



Daniel Vaiokema ("Muli") Kinikini, Sr.

Sept. 5, 1940 ~ Dec. 24, 2021

Daniel Vaiokema ("Muli") Kinikini, Sr. was born September 5th, 1940 in the house of his grandparents, Semisi Hoko Niniva and Meleseini Latu Sikei Hoko, to his mother, Taina Ofa-ki-Uiha of Fahefa, Tongatapu, and father, Sione Vaiokema, son of Taniela Kinikini and Selita Valu Malupo of Uiha, Haapai. "Muli" as he was called by his family, was the second son and third child of what would grow to be nine children of Ofa and Vaiokema. He grew up helping his grandfather and sisters and brothers on the family copra plantation where he had many wonderful memories running around playing and getting into trouble. He attended primary school in Fahefa and Vaotuu, went on to attend Tupou College in Toloa briefly, and graduated from Liahona High School. While at Liahona, Muli became converted to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints a decision that was not in line with his fathers religion, but he shared his faith where he could and prayed for future reconciliation. His uncle Tevita and family made it possible to further his education at Church College of Hawaii, and in 1962 he left Tongatapu on a ship, waited a week in Samoa, boarded his first airplane and finally touched down in Hawaii with fifty dollars in his pocket. There, he met and married the love of his life, Mayone Woodbury. Muli and Mayone had four children in Hawaii: Lepeka Shannon, Ofa Donita, Daniel Vaiokema Jr. and Michael Niniva. It was during these years that Muli's mother Ofa fell gravely ill, and was healed by a priesthood blessing, fully recovering, which prompted his father Vaiokema to read the Book of Mormon in two days, after which he prayed about its truth and received a witness to be baptized. Eventually Muli's parents served several missions in Tonga, baptizing hundreds. The simple faith of a teenage Muli led to changing the life course of many souls receiving the blessings of the Gospel over the ensuing decades. After years of study, Muli earned a Bachelor's degree in Biology and Secondary Education. He was the first in his family to graduate college. To support his growing family during these college years, Muli learned the construction business, helping to build hotels in Waikiki and Turtle Bay. Other than a few formal courses in reading blueprints and framing, his mastery of the building trades was self-taught. Upon graduation the family of six returned to Tonga and Muli taught at Liahona High School for a year. They returned to Hawaii, helped his two parents and siblings emigrate, and together they all eventually made their way to Utah, where Muli qualified as a General Contractor and built the family home on the banks of the Spanish Fork River. He and Mayone soon had a family of nine children, adding Aaron Monuia, Lose Marie, Lea Lani, Vaiokema and Manamoui, and life was

full, busy, challenging, and happy. They spent many years in Spanish Fork before relocating to Riverside, California, where the construction industry offered better opportunities. Muli was a tireless worker, a person of the highest integrity, and a bighearted, generous man. He was always willing to employ someone in need of a job, quick to pick up hitchhikers, and always ready with a smile or helping hand. He never lost his love of working the land, and over his life planted huge gardens in Spanish Fork, small backyard corn rows in Riverside California, and a 4-acre Pele Farm in Hauula Hawaii, where he would sell pele leaves to travelling Tongans who took them to the mainland. He loved hearing his daughters Shannon and Ofa sing, and his son Manamoui play classical piano, and his nephews Tipiloma and Tau sing opera. He preached the value of education and hard work to his children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews, and all benefited from that wisdom. He loved his Tongan community in Utah and returned in 1993, where he served as Bishop of the Liberty 3rd Ward, and resumed working as a Contractor, passing on his knowledge of construction and masonry to sons, nephews and many others. When retirement approached, he and Mayone returned to Hauula where he built another home with his sons Mana and Vai. He farmed and fished, and spent many years happily in Hauula with Mayone. He also returned to Uiha and Fahefa, to live with his daughter Lea Lani, and built his final house in Uiha, a small "fale Hunuki" that still stands on the Beach known as Motuha, which he called his "paradise". He fought cancer and won, and then developed Alzheimer's, a terminal condition whose long trials and challenges he met with courage, patience, and grace. We love you grandpa, dad, uncle, brother, son, and friend to the needy. You will always be our builder.

