

# Gifts of Cultural and Historical Significance to 'Iolani Palace

*Returning treasures to their rightful home.*



## **A Belief in Visibility and Connection**

One of Abigail's strongest convictions was that the artifacts of the Hawaiian Kingdom should not be locked away or lost to collectors — they should be seen and honored by the people of Hawai'i, especially by Native Hawaiians. She believed these objects could do something that even the most careful writing could not: bring history to life.

## **A Lifelong Commitment to 'Iolani Palace**

Her dedication to 'Iolani Palace was deeply personal. It was the home of her royal ancestors — and it had been saved from demolition by her mother, Princess Lydia Lili'uokalani Morris, who led its initial restoration as President of The Friends of 'Iolani Palace. Upon her mother's passing in 1969, Princess Abigail took up the mantle and led the organization from 1971 to 1998.

During her tenure:

- The Palace was restored, room by room, to its historical grandeur.
- Doors were opened to the public, welcoming a new generation of learners and visitors.
- She oversaw and supported the preservation of not just the building, but its legacy.

In 1998, a photo of Princess Abigail seated briefly on a Palace throne for Life Magazine sparked public criticism. The resulting controversy led to her removal from the Board — an act that wounded her deeply. And yet, even after that, she remained the Palace's most generous and loyal benefactor.

## A Quiet but Powerful Giving

She donated funds consistently, often covering budget gaps and even paying the Palace's electric bills for a period when rising fuel costs threatened operations. Her gifts were timely and targeted — rarely announced, always meaningful.

One of her most notable contributions was the Kalākaua Diamond, a treasured family heirloom. As she neared the end of her life, she began organizing the transfer of even more objects to the Palace, ensuring they would return home — to be cared for and displayed with dignity, as she had always intended.

## Object List

The total number of objects that Abigail gifted to the Palace exceeded 150, with another 70 plus given jointly with other family members.

The list that follows highlights some of the most significant of these gifts followed by photos and descriptions of some of the more recent ones.

Kalākaua covered kou pedestal bowl (h: 7-1/2"; d: 5-1/2")

Kalākaua covered kou pedestal bowl (h: 9"; d : 8")

Kalākaua covered kou pedestal bowl (h: 12"; d: 11-3/4")

Kawānanakoa political arm band (framed)

Portrait - Lili'uokalani Kawananakoa Morris (framed)

Hale Naua 'olona cordage

Akua Ka'ai image (Kahanu-Vredenburg-Hind)

Matteo Sandonna portrait of H.R.H. Prince David Kawānanakoa

Abigail Kuaihelani Ma'ipinepine cradle (made by James Campbell)

Kauila Kapa Beater (label 1: Her Majesty The Queen; label 2: Kinoiki)

Ali'i refuse bowl (ipu 'āina ali'i) w/four (4) human teeth

Ali'i refuse bowl (ipu 'āina ali'i)

Lei niho palaoa - HRH Abigail K. K. Kawānanakoa

La'au pālau (wooden club) - ?kauila wood; old 19th century

King Kalākaua's Hawaiian Bible - jubilee gift

Gold pocket watch - "D. K. Pi'ikoi" (HRH Prince David Kawānanakoa Pi'ikoi)

Queen Emma gold mourning bracelet

Pololū - antique 18th century milo long spear

Pocketwatch - Princess Abigail Wahīka'ahu'ula Kawānanakoa' rare American pocketwatch`

## Gift Set #1: November 2022 Palace Dinner

Hawaiian Kalākaua monarchy period turned dark kou wood presentation covered pedestal bowls. The first bowl features a slightly tapered cylindrical bowl with rounded base continuing to a round stepped pedestal foot with a fitted turned dome cover with round indented top knob branded on the interior cover and the base of the flat foot. The second bowl, marked by three indented rings, rests on a stepped pedestal foot and the turned dome cover with rounded steps is surmounted by a crown form finial.

The King David Kalākaua mark is branded on the interior cover and the base of the flat foot. The third bowl is marked by 13 shallow steps on the sides and features a round turned cover stepped on the rim, surmounted by the urn form finial. The cover is inscribed KALĀKAUA in capital letters and the King David Kalākaua mark is branded on the interior cover and the base of the flat foot.

These covered bowls are believed to have been gifted to King David Kalākaua on the occasion of his 50th Birthday Silver Jubilee celebration on November 16, 1886.



**Item #4: Coconut Shell Cup (1886)**

This sanded and finished coconut shell cup rests on a kou wood flaring stepped pedestal foot. The fitted cover marked by incised rings is surmounted by a finial, with POXXIV inscribed on the base of flat foot.

This cup was likely the property of Liliu‘okalani Morris and inherited by her daughter, Princess Abigail Kawānanakoa.



## Item #5: Political Armband (1900)

This rare printed paper political armband was worn by the supporters of Prince David Kawānanakoa during the 1900 election of the Hawaii Delegate to Congress. Prince Kawānanakoa, who lost the election, ran against Sam Parker and Robert Wilcox, who won the election. The armband is framed together with a small copy of Prince David's lifetime portrait and a brief descriptive text of the armband. The political paper armband is unique with no other known surviving example.



