

Leiana Ikarosalani Maui Long Woodside  
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I'm the seventh of seven girls in my family. I have a daughter, Hokulani Holt Padilla, and her halau is called, Pa'u 'o Hi'iaka. I teach the Oahu branch of that halau and my students come from Waimanalo where I presently live. I also teach classes up at St. Francis Hospital.

I don't think I had a choice about the hula. My mother was a kumu hula and you just had to get up there and dance. My mother's name was Ida Pakulani Long and she was born and reared on Maui. Everyone of us including my brothers had to dance. I remember being at the Territorial Building in Kahului when I was four-years-old. That's where Maui held all of their concerts like the HIC did for Honolulu. In the early 30's, my mother was the only one that I can remember who was holding hula concerts. It wasn't a very big thing at that time. My brothers and sisters were all onstage and I was off on the side and I was broken-hearted and ready to cry because I was not asked to get in and dance with them although I felt I knew all the dances.

At the age of six I was the May Day dancer for my public school and I thought that was a big deal at that time. Here I was a soloist at six-years-old and I felt so big and important.

Something very special to me was being in movies. I was in Mr. Roberts and Bird of Paradise with Debra Padgett.

My first kumu was my mother. In those days we never went to pay anybody how to dance. The war came along and so we all joined the USO and did our bit for the war. We put together a little show with my sisters and some of the kids in the neighborhood and we go from camp to camp and entertain the servicemen of World War 2. After I got married, I moved to Honolulu. My sister lived up on Kaimuki ~~Avenue~~ and I went to go live with her for awhile. And that's when my dancing career started. She was a neighbor of Lena Guerrero. Lena had a hula group called the "Waikiki Girls". My sister, Mae Loebenstein, was dancing at the Royal Hawaiian for Mama and Papa Bray. Everytime she came back from Oahu to Maui for vacation we would have hula classes and there was no ifs, ands or buts, you just had to get in there. My mother wanted us to keep abreast of what Honolulu was doing. We would get our whacks everyday because our feet weren't right or our elbows were off, and so we would cry everyday. My other sister and I after awhile took turns crying. One day would be my turn to cry and the next day would be hers. My sister Mae was just like my mother, she was a perfectionist and very strict. We had to do everything right. And they taught with the puili, not only to keep rythm but to discipline our motions. I thought my sister Mae was the greatest dancer in the world and since she was dancing at the Royal Hawaiian which was the spot in the Hawaiian Islands I thought ~~she had to be the greatest~~ she had to be the greatest. I wanted to learn everything she had to teach us. I wanted to emulate every motion she had to the nth degree. I tried very hard to be exactly like her. <sup>A memory I have is of watching my mother teaching</sup> Alice Ma*hi*, Loyal Garner's mother. I used to walk around the yard and in my dreams I promised myself that one day I was going to be a beautiful hula dancer like Alice Ma*hi*. Alice Ma*hi* was my first idol and then when my sister came back from Honolulu to teach us she became my idol. I think what I admired about their dancing was that their motions were precise, very articulate. They had poise, and strength in their dancing, there was no sloppiness in their style. And they had a smile that just expressed everything that they were feeling inside. They took pride in what they were doing with just the tilt of their head and I told myself that's the way I'm going to dance. ~~When my mother and sister taught me~~ I was taught both ancient and modern by my mother and my sister. I did the simple ancient hulas and I learned only about five of them. It was my sisters that really became involved in the ancient hula. My family is Mormon and we were taught to open ourselves up and share our talents. So When I was eight years old we would teach the other children the hula at church and the older women would teach us old chants. We would be taught hula kolani.

I remember Tutu Kahea who was an enormous woman who carried a great staff and at Sunday School we would sit around her and chant and she would chant and keep the beat using the staff. And if there was any mistakes she would use her staff to correct us.

Aside from the concerts, it was the church where we did a lot of our dancing.

I learned from Mae that my mother learned from an old Hawaiian man named Ma'wae who lived in Piiana. The reason my mother knows this is because one of my mother's favorite songs was Kaloke and whenever she needed fresh flowers, she would go see Ma'wae and he would cry while he chanted a kahea komo as if a student had come back to him. The two of them would cry as they chanted to each other and that's why Mae felt he was her kumu.

I never heard about The Unwritten Literature of Hawaii until I was married and preparing to take the Dep. of Parks and Rec. test. A Librarian came over and showed me the book. I could remember my mother explaining to me the 'ailolo, the kahea komo, the cleansing rituals. She told me that they never practiced like they do today. Today they practice the u'ehe, kahele over and over again. The way they learned it was they dreamt of things. When my mother was telling me these things I thought my mother didn't know what she was talking about. I was always ashamed to mention these things around people because I felt they would think she was crazy. But she said at night when she would fall asleep she would see and hear in her dreams the chanting, and the drumming and she saw herself dancing. Throughout the whole night until dawn. When the rooster crowed, she would get up and it would all be in her head and she would know exactly how to do the chant and the dance.

