

Lolita the orca's ashes are going home for a traditional water ceremony: Here's what will happen

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Lolita, the orca who lived in a tank at the Miami Seaquarium from her capture in 1970 in waters off Washington state to her death 53 years

later in August, will be honored in a homecoming Saturday.

On Wednesday, the Lummi Nation, representing the original inhabitants of Washington's northernmost coast where Lolita was captured, announced it will welcome home Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut—the orca also known as Tokitae or Toki—"in traditional ceremonies to honor her life and leadership," the group said in a statement.

The Lummi Nation had long advocated on behalf of Tokitae and had aimed to have her returned to Puget Sound in her lifetime.

Lolita, who performed at the Virginia Key attraction until she was retired in 2022 due to [health issues](#), died Aug. 18. She was about 57.

"Lolita will be welcomed by her family, with the honors and ceremonies of the Lummi's still preserved culture. Some of them will be shared to the people [live stream](#) in [social media](#)," the Seaquarium said in a Facebook post.

According to the Lummi Nation, its members traveled to Athens, Georgia, earlier this week to culturally and traditionally prepare Toki's ashes for her journey home. A necropsy was conducted in August by vets and pathologists at the University of Georgia. Final results will be released soon and made available to the public, the Seaquarium said in its statement.

"This week's ceremonies are private for Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's Lummi relations. Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut will be honored with a public celebration of life at a date to be announced later," the Lummi Nation said.

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