

NANA I NA LOEA HULA  
KUMU HULA: CY BRIDGES  
INTERVIEWER: LOVINA LEPENDU  
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(YOU TEACH PRESENTLY?) Yes. (WHERE DO YOU TEACH?) We meet on BYU Hawaii campus. We used to meet here at the cultural center but we moved over there only for convenience . . . (SO YOU TEACH DURING THE DAY?) In the evenings. Between 7:30 and midnight. (HOW OLD ARE YOUR CHILDREN?) The students range from 13 to in their 50's or so. (DO YOU TEACH BOTH KAHIKO AND AUANA?) Yes. (AND THAT IS FROM SMALL TO OLD?) Right. The only difference that we have with our people is that for me I don't have time to have a class for beginners, intermediate and the advanced. So basically the advanced have to be patient while I'm working with the beginners, and likewise the beginners have to try and catch on as quickly when I'm working. (SO YOUR CLASS IS MIXED?) The class is mixed, but I have beginners way in the back of the class and I have the others in the front, and the only reason for that is basically that I don't have time. Right now, for a number of years I have not had the time for hula. There are many times when I am not at home. I come to work in the morning and I am gone and our men don't get through the night show at PCC until 9:30, 10 o'clock at night, so I wait for them. The women come in and when the

women go then the men come in. And so I take them until 11, 11:30 at night. For a lot of people, hula is the thing that they do. But for me, I have a family, I have a wife and children, and that takes precedence over everything. I hold a very important position here at the Polynesian Cultural Center which goes beyond eight hours a day. That's another important thing because that pays my bills. And second, next to my family, is my ecclesiastical calling, because I've had a very important calling in the church. And for the past year or so I've been a Bishop in the Hau'ula 4th Ward and so that takes a lot of my time. You find almost no time at all for hula. But there are students out there that still want to be involved and learn, so I try and make the time.

(HOW MANY STUDENTS ARE IN YOUR HALAU?) Right now we have about 65 in the halau, but they come and go because there are so many students. Just when you get them where you want them they graduate and go on. But we do have a lot of women from the community, so they've been with me for awhile.

(DO YOU HAVE A NAME FOR YOUR HALAU?) "Hui Ho'oulu Aloha". When we first started to teach there were four of us: myself, Bill Wallace, Enoka Kaina, and Keith Auwai. Enoka suggested that name, and we all agreed. (WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THAT NAME?) I thought the name was nice

and appropriate. *Ha'aulu* is to grow, and we were starting from nothing and, of course, we wanted it to grow. And *aloha* has many meanings, and I think the most important thing is love, not only for each other but for the culture and for what we do. That was one of the reasons. It was very simple. The name could have been anything. (FROM THERE YOU JUST BRANCHED OFF?) Slowly everybody moved elsewhere. My cousin, Bill, finished school and he moved to the mainland and Enoka moved into Honolulu. Keith took over when I dropped off for a little bit, and then I came back and Keith left. Everybody was so busy doing their own thing.

(ALL FOUR OF YOU CAME FROM ONE HALAU?) No. We were all friends working here. Bill studied with Auntie Nona Beamer at Kamehameha Schools and Auntie Harriet Nei on Moloka'i. Keith Auwai is my hula brother. He also studied under Auntie Nona at Kamehameha, but he and I both graduated from Auntie Sally.

(AT WHAT AGE DID YOU START HULA?) I cannot recall my exact age, but I know I was in high school. And ever since I was young I was quite fascinated not so much with the dancing of the hula but with the sound of the ipu and the way that the voice was carried. I wanted to know how they did that. The only kind of training I got was from my mom and my grandmother telling me how it should sound and how it shouldn't sound,



and by myself trying to listen and copy others or copy recordings that I heard. My mother was not a hula teacher or a chanter; neither was my grandmother. But they would tell me that was not the way "tutu man" does it and so on . . . Whenever I practiced no one would be home. I'd be hitting the ipu or the chair. When I got into high school and I was staying with my grandmother, she knew what I was doing because her neighbor across the river used to tell her, "Gee, when I'm home I can hear the ipu going, and I can hear your grandson chanting." (AND THE CHANTING WAS JUST COPYING?) The chanting was just what I had heard when I would hear chanters or from things that I had heard on record. (SO, IN A CERTAIN WAY, YOU LEARNED TO HO'OPA'A FIRST BEFORE YOU EVEN DANCED.) Yes.

