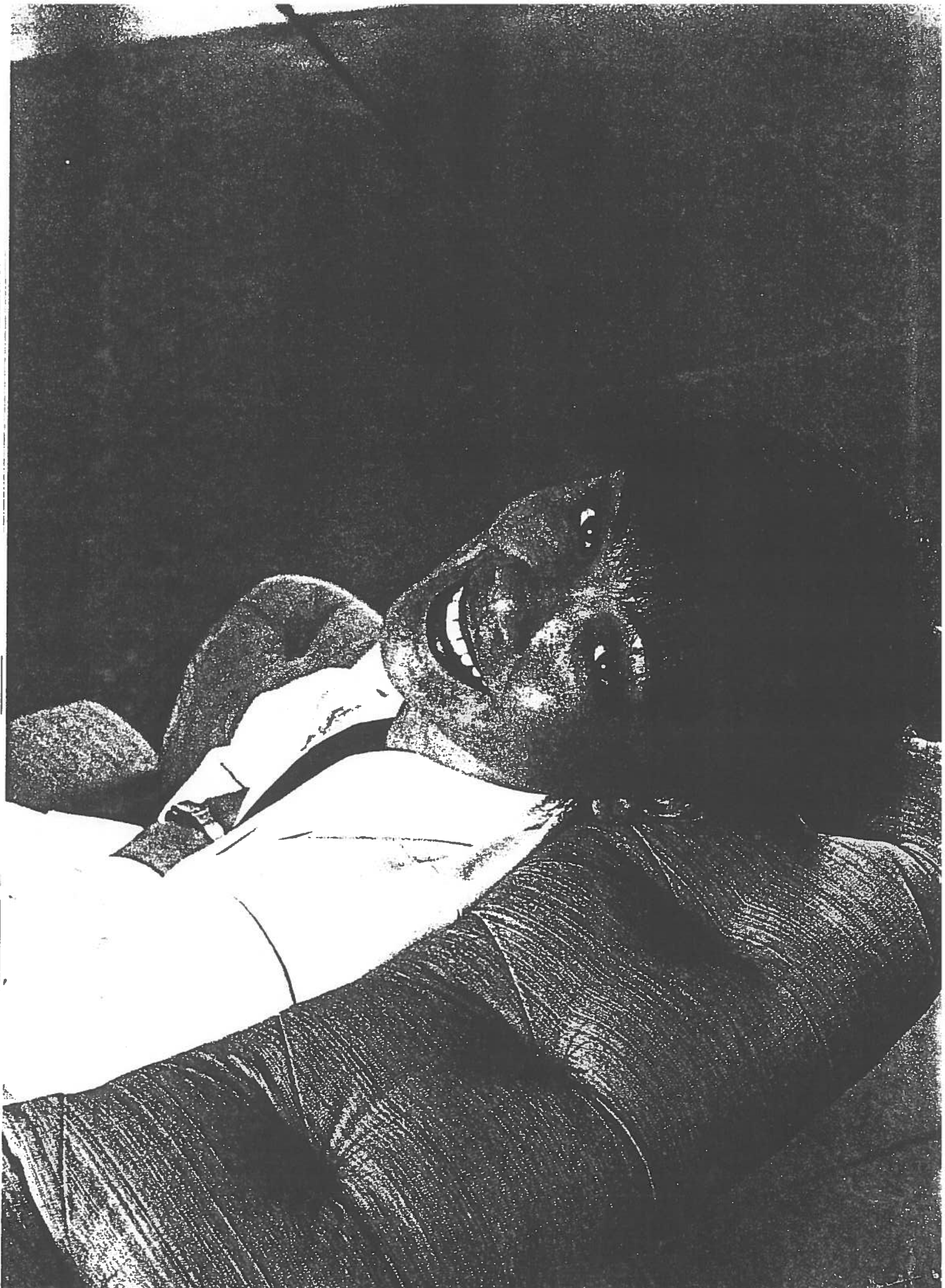


"Lyne Waine - First Lady of Hawaii" Honolulu Star-Bulletin March 11, 1961



CALL HER AN ACCIDENTAL CELEBRITY. Lynne Waihee, Hawai'i's first lady and wife of Gov. John Waihee, doesn't fit the mold of the glamorous political wife. She'd prefer to spend an evening babysitting Joshua, her cook's son, than attending glittery social events. Her clothes are elegant but simple, and you get the feeling *she* doesn't spend all her time in designer boutiques and *she* doesn't have more pairs of shoes than you could count on two hands. As first lady, she has two chauffeured cars at her disposal: an official governor's limousine, and a Chevy Celebrity for running errands. Unless it's a formal affair, or unless she's visiting schools and wants to give students a treat, she will opt to take the Chevy—that's about as close to "Celebrity" status as she cares to get.

People spot her in the supermarket and whisper, "Isn't that the governor's wife?" But Lynne Waihee is also many other things: a conscientious parent, a high school English teacher whose heart has never left the classroom, a Kalihi girl who now calls stately Washington Place home. She's a hard-working volunteer—her pet project is the Governor's Council for Literacy—and has a magic touch when it comes to fund-raising for a good cause. Says one community leader she's worked with, "When you go into political office, you expect your spouse to be at your side. Lynne does that, but she's also professionally capable." Says another, "In terms of public service, Lynne Waihee is the greatest asset Gov. Waihee could ever have."

Nobody has anything bad to say about Lynne Waihee. Then again, not many people can say they really know her. Ask around town and the word that keeps popping up to describe her is "enigma." And you get the feeling that she'd be perfectly happy keeping it that way. She's a public figure who guards her privacy carefully. "Giving interviews is my least favorite thing to do," she admits, laughing.

The 1st LADY of Hawai'i

