

AUNTY PAT NAMAKA BACON

Pulama Award Recipient

Born at Waimea, Kaua'i and orphaned at birth "Aunty Pat" as she is more affectionately called by all of us who have come to know and love her was adopted by Mr. & Mrs. Henry Wiggin and raised in the Hawaiian tradition of "hanai" by their daughter, Mrs. Mary Kawena Pukui. She was given the name Patience by her father, Elmay, a compromise of two family names, and the Hawaiian names of Na-maka-uohoa-o-kawena-'ula-o-ka-lani by Kawena's mother and Ikiiki-ka-lani-nui by Kawena.

Aunty Pat was nurtured in a household in which Hawaiian was the spoken language and she recalls her childhood as a time filled with special memories and "na mea Hawaii." Her fondness for dance first became evident at age three when she was called upon to entertain at a family gathering and she performed a solo hula to "Hilo Hanakahi," a dance she learned by watching others. However, Aunty Pat's serious study of the hula did not begin until the age of thirteen, during which time she served as

an assistant to her mother, Kawena, and the famed hula master of Kaua'i, Keahi Luahine. As an aide, Aunty Pat was taught the dances while Kawena and Keahi drummed and chanted in an exchange of mele. It is said that at first Aunty Pat danced terribly and Kawena was becoming increasingly worried as the lessons progressed. One day, Keahi beckoned Aunty Pat to come to her, then she placed her hands on her shoulders and began to chant. As she chanted she pressed the child's body lower and lower, continuing her chanting until Aunty Pat was sitting on her heels. Then Keahi said, "Get up, it is finished." From that moment on, Aunty Pat lost every vestige of awkwardness.

After completing her study with Keahi, Aunty Pat continued her formal hula training under the tutelage of the hula master Kapua and later with a relative well known in the hula world as a master of ancient Hawaiian dance by the name of Joseph Ilalaole.

Although Aunty Pat never had a halau, she has shared her love for the hula and her knowledge for things Hawaiian with many people of Hawaii. She has been affiliated with the Kalihi-Palama Culture and Arts Society, Inc. for approximately 15 years serving as a "loea hula" for our kumu hula seminars and volunteering her valuable time and expertise as a Hawaiian cultural resource, consultant and judge for our keiki hula competition. In addition she has also generously contributed hula kahiko chants from her family's renowned Mary Kawena Pukui collection of traditional Hawaiian poetry as a hoo-kupu to all the children participating in our festival.

In recognition and appreciation for her significant contributions toward preservation and perpetuation of the Hawaiian culture for our keiki o ka 'aina through our Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition, the Kalihi-Palama Culture and Arts Society, Inc. is pleased to bestow the 1989 Pulama Award to Aunty Pat Namaka Bacon. With this award, we extend our warmest aloha and mahalo nui loa for enriching our island keiki with your aloha and precious mana'o. Ke pulama mau nei makou, ia 'oe me ka welina pau'ole (we shall cherish you always with our never ending love).

Photo Credit: Michael Young