(WHEN DID YOU START TO GET INTO HULA?) My formal hula dancing started when I was in high school with Aunty Sally at the cultural center. She is like my hula mother, although I had a number of teachers. To me she is my hula mama because I graduated with her and I was with her for a number of years. I started learning doing shows for her around here (PCC?), and then Aunty Sally had special things for special cultural days, Kamehameha Day, May Day, or Aloha Week that we would do a performance for so we had to learn other things. There was always a core of people that Aunty Sally would take. (AND YOU WERE THERE WITH A LOT OF

STUDENTS?) There were a lot of other students, but many of the other students are just like people that are in hula today; its the "in" thing to do so they're all over there doing it but when they finish they never continued hula. They never went and studied any more. (WHEN YOU GRADUATED, WAS THE CLASS SMALL?) When I graduated it was just myself and Keith. (ABOUT HOW LONG BEFORE YOU GRADUATED?) From the first time I started dancing with Aunty it was about 14 years. Aunty Sally called me one morning early, before 6 'o clock in the morning. She was crying on the phone and she said to me that she was sorry and I don't know why she was sorry because she never did anything wrong to me. I should have been sorry for not calling her more often. She said she took a look at a lot of kumu hula who are teaching now. They are going to competition. They are doing all kinds of things. And she said, "I thought of my own students that I've trained for so many years and they didn't graduate, so I want you folks to graduate." So we got together again and started going through some of the training that we had before we had to end. Sunday and Ellen Gay graduated first and then myself and Keith. But there are others that I wish had come back and finished too.

(AFTER AUNTY SALLY, DID YOU GO SOMEWHERE ELSE?) Yes. In fact, while I was with Aunty Sally I was with Aunty Hoakalei also. It started

from their need for male teachers to teach male dancing so I went to help them teach at hula workshops, but prior to workshops there was always a "ho'ike" at McKinley High School so we had to go there and learn all of the routines and it was Peter Lonoae'a and myself. So that's how we got started working on the routines, and then we started to come over and go through the classes with Aunty Hoakalei. In 1976 she took a group to the South Pacific Festival of Arts in Rotarua, New Zealand. It was a small group that went and I was very fortunate to be a part of that. (WHO DID YOU GO TO AFTER HOAKALEI?) During part of the time when I was with Aunty Hoakalei, we also learned from others because of our involvement with the Arts Festivals. We had the opportunity to learn a lot of numbers informally from Aunty Edith (Kanaka'ole), Pua, and Nalani because they came in and taught our group. I was fortunate to learn quite a few numbers from Nalani and Pua and Aunty Edith. The thing that I enjoyed the most was the talking and the information that was shared on the side just talking and asking about things whether we were here in Honolulu or on the Big Island. I was fascinated with the fact that she would explain the different winds and the different rains and how she associated that with the certain chant that we learned. (DID YOU TAKE FROM OTHER PEOPLE HERE TOO AFTER THAT?) With Aunty Pat and Aunty Pele. (AND THIS WAS



ALL INFORMALLY?) Yes. Just learning a few dances here and a few dances there. But 'til today I will still call them and ask when I need help. I call Auntie Pat and talk to her. And Auntie Pele is gone, but I do call.