Ask Lynne's family and friends about her, though, and they'll give you a clearer picture of her. Her sister-in-law, Celia Waihee, says, "She thinks things through before jumping into something. She's friendly but not aggressively so." They say she's warm, unexpectedly irreverent at times and very generous. According to her sister, Jane Cheeseman, Lynne's a woman of many talents. She ~~makes~~ great fried chicken and carrot cake; she gives the ~~best~~ massages; and she has a pretty singing voice, which she'll occasionally share by singing Japanese songs at Okinawan club gatherings.

But ask Lynne Waihee about herself, and she'll be the first to tell you she's shy. One of the first official functions she ~~had~~ to attend was a cocktail reception at Wai'alaie Country Club, right after her husband had become lieutenant governor. She remembers finding herself alone when her husband wandered off. "I don't think I knew a single person in that room. If I don't know people, I'm not the type to just walk up to somebody and start talking. When we got to the car, I said to John, 'Don't you ever do that to me again!' He just figured I ~~knew~~ how to do this. I didn't."

Like it or not, she has had to learn. Since John Waihee became governor in 1986, Lynne's family and

Continued on page 54

Lynne Waihee

By Beverly Fujita

At home with First Lady
Lynne Waihee on the final
of Washington Place.

Lynne Waihee

Continued from page 33

friends say she has grown more poised in public. Her sister Jane observes, "When we were growing up, she was the shyest of the three girls in the family. Now she's probably the most outgoing—by necessity, of course. But even when she became the first lady, we weren't worried about her because we know her to be the type of person to rise to any demand."

That strength is inherited partly from her mother, Matsue Kobashigawa. Lynne was born to Toshio and Matsue Kobashigawa on Dec. 9, 1946. Her father, a carpenter, died when Lynne was 5. Her mother, who had come to Hawai'i from Okinawa, raised five children—James, Jane, Nancy, Lynne and Tom—on her own. Says Lynne, "Knowing that he was ill, my dad bought a restaurant right before his death so my mom could support the family. My mother and her business partner, a cousin of my dad's, ran Farrington Inn together, on Kalihi Street." The Kobashigawa kids all pitched in at the restaurant after school and on weekends, waiting tables, washing dishes and cooking.

