

Florida Impressions

One of my best memories is of the last night of the conference (intended for longtime pioneer members), when the Sunshine Cafeteria at the FNCC was festooned with balloons. Several people were called up to the front and presented with beautiful orchid leis. I saw General Director Zaitso coming and went to thank him for this wonderful weekend and for his guidance and speeches when he'd come to Philadelphia in the past. I told him they had meant a lot to me, since I'd only had the Gohonzon one year, and that I felt honored to be together with the pioneer members. Hearing this, he looked at my name tag and ran off. I thought: "Now I've done it. He's going to want to know what I'm doing here." Suddenly, Wendy Clark, SGI-USA women's division chief, called me up to the front — and Mr. Zaitso was announcing that I was a new member, and he was proud of me and happy that I was there with all of them. People applauded as I walked toward him, and he placed one of those orchid leis around my neck. "But I'm not a pioneer," I said. He put his hands on my shoulders and gave me a firm little shake, saying, "You are a future pioneer."

— *Sandi Drew Biron, Philadelphia*