**Item #6: Mrs. Morris Liliu‘okalani**

Titled Portrait of Mrs. Liliu‘okalani Kawānanakoa Morris, this bust portrait shows a smiling woman wearing a white dress with a diamond and sapphire pin, posed in front of ‘Iolani Palace. It is signed Glover on the lower right.



**Item #7: Calabash**

A Hawaiian 19th century kou wood 'umeke la'au pakaka. This calabash of low rounded form features a deep honey color wood with darker markings and the King David Kālākaua mark branded on the base.

Owned by King David Kalākaua, as indicted by the Kalākaua mark on the bottom of the calabash, and inherited by descent first to his great grandniece Liliu'okalani Morris and then her daughter, Abigail Kawānanakoa.



### **Item #8: Cordage**

This very large bundle of Hawaiian 19th century olona cordage of indeterminate length is believed to have been used in the rituals of the Hale Naua Society, a secret royal society established by King David Kalākaua on September 24, 1886. Membership was strictly controlled and limited to men who claimed relationship to the chiefs. Genealogists who sat with the King were required to recognize a suitable relationship between the King and the ancestry of the candidate.

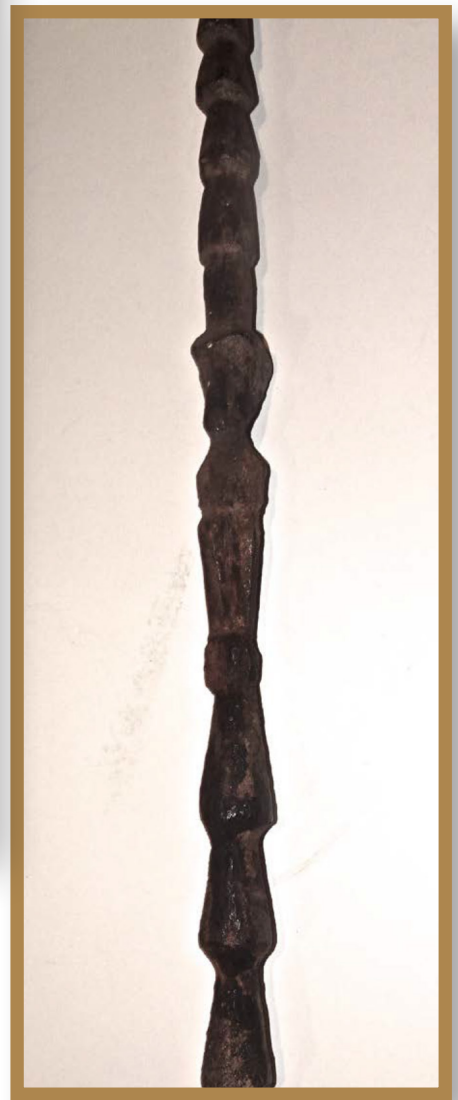
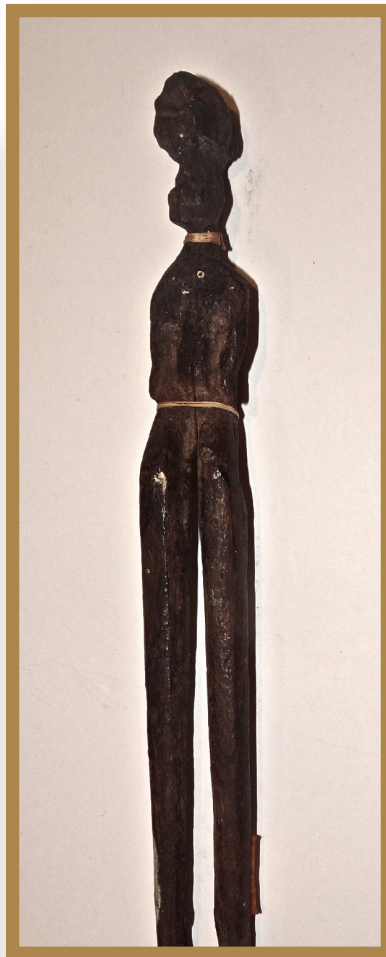
Likely owned by King David Kalākaua and inherited by descent first to his great grandniece Liliu'okalani Morris and then her daughter, Abigail Kawānanakoa.



### Item #9: Wood Akua Ka'ai Image

Very early 19th century or earlier, this long stick image is composed of two god figures, with the upper standing god figure featuring very long slightly flexed legs and the lower god figure featuring a triangular head. The stick is marked with a series of tapered conical sections.

Princess Kahanu Kalaniana'ole gifted the piece to Thomas Vredenburg prior to 1932. The upper half was stolen in the 1980s. Both halves were subsequently reunited in 2008 when they were acquired by Princess Abigail Kawānanakoa.



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