



Contributed by Dani Hakoda Emoto:

After graduating from Kaimuki, I attended the University of Hawaii at Manoa and earned a BA in elementary education. I taught preschool for two years and loved working with this age group. However, fate brought me to my true love: medical care. After the birth of my first son, I was a stay-at-home mom until a relative told me about a front-office position at the medical clinic where she worked, and suggested I apply for it because it was a great place to work. I got the position and found that I loved working with patients. The doctors at the clinic taught me to do medical procedures and I eventually moved from front-office tasks to patient-care duties. I started out taking blood pressures and learned to do more complex procedures such as EKGs, treadmill stress tests and echocardiograms. I worked as an EKG technician/ medical assistant for over 25 years. In 2002, I changed specialties and I now work with two rheumatologists and an infectious disease specialist. I am very thankful to my bosses and my patients. They make going to work so rewarding and enjoyable!

I was married to Royden Emoto (Class of KHS 1967) until his passing in 2002. My two sons have been my rock. They were very supportive and helpful throughout Royden's lengthy illness, as well as during my dad's illness and eventual passing. You never really appreciate life and the simple things we do every day, until you see a loved one suffering and slowly deteriorating. The lessons learned while caring for Royden and my dad have given me more passion to help others and impressed upon me to never take the little things for granted. Always remember to tell family and friends how special they are and how much they are loved. Life is short and we need to live every day to the fullest.

I lived in Bellevue, Washington for four years and worked at a cardiology clinic. I was lucky to work for some very wonderful doctors and met many great patients. There were

several patients from Hawaii and even more patients who vacationed in Hawaii every year. They would tell me how much they loved my “home” and would even bring back omiyage for me! They were so special! We had patients of many ethnicities and I learned to say “good morning,” “goodbye” and a few other phrases in Russian, Chinese, Spanish, Korean and Japanese. Oh, and of course there was also “Aloha” and “Mahalo!” Just a few words in patients’ native languages when they weren’t feeling well would help to bring a smile to their faces.

I got to experience snow for the first time in my life while living in Washington and made a snowman and snow angel. I also wore boots, gloves, a long coat and a scarf for the first time. My friends and I would drive north to visit farms and buy fresh fruits and vegetables. I saw fields of tulips of different colors that looked like a painting. I rode the ferry to different islands and, over the years, saw wonderful scenery, ate awesome food, attended flower festivals and a mochitsuki festival and, of course, visited Indian casinos. I even attended a UH football game in the stadium where the Seattle Seahawks play. We won, of course! I didn't feel homesick until I attended a Na Leo concert and heard them sing about rainbows while showing a video about Hawaii. Although I loved living in Washington, I discovered the home in my heart. LUCKY WE LIVE HAWAII is such a true statement! There is still no place like HOME!

As far as hobbies and interests, I love to make wedding bouquets and baby shower diaper cakes. I like baking (when time permits) or trying new recipes that I find online. I love going to karaoke with my sons and our friends! I also enjoy fishing from the shore, although I haven't done that in a while. It's not so much catching fish, but just being near the ocean, hearing the waves, feeling the breeze It's so relaxing and revitalizes me.

Most people would be surprised to learn that I took dance classes. If you know me, you know that I have two left feet.

I have fond memories of Kaimuki High School pep rallies and cheering at the football games at the old stadium, decorating homecoming floats, club functions, and Ms. Rivera's speech class. I also remember my first Sweet Hearts Ball at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel during our first year in high school. It was so magical!!! I had never been to such a "fancy" function; we got to dress up and had to act so ladylike. That was hard for a tomboy like me. My fondest memories are of all of the friendships made and the fun times in school as well as at the beach on the weekends. I'm looking forward to our Class Reunion in September, and hope to reconnect with everyone there.

Me ke aloha pumehana.
Dani Hakoda Emoto