Lynne and her brothers and sisters didn't have a lot of spare time, but she says, "I have wonderful memories of growing up. During the summer we'd go down to Hale'iwa to stay at my Auntie Maka's house. We'd go fishing and swimming, and once a week we'd go to movies at the Hale'iwa Theater. My mom was working all the time, at the restaurant, but once a year she'd take us on trips to the Neighbor Islands, either to Maui or Kaua'i."

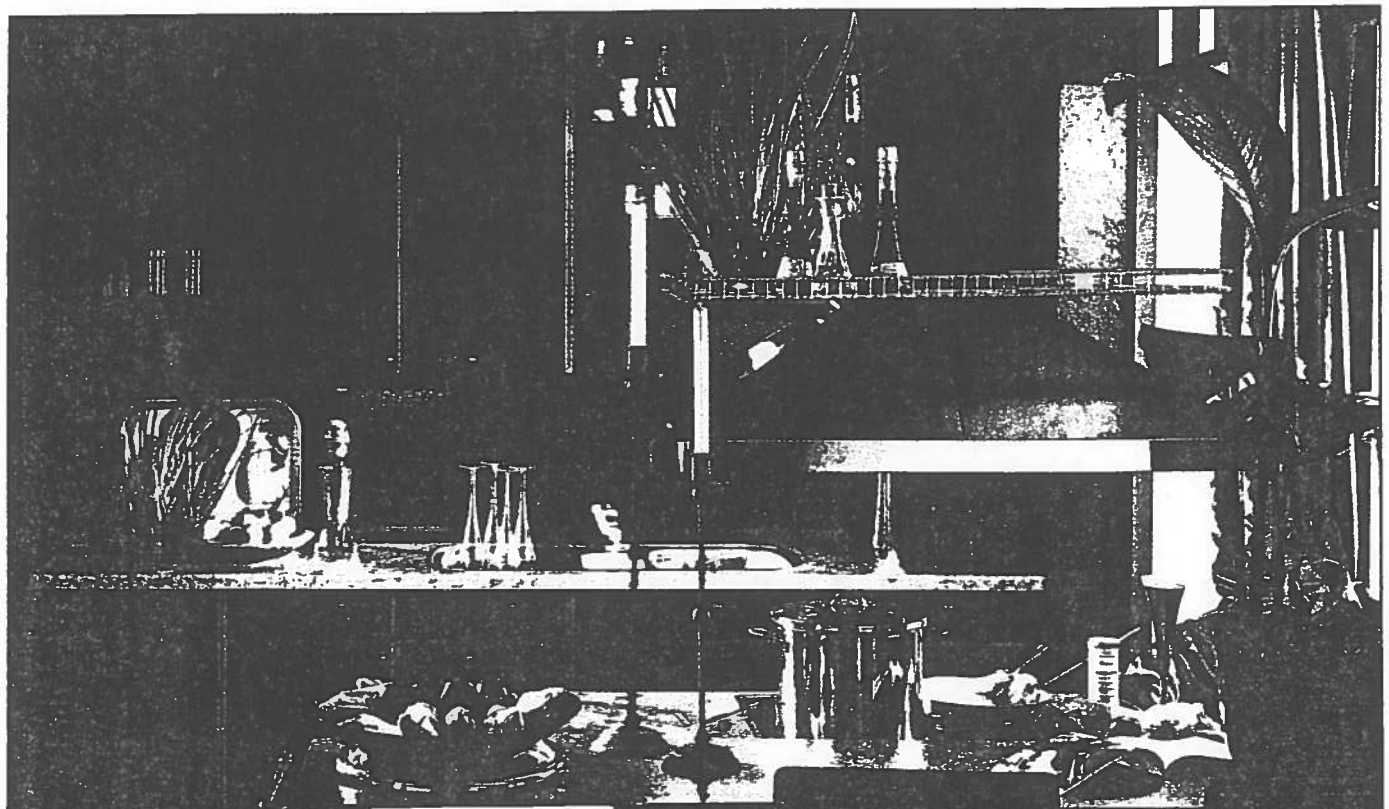
During the school year, the family lived in lower Kalihi, behind the Kalihi Fire Station. Lynne says, "Even though my mother wasn't home until about 8 in the evening, she kept very close tabs on us and made sure we were where we were supposed to be." Sister Jane recalls, "In the evenings, the five of us would spread a goza [straw mat] on the front lawn and lie there and crack jokes and look for shooting stars."