(CAN YOU RECALL AUNTIE SALLY'S STYLE?) None of my teachers were strict at all. I hear people (kumu) screaming at their students and scolding them. I've never experienced that with any of my teachers. And one special thing, I think, is the fact that Auntie Sally is one of the students of Lokalia Montgomery, and I had the great opportunity of learning with Auntie Lokalia, not hula but chanting. I met her once when we did a performance for the crowning of the Lei Day queen at the bandstand at Kapi'olani Park. Auntie Lokalia was there. A few months later word came to me that I was invited by Auntie Lokalia to learn. And that really thrilled me; "Wow, why me? Not me." So I went there and was able to learn chanting and feather work. It was special because she was Auntie Sally's teacher; Auntie Sally was my hula mother and Auntie Lokalia was my hula grandmother. And what was even more special was that one of Auntie Lokalia's teachers was Tutu Kuluwaimaka. So it goes, it comes back from him to her to Auntie Sally.

(WHAT KIND OF STYLE DOES AUNTIE SALLY NALUAI HAVE?) Auntie Sally has a beautiful style. It's simple like hula should be. She made it

enjoyable. It was not a chore, I suppose because we didn't get scolding or anything. It was fun. I have tapes of us learning dances and you can hear us laughing. There were times when you could tell she was getting a little upset with someone, but it was never hard. Her style was simple. She made no secret about the fact that when she came across things that she didn't quite know she would go and ask, and lucky for her at that time Tutu Kawena was still living and Aunty Sally would go to her and ask and then come back and clarify.

(FOR YOUR TRAINING IN CHANTING, WERE YOU TRAINED BY AUNTY SALLY TOO?) Yes. It was not quite as intense. Just the ho'opa'a and a few chants I was given the words and she would kind of do it for me and I would follow her, so I got the jist of it. But then as I went to other teachers, Aunty Pele was a little bit different and Aunty Lokalia was a little different. But I gathered a little bit from everybody. And I went to Ka'upena Wong. I was kind of shame but somebody else took me to him. He told me when he worked with Kalena it just drained him, it took so much out of him. But he said to me, "If you need any help, you come back and you call me any time", but what he did for me was he made tapes of a few chants and I still have that, and he said, "You learn from these tapes and if you have any problems, come back and I will help you on some of the



techniques." Although it was nothing more than just talking and some tapes of his voice and the words of the chants, I think he was one of my teachers, to a small degree.

(AFTER THAT, DID YOU TRAIN YOURSELF?) My greatest goal was to please my mom. They were my biggest critics. One of the greatest awards that I got was not when I walked off the stage at the Merry Monarch with a trophy or not when I left Kamehameha Day Competition with a trophy, but it was at a performance, and I heard my mother say to my aunty, "You know Cy, he sounds like the 'Old Man'. Just like 'Tutu Man'." Because her great grandfather was a great chanter. And my aunty said, "Yea, I was listening to him and, boy, he sound like the 'Old Man'." I have trophies at my house, things that we've won, but that's minor. (DID YOUR MOTHER CHANT?) No. In fact, they said when "Tutu Man" died they were so happy because they didn't have to go and train and stand by the wall and 'ami and do all of these kinds of things that they had to do when they were little. They were so happy when he died because that all ended. (BUT YOUR GRANDFATHER DID TEACH HULA THEN? GIVE ME HIS NAME AGAIN.) Kuluwaimaka. (HE WAS ON O'AHU?) He is from Ka'u. (HE TAUGHT THERE ONLY?) He left there at a quite a young age. He was 19 when he became the chanter in the court of Kamehameha IV and Queen Emma and remained

the court chanter until the overthrow of the monarchy. He was the last living chanter of Kalakaua. He composed and chanted the house-warming chant for 'Iolani Palace when that palace was first completed. But at the overthrow of the monarchy, he moved back to Hau'ula and he lived there. We had also a place in town, in Palama, on Peterson Lane, and he lived there for a while. He died at Lalani Hawaiian Village, George Mossman's Lalani Hawaiian Village. He was a very good friend of Theodore Kelcey. In fact, from what was said to me, Tutu Man gathered all of the family together and he told them that he was going. He said, "I am not sick, but my work is finished. But before I go I want to see Kelcey. And so the family went and got Theodore Kelcey, who was working for the museum, I believe. They sat there and they talked for a long while and then he just laid back and he was gone. And that was in 1937. He was 100 when he died. (And Kelcey at that time was pretty young then?) Yea, he was quite young, because he was in his 90's when he died. But the records that they have at the Bishop Museum say that Tutu Man was born about 1845, but our records say that he was born in 1837, I forgot the exact month and day, but we have the month and day, 1837 in Na'alehu, Ka'u.

