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Edward Etua Lopes

Etua Lopes has been teaching hula on the grounds of Hulihe'e Palace in Kailua-Kona since 1984. He named his hālau, Hālau Hula Na Pua U'i O Hawai'i.

It was through Lokelani Anderson that I met Uncle George Naope. He had come to teach us to pa'i for the girls in her show. Originally, I went to Lokelani's hālau to become a Tahitian drummer. I was fifteen-years-old and my first hula experience was watching the girls dance. I just fell in love with the hula.

I stayed with Lokelani for about three years, and in 1971 I left Honolulu and went to Hilo to learn from Uncle George. That's when my ~~heavy-duty training~~ *focus on and learning* for the hula began. I've been with Uncle George ever since.

Uncle George had the most influence in my hula. He taught me that I can't be exactly like him so he sent me to different teachers. Because of Uncle George, I've met a lot of very well known hula masters. I was able to take ~~a few~~ *a few* class each from Henry Pā, Lokalia Montgomery, 'Iolani Luahine, Edith Kanaka'ole and Eleanor Hiram Hoke. Aunty 'Iolani did not teach me to dance but she gave me a lot of the history.

For four years, my hula brother Ray Fonseca and I spent every weekend with Aunty 'Io in Kona. At that time she was the curator of the Hulihe'e Palace and she lived in the house where the gift shop is now. On Sunday we would take her down to her Napo'opo'o home and spend the day with her. She and Uncle George did oli, blessings and other rituals. Ray and I were always around. We gained a lot of knowledge by listening and watching Aunty 'Io and Uncle George.

Ray and I had our 'ūniki at Farrington High School in 1976. The day of our 'ūniki was very exciting. We were the first two males to ever 'ūniki from Uncle George. We met him at Farrington's auditorium and we set up the ~~platform~~ *LELE made from Ohia* that

Laka was made of Lama.

Linolai

Laka was going to go on. He explained to us the different ~~lan~~ that went on top of the kuahu and the meaning of each plant. ~~and~~ ~~and~~ ~~and~~ ~~and~~

use space
to write

I still teach and carry on what Uncle George taught me. But I feel that I have my own style because I was also inspired by another man that I really respect in hula, Uncle Henry Pā. Our kupuna are very important. They are the source and we must go back to talk to them. Kumu hula must learn from the masters. If you need help as a young kumu, you need to call them up to talk story.

Seeing my girls in their costumes on stage is worth all the months of hard work, even if it's only for a five-minute performance. Just to see them on stage and to hear the audience's applause for what they have done is my reward. As a kumu hula you deal with not only your problems but also with the keiki and their problems at home. Some of the children have a hard time at home and it reflects in class. I try to work with them and encourage them to do their best.

I've been teaching for over seventeen years. Although I am not ready to 'ūniki any of my haumana, eventually I would like to have them go through the same process that I went through and have an 'ūniki. I would expect the same things from them as my kumu expected from me.

However, things have changed. When we first learned how to dance, it was basic 'olapa. Today when you listen to ho'opa'a play the 'ipu heke, they're just slapping away. We had definite beats that we had to use. In comparison the hula kahiko of today is very flamboyant.

One of the reasons why I decided to become a hula teacher instead of a Tahitian drummer is because I love children. I made my decision and went into the hula all the way. Being around children makes me happy. To me, the children are our future. If we teach our children right, they are going to carry on the tradition of our people.

The days ~~that~~ ~~before~~ ^{before} our uniki, was ^{spent on} ~~to~~ gathering the Kinolau, that adorned the Kuahu (alter) Laua'e, Pala Pala'e, Maile, Hau, Ohia Lehua, and ilima. we opened that evening with Pule (prayer) and Oli (chant) & then Hula Pahu. Kaulilua, a Kōolau and a aia into, ala apapa with Iou heke and Implements meshing with the Hula Mai. Either Ray chanted and I dance or I Chanted and Ray dance and then Uncle George chanted and we both Dance.

After a short intermission we had fun with the Hula ~~uana~~ ^{uana}. That Evening is so special to me its when - became Kumu Hula.

at that time Uncle George was ^{Teaching} ~~at~~ ~~the~~ Kalihī Palama Culture & the arts Foundation and Ray & I were alaka'i for ~~these~~ ^{these} classes. The Culture and arts ~~the~~ programme had lots of classes ~~as~~ like, Hula, Feather lei, Lauhala, Implements and jewelry making. So we went to alot of these classes > prepare for our uniki.