All three Kobashigawa girls attended Hawaiian Mission Academy, a Seventh Day Adventist school in Makiki; their brothers attended Farrington High School. Lynne was a serious student, but quite popular. You could always find Lynne and her sisters at the school's Saturday night socials. Lynne served as class vice president her freshman, junior and senior

years, played on the senior girls' basketball team, reported for the school newspaper, and worked after school, correcting papers. Because the school was so small—about 60 in her graduating class—everyone was friendly with each other. Among her friends and classmates was John Waihee III.

After her high school graduation in 1964, Lynne headed for Andrews College, another small Seventh Day Adventist school, in Berrien, Mich. As the story goes, John, upon learning of Lynne's plans, followed her to Andrews. "At least, that's what I tell people," says Lynne, laughing. "I had a reason to go there—my sisters were there—while he already had a scholarship to the University of Hawai'i."

Lynne and John began dating at Andrews, often studying together at the library or the student lounge. Despite his less than outstanding scholastic record in high school, John settled down and hit the books. "My first semester in college, I didn't study very hard," Lynne admits. "I thought that's what you're supposed to do, have fun when you're in school. But John made honor roll, maybe from second semester on. I figured I'd better start buckling down. Maybe he doesn't know it, but he was a good influence on me."



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They married in Michigan in September 1969, the year after they graduated, she with a degree in English and he in business and history. "I don't know what you consider eloping, but we just were married," says Lynne. "We went to a justice of the peace, with just my sister Jane and her husband and a close friend of John's." There was no elaborate reception, no fuss or frills. And no regrets—for the most part. "Now that I'm older, I think maybe [a big wedding] is something I robbed our parents of," says Lynne.

Lynne had begun work on a master's degree, but after they were married, she took a teaching job in a small farming community while John worked with a community education program. When their first child, John IV, was born in August 1970, she quit her job to stay home with the baby. Then in 1971, John was offered a job as an equal opportunity officer at the Whirlpool Corp. "He had quite a handsome offer," Lynne remembers. "I think he knew that if he took that position it would probably mean settling down in Michigan, buying a house and taking root. At that point, he had to make up his mind whether to stay in Michigan or come home." Homesickness won out—"We just pulled up stakes."

Their second child, Jennifer, was born

in September 1971, shortly after the Waihees returned to the Islands. It was good to be home, but neither Lynne nor John was prepared for the tight job market. John eventually enrolled at the University of Hawai'i Law School. Lynne worked briefly for a company that sold Florida land to tourists. "We had to stop tourists in Waikiki and ask them to come to lunch and watch a sales presentation. We'd give them Don Ho show tickets for listening to this spiel. All the while I was doing it, I hated it, but I felt that I had signed up so I was going to do my best. Luckily—well, I shouldn't say that—the company had to cut back. I was one of the first ones to get cut, which was great with me."

Lynne finally went back to teaching, in the public school system, in 1976, the year her husband graduated from law school. In 1979, a position to teach English opened up at her alma mater, Hawaiian Mission. She snapped it up, and found herself working side by side with some of her former instructors. In the meantime, her husband found himself working his way up the political ladder with surprising speed. Riding on the success of his role in the 1978 Constitutional Convention, he was elected to the state House in 1980 and to the lieutenant

governor's office in 1982. In the 1986 edition of *Ka Lamakū*, the Hawaiian Mission yearbook, students described Lynne Waihee as the "mega-busy" wife of the lieutenant governor. They wrote, "Her favorite pastime used to be baking—now she settles for reading, relaxing, going out for shave ice."