(DID YOU BEGIN A HALAU BECAUSE YOU WANTED TO OPEN ONE?) No. Because of Bill Cravens, the President of the Polynesian Cultural Center at

the time. He called us in and he said that there was so much going on out there in the wider community with hula. He said, "Why don't we have a halau here?" "Well," we said, "for one thing, we don't have time. We're too busy. It requires a lot of time." And he said, "Let's put together a halau. We'll sponsor it. You don't have to worry about all of the fundraising and all of that. We'll take care of that. Just so that you can teach. As long as we have something for our students, the people who would like to get involved." And that's how it all got started. I don't get a salary for teaching hula. My students don't pay to learn. They just come. And sometimes you wonder if it's all worth it, because when you're not investing money in something, you come, sometimes you don't and sometimes I wonder, "Is this worth my time." I take off from my family, from everything and I come to halau and there are times when some of these students don't show up, because, "Oh, I have to go to town." And I tell them, "I have to go in town too. And I want to do other things. I want to take my children out to the beach, but I'm over here with you, and you guys don't come." There were times when I would sit down on the stage and the kids would come in, it takes about 20 minutes, half an hour, by the time they all get there, they're all ready to start, I just pick up my things and I walk out, get in my car and drive away. And then they get the



message. And they're all sorry, and then for the next few months everybody's okay. But I think it's partly because they're not putting out money; there's nothing to lose. And, of course, there are those that do appreciate, there are those that come.

(HOW DO YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DANCING STYLE?) My dancing style is part and parcel of all of my teachers. I don't toy around with a lot of new things. I may get a little creative with the entrance and the exit, maybe. But with the dances I don't fool around with it too much because every time I am doing something in my mind I am thinking, "Now what would Auntie Sally say. What would Auntie Pat say. What would Auntie Hoakalei say". (DO YOU TEACH NEW CHANTS?) Yes. There were times when I would look in my collection. I have some collection of Tutu Man's chants. I have some old chants in my collection, sometimes I use that. There are times when I call and I ask them if I can use. A fine example is last Kamehameha Day I called Manu Boyd and asked him if I could use the chant that was composed for Auntie Freda Gomes and Uncle Herman. And so we did that. But I ask them first. (BUT YOU DO <sup>ch</sup>CORREOGRAPH YOUR OWN?) I do, yes. There are times when I <sup>ch</sup>cor/eograph my own and there are times, for example, the one that I learned for Auntie Freda, I did it exactly the way that Manu put it together.

(WHEN YOU THINK OF HULA, WHAT KIND OF JOY DO YOU GET BACK FROM IT?) The joy that I get back is seeing someone who did not know how to dance at one time be able to go do a performance and perform well. And the interesting thing that is with our group, in our line up I can sit on the side and I can point out to you, that girl is from the Cook Islands, that one is from New Zealand, this one is from Fiji, that one is from Rotuma, this one is from Honolulu, that one is from Kaua'i, this one here is from the Big Island. We have one from Japan, one from Spain. They're from all over because here at the Center we have people from all over the world, and they all come, they all want to learn hula. And to have someone start off that did not know how to kaholo, but then a year or two down the road you see them turn into a beautiful dancer, and that gives me a lot of joy. And that's when I think , "Yeah, it's worth it." (DO YOU HAVE STUDENTS FROM HERE, HAWAIIAN PEOPLE, THAT COME TO YOU?) Yea, we have quite a few.

