

# Kumu hula gets deserved recognition

PUKALANI — A great moment in the life of Nina Charlotte Boyd Maxwell came this past July, when she was recognized for her talent as a teacher of ancient and modern hula and the chants of old Hawaii by the Kumu Hulas of Hawaii, Kalihi and Palama Culture & Arts Society.

She has an enrollment of 100 students at her Pukalani Hula Hale (House of Dance). Students come from all over Maui. She says, "There is a waiting list, which makes me feel very satisfied that the hula is here to stay. I believe in researching the legends, the dance, the chants before I perform or teach my students."

She almost did not become a kumu hula — if her late father, Edward Kalandani Boyd had his way. He even bought her a piano so that she would not take hula lessons. She says, "It is possible that he felt that the culture was dead, as he had experienced a sudden change in the Hawaiian culture in his youth and adulthood."

Luckily Nina, although she was

very young, was very determined to learn the hula. She learned the fundamentals of hula, both ancient and modern, the chants, and the "oli," the chant that is not danced to music, especially, with prolonged phrases chanted in one breath, often with a trill ('i'i) at the end of each phrase.

Her first teacher was Elizabeth Lum Ho. At the age of 10, she took hula from Auntie Emma Sharpe. Nina became Auntie Emma's solo dancer and entertained all over Maui.

She and her students are now practicing hula numbers to be performed at the Merrie Monarch Festival in Hilo in April. She says, "It takes a whole year for all of us to be ready for the great event, 'the hula Olympics.' There are 35 hula schools participating in the competition."

Those who participate in this "hula Olympics" are selected by the halau through auditions.

She takes her hair dressers, make-up artists and costumers with her so that everyone and every number is



**Rachael Jio  
Pukalani**

authentically Hawaiian. "Without these people," she said, "it would be almost impossible to take part in the competition, because no one kumu hula is able to do everything for the performers, and I want everything to be perfectly Hawaiian — from make-up to customs. The hula competition is keen, and everyone performing at the Merrie Monarch Hula Festival is a perfectionist."

Nina is not only a kumu hula, but she comes from a family which has deep roots in Hawaii. Her grandfather was a member of Queen Liliuokalani's cabinet. He was thrown in prison during the take-over of the monarchy. Her grandmother was lady-in-waiting for Queen Liliuokalani.

Nina's hope for the future is to try to research the Hawaiian culture through the hula — from Tahiti throughout Polynesia.

Nina is a graduate of St. Anthony's High School. She is married to Charles Kauluwehi Maxwell. They have four children, three girls and one boy. Her mother, Mary Boyd, who is 81 years old, lives in Waiehu.

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Greetings to Dennis and Katherine Hashiro, who recently moved into their new home in Pukalani Terrace. Dennis is the manager of Air Flo and Katherine is a second grade teacher at Makawao School.