But her "mega-busy" days were just beginning. In 1986, John Waihee led the Democratic gubernatorial ticket to victory, defeating Republican Andy Anderson. The Waihees moved from their two-bedroom Kalihi walkup to Washington Place, the governor's mansion. Lynne recalls sitting down with Jean Ariyoshi, wife of outgoing governor George Ariyoshi, just after the election. "She talked about Washington Place and a little about what was expected of me as first lady," Lynne recalls. "But I don't think I realized how important a role it was, that people would always ask me, 'What do you think?' or 'What will you do?'"

As first lady, Lynne found herself in demand by one cause after another. Currently, she sponsors the annual First Lady's Outstanding Volunteer Awards and is involved with the Washington Place docents program. She serves as honorary president of the Girl

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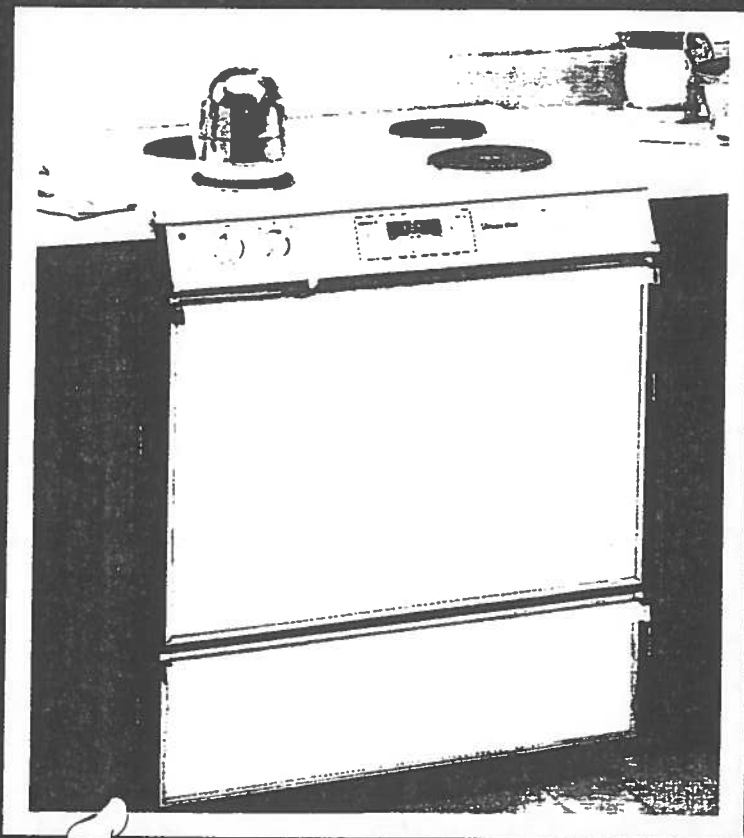
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Lynne Waihee

Scout Council of Hawai'i and as honorary chair of the Governor's Council for Literacy, a public-private ad hoc coalition working to promote literacy statewide. She has also worked closely with the Multiple Sclerosis Readathon and with the Hawai'i State Library System during the Year of the Young Reader in 1989. She says she feels uncomfortable about getting recognition for her work. "I do it because I want to do my part." But talk to the organizations and individuals she's helped and you'll hear the same refrain: She's dedicated, energetic and a persuasive spokeswoman.

In 1986, when the United Okinawan Association announced plans to build the Hawai'i Okinawa Center in Waipi'o, it asked Lynne Waihee to be the honorary chairperson for its fund-raising efforts. The center was designed to serve as a memorial for the first generation of Okinawans in Hawai'i. Fund-raising chairman Ed Kuba says, "When we began the fund-raising, she was uncomfortable about asking for money, but by the end, she was the one saying, 'C'mon, we need more money,' and going out there to get it." Local contributions total \$7.5 million to date. Although the center has been open since June 1990, fund-raising efforts are continuing, as the UOA hopes to establish an endowment fund. "Technically, Mrs. Waihee's part is over," says Kuba, adding hopefully, "but I'm sure she'll be available to give pep talks."

