

Karen Kaohulani Aiu Costa

Karen Kaohulani Aiu Costa, daughter of the late renown kumu hula Ma'iki Aiu Lake, established the halau, Nā Wahine No Me Ka Ha'aha'a Mai Ma'iki and Nā Kane O Kaohulani in 1984.

Back in the early '60's, kahiko was not as popular as today, ~~but~~ ^{the} training as a dancer was very important and valuable as far as where our beginnings came from and where hula started.

Chants such as Aua'ia were very precious to Hawaiians and were taught only to the special students.

I became a student of my mother, Ma'iki Aiu from the age of six or seven. As I got older, I was fortunate to become a right hand or an extension of my mother in the partnership of the business as well as learning culture of the hula. So for twenty-two years, I was very privileged and honored to hold this position. In 1970, my mother opened up a class for anyone interested in studying to be a kumu hula. It was not by choice but by obligation, ~~which~~ ^{it} was decided by my mother's aunty, Hoakalei Defries, that I attend ~~ed~~ all of these classes. All the young people who came to ~~be in~~ that first kumu hula class were there by choice, ~~but~~ ^{for me} for myself, it was part of my family tradition. ~~It was to be~~ ^{and} carried on for the future. ~~It was just mandatory.~~

Our class started off with a total of at least seventy-eight students but dwindled down to about fifty-two. The desire to be a kumu ~~to~~ ^{and} to learn what a kumu ~~and her~~ responsibilities were ~~were not~~ ^{were not} as easy as we thought it was going to be. The formal training lasted over two years ~~of~~ ^{with} long hours of ~~being able to~~ ^{ice} create chants of our ancestors, learning to make your own instruments, training as 'olapa, ho'opa'a and then, ~~fully~~ given the title of being a kumu hula. This title was bestowed unto us after all of this training in 1972. I accepted the title but I didn't acknowledge it because of all the duties and responsibility ^{ice} that such a heavy title carries ^{ing}.

My mother gave us the opportunity to bring paper and pencil to write notes and to ask questions regarding any chant, song or dance that we were learning. She also issued some chants that we never heard of on paper to make it easy for us. Tutu Kawena Puku'i encouraged her ~~that~~

to satisfy the

~~there was~~ a need for paper and pencil because when we went home, we would be totally lost if we didn't have anyone who spoke the language. We would be frustrated and lose interest in learning. It would be more damaging not to have something to fall back on like notes.

I have had the opportunity during those twenty-two years with my mother of visiting and learning from many elders. Many of them are gone, like Aunty Alice, Vicky I'i, Uncle Bill Lincoln and Tutu Kawena, ~~who we'd spend many hours at her home~~. I was fortunate to have these caring teachers.

~~As I said, initially I went into the kumu hula class not by choice. But as I got older~~
and hopefully ^I wiser, ~~you~~ ^{saw} experienced things and ~~you see~~ the love of people who came to me and believed in me and my teaching. They told me that I really had a lot to share. My interpretation of kumu hula has always been what I saw in my mother. She was so enlightening, full of love and she had so much to give. I didn't think I was that kind of a person. But the people ^{led to} look at me for all of the same things that they saw in my mother. ~~So~~ Today, I share the knowledge that my mother's hula masters left with her and she has left with me. Now I leave it with all of you.

I visualize hula, ~~in the time~~, ^{return} will come to full circle and we will go back to that which was the most important, ~~which is~~ the basics. ~~Because~~ Without the source, we don't have much of a future. We will go back to the beginnings, to our ancestors and that will be ~~the vital part~~ to our survival. We do have elders; we do have beginnings; we do have grass roots, ~~and~~ where we all come from and the source of the elders is there.

As a teacher, my mother was strict but there was also love and concern. To me, she was a master in all that she did. She appealed to the young because she made hula exciting. ~~Her~~ ~~gestures were of what one felt and what one could convey~~. She wasn't selfish with her haumana and she was always forever giving. All of these things made me look up to her. Hopefully all these qualities is what I as a kumu hula can someday leave to my haumana.