANIEL K. INOUYE
INSTITUTE

April 8, 2020

Dear Friends,

With a heavy heart, I share with you the very sad news that Irene Hirano Inouye passed away peacefully and surrounded by her family in Los Angeles on Tuesday, April 7th.



Irene was an accomplished, professional, talented business woman who led the Japanese American National Museum for 21 years, and then founded and built the U.S.-Japan Council into the premier organization it is today, known for fostering good will and friendship between the peoples of America and Japan. She was a national leader in both the philanthropic and museum sectors.

But the Irene we knew and came to adore was the woman who brought so much joy to our former boss, Senator Dan Inouye. They wed in May, 2008 and lived happily, enriching each other's lives until his passing in December, 2012. Without question, Irene infused a special richness and fun, extending his lifetime with happiness in his autumn years.

With his passing, it was Irene's commitment to ensure that Dan Inouye's legacy lived on internationally, nationally, and of course in Hawaii which spurred on the establishment of the Daniel K Inouye Institute, a program fund of the Hawaii Community Foundation. She was tireless in her efforts. So much of what we accomplished, we did together through the generosity, warm hearts and helping hands of former staff, family, friends, colleagues and supporters.

A most definite highlight was the christening of the navy destroyer DDG 118, Daniel K. Inouye, in June, 2019. A 75-foot ti-leaf lei for the vessel and flowers for all – we left an indelible impression in Bath, Maine.

Irene's last visit to Hawaii was in December to dedicate the Daniel K. Inouye School of Pharmacy at the University of Hawaii at Hilo, and then to Maui to meet the artist who would paint Senator's portrait, as a former President Pro Tempore, to be hung in the U.S. Capitol. She was determined to complete these tasks before returning to Los Angeles.



**At the Daniel K. Inouye
Kilauea Point Lighthouse**

DANIEL K. INOUYE INSTITUTE FUND

Hawai'i Community Foundation • 827 Fort Street Mall • Honolulu, Hawai'i 96813 • 808.537.6333

www.danielkinouyeinstitute.org



Senator and Irene with Inouye staff members

It makes me even sadder to know that we cannot gather to console one another, or toast her amazing life in the near term. For now, please join me in saying a short prayer for our beloved Irene until that future time when we can celebrate together.

A Hui Hou and God Bless.

Jennifer Sabas
Director