Girl Scout Council of Hawai'i executive director Joyce Richards-Hurst says, "Lynne Waihee is by far the most active first lady [with the Girl Scouts] since statehood." When the council decided to organize a latchkey program for the Kalihi area to help keep girls out of youth gangs, Lynne was instrumental in bringing together members of the House of Representatives, the City Council and concerned community members to address the issue.

The first lady also traditionally hosts the annual alumnae lunch, called "Campfires Rekindled," at which former Girl Scouts come to Washington Place to have Girl Scout cookies with the first lady. Says Richards-Hurst, "At last year's get-together, two elderly ladies who attended were waiting for a cab to take them back to the Arcadia nursing home when Mrs. Waihee came over and said, 'I'm going that way. Why don't we just go in my car?' The two women looked at each other like, 'Are you kidding?' and got into the limousine just as fast as their walkers would let them." The women asked to use Richards-Hurst's cellular phone to let the folks back home know they were on their way. When the first lady's limo

pulled in the Arcadia driveway, there was a big welcoming committee. Says Richards-Hurst, "For them, it was one of those chances of a lifetime."

Stanford Manuia, executive chair for the Governor's Council for Literacy, notes, "Lynne doesn't want to just lend her name to a cause. When we were at Lihikai School on Maui promoting the MS Readathon, she read to a group of kindergarteners for an hour, reading five to 10 minutes each from various books by her favorite authors."

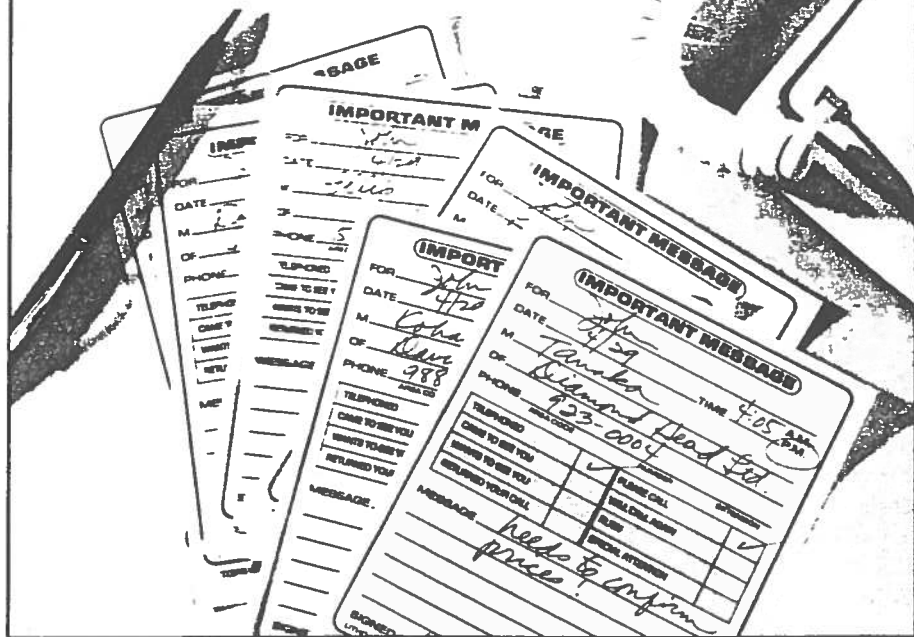
Whatever the cause is, Lynne maintains a nonpartisan attitude. She doesn't see the first lady's role as a political one. "Once in a while, people will write me a letter or stop me and talk about something they need help with," she says. "Generally I refer them to someone else who will be able to help them. It's very rare that I'll try to personally involve myself because otherwise there'd be no end. That's not my role. But at the same time I realize that some people don't know where to turn, or they need to get to someone they think can help them. So I don't just say, 'I'm sorry, I can't help you.' " She adds after a moment, "Well, don't print that because then I might get more people than I can handle!"

The Waihees don't often talk politics over the dinner table, either. "Once the governor comes home, this is his haven," Lynne says firmly. "I try to provide an atmosphere that's conducive to relaxing." She's determined that neither her marriage nor her family suffer from the wear and tear of political life. As her sister Jane puts it, "Lynne may look weak and fragile, but she's very strong."

