In the sea off Kona on Thursday, waves of maile will dance for 'Io'



Luahine in 1948 . . .

Three Hawaiian canoes bearing maile leis will leave Kailua-Kona on Thursday morning to cast a loving gift into the sea in memory of revered hula dancer Iolani Luahine. She died Sunday at Straub Clinic & Hospital in Honolulu.

The Rev. Leon Sterling of Kona will be in one of the canoes with the "mahai aloha," the loving gift of maile. He will scatter the fragrant leaves into the waves as part of a special memorial service for "Io."

The service will begin at 10 a.m. Thursday at Kona's Hulihee Palace, where Iolani served as curator for many years before retiring in March because of ill health.

Lt. Col. Arthur Chun of Kona will deliver the eulogy, the Rev. Henry Boshard, pastor of Mokuaikaua Church across the street from Hulihee Palace, will offer the opening prayer, and Billy Paris will give the closing prayer. The Monarchy Singers and the Lanakila Choir, both from Kona, will also participate.

The bells of Mokuaikaua Church will be rung to signal the beginning of the service at the palace.

The service is sponsored by the Daughters of Hawaii, who operate both Hulihee and the Queen Emma Summer Palace in Nuuanu on Oahu. Both palaces will be closed Thursday in Io's memory.

Iolani was a member of the Daughters of Hawaii and the Daughters and Sons of Hawaiian Warriors.

At the same time in Honolulu, 10 a.m. Thursday, official funeral services for Iolani will be held at the Mormon Tabernacle Chapel at 1560 S. Beretania St. Honorary pallbearers include Gov. George Ariyoshi, Honolulu Mayor Frank Fasi, local business executives Henry Walker, Allen Wilcox and Mervin Gilliland and Alfred Preis of the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts.

Burial at Hawaiian Memorial Park will follow the service.

Auntie Io, as she was called by her friends, died early Sunday morning. She would have been 64 on Jan. 31.

She was born in Napoopoo on the Big Island but grew up in Honolulu as the student of Juliet Luahine, court dancer to King Kalakaua. As a child Io was dedicated to Laka, goddess of the hula, and forbidden to marry. She did marry, however, but that union ended in divorce.

Friends may call at Borthwick Mortuary from 6 to 9 p.m. tomorrow and after 8:30 a.m. Thursday at the Mormon Tabernacle Chapel.

Iolani is survived by her brother, Manase Makekau; four sisters, Mrs. Matilda P. Prim, Mrs. Bernice Awana, Mrs. Dorothy Kahinu, and Mrs. Ipolani Bailey; nieces and nephews.

Borthwick Mortuary is in charge of arrangements.



. . . and in March 1978.