



HAWAI'I LODGING & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION

**LATE**

Testimony of

Mufi Hannemann  
President & CEO  
Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association

House Committee on Veteran, Military, & International Affairs, & Culture and the Arts

House Concurrent Resolution 70

*Requesting the United States Postal Service to issue a commemorative postage stamp in honor of Alfred Apaka.*

Aloha Chair Ito, Vice Chair Tokioka and members of the committee, on behalf of the Hawai'i Lodging & Tourism Association and its 700-plus members we offer **strong support** for HCR 70 which would request of the US Postal Service to issue a commemorative postage stamp in honor of Alfred Apaka, legendary Hawaiian entertainer and showman.

As a state we pride ourselves on our Native Hawaiian culture and our Aloha spirit, two very unique features that help set us apart from the rest of the world. One very important aspect of our culture is and has been our islands' music, a genre that has helped set the stage for Hawai'i as a global destination. We have seen the pioneers of our state's music from Don Ho to Israel Kamakawiwo'ole and others who have made a name for themselves locally, nationally, and internationally. But before these gentlemen hit the scene there was another musical legend, Alfred Apaka, the pioneer who first introduced the world to Hawai'i's music.

Alfred Apaka, frequently known as the *Golden Voice of Hawai'i*, has created a legacy for himself as he headlined venues such as the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, the Moana Surfrider, Don at the Beachcomber, and Kaiser's Hawaiian Village where he entertained thousands of visitors and locals alike. His Hawaiian spirit spread throughout the world as he performed on national shows with the likes of Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore and Ed Sullivan. He was not only a talented musician, but an ambassador of Aloha of our beautiful islands.

Another Ambassador of Aloha and the only Native Hawaiian to receive a commemorative stamp from the US Postal Service is Olympic gold medalist Duke Kahanamoku. Duke was a very worthy recipient of this honor and it stands to follow that Alfred Apaka would be the perfect candidate to follow suit as the second Native Hawaiian to receive this accolade.

Alfred Apaka more than fits the bill when looking at the selection criteria for US commemorative stamps, but we will also be celebrating the centennial anniversary of his birth in 2019. For these reasons amongst many more we support this resolution and urge its passage.

Mahalo for the opportunity to testify.

say4 - Dustin

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**From:** John Berger <regreb808@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, March 16, 2017 8:08 AM  
**To:** say4 - Dustin  
**Subject:** John Berger - revised testimony

**LATE**

Testimony of John Berger in support of House Resolution 36 (HR 36) and House Concurrent Resolution 70 (HCR 70)

Aloha:

Tuesday, March 19, 2019, will be the birth centennial of Alfred Apaka. Apaka was one of the greatest Hawaiian vocalists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and his birth centennial should be commemorated by the United States Postal Service with a commemorative stamp.

Apaka was Hawaii's foremost male vocalist from the end of World War II through his death from a heart attack in 1960. He personified Hawaii for people who heard him around the world on the records he made for several national record labels and on the "Hawaii Calls" radio show, and for the tens of thousands of visitors who saw him perform at Kaiser's Hawaiian Village (now the Hilton Hawaiian Village) in Waikiki.

Apaka would be only the second native-Hawaiian to be recognized with a commemorative stamp by the USPS. Olympic gold medalist Duke Kahanamoku was honored with a commemorative stamp on the 112<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his birth in 2002. An Apaka stamp would be the first to direct attention to the contributions native-Hawaiians have made to America's performing arts - a completely different area of cultural endeavor.

To cite USPS guidelines for selecting subjects:

"Commemorative stamps or postal stationery items honoring individuals usually will be issued to celebrate births, anniversaries, and significant contributions."

"A balance of stamp subjects includes timely, relevant and contemporary subjects that reflect the nation's diverse population. Themes of widespread national appeal and significance that showcase our nation's inclusiveness, events and persons will be considered for commemoration."

An Alfred Apaka commemorative stamp would be exactly on point with those guidelines.

Mahalo,

John Berger

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Attached documentation:

Entry on Alfred Apaka from the second edition of *Hawaiian Music and Musicians* (Mutual Publishing, Honolulu, 2012)

APAKA, ALFRED AHOLO [Alfred Aholo Afat]

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Singer, musician (acoustic bass, 'ukulele) recording artist.