Of her marriage, Lynne says, "I think we have a really good relationship." She calls it a "compatibility of polarities." Lynne will try her best to avoid a big to-do on her birthday, but the governor delights in surprising her. One year it was an exploding birthday cake (a box, elaborately frosted and filled with balloons), another year it was a message reading, "Happy Birthday Lynne" that appeared on the Aloha Stadium scoreboard. Says sister-in-law Celia, "She was quite embarrassed, but she certainly won't forget that birthday." The governor is a bit more organized than his wife when it comes to work habits—his notes will be neatly typed while hers might be scribbled by hand—and he's neat in packing his clothes for a trip. (Yes, the governor does his own packing, "but I have to do the folding—I can do that part better.")

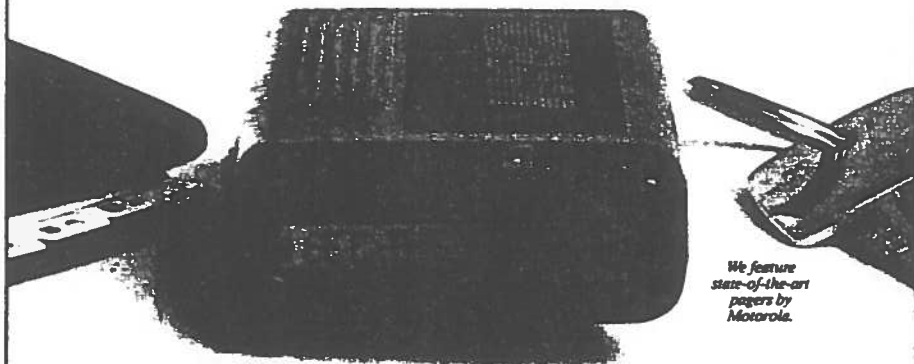
The Waihees' "polarities" are reflected in their children. Son John is quiet, like his mother, daughter Jennifer is more outgoing, like her father. John, 20, is

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Lynne Waihee

studying art at Honolulu Community College. Jennifer, 19, is a student at the University of Hawai'i-Mānoa, majoring in psychology and English (but "it's subject to change," says her mother). Was it difficult raising children in Washington Place and in the public eye? "In some ways it's easier, because we have help"—including six maids and a cook—"but to the extent that they are children of a notable person, maybe it's a little difficult."

Any possibility of seeing a second generation of Waihees enter local politics? "Not really," says Lynne, "although I suppose if anyone, it would be Jennifer. She's a little more aggressive, and yet her sensitivity is maybe more like mine." Lynne describes her son John as "a very sweet person, and loyal, fiercely loyal." In 1989, when the governor's pay raise was a heated topic of discussion in the Legislature, John Jr. wrote a letter to the editor of the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* noting the fact that his mother, the state's "hardest-working volunteer," works for no salary. Lynne shakes her head at the memory. "Partly, the letter was in reaction to the idea, 'Why not give the governor a raise, his wife doesn't work.'" Had she known about the letter beforehand, she says she would have told her son not to send it.

"But he was happy he did. There was a rebuttal that criticized him, and at first I think he was rather hurt by it. But then I had to say, 'Well, this is why I would have told you not to send it because I'd like to protect you from all of this.'"

Lynne would prefer to surround her children with their large, close-knit family. As often as their schedules allow, weekends are strictly family time. Both the Kobashigawa and Waihee clans are frequent visitors at Washington Place—or "WP," as they call it—often sitting down to lunch together on Saturday. Sundays are often spent playing volleyball, a passion of Lynne's. The family also enjoys a game of Pictionary, although Lynne confesses, "We don't play by the rules. Whoever is on my son John's team always wins. I'm not very good—if it's supposed to be a reindeer, it'll look more like a dog." When she has free time, she'll curl up with a good book, a crossword puzzle or occasionally tune into a game show, *The Golden Girls* or *Oprah*.