(YOU DON'T TRAIN ANY STUDENTS TO CONTINUE YOUR STYLE OR ANYTHING?) I would love to, but I don't know. Perhaps when the time comes, or if there was someone that was serious enough. Because a lot of them have come and asked. (DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE SOMEONE THAT CAN CONTINUE A PERSON'S STYLE?) I think it's important. But I think for every student, just like some of my teachers, there are

things that I do, like "Pu 'ai Lehua Ka Makani" I learned from Aunty Pat. I do it exactly the way I learned it from Aunty Pat. But there are perhaps other things that I have learned, for Aunty Sally, for example, she teaches me but then she says you go out and you do yours. And no matter how much we try to teach our style, you will never throw your students in a freezer and be preserved for eternity, because life is that way. It's going to change, it will change. Life changed. When Kamehameha conquered all of the islands in 1795, he sent his people to the outskirts to bring these experts to teach the ways of old. Now, to me, 1795 is the way of old. But even at that time, Kamehameha realized things had changed a little bit. So it will continue to change, and change is always good, however, as long as it does not degrade or desecrate the culture. As long as it gives it dignity, it gives it beauty, I think it's nice.

(WHAT DO YOU THINK IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING IN HULA?) To me, the most important thing is the love and the desire to learn. There are many elements that make up hula. Basics are very important. Some people know the basics really well but they don't absorb any of the stories and the history that goes into the chant. Others know the stories really well but they're terrible on their basics. So we try to do the best with bringing in all of those different elements. But the love and the desire to learn and



the discipline, because many times people are not disciplined enough. And I even explained to our students that, "I know all of you are here for different reasons. Some of you are only here because we are going to competition. Others are only here because it is the 'In thing' to belong to a halau. Perhaps there are some of you who are here because you really want to learn hula." We have some others who are there mainly because they want to exercise. Some have come only because they want to know a dance or two when they go to parties. And so the reasons vary. (SO YOU THINK HULA IS NOT JUST THE ART OF DANCE, THAT IT COMES WITH THE CULTURE, HISTORY, AND LANGUAGE?) Yes. The chants are not chanted in English, you need to know the language. You need to understand the kahea, words and all of that. It is fascinating because you have genealogy, geography. All of this is woven into chants.

(YOU DO HAVE A FASCINATION FOR CHANTS. IS THAT BECAUSE YOU LEARNED LANGUAGE OR DID IT JUST COME NATURALLY?) You learn your language too while your chanting. A lot of them don't know the full jist of things, but you learn a lot of that. And language was spoken in our family, but I did go to school to learn language. But I was having a difficult time, actually. (BUT DID YOU SPEAK THE LANGUAGE?) I could get along fine with my grandparents, but when I went to learn verb, subject, object, then I

started to have problems, because of the grammar part of it. But the stories I understood and knew, and these are the things that I share with students. You can be able to understand and read in Hawaiian perfectly, but you might give them translation but, no that's not what it's talking about. (WHEN YOU LEARNED TO CHANT, WAS IT DIFFICULT?) I didn't think it was studying hard. Maybe some people would look at it as something ... (THAT'S WHAT I'M TRYING TO SEE. SOME PEOPLE WOULD SAY THAT TO PRONOUNCE IS HARD.) It was not difficult to learn any of the pronunciation and to even learn it because when you love something it's not hard work. People can stay in a taro patch all day long, but if they love what they're doing, it's not hard. And to us you might think, "Oh boy, it's so much work to make that quilt, or to do this and carve that thing." But, no, it wasn't hard to the worker. It was very enjoyable. (DO YOU TEACH YOUR STUDENTS CHANTS?) I have, on occasion. (AND IS THAT BECAUSE OF THE HULA, OR JUST CHANTING?) Just chanting. Well, on two occasions was because of the hula, but I've gotten discouraged listening to them and having them not pick up certain things. I don't know how people cannot pick up, listening and not pick up.

[SIDE TWO OF TAPE]

(DO YOU THINK HULA HAS CHANGED TODAY?) Oh, yes! (IN WHAT

SENSE?) Well, its just different. We have movies of hula dances of before. All you have to do is pop in a video and watch this one and then watch the other one and you can readily see how much has changed. (WHAT DO YOU THINK HAPPENED?) I think people just added a little bit. I think hula has gone from becoming important because of historical significance, because we had no textbooks so hula and chanting were really the textbooks of Hawai'i. The history and everything was contained in there, so the words were very important. Today, you find the words are secondary, and the motions are important. The crowds go wild when they do certain motions, and yet the people may not know for beans what the words are saying, but those movements are so electrifying. There are a lot of things that I enjoy watching that I would not do with my own students.

