

"Ka Lei Hulu Mamo o Kawelohea" is the precious lei of Kawelohea. The lei is a symbol of the individual efforts that were required to receive this most prestigious honor. Individual commitment and dedication to excellence is represented by each individual feather, placed carefully onto a foundation, bound together, forever more.

This foundation is the basis from which all knowledge, skills, and wisdom are derived. The backbone of the lei is likened to the line of kupuna and mentors that were important to Aunty Edith Kawelohea McKinzie's development as a student of Hawaiian Hula and Chant and eventually, a recognized master or Kumu Loea.

Likened to the efforts of your Kumu, the entire lei is masterfully created out of individual feathers and a labor of Love. The love for Hula, skills of your kumu and the sacrifices that are made daily for the betterment of the entire Halau are important to the making of a complete lei of Aloha.

The hue of yellow was specially selected to represent knowledge and enlightenment. May you go forth, as Aunty Edith does, seeking further into the secrets of the Hula and Chant and while doing so, may the search for Truth and Wisdom serve as a light to guide your every endeavor.

The koa container which holds Ka Lei Hulu Mamo o Kawelohea is fashioned to represent a book of knowledge and a reminder of the important sources Aunty Edith Kawelohea McKinzie has given as an author, composer and researcher. The body of knowledge our Kupuna left in our charge is tremendous, but there are yet many more pages to be added. Preserved for perpetuity, her work stands firmly as a foundation to Hawaii's collected knowledge in countless ways. Perhaps, this is the time for you to contribute as well.

When this Award is displayed in an open stance, let it be a reminder of the open invitation Aunty Edith extends to everyone: seek the essence of your culture, why you are you, and make those important connections with the past, the present and the future.