Weekends are a time for regrouping and unwinding, since the weekday pace is brisk, to say the least. There's no such thing as a typical day in the life of the first lady, except to say that it's always a busy one. For the first three years, Lynne was able to go back to Hawaiian Mission to

teach whenever she had free time, but these days, her schedule is too hectic to allow even that. On a recent day, she took a 5:50 a.m. flight to Hilo for a Food Bank campaign kickoff, read stories to three classes of children at two elementary schools, returned to Honolulu in the evening to talk to parents about family literacy, then flew to Kona the next morning for the Food Bank campaign there.

While the first lady has gotten used to her role, some things haven't gotten easier. "Speaking in front of people is never easy for me," she says. "A lot of times when the request comes in, I think, 'oh, that sounds like something I'd like to do.' Then when I get there, frequently it's a lunch or dinner where I have to eat before I give my speech, and I can't relax and enjoy my meal. I think, 'Why did I accept this!'"

When the Waihees leave Washington Place and go back to a "normal" life, Lynne says she may go back to teaching. "A lot depends on what John's role will be when his term as governor ends." On her experiences so far as the first lady, Lynne says, "You hope to make a difference, to impact on the issues. I think I'm more

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aware of the problems that are in the community. As a teacher, I worked with my students and I felt that I could make a difference. I think that's been magnified even more. But the strangest thing happened to me recently. I was speaking at a Family Literacy conference and telling parents how you should read to your child. Then I guess it was days later that I thought to myself, 'gee, when did the student become the teacher?' It's strange to see my role changing, because I don't imagine myself telling other teachers what to do. All of a sudden I'm at a different vantage point, a different position altogether."

Lynne Waihee hopes she can be a good role model. "I think for most people there's something special about meeting the governor's wife. So if you can leave them with some impression or some thought that they can internalize, then that's quite an accomplishment. Something well worth thinking about when you go about your day-to-day doings."

Joyce Fasi

Continued from page 34

"I'm sure the neighbors hear us," Joyce whispers. "We both have loud voices." The booming voice is evident when her

son David gets a call and she summons him to the phone.

The wife-beating rumors preceded the Joyce years. In 1960 Frank Fasi's former wife, Florence Ohama Fasi (of Japanese ancestry, like Joyce), ran an ad in the *Hawai'i Hochi* newspaper, later reprinted in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* during Fasi's unsuccessful bid for mayor that year. The

"We were dancing and Frank said, 'I don't know how, but sometime, somewhere, you're going to be my wife.' And I thought, boy, this guy's nuts. I had a lot of boyfriends, and no way was I settling down."

inch-high headline proclaimed, "HERE IS THE TRUTH!" It began with a quote from French playwright Moliere, "Doubts are more cruel than the worst of truths," then proceeded, in Florence's words, to set the record straight: that Frank did not marry her for her money ("How ridiculous," wrote Florence, "I came from a

poor family—the same as Frank"); that "At no time did Frank lay a hand on me," in response to the wife-beating rumors; and that Frank did not leave her, as some gossiped, to shift for herself after she became ill. (Another article reported she had virus encephalitis, or sleeping sickness.) "The truth is, I divorced Frank in 1957... We knew as early as 1950 that we were becoming strangers... We are both happy with the way things are now."

The year 1957, when Florence divorced Frank, is the year Joyce and Frank met. Joyce Miyeku Kono was a University of Hawai'i home economics student who worked summers as an Aloha Airlines flight attendant ("stewardess" back then), at Christmas time as a McNerny salesgirl, and once a week did the live TV commercials on Channel 2 for Resnick kitchen cabinets (Resnick being Joe, who later would become U.S. congressman from New York). Resnick's kitchen cabinet company was the sponsor of the live celebrity interview program *The Eddie Sherman Show*.

In May of 1957, Joyce Kono was also a Cherry Blossom Queen contestant. She lost the competition to the contestant sponsored by the Kalihi Businessmen's

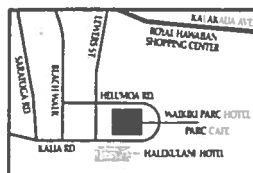
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