(CAN YOU GIVE ME A DEFINITION OF HULA KAHIKO?) Hula kahiko would be hula that is done in an ancient style or a more traditional style. Traditional to one person may have a different meaning to another. A lot of our songs that we have today, if you look on the back of these records they have "Traditional", and yet I go to my great-grandparents and that's not traditional, that was the top ten hits of their time. So what is traditional to one person is something that was popular at that time.



(HOW DO YOU SEPARATE A HULA KAHIKO THAT YOU THINK IS HULA KAHIKO AND HULA KAHIKO THAT YOU SEE TODAY?) I don't know how I would separate that, because, for example, to separate "E ho'i ke aloha Ni'ihau" from the chant that was composed by Manu for Auntie Freda. One was just composed the other year and "E ho'i ke aloha" is a lot older. I don't know how I would separate those two. (FOR YOU THEY'RE STILL HULA KAHIKO?) Because they have kahelas, uwehe; the basic steps are there. There are hulas today that are done differently. I think that particular chant for Auntie Freda is done in a more traditional way. There's a lot of groups today that actually act it out as though they were performing in Hollywood rather than dancing. There are times when that's not really hula, and sometimes I forget that too, because I enjoy watching it so much. Like Edith said at one competition, she said, "Oh, that was so delightfull!" And it was. But I was reminded by my wife, who is not even Hawaiian, when I was leaving a competition and there was something a group did that was so good, I really enjoyed it, I had a lot of fun, I was laughing and having a ball with that group. And as I was leaving I said, "Oh man, I was surprised that it wasn't first place," they placed second but it wasn't first place. And my wife reminded me, she said, "They were all right." I said, "They were good." She says, "No. What you're talking about is these other extra

things that they did. That's what you enjoyed." I said, "Well, yea." But she said, "But the actual dancing of the hula, the hand motions, the feet movement, the body, it wasn't that fascinating. You weren't impressed with that." And then I came back to earth and I remembered, "Yea, I wasn't really fascinated with the actual dancing, it was all the other fancy stuff that they did." And all of those other things that I was fascinated with, which fascinated the whole crowd, wasn't even hula. It was the music and all these fancy things that they did. It wasn't hula. (SO YOU THINK IT IS MORE THEATRICAL TODAY?) Yea. (DO YOU THINK IT IS BECAUSE THINGS ARE MORE MODERN TODAY?) The only way that I could come to a definite conclusion as far as what's happening with hula today and why people do what they do is I'd have to read the minds of those people that did it, because the only ones that know 100% why the hula goes that way is because they're the ones that created that. And they would have the true answer. And all I can do is give an analogy which might be far off left field. I might be totally wrong from the actual reasons why they did it. I can say, "Perhaps they liked to be creative. Perhaps they like it to have a little more 'spunk'", but I may be totally wrong. They might have a totally different reason. I'm the only one that knows why I do what I do, and for a lot of them, basically, it's really simple. They just say, "I did it because I

wanted to; I thought it was nice". There's no big background. Some of them have reasons, but there are others who just thought it was nice. (SO IT'S ALL INDIVIDUAL?) It's all individually, and I cannot really answer or analyze somebody elses.

