

My parents <sup>on occasion</sup> danced at parties and special <sup>events</sup> occasions. I loved to watch the expressions on their faces as they danced. That's what first inspired me about the hula.

I started my training under Esther Paulson in 1937. There was no such thing as a halau back then. Esther would have to come to my home and she would train me in hula auwana. In 1939 I moved on and began to train under Tom Hiona. It marked the beginning of an eight year education that is a special and memorable part of my life. Three times a week I would go to Tom's house on Queen Emma Street and for three hours he would train us in hula kahiko. A haumana would begin with the fundamental steps until Tom was satisfied with her progress. Then he would introduce a particular mele which the student would practice until Tom again gave his approval. Finally the student was allowed to rise and learn the corresponding dance step. The training was a slow, painstaking process. You didn't move on to the next level until he was satisfied. Tom demanded a great deal but the result was the blessing of a solid foundation.

In 1947 I began to teach. I simply had reached a point where I felt I could go out on my own so I began a career which I've come to love dearly. There is nothing more uplifting than to see my haumana going out into the community and passing on the style of hula that was handed down to them. The practice of my kumu was to first feel the mana'o of the story and then to translate those emotions through the dance. Once I was having trouble with the mele of the hula auwana "Minei". I knew all the steps but there was something missing in my movements. My mother took me aside and began to tell me an old story. She spoke of two sisters who were deeply in love with a great prince. One sister she explained was a great beauty and the other was very plain. Now the grandmother of these two girls felt very sorry for the plain sister. She decided to teach the girl a very beautiful and magical dance that would win over the handsome prince. The prince fell in love with the plain sister and this was the story of "Minei". Because of that very special moment between my mother and me, "Minei" became my most favorite hula auwana. I do not have a particularly favorite kahiko mele but I do love the ohelo style of dancing.

I have always tried to be respectful and faithful to the style of hula that was passed down to me by my kumu. It has been a life of great joy because I have had the blessing of being able to work at what I love.

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Birthdate: February 10, 1981

Birthplace: Honolulu, Hawaii

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