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# Local waterwoman will be honored at book event

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North Shore waterwoman, naturalist, educator and writer Audrey Sutherland, who raised four children in a long wooden house she and her husband built on the shoreline overlooking Chun's Reef, gained nationwide recognition in 2012 with her memoir "Paddling North: A Solo Adventure Along the Inside Passage," published by Patagonia Books. It chronicles two of her many summer voyages through the fjords of Alaska in her inflatable kayak.

Sutherland, who died at 94 in 2015, was already beloved to Hawaii readers for "Paddling My Own Canoe: A Solo Adventure on the Coast of Moloka'i," first published locally in 1978. New paperback editions of both books were released by Patagonia this year, with luminous color illustrations by Yoshiko Yamamoto.

Her candid voice and the sensual immediacy of her prose, however, require no pic-

torial accompaniment: "The waterfall of Waiaho'okalo, water-for-making-taro, filled the space between the cliff and the sea. I walked through it, tilting my head back for a quick drink."

In 1962, having trained her children to take care of themselves, Sutherland set off on her first of many swims along the wild, forbidding northeast coast of Molokai with its perilous currents and waves, steep cliffs and water-gouged valleys, while towing a raft with supplies. Launching at Halawa Valley, she emerged sea-battered at Kalaupapa. She returned years later with an inflatable kayak, got caught in a rainstorm and terrifying seas, barely surviving again. Yet safe at home with her children on a moonlit night, "I would think of Moloka'i, how it would be in that light and that surf." She keeps returning.

"Go simple, go solo, go now," is Sutherland's rallying call. "Alone, you are more aware of surroundings, wary as an animal to danger, limp and relaxed when the sun, the brown earth, or the deep grass say, 'Rest now.' You become as a fish, a boulder, a tree — a part of the world around you."

But Sutherland didn't always feel alone. She read Hawaiian myths, and "In these valleys of north Moloka'i, I often felt that some of the ancient people were squatting with me by the fire."

And wherever you may go alone, you won't be lonely if you take her books.

On Thursday, Sutherland will be



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**Audrey Sutherland posed with her inflated canoe on her North Shore lawn in 2011. Sutherland died in 2015 at age 94.**

commemorated by her champion surfer son Jock Sutherland, friend and fellow Patagonia author Dale Hope ("The Aloha Shirt") and others at a free public event at da Shop, 3565 Harding Ave. Refreshments will be served and her books will be for sale at \$16.95 each.