b. Honolulu, 19 Mar 1919; d. Honolulu, 30 Jan 1960. p. Mary Aholo and Alfred Afat (later Alfred Apaka, Sr.); m. Edna Blake, 1945; c. Jeff (son). Edc. Roosevelt High School (1938). Early musical training consisted of 'ukulele, bass playing, and singing in chorus at Roosevelt High School, and singing in Mormon church choirs. First professional engagement as a singer for Don McDiarmid, Sr., at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel (1938); also sang at the Alexander Young Hotel. Joined Ray Kinney and His Hawaiians at the Lexington Hotel in New York City (1940); made first recording as a featured vocalist, "Hawaii's Charm," with Ray Kinney and His Hawaiians (Decca 3447) 11 Apr 1940; subsequently with Ray Kinney and His Hawaiian Musical Ambassadors for Victor—"Rhythm of the Waves" (recorded 29 Aug 1940) b/w "Moon Over Burma (recorded 09 Oct 1940) (Vi 26750) featuring him as lead vocalist. Additional recordings for Victor 1940-1941. Rejoined McDiarmid at Kewalo Inn as bass player and vocalist (1943). Formed his own band at the La Hula Rhumba (1944). Recorded with Randy Oness' Select Hawaiian Serenaders for Bell Records c. June 1944. Records Performed on U.S. mainland circuit, mainly on West Coast (1946-1949). Recorded with Al Kealoha Perry and His Singing Surf Riders for Aloha Records c. 1947-1949. Engaged at Moana Hotel with his own band (a four-piece group) (1949-1951). Records as the leader of Alfred Apaka and His Hawaiians for Bell (1949), with Danny Stewart's Hawaiians for Decca (1950), and also for Decca as the leader of Alfred Apaka and The Select Hawaiians (1951). Performed at Don the Beachcomber's in Waikiki, where he was "discovered" by Bob Hope (1952); appears on Hope's NBC radio show with Dorothy Lamour in May of that year, and shortly thereafter on Bing Crosby's radio show. Recorded with the Andrews Sisters and Danny Stewart and His Islanders for Decca (May 1952) Also recorded in Hawai'i with J. Akuhead Pupule (aka mainland-born Hawai'i radio disk jockey Hal Lewis) for Lewis' Aku Records in 1952. Played the mainland circuit until 1954, when he returned to Hawai'i to work for Henry Kaiser. Summer engagements in Las Vegas and Lake Tahoe (1955). Opens at Kaiser's Hawaiian Village as Alfred Apaka and His Hawaiian Village Serenaders (1955); also served as the hotel's entertainment director until his death. Recorded for Kaiser's new Hawaiian Village record label (1958).

Apaka's discography includes numerous 78 rpm "sides" recorded for Decca and Bell in the 1940s as well as 33-1/3 rpm vinyl albums recorded in the 1950s and several posthumously released anthologies. Albums released

during his lifetime include *Broadway Wears A Lei* (Hawaiian Village HVLP-700). Among the others are *Alfred Apaka's Greatest Hits* (Capitol SM 2088), *My Isle of Golden Dreams* (Decca DL 74418), *The Immortal Hawaiian*, *Alfred Apaka* (ABC Records ABCS 734), and *Alfred Aholo Apaka: Hawaii's Golden Voice* (Hawaiian Legends Series Vol. 5) (HanaOla/Cord International HOCD32000). The HanaOla/Cord International album, released in 1998, contains electronically restored and remastered recordings made in Honolulu recording studios in the years 1947 through 1949.

Recipient of the Hawai'i Academy of Recording Arts Lifetime Achievement Award (1997).

Alfred Apaka possessed one of the most remarkable voices to come out of Hawai'i. A natural, untrained voice, it was strong, masculine, and agile—a delicate instrument that could range from B-flat to E in pianissimo. A good example of his vocal agility is his recording of “*Lei Aloha Lei Makamae*” on *Aloha Apaka!* (MCA 173), in which he sings both baritone and tenor parts. His numerous recordings contain many other examples.

Apaka was a balladeer by temperament and by talent. He sang Hawaiian, hapa haole, and haole songs, including American pop and show tunes (which his patrons, American industrialist Henry J. Kaiser and his second wife, Alyce, seemed to like), but he excelled at interpreting sentimental favorites such as “*My Isle of Golden Dreams*,” “*Sweet Leilani*,” and, one of his all-time favorites, “*Beyond the Reef*.” His prime audience tended to be adults between 30 and 60. He was a tourist attraction— as someone once put it, “*Every middle-aged female visitor to Waikiki was in love with Apaka*”—but he also had a large local following, and was popular with men as well as women. (He was athletic as well as handsome.)

Apaka played bass and 'ukulele, but was basically a vocalist. He composed no songs. He once said that when he composed anything, it always ended up sounding like something else. He did not read music and had no formal musical training after high school. However, he became a stellar entertainer with commanding stage presence. He was also was one of a handful of island-born singers of his generation who achieved a measure of success on the U.S. mainland, and must be recognized as a factor in the national popularization of Hawaiian music in the 1940s and 1950s.

His death in 1960 at the age of 41 came at the height of his career, when he seemed to be headed for national television exposure— and possible success as a pop singer. Apaka's *Broadway Wears A Lei* album contained as many America pop hits as Hawaiian and hapa haole songs, and a TV pilot project in which he starred had just been sold to a sponsor. Apaka was mourned by many, and was buried with a microphone in his hands.

Apaka's stature continued to grow after his death. Many of his recordings are still in print —now on CD—more than 50 years after his death.

—GSK (1979) and JB (2012)