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## King Kamehameha Day

Today, June 11 is a state holiday here in Hawaii: King Kamehameha I Day.

Kamehameha I, also known as Kamehameha the Great, unified the Hawaiian islands into the Kingdom of Hawai'i in the early 1800s. The holiday was first proclaimed in 1871 by King Kamehameha V to honor his grandfather. It was one of the first holidays authorized by the governor and state legislature when Hawaii became a state in 1959.

The holiday is celebrated here with floral parades, hula, music, food, exhibitions, crafts, and other aspects of Hawaiian cultural traditions. One of the central events is the draping of the Kamehameha statue in Honolulu with long strands of lei. This statue stands in front of Ali'i'ōlani Hale, the former government seat of both the Kingdom of Hawaii and the Republic of Hawaii. It is now the home of the State Supreme Court. Replicas of the statue on other Hawaiian islands are also draped in lei. State and county offices are closed on this day, as well as some of the local banks.



There's a copy of the Kamehameha statue in Washington, D.C. Here's some information from Wikipedia.

*A third replica was commissioned when Hawaii attained statehood and was unveiled in 1969. It stood in the United States Capitol alongside the Father Damien Statue and was the heaviest statue in Statuary Hall, weighing 15,000 pounds. In 2008, shortly after Hawaii-born Barack Obama was nominated as the Democratic Party's candidate for the presidency, the statue was moved from a dark, back row of Statuary Hall to a prominent position in Emancipation Hall in the Capitol's new visitor center.*

Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, all Kamehameha celebrations have been canceled in Hawaii this year. We are all looking forward to their return in 2021.

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