

Akata Kalonikakala Mafoa ‘Otukolo

December 12, 1958 ~ October 15, 2020

Our beautiful mother – the queen of our hearts – Akata Kalonikakala Mafoa ‘Otukolo (61) – returned to our Heavenly Father on October 15, 2020. Our mother was known to everyone as Kaloni, and while she lived in Salt Lake City for over 20 years, she spent half of her time on the islands of Tonga during the frigid winter months in Utah. Mom’s residency and citizenship transcended boundaries, as did her unconditional love.

Kaloni was born on December 12, 1958 in Ha’akame, Tongatapu, Tonga to Sione and Supiesi Mafoa. As the oldest of eleven children, Mom often shared fond memories of growing up with her siblings in a village where the presence of generosity, faith, joy, and ‘ofa/love was threaded into their daily interactions and in moments of storytelling and humorous exchanges leading to stomache aching laughter. Mom’s bond with her mehikitanga/paternal aunties was also grounded in the highest regard. She witnessed the meaningful ways in which her father elevated and honored his sisters’ chiefly status in our culture – always with the utmost respect – and she followed his example by doing the same. Her mehikitanga—Kalonikakala Vanderheide, Tangisi Winterich, Ana Marsh, Filipa Iloahefaiva, and Olivia Teu—are foundational to the Mafoa family, and they held a special place in Mom’s heart.

In 1976, she married her high school sweetheart, Sione Tahitu’a Otukolo. Together, they had five children (in addition to one they lost soon after birth). Mom made incredible sacrifices and worked tirelessly to transform our lives. In 1982, after moving from the comfort of her ‘home’ in Tonga, she landed on Maui with tremendous optimism and hope. She raised five children on a housekeeper’s hourly wage (her job during the day) while also working graveyard shifts cleaning restaurants every single night. We aren’t sure when she rested, but it was definitely a treat when she had some time off. In 1997 (after her second daughter decided to continue her academic career in Utah), Mom decided to make Utah her home as well. She became the primary caretaker of her grandchildren while her children were in college and/or employed full-time. Mom’s resilience and commitment to transforming our lives resulted in one child earning her Ph.D. and becoming an administrator, another becoming a school teacher, another a flight attendant, and two more employed in the service industry and private sector.

Mom was humble and caring, and she prioritized the importance of forging harmonious and peaceful relationships. She embodied a kind of love that was rooted in Christ and contributed to enabling the heart, mind, body, and spirit to commit to actions that put others’ needs ahead of her own; she was selfless in this way. Sunday dinners with the family will be incomplete without her; we will miss her cooking, especially her lu, me’akai Tonga, ‘otai, ika, supo, and keke ‘isite.

We miss her deeply and our grief is beyond measure. Our mom’s absence in this mortal life is painful and it speaks profoundly to the suffering of our hearts, the weariness of our spirit, and the yearning of our souls. We are forever grateful for the Plan of Salvation and we will continue to strive toward living a dignified life that she exemplified,

modeled, and paved for us. May our mom’s legacy continue to dwell and thrive in her posterity.

Akata Kalonikakala Mafoa Otukolo is survived by her spouse, Sione Tahitua Otukolo; her children, Toalea Langi (Fine Langi, Jr.), Belinda Otukolo Saltiban (Bobby Saltiban), Taniela Otukolo, Sitiveni Piutau, and Meleana Tuimoala (Setaleki Tuimoala); and grandchildren (Saia Saltiban, Palepa Otukolo, Liliana Saltiban, Lei Kalonikakala Saltiban, Sosefina Langi, Finau Langi, Meleana Langi, Lupe Langi, Cesilia Carter Otukolo, Sione Tahitua Otukolo, and Metai Tuimoala).

Funeral services will be held on Tuesday, October 27th, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. at Larkin Mortuary, 260 East South Temple, Salt Lake City, Utah. A viewing will be held on Tuesday, October 27th, 2020 from 9:00 a.m. - 10:45 a.m. at the mortuary prior to services. Interment will take place at Salt Lake City Cemetery. To attend services via Zoom please contact one of Kaloni's daughters for the Zoom meeting information.