(DO YOU THINK LANGUAGE IS IMPORTANT IN HULA?) Oh, yes! (WHY?) Because you cannot grasp the essence. A lot of the dances, the expressions, the hand movements, the body movements become meaningless. It's like for me when I learn songs that are in Spanish. I can learn it, I can copy it to the tee phonetically, but I don't have the true essence of it because I don't understand what is being said. (DO YOU THINK THE KUMU HULA HAS TO LEARN THE LANGUAGE?) If he or she have the desire to then, yes, by all means. I would suggest and encourage everybody. If you're involved with these kinds of cultural things and if that's going to be your livelihood or the things that you do in life, then perhaps I would encourage them to do so. But bearing in mind that there have been many through the years that understood but could not speak fluently, and some who just knew things because of the translations that were given to them, and many of them use translations today and background stories. I think we Hawaiians, because we work with other Polynesians every day, tend to dig deeper into everything we do. We want



to know the translation, we want to know the background; where did this story come from, why was it composed. Whereas with a lot of the other cultures, I try to create a file here and I've asked them, "I want the translation of this." And it's so hard for them to give me a translation. I want the background, and they give me a general idea of what it is. I want more, but they don't have a lot of that in other places, and we're trying to accomplish that here. (WHY DO YOU THINK HAWAIIANS DO THAT?) I think because they want to know. There are a lot people that feel like we've lost a lot, so we want to do the best that we can and make sure that all of your facts are there, and especially for those who are involved with competition, they're being judged on their interpretation, their costuming and all of that, so they want to make sure that all of their facts are together. And even with that, you still are subject to human judgement.

I've said to people, there could be two reasons why I'm doing what I'm doing when it involves hula. Number one, either I love it, or two, I must be crazy. It's either one or the other, or maybe a little bit of both, because its like when I was entertaining; you sit up there when everything is all finished, all the people go home, and you wonder, "Is this all worth it?" And sometimes you think, "No." There have been times when I've said, "This is it. After this I'm finished because I really don't have the time."

But it is still something that is fascinating to me, and for the most part I am proud of it. I am proud to be Hawaiian. I am proud to share anything about Hawai'i. Someone said to me once, after a performance, "Oh, your grandma would be so proud of you." And a lot of times when I do things I often wonder if they're proud of me and what I do. And maybe that is one of the things that keep me going. It was a special thing that I can carry on what my teachers taught me. All of my teachers were real Auntys to me. They weren't Auntys that I called "Aunty" out of courtesy. No. They were relatives of mine. And so these things were special because I got this from one of my own family. I got this training from one of my own family, and those are the things that are special, and I try to impart that on all the students, especially some of my own relatives and nephews that learn. It's a little bit more special than going and paying and being one of many. But I love it. (DO YOU HAVE YOUR OWN CHILDREN INVOLVED IN HULA?) Yes, a little bit. They were dancing with Sunday. Your patience level is a lot lower when you're teaching your own because you expect so much more. And sometimes I feel sorry when my younger daughter tries so hard, she loves hula so much, but because of our schedule and things she had to drop out of hula. But she tries and she's asked me several times, "Daddy, can you teach me?" And I try, and she cannot. "I don't think you've got it in

you." But then I see her on the side trying on her own and my heart just goes out to her, "Oh, baby, come, come, come. I'll help you." (WOULD YOU LIKE TO HAVE ONE OF YOUR DAUGHTERS CONTINUE WHAT YOU'RE DOING?) I would love to if that's what they wanted. I would never impose that on any of them. Because none of my parents were doing it, and I'm the only one out of my family, well my brother does a little bit, but he lives in New Jersey. Everybody has their own little niche and love and things that they do. I didn't follow exactly the same footsteps that my dad did. In fact all three of us, we have three boys in my family, and every one of us are as different as night and day. (DO YOU THINK KUMU HULA NEED TO HAVE SPECIAL TRAINING TO HAVE THAT TITLE?) Well, I think so. But just because I think so doesn't mean that that's the rule and that's what it really should be. I only think so because that's the way it was before, and that's the way our kupuna set it up. Someone from the mainland called me up and asked, "I've never had this training, but if I wanted to I wanted to be a kumu hula. What should I do?" And I asked them, "If you wanted to be a pilot, what would you do? When you want to be a Sociologist, what do you do? Whatever you want to do in life, what do you do? You go and train." I don't wake up one day and decide, "Today I'm going to be a professor of Anthropology and go to University of Hawai'i and say I'm



