

**HELEN NIELSEN BIO-SKETCH**

A resident of Maui for close to thirty years, Helen Nielsen has a passion for community service and environmental sustainability. A homeowner in remote Kaupo in the Hana District of Maui, her home has been off the grid for decades, with 100% independent infrastructure, utilizing solar power with rainwater catchment. Helen grows fruit trees and vegetables, and raises honeybees and chickens.

Helen is co-owner/manager of commercial properties in Wailuku, Maui and Waimea, Hawaii, and is actively working with her husband Jonathan Starr to build affordable workforce rental apartment housing in Wailuku. She has worked as a reports analyst for WR Grace & Co. headquarters in NY City, as Military Spec Sales Administrator at EG&G Rotron Corporation, and as administrative manager for the Artkraft Strauss Group of communications, advertising and construction companies in New York.

Until Helen's appointment as a UH Regent, she was employed by the United States Senate as a Field Representative for Hawaii's US Senator Brian Schatz.

Taking land conservation to a new level in Hawaii, in 2001 Helen founded the Maui Coastal Land Trust (MCLT) and served on its board for 14 years. MCLT protected over 14,000 acres in Maui County and garnered nationwide recognition as a leader in land conservation.

Due to the success of the MCLT, major funders, governmental and land conservation groups requested that MCLT, under Helen's leadership as President, spearhead efforts to merge similar local organizations into a statewide non-profit. The Hawaiian Islands Land Trust (HILT) was thereby formed in 2011, merging non-profits from Kauai, Oahu, Maui and Hawaii Island. Helen served as the transition leader and first board president of HILT. The purpose of HILT is to preserve iconic lands by identifying and creating sustainable partnerships to protect unique and endangered resources in Hawaii.

Helen's exemplary work with land conservation, as well as her consensus-driven and inclusive leadership style, has been widely lauded and she has been honored by the Hawaii Legislature, the Maui County Council, the Rotary Club, and Maui County's Commission on the Status of Women. On her retirement from the HILT Board, Governor Neil Abercrombie proclaimed November 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2014 as Helen Nielsen Day throughout Hawaii, in recognition of her accomplishments through 14 years of effective service

In addition, Helen is a long-time volunteer with several other local non-profits. She has served as President of the Maui Japanese Chamber of Commerce, participating in community-building projects in Fukuyama and Hiroshima Japan. Currently Helen serves on the Maui Japanese Cultural Society Board of Directors.

Helen is a 30-year member of the Amateur Radio Emergency Service (Ham Radio Operator Extra Class license KH6T). She holds an FAA private pilot license. Helen has also served on the Maui County Salary Commission and the Maui Economic Development Board's (MEDB) committee on Economic Development, and as communications and logistics officer on the Hawaii Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) HI-1.

She attended Kingsborough Community College and Pace University in New York City, studying business while working corporate administrative jobs to pay her tuition.

Helen is an abstract painter. She enjoys travel, art, music and cooking for her many diverse friends and acquaintances.

\*\*\*\*\*HN January 2015

