

Hawaiian educators recognized as kukui – guiding lights

by Jeff Clark

Four educators have been recognized by the Office of Hawaiian Affairs for their outstanding contributions in the field of Hawaiian education. Leilani Violet Browne Hughes, Edith Kawelohea McKinzie, Myron "Pinky" Thompson and John Anson Hau'oli Tomoso received OHA's Ke Kukui Mālamalama award during a reception Dec. 7 in Honolulu.

Hughes is one of those energetic individuals who, lucky for the Hawaiian community, doesn't know the meaning of the word "retirement." She is still going strong after many years as a teacher in the state Department of Education (DOE).

As a kupuna kākō'o in the state DOE's Kupuna Program, Hughes supports other kūpuna and helps them to be effective in the classroom.

During the summertime she helps staff the Explorations program at Kamehameha Schools. A native speaker of Hawaiian, Hughes has taught the language at the Mission Houses and has translated documents for the courts.

She established, along with her late husband, the scholarship fund for the Royal Order of Kamehameha. She is a charter

member of that group's Hawai'i Chapter #1 Women's Auxiliary. She is also active in the Hawaiian Civic Club of Honolulu and is a member of the Hui Hānai Council, an organization associated with the Queen Lili'uokalani Trust whose focus is the preservation of the Queen's music and writings.

A renowned scholar and kumu hula, Edith McKinzie wears many hats. She teaches

Hawaiian language, culture and literature as an assistant professor of Hawaiian studies at Honolulu Community College. She has served as a lecturer for Kamehameha Schools, Alu Like, the UH-Mānoa College of

Continuing Education, and the Kalihi-Pālana Culture and Arts Society.

She is the translator for the Hawaiian Historical Society, is a member of UH's Committee for the Preservation and Study of Hawaiian Language, Art and Culture, and heads the Native Hawaiian Culture and Arts Program's Hawaiian language newspaper indexing project.

McKinzie is a noted genealogist who published *Hawaiian Genealogies, Volumes 1 and 2*, important genealogical reference works. She represented Hawai'i in the Smithsonian Institute's Folklife Program in Washington, D.C. and at Pacific Arts Festivals in New Zealand and Tahiti.

As a result of all these activities, McKinzie has

touched the minds – and hearts – of thousands of students, many of whom have themselves gone on to become teachers. Upon receiving her award, McKinzie told her fellow educators, "Our work is just beginning – there's more to come."

As a Bishop Estate trustee for the past 20 years, Myron Thompson has helped guide the expansion of educational programs throughout the Hawaiian community, reaching more than 30,000 people every year. A firm believer in early education, he helped establish Kamehameha Schools Bishop Estate's 28 center-based preschools and played a major role in obtaining federal

funding for traveling preschools and parent-infant education. His foresight and support have paved the way for many of the alternative education programs for at-risk students.

Active in the community, Thompson is the president of the Polynesian Voyaging Society and staunch supporter of the voyaging canoe Hōkūle'a, which has proven to be an effective educational

tool. While using his considerable skills as an administrator and advocate, Thompson has not lost his grounding in the Hawaiian culture: When the estate's new mission statement was developed, he made sure to infuse it with Hawaiian cultural values such as lōkahi,

pono and ha'aha'a. Now retired, Thompson has been retained by Bishop Estates as a consultant.

John Tomoso is a social worker, teacher, president of Seabury Hall Preparatory Academy, and all-around friend of the community. He has been a social worker with Child and Family Services and a junior specialist with the University of Hawai'i School of Social Work. As a social worker

he has encouraged Hawaiian families to reach their full potential by holding family life and education seminars in the Hawaiian community.

To better serve Hawaiians, he completed the two-year "Hawaiian Learning Program in Social Work" at the National Institute of Mental Health. He is active in his church, where he continually inspires young

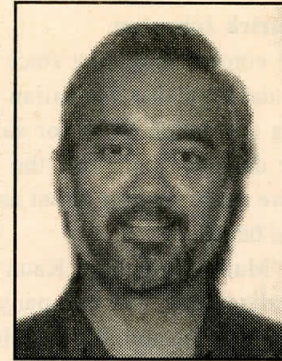
Hawaiian children through a youth tutoring program. Through his involvement in a great many community organizations, issues and concerns, Tomoso is able to educate the community at large about the importance of acknowledging and respecting Hawaiian traditions.

Each year, OHA solicits Ke Kukui Mālamalama award nominations from the Hawaiian community. A selection committee reviews the nominations and its selections are approved by OHA's Board of Trustees.

In addition to the four winners, nominees included Michael Casupang, Paula Ann DeMorales, Clyde Kahula, Margaret Machado, and Fred Kalani Meinecke. All exemplary educators, these nominees serve as kukui, illuminating the educational path for students of all ages.



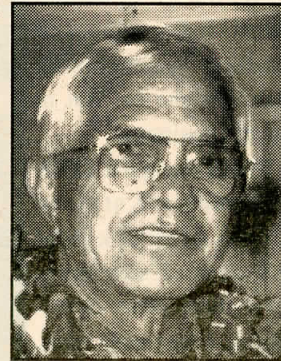
McKinzie



Tomoso



Hughes



Thompson