going to teach a class today." No, we don't do that. But there are those who have chosen to be a teacher and call themselves that. I have a hula brother here that refuses to call himself "kumu hula". He's gone to Merry Monarch. He's gone to competition. He's judged a number of times. But he refused to call himself a kumu hula. He says, "Perhaps after my teachers are gone, then maybe." For me, it took a long while. And I don't refer to myself as kumu hula, but my students refer to me as "kumu". And, for example, when I fill out an application, they have "Name of Kumu Hula", I don't make a big deal out of it, only because, for me, a kumu hula is a special person. Kumu Hula's don't drop out of the trees. Kumu hula's are created and molded to become so. But even with the greatest kumu hulas, there was a time in their lives, just like anyone elses, when they took their first step; like any baby, they take their first step. And every great kumu hula at one time did the kaholo for the first time, they did their pa'i for the first time on the ipu, and they all had to learn.

(DO YOU THINK YOU CAN BECOME A KUMU HULA JUST BY BEING AN ENTERTAINER?) I don't know if I can really answer that only because there are some people who think they can. But to me, being an entertainer, and there are many varieties of entertainers, some people are very good in their knowledge and it's something like what we do here at the Polynesian

Cultural Center. A lot of people want to go 100% culture, and you know, we do that. Sometimes when we have special visitors that come from New Zealand or Tonga or Samoa, they come from Samoa and we take them in the Fali Tali Maaloo and we have a traditional Samoan welcome where we go on the Marai in the New Zealand religion, Maori village, and we have a traditional Pohiri, or welcome. The average people in the audience get bored to tears because they don't understand all of the speeches and all of that. So, for the most part, we cater to a lot of them. We can do both, but there's a time when we do a lot of entertaining. You hear all the laughter. We get letters from all over the world telling us how great that Samoan village is, not because their culture is any better, but because he has funny jokes. And that's the things they're laughing at, just like hula. It's the things that's not cultural that they're enjoying. And likewise with the entertaining. Some people are good entertainers but they're not so good teachers in hula. And some people are very good teachers, but they cannot entertain to save their soul. But there are those gifted ones that can do a little bit of both. Lucky for them, for the most part, today hula has become nothing more than a form of entertainment. And I only hope that there are still many out there who take hula a little more serious than just another nice hula. (IF SOMEONE COMES TO YOU AND IS INTERESTED IN

HULA, DO YOU THINK "KAHIKO" OR "AUANA" FIRST?) If a person came with the intention of wanting to become a kumu hula and not having any background, I would have that individual start with the basics. And after a while, I would perhaps make that determination. Most of the people that come in they've had a little bit of background already. So for those that have had background already, there have been times when we were working on kahiko. So, like I said, I don't have many different classes, so at the time that they came we were working on kahiko. And there have been others, at the time of their arrival into the group we were working on something that was more contemporary in nature. So their first experience with us would be in auana. However, we haven't had people come in and actually say that, "Oh, I'd like to be a kumu hula one day." We've had people that have been with me for a little while that have said to me they wanted eventually to become kumu hula, but I always use that story of Socrates, when that young boy went to him and says, "I want to learn," and he held his head under the water, and gasping for air when he pulled him up he says, "When you want to learn as much as you wanted air, you come back." When you're sincere. Because there have been girls that come to me, "Oh, I really want to go to 'Miss Aloha Hula'; I want to be a contestant in 'Miss Aloha Hula'; I really want to; I want to do this; I want



to do that." And then you never see them. So I just don't bother. I don't go chase after them. And before I used to get really upset when they don't come and then they come again, and I'm thinking, "What are you doing over here?" But Aunt Maiki was the one that taught me. She said, "You know, babe, you don't own them. With me, some they come and then they go and then they come back. You don't own them. And if they decide to go, let them go. If they come back one day, good. If they don't come back, that's okay. But don't make your life miserable because of that. And I was trying not to make my life miserable, but I guess in the back of your mind you're just thinking that you're being used, and I don't like to be used. But I've gotten over that, and there are those that have good reasons sometimes; they cannot because they're working and whatever. I handle that very well now.