

Leimomi Ho

I have stayed with Aunty Vickie Ii Rodrigues till this day and she has been the one that has made me what I am today. She shares so much with me and I've grown to love her like a mom. I've become her hands and feet. If someone wants to learn a dance from her, she teaches it to me and I take it from there. *It is indeed an honor to be one of the many that have been "touched" by her work and to be able to share a part of her great knowledge.*

My grandmother and my parents were involved in the hula on Kauai so when I turned three-years-old I was taken to Helen Waiau. I stayed with Helen for six years until we moved to Honolulu. We lived in Pauoa and through our neighbor I was led to my second kumu, Kamuela Naeole. Sam's studio was on Nuuanu Avenue in a building that they've torn down by now. He used to yell at us and we would get so scared but he was a good teacher who was always emphasizing fundamentals. Halaus back then were known as studios and the uniki was called a recital. It's only in the last few years that ~~these new terms~~ have come into use.

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I stayed with Sam for three years and then I met Piilani Watkins. I studied under John for five years and for two summers I worked with him at Jones Beach in New York. We had to learn to work with theatre people and it was all big production numbers. Because of all his trips to New York, John Watkins was very modernized. There was nothing very ancient about his dances. During my second summer in New York, I met Joe Kahaulilio who was a partner of Vickie Ii Rodrigues and I began to train under them when I returned home.

I was grateful for what ~~Uncle~~ John had given me but Uncle Joe taught me the hula as it should be. I didn't like doing production numbers like "Bali Hai" and Uncle Joe and Aunty Vickie started training me in ancient hula, soft auwana numbers, and old Hawaiian songs.

I began to teach in the 1960's but in a very off-handed manner. It was a case of people coming to me and asking if I could teach them a certain song. What hula takes from your life is time with your family so I've always tried to make the hula secondary.

Nowadays the hula is so modernized. So many steps have been added to ancient hula that never existed so what do you call them? My kumu created motions but they were kept within the kahiko style of dancing. I suppose there has to be change but I come from the old school and it's hard for me to adjust to this change.

*Mahalo to the Good Lord for giving me my mind, hands and feet to be able to carry on my Hawaiian Culture as I love it.
Mahalo Aunty Vickie for the many years you have shared your*

Knowledge with me.
P.S. please indicate how you wish your name to appear in the publication. if you prefer your full name or any variation from the above please call our office before June 24, 1983 and supply us with the necessary information.

"I love you"

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My parents, my mom and my dad were involved in the hula. Also my grandmother. And so when I turned 3 or 4 years old, they just started me in it to. And I've been dancing ever since then. The older I got, the harder it was to stop because it just got in my blood. The hula was something I enjoyed doing. It was a time when I got to express myself through dancing. This was my outlet from the everyday routine of life.

When I was a young girl, my first kumu hula was on Kaua'i. Her name was Helen Waiau. Then from Kaua'i my family moved to Oahu. We left Kaua'i when I was about nine years old. We moved to Pauoa and our next door neighbor was taking from Sam Naeole. And so because I was so interested in hula, I started going with her to class and that's how I got started with my second kumu Sam Naeole. I stayed with Sam for about 3 years. His studio was on Nuuanu Avenue but the building is not there anymore. As far as I can remember Sam was a very strict teacher. He used to get after us and ~~yahhmatnmsmifi~~ being so young you would listen when he yelled at you. We would get so scared. But he was a good teacher and as he got older he got even more strict and became a better teacher. He started his students on the fundamentals. At that time they did not refer to the classes as halau. I was with the older girls and he would use my class to demonstrate the motions and steps of the dances to the other classes. We were known as a studio back then not a halau like it would be today. It's just in the recent years that terms like a halau have come into use. We did not have a uniki back then but a recital.

After Sam Naeole I went to John Piilani Watkins. I stayed with John Watkins about five years. And then for two summers I worked with Piilani at Jones Beach in New York. It was all big production numbers up there and I had never done anything like it before. We really had to learn how to work with the theatre people. It was a really nice experience for me. On the second summer I went, I met Uncle Joe Kahaulilio. He and Auntie Vickie Ii became my kumu. I think because of his trips to New York, John Watkins was very modernized. There was nothing very ancient about his dances. They were all quite modern. It was hard for me because I started with Uncle Joe when I was still with Uncle John and it was two different types of training. I thank Uncle John for what he taught me but I really enjoyed what Uncle Joe taught me.

Uncle Joe taught me the hula as it should be. I didn't like doing production numbers like Bali Hai, I preferred doing ancient dancing and auwana that is soft and uses the old songs. He and Auntie Vickie taught together so that's how I got involved with Auntie Vickie. It's hard for me to describe Uncle Joe's style of dancing. I just call it the old style of hula. The modern style of dancing has added a lot of steps to the hula that did not exist before. For me I'm able to tell the difference between the old style and the new style because I can see the ~~hula~~ changes put into the old style of hula but I don't think people outside the hula ~~are~~ aware of the differences.
can be

I have stayed with Auntie Vickie till this day and she has been the one that has made me what I am today. She is my greatest influence and I've grown to love her like another mom. She shares so much with me. I've become her hands and her feet. If someone wants to learn a certain dance from her, she teaches it to me and then I teach it to that person. She shows me what to do and I take it from there.