

## AL MAKAHINU BARCARSE

A Hawaiian Studies teacher, Al Barcarse has realized his dream of dedicating his time and efforts to build a Hawaiian Village on the grounds of the Samuel Wilder King Intermediate School.

I was born and raised in Waimea, Kaua'i and attended Waimea High School. As part of the school curriculum, hula was taught to us in the sixth grade. My actual formal training began in 1951 with Leolani Rivera, Larry Rivera's sister, until 1957 when I received my kumu hula certificate. She taught hula kahiko and 'auana, Maori, and also Tahitian.

After graduating from high school, I attended the Church College of Hawai'i in La'ie. I continued my hula training under Christina Nauahi, a kumu hula in La'ie, who also taught a lot of Maori dances.

While attending Church College, I formed a group and taught them hula. We first performed at school functions and then for the hukilau once a month at La'ie Bay. Our group became a regular special guest for John Pi'ilani Watkins' show at the Club Aloha. Then in 1959, we ended up working at the Don the Beachcomber Show, our first professional gig.

In 1959, Rose Joshua contacted me because she wanted to learn Maori. I taught Maori at her studio and she in turn taught me hula. I took formal lessons from her for two years and then informally for about five more years. Whenever she needed me, she would call. Besides dancing and teaching Maori, I also chanted for her. I went to Japan with her group to perform and did lots of programs with her and her daughters.

Both George Holokai and Henry Pa were affiliated with Rose Joshua. George was asked to teach us some chants for our show for Kanikapila at the University of Hawai'i. Grandma Joshua was doing a big show with Uncle Henry and he taught us the numbers for the show.

In 1963, Jack Regas hired me as his assistant choreographer for the Polynesian Cultural Center. Aunty Sally Wood was in charge of the Hawaiian section so I studied under her

for two years. Because Aunty Sally and Grandma Rose Joshua were hula sisters, their styles were basically the same.

While teaching the hula, my greatest influence was Uncle George Naope. When I decided to give up hula, he was the person who encouraged me to continue and who helped me on my way. He became my mentor and my teacher.

I got involved with teaching school kids when I was at Kalani High School. I was student teaching and I organized a group called the "Na Makahinu" to do shows at the Outrigger Canoe Club. We also did shows at Sea Life Park, Hilton Hawaiian Village, and Hula Hut. As a group, we toured Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, Australia, New Zealand, and Tahiti. My sons and the students of Kalani were the core of that group.

My sons talked me into entering the Merrie Monarch Festival when I was teaching at Kaimuki High School. Football players and the cheerleaders made up the group that was entered the first year. After Kaimuki, I went to Moloka'i as a district resource teacher of Hawaiian Studies for a year and returned to O'ahu and taught at Mililani High School, Castle High School, and am now presently here at King Intermediate. I have entered the school kids in the Merrie Monarch Festival from all of the schools that I have taught at.

At King, besides teaching Hawaiian language and Pacific Islands Studies, I teach hula the first semester and other Polynesian dances the second semester. One of our regular community service projects is to perform at five different care homes during Christmas and Easter. I feel it is important for the students to perform for our senior citizens. A lot of my students come from broken homes and they feel like they have no purpose in life. When the people enjoy the performances and thank them, they get this feeling that they're worth something and they're doing something good.

I enjoy performing in public and getting the kids to dance to keep them out of trouble.

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The name of my halau, "Ka Ua Kilihune" means the life-giving rain. It rains all the time in the mountains and it keeps the mountains green and alive. I relate to this rain because I have devoted my life to keep Hawai'i alive by teaching hula to the children. One of my mottos is "It matters not what happens to you if you get involved, rather than what happens to them if you do not."

The things that I've learned from my kumu hula, I try not to change. If I forget something, then I'll add where I forgot. Keeping the dance intact is sacred as far as I'm concerned. I will do what I feel on all other chants that I work on myself, but I think I am basically influenced by what I've learned from my kumu hula.

At one time in our history, nothing was written down. There was no written language and everything had to be memorized. Through dancing the hula to all of the ancient chants, it made those things real. The easiest way to memorize our history is by doing it through the hula. Hula keeps our history and our people alive and without it, one cannot truly identify oneself as being Hawaiian.

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