Shortly before his passing, but after he had lost the power of speech in this world, Muli came to Mayone in a dream and joyfully said, "Come see our house!" We know that he is on the other side, still building a legacy. His skill as a stonemason, and his deep humility and faith, calls to mind the words of the Psalmist: "The stone which the builders refused is become the head cornerstone." (Psalm 118:22) The scripture refers to the ancient quarries where highly trained stonemasons carefully chose the stones used in construction. No stone was more important than the cornerstone because the integrity of the whole structure depended on the cornerstone containing exactly the right lines. If the cornerstone was not exactly right, the entire building would be out of line. For that reason, builders inspected many stones, rejecting each one until they found the one they wanted. Rejected stones might be used in other parts of the building, but they would never become the cornerstone or the capstone (the first and last stones put in place). To those of us who learned at his feet and by his example, Muli was both the master mason, and the humble, but so very essential cornerstone of our family. The straightness of his vision, and the soundness of his discernment gave all of us the gift of a firm, true, and eternal foundation. A man of great spiritual gifts, he was generous with them all. Loved by so many, respected by all, he will be sorely missed.

He is survived by his sweetheart and eternal companion, Mayone Woodbury Kinikini, by sons Dr. Daniel Vaiokema (Michelle Mueller) Jr. of Salt Lake City, Utah, Michael Niniva Kinikini of Hauula, Hawaii, Aaron Monuia Kinikini, Esq. of Rose Park, Jared Vaiokema Kinikini of Honolulu, Hawaii and David Manamoui Kinikini of Eloy, Arizona and by his daughters, Lea Lani Kinikini, PhD, of Glendale, Utah, Lose Marie (David) Tuinei of Mapusagafo, American Samoa, Ofa (Mark) Moeai of Provo, Utah, and Shannon (Kevin) Woody of Hauula, Hawaii and 33 grandchildren and 1 great-grandchild. He is survived also by his dear brothers Vaiokema Semisi Hoko and Sateki Vaiokema "Kini" Kinikini of Salt Lake City, Sione Siamaka Hoko of Glendale, Utah, and his respected sisters Pisila (Etika) Foliaki of Mangere, New Zealand, Selita Valu (Paula) Tamoua, Lose (Isake) Tukuafu of Haateiho, Tonga, Seini Niu Fine of Moreno Valley, California, Meleseini Latu Maama of San Francisco, California, and numerous nieces, grandnieces, great-grandnieces, nephews, grandnephews, and great-grand nephews, as well as many many cousins.

Preceded in death by: His parents Sione Vaikoema and Taina Ofa Hoko Kinikini, by his sisters Manu Siuifanga Pupua, Litea Tuituu Naeata, brothers Paula Fekauutoki Kinikini and Metui Leaaefala Kinikini, and one grandchild, Keiara Love Kinikini.

A viewing will be held Monday January 3 from 6:00-9:00PM at Larkin Sunset Gardens, 1950 E. Dimple Dell Road. A family funeral service will be held on Tuesday, January 4 at 9:00AM followed by a Bishop's service at 11:00AM, at Larkin Sunset Gardens with interment to follow at Memorial Estates Redwood Cemetery, 6500 S. Redwood

Road.

To view the evening viewing and funeral services, please click on the corresponding Zoom link below.
Please note a Zoom account is required to view.

Completed Evening Viewing:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/6bF4l3gWqBi8xKEWQjGN2TrpWHhflJAypXv6_NEmA0Aue0lcs02bBxFcA-ISnyly.yWJ

Completed Funeral Service:

https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/nv1AegAQwIUbfAgsaWzjVCziVD6496ekcDui6-_2lBIQZOyUKhKd4L4lb4Sv8h_a.M8kq