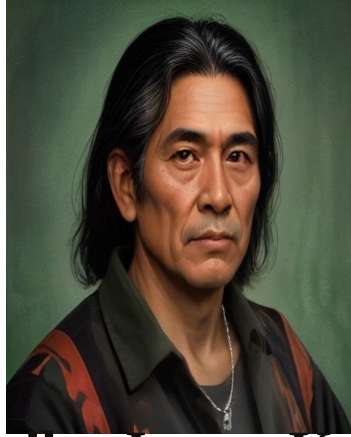




Kawika James Kalani

July 18, 1956 - August 22, 2026

Hilo, Hawaii

Kawika James Kalani died in Hilo on August 22, 2026. He was seventy. He was born there on July 18, 1956, in a house that smelled of rain and coffee, and he learned the orchard road as a weekday neighbor long before it became a postcard. His mother packed lunches for a crew that started before daylight. Kawika learned that a clean sink is a kind of welcome that does not require a speech.

He spent sixteen years in a macadamia orchard that treated a lug as a promise: it has to arrive cool or the whole story is late. Later he kept a school building that smelled of crayons and toner. He was the adult who could sit with a mop closet without making a production of it. He kept extra snacks in a drawer for the child whose morning had already been too long. When the district sent a new form, he translated it twice: once into English a tired parent could use, and once into the quiet that says you are not in trouble for needing help.

He married Noelani Kalani in 1980. They bought a bungalow in a neighborhood that later became expensive around them. They stayed. A son and a daughter went through public schools he trusted more than he trusted waterfront talk. After Noelani died in 2019 he kept the garden of ti and the habit of walking a neighbor's child to the bus when a shift ran late.

Neighbors remember a man who swept his sidewalk and yours if the wind had been unfair, who kept a coffee can of measuring spoons, and who could sit through a graduation without making it about himself. He liked the bay early, before the heat, when the water still looked like a place a person could walk. He died in Hilo, the only city he had ever needed.

Services

A memorial in Hilo with tea afterward. In lieu of flowers, a gift to a school supply closet is welcome.

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