You would see yourself dancing and hear kumu hula chanting in your head and the next morning we would all go to class. The kumu hula would come out, bang on the ipu, and we would all kahea and we would all dance together. She was emphatic about all of this. She talked about the cleansing ceremonies before the recitals. Back then they didn't call it uniki, they had another name for it. They had an open lania with coconut leaves on the top. In the middle of the room there was a fire pit where they had a fire. She made it a point to tell me that the haumana didn't go home and sleep, they slept with their kumu, and when they ~~slept~~ slept, their feet were always pointed towards the fire. Before the recitals, the kumu and the haumana would stay up and pray all night long. I never questioned her why they sleep with their feet towards the fire, but my sister Kahili told me that's where they believed their strength came from the feet. My mother always told us that when you look at a hula dancer you look at the feet. If the feet were good, the rest of the dance will be beautiful.

She used words like kahiko and auwana, but her steps had different names. She used two steps, Kii pa ~~and Kii wawae~~ and Kii wawae, that I don't see used by kumu. Her favorite steps was u'ehe for kahiko and kui for auwana.

In 1945 we moved to Honolulu and we lived next door to Lena Grienecco and she had a hula group.

We lived just below Kahekili's heiau in Maui. The area we lived in had been Kahekili's practice ground for combat. Today it is the Hawaiian Homestead land and it is a big plain confined by hills like a horseshoe. Our house back then was the only one in there and all of the was our playground.

Lena used to see me walking around the yard and one day she asked me if I danced. I said yes, so she invited me to come learn with her and at 21 she asked me to dance at the Royal Hawaiian. I would stay at the Royal for 16 years after that.

In those days you danced many places in one night-- we would dance at private parties, the Moana Hotel, Don the Beachcomber, ~~then~~ you might start at the cocktail hour at the Moana, then go to a 9 o'clock floor show at the Royal Hawaiian, then come back for the last floor show at the Royal. You had to change in the car in the end. When you came to a stoplight, you looked around and you put on the other blouse. When you came to the next hotel you just grabbed your things and ran from the car onto the stage just in time to the accompaniment of the musical fanfare. They didn't have that many hula dancers before. Back in the 40's and 50's the halau were never called halau, they were called ~~hula~~ hula troupes. These troupes back then thought nothing about sharing their haumana with each other. If Bill had a show that already took up all of his dancers and he had another order for a show, he would ask another teacher. Everyone thought nothing of it. The biggest change has been the young men coming to the hula. Before you couldn't ever get young people near the hula.

Today the hula is being learned by people of all races some with more interest than the Hawaiians themselves. The wonderful thing about the hula is it is bringing the Hawaiian to the fore. For so long we have been depicted as always lagging behind or always having someone else do things for us and complain. The hula has been one way the Hawaiians have brought themselves out of themselves to move forward. It has also helped races to understand the Hawaiian socially so it makes for a better blend.

Alice Keawakane was at the same time of Lena G.. She was more auwana. Lena was kahiko and had learned from the Brays. In the shows we always performed kahiko and auwana. We would open with Kahiko and close with auwana. From Iolani, Joseph Kahaukelio, and Sally Wood I learned a few numbers. Because I had so many sisters I didn't really have a close friend. So when it came to learning the hula, I did it all on my own. There was a desire in me, a light for the hula that made me seek out training on my own.

I began to teach at 21 on my own. I would set up classes at a court across Punahou School and hold classes in one of the teachers apartments. I told them to learn one kahiko chant because once you learn one kahiko, the auwana will be easier to understand but they were interested in modern hula.

Every summer it was a must for me to go home and teach my family. I would go back for 3 months every year and every day the kids ~~we~~ would come at 2 PM to 4 PM. The SFCA had me going around the schools as an artist-in-the-schools teaching traditional dances and chants.

I encourage creativity. Some of the old kumu feel their way is the only way of dancing that traditionally you don't veer from the hand or foot movements, handed down from ~~generations~~ ~~a~~ generation to generation. But if everything has been passed down the same it would be so monotonous. I don't believe that's the way it was done because it does not explain the great variety we have in our chants and dances. I encourage my haumana to create what they feel. Our ancestors must have created on their own or we wouldn't have ~~suck~~ diversity. They say we have lost a lot but we still have a lot left. We can't be worse off then they were. If our ancestors were here today they would be writing chants about things that inspire them of today. So why can't the young of today continue that tradition?

People of today will dismiss a kahiko chant unless it's ancient. They say the ~~xx~~ writer doesn't know what he's doing. But even the oldest chant probably went through the ~~same~~ same criticism as the new kahiko chants of today.

I think a lot of the kapus are because a kumu wanted to protect his/her ideas and dances from being stolen by other jealous kumu. It's ~~a~~ not that there is a curse on it ~~at~~ at all.

Hula kahiko is a record of the Hawaiians emotion, historical and everyday ~~xxx~~ events, his love life, his entire life. That was Hawaii's way of preserving history.