

JULIE HONDA:

The Queen of Chaîne Aloha



draped around the statue's neck. In addition to serving as chargée de presse provinciale, she was a fondateur and member of the Conseil d'Honneur; she received both the Bronze and Silver Stars of Excellence; and she was the third person—and first woman—to earn the Médaille Présidentielle.

Chargée de Presse Provinciale Honoraire Honda's gift for connecting with people is legendary. At her parties, one finds ex-governors, admirals, actors, distinguished professionals, and regular folks—the majority of whom are now Chaîne members. Her friendships are her most valued treasures. Among these are many national and international Chaîne officers, with Argentier National Honoraire Vincent DeDomenico of Hillsborough and Napa Valley as the most formative during her illustrious Chaîne career. She has attended national chapitres under the leadership of nine baillis délégués, personally hosted six national baillis in Hawaii, and befriended three international Chaîne presidents.

Despite her ease in even the most elite circles, Chargée de Presse Provinciale Honoraire Honda never forgets her Maui country roots. She cherishes the traditions of her multicultural heritage, which includes Hawaiian, Japanese, Filipino, Chinese, and Spanish roots. She was raised Catholic in a close-knit family of six sisters and two brothers. Her Hawaiian grandmother helped foster her deep connection with the land, and when recalling her grandfathers, she said,

“The Japanese was a disciplinarian, and the Filipino, loving, kind, and full of laughter, but both spoiled us terribly in their own way.”

If she is the “Queen of Chaîne Aloha,” Chargée de Presse Provinciale Honoraire Honda has a magnificent “Prince Consort” in her accomplished husband, Bailli Provincial Honoraire Fred Honda—retired general manager of the five-diamond Halekulani



(Top) H/PI Chargée de Presse Provinciale Hon. Julie Honda. (Above left) Julie (far right) as a cheerleader, Lahainaluna High School, Maui. (Left) H/PI Chargée de Presse Provinciale Hon. Julie Honda and International Chaîne President Yam Atallah.

By Judith Kellogg
Hawaii/Pacific Islands Chargée de Presse Provinciale

CHARGÉE DE PRESSE NATIONALE CINDY Eisenmenger, in her debut column as *Gastronome* publisher, described individuals who epitomize the best of the Chaîne. Her first tribute was to Hawaii/Pacific Islands Chargée de Presse Provinciale Honoraire Julie Honda: “We are Julie Honda of Honolulu, who greets life and Chaîne members with open arms and, if you're really fortunate, the most beautiful lei you will ever possess.” Julie Honda indeed embodies the quintessential aloha spirit. She has contributed to the Chaîne and touched lives in numerous ways and on all levels.

Upon entering the Honda home, one sees a statue of Kuan Yin peacefully guarding Julie Honda's medals and ribbons, which are

Hotel in Waikiki. His induction into the Maui Chapter more than thirty years ago marked the Hondas' introduction to the world of fine wines and gourmet dining experiences.

The hospitality industry took the couple to San Francisco, where Fred Honda founded the San Francisco Peninsula Bailliage. He subsequently became Pacific Northwest chambellan provincial and eventually bailli provincial for the Hawaii/Pacific Islands region. He currently chairs the Conseil d'Honneur. From the early days of Bailli Provincial Honoraire Honda's Chaîne involvement, his wife refused to sit idly by.

While in San Francisco, Julie Honda became increasingly aware of how few women were active in the Chaîne. She drew her early inspiration from two powerful women who became her close friends: then Atlanta Bailli Lynn Halpern and Harriette Katz, who was bailli of the New York Chapter before becoming Northeast chambellan provincial. In 1990, Julie Honda was inducted at the Fairmont Hotel as one of three women in a previously all-male chapter. She has been an advocate and mentor for the Chaîne's female members ever since. The organization's most active women,



1 Chargée de Presse Nationale Hon. Ellen Hughes and H/PI Chargée de Presse Provinciale Hon. Julie Honda. **2** H/PI Bailli Provincial Hon. Fred Honda and H/PI Chargée de Presse Provinciale Hon. Julie Honda. **3** H/PI Chargée de Presse Provinciale Hon. Julie Honda and former Hawaii Governor George Ariyoshi. **4** Hawaiian Royal Guardsman, H/PI Bailli Provincial Hon. Fred Honda, H/PI Chargée de Presse Provinciale Hon. Julie Honda, Bailli Délégué National George Brown, Seattle Officer Elizabeth Brown and Honolulu Bailli Garrett Saikley, 2008.



(Left) H/PI Chargée de Presse Provinciale Hon. Julie Honda and H/PI Bailli Provincial Hon. Fred Honda.

including those responsible for the evolution of *Gastronome* over the years, are among her many Chaîne heroes.

Chargée de Presse Provinciale Honoraire Honda's most ambitious gathering was the five-day Hawaiian Islands tour she organized following the Grand Chapitre in Honolulu in 2000 (see *Gastronome*, Volume 1 2000, pp. 5-9). The *Gastronome* article begins, "If Julie Honda ever again offers to serve as tour guide of her homeland, stop, do not pass go, do not collect \$200, sign on—the experience is as priceless as Julie herself." Even after retiring from her regional role in 2006, Julie Honda was irrepensible, writing her delightful "Julie's Corner"—a witty column focused on local confrères—for the region's annual newsletter.

Two photos of Chargée de Presse Provinciale Honoraire Honda capture opposite facets of her delightful personality. Her

queenly aspect is portrayed at a Chaîne Christmas gala at the Hawaii governor's mansion, hosted by the Honolulu Chapter. She awed attendees in her custom-made, peacock-feathered dress, copied from one worn by Hawaii's Queen Kapiolani. Her whimsical side is depicted in a 2003 *Gastronome* photo taken with her husband, in which both are dressed as cone sushi.

Whether one knows Julie Honda as a loyal friend, sophisticated hostess, politically astute advisor, tough-minded Chaîne board member, wise mentor, or favorite "auntie," this big-hearted, humble powerhouse with the mischievous laugh and twinkling eyes has made an indelible mark on the Chaîne. 