

HELEN HOAKALEI KAMAU'U

Kumu Hula Hoakalei Kamau'u received some of her early training in the art of the Hula with Emma Moniz Bishop and Iolani Makekau Luahine. Her great-grandmother, Kaleihulumamo Makekau, and great-grandaunt, Keahi Luahine, were court dancers during the reign of King Kalākaua. Her grandfather, Manase Makekau, was a chanter. Her aunt, Iolani Luahine, was Hawai'i's exponent of ancient dances and a teacher with whom Hoakalei studied Hawaiian chants, dances and culture, and for whom she chanted during their thirty-two years of performing together.

Since 1969, Hoakalei has been a master teacher in the art of the ancient hula for the State Council on Hawaiian Heritage and the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts, training instructors in the ancient dances throughout the islands. For twenty-three years, she has also served as an Aloha Week Royal Court Chanter. With Iolani Luahine and Lokalia Montgomery, she performed at the National Folk Dance Festival in New London, Connecticut, the National Endowment for the Arts Symposium at Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana. In 1976, she served as Artistic Director for the first group from Hawai'i to present Hawaiian dances at the Second Pan Pacific Festival of the Arts in Rotorua, New Zealand. Since 1974 and on-going, she has taught and presented lecture-demonstrations in the art of ancient Chant and Hula of Hawai'i with Lama Kū, College of Continuing Education and Community Service and Artists-in-the-Schools Programs.

Hoakalei founded her Hālau or school in 1952. She has taken the Hālau on world-wide tours, sharing Hawaiian culture and values in Mexico, Japan and Canada under the auspices of then-Governor and Mrs Ariyoshi. The Hālau has also performed at the National Gallery of Arts in Washington D.C. in 1980, and at the 53rd Annual American Dance Festival in Durham, North Carolina in 1987. She continues to serve Hawai'i as evidenced by her participation as a judge at many hula competitions, including those held in our islands, in California, Las Vegas, Nevada and Salt Lake City, Utah.

Her expertise and presentations are truly treasures of the past, actively shared in the present and worthy of continuance in the future. Hālau Hula O Hoakalei celebrates this extraordinary heritage, career and contributions of Helen Hoakalei Kamau'u, this day, August 24, 1991.

Photo Courtesy of:
Mr. Carl Hefner

