

## IOLA YOLANDA CALDITO BALUBAR

Iola Balubar founded the Halau Hula O' Keola-Alliokekai in 1975. She teaches at the Central Maui Youth Center in Kahului, Maui.

Mrs. Elizabeth Lum Ho, a Chinese-Hawaiian lady, had been teaching hula in Wailuku for a long time. She taught me the basics when I was in the second grade. She was also my mother's hula teacher. The first thing she would concentrate on, was our basics. She would go through the steps and if we had a hard time doing the 'ami, we would ~~put~~ <sup>placed</sup> our hands against the wall, bend ~~our~~ <sup>ed</sup> knees and push, concentrating on the hips. I remember kneeling down and she would step <sup>ping</sup> on our thighs so we would be more limber. I also remember ~~her~~ <sup>she used</sup> using the bamboo stick <sup>to</sup> in correcting us. Just a tap to remind us. I went through an 'uniki with her but not to graduate. After the 'uniki, she took time off and we never returned.

Later when I was in the sixth grade, my mother bumped into Aunty Becky Kaopuiki at the shopping center. She invited my sister and I to her place to learn with her daughter and a few other girls. We used to go down to her house in Nasca where she taught us in her yard. We learned implement numbers, New Zealand and Polynesian numbers, and hula kahiko and 'auana. We did a mixture of numbers for the shows at small hotels.

Aunty Becky asked Johnny Hokuana to teach us his hula. He's a long

time kumu hula from Maui who is well known here. I learned from Uncle Hokuana and also from Uncle Robert Kalani. Uncle Robert taught some of his kahiko and implement numbers. <sup>lolo</sup> They came to help Aunty Becky. I was with her for seven or eight years but I never did uniki from anyone.

A competition was ~~just~~ started when I started my hula business in 1975. I remember taking my first <sup>group</sup> ~~crop~~ of girls <sup>begin</sup> ~~that~~ were excellent and I trained them for shows. I took them to observe the Merrie Monarch Festival that year.

People knew me as a dancer. They respected me as a person who can create dances because my dad was a politician and whenever I went to rallies, they always asked me to do a ~~couple~~ hulas. Aunty Becky gave me the freedom of just going and sitting under the tree with her daughter and creating a hula for her. She said, "You and Luana go sit under the tree. Take this sheet of paper and go make up this hula for the show." So we were creating <sup>during my</sup> ~~at about~~ the seventh-grade year. I felt confident, I created <sup>my</sup> my own hula.

After I had my son in 1974, I couldn't go back to dancing because I put on so much weight. My husband told me to stay home with the baby and ~~try to~~ open up a dance studio because I can create ~~and a lot of people know~~ me as a dancer. I put an ad in the paper. I didn't have a place to teach so I

called my brother and asked him if I could use his double car garage. He ~~said of course.~~ <sup>agreed</sup> So every Saturday, I ~~taught at~~ <sup>would teach in</sup> his double car garage. It was so overwhelming because I had many students from that first week's ad. All of a sudden I knew this was my bag. I really liked it.

I started teaching hula 'auana. Then I taught what I learned from the different shows, hula kahiko like "Lili'u E", "Kawika", "Hana Chant" and "Ho'opuka" oli. After that I went to see Uncle Robert Kalani to learn more of the kahiko so I could teach my students. I didn't get into the language until three or four years ago when I got into the Hawaiian Studies Program.

Around the 1980's, I started entering hula competitions here on Maui. The first year I entered the Ka'ahumanu Festival with senior girls as well as keikis ~~and we~~ <sup>and</sup> entered ~~in~~ the 'auana division. We placed first for both divisions. Uncle George Naope saw us and asked me several times to come to the Merrie Monarch. I just wasn't ready for that kind of competition. I got more interested in Polynesian and I went to the Tahiti Fete <sup>in</sup> Kaua'i. I took my keiki to the hula competition in California and entered Tahitian and 'auana. <sup>#</sup> I really got into hula kahiko when I got into the Queen Lili'uokalani Keiki Hula Competition. That's when I started creating my own kahiko and trying to put my own tune to the chant that they gave us.

Every year ~~when~~ <sup>uniki</sup> I watch the video tape, I ~~can~~ <sup>my growth</sup> see how I grew. I'm still learning.

Uniki to me is to graduate from a halau that you have learned from. You know the kumu's basics, how she interprets her dance for you to learn, how you describe it and your feeling from within that you could bring out. Your creativity <sup>will</sup> to create your own hula and kahiko. I ~~would~~ think ~~at that~~ my students <sup>will</sup> ~~would~~ <sup>can teach</sup> have learned what I have taught them in twelve years. Every kumu <sup>has his/her</sup> have their own ability and their ~~own~~ knowledge. For me, what I know and what I have shared with my students is what I would uniki them on.

When I started hula, it was ~~real simple motions~~. It wasn't like today. Because I know the different Polynesian dancing, I can see the different steps ~~that somehow get caught into~~ our hula. Sometimes I see <sup>o</sup> some Samoan step in the hula dances, sometimes it's visa versa, Hawaiian into Tahitian, Tahitian into hula. We are all intermixing ~~and~~ I see the difference. It's a little bit more modern, <sup>and</sup> ~~it's~~ got ~~carried~~ away from the simple hula style. I think we <sup>should</sup> ~~want~~ to try and get back to it.