

NANA I NA LOEA HULA
KUMU HULA: Ulalia Berman
INTERVIEWER: Lovina Le Pendu
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(CAN YOU GIVE ME YOUR FULL GIVEN NAME?) Ann Darlene Ulalia Ka'ai Berman. (HOW WERE YOU CALLED BY "ULALIA"?) When we studied for kumu hula with Aunty Maiki, she wanted us to use our Hawaiian name, so then I used Ulalia Ka'ai. (DO YOU WANT THAT NAME IN THE BOOK?) Ulalia Ka'ai Berman. (DO YOU TEACH PRESENTLY?) Yes. (WHERE?) At Keauhou Shopping Village and at home. (AGE OF THE STUDENTS?) The youngest, 2, to 61. (WHY TWO DIFFERENT LOCATIONS?) When the shopping center opened, several different halau went over to ask if they could teach there, because the location is nice and it's outdoors. . .different program when they first opened. So I got called if I would be willing to be the kumu in residence under the condition that I will be there every week. And I said, "I would love to come, but I can't if it has to be that." Because Saturdays and for programs throughout Kamehameha day down at Pu'uuhonua 'O Honaunau, here at Hulihe'e, whenever there's programs, Special Olympics, we kokua. So if they didn't mind that on those Saturdays there would be no class. But other than that... so I've been there now 5, 6 years. (AND THEN YOU TEACH AT HOME?) It's the same, it's just that I have the ladies at home on Tuesday evenings. Saturday mornings I teach at Keauhou, from 8:00 to 10:00. (DO YOU TEACH BOTH KAHIKO AND AUWANA?) Yes. (OLI?) Within learning their kahiko they have to oli, certain areas. They have to learn what is going on and now that my teens are at the point where they want to learn it makes a difference, because you start a class and they are there for 6 months strong and then comes the holidays and then they drift and then they come back. (HOW MANY YEARS HAVE YOU BEEN TEACHING?) Since 1974. (HOW DID YOU START TO TEACH?) With Kalihi-Palama Culture & Arts, September 1974. (WHERE?) I taught at Kuhio Park Terrace, Mayor Wrights housing, and Kamehameha housing. I was an understudy with Aunty Maiki so I taught within the halau. Really, I first started off at

Cathedral School, because one of the teachers there was a student of Aunty Maiki's and she wanted some classes. So I went to teach at Cathedral School. In September I started with the school. And then Kalihi-Palama Culture & Arts called, so I went to work there. And then when they politely let me go a year and 1/2 later for no concrete reason, you learn to bite your tongue and you learn to understand why different paths come to you. So I go home to the halau with Aunty Maiki and teach there, and then she said now you're ready to teach on your own. So then in 1975-1976, I'm not sure, that's when I started Ulalia School of Hawaiian Dance at my home at Nu'uanu. (WHEN DID YOU FIRST START TO DANCE HULA?) About 1 year and 1/2, 2 years old. (YOUR FIRST TEACHER?) I don't remember her name. I remember her being an aunt, because of my leg, one was shorter than the other, so hula was taught to me for exercise to even out my leg, whatever Aunty did to help me get the equal back; and then at Pu'unui Playground. (YOUR TEACHER?) Rose Lane, Aunty Alice Namakelua. And then I went to the halau with Aunty Maiki and I was with her since I was 7 years old. (HOW LONG WERE YOU THERE?) I am still with her. (CAN YOU REMEMBER THE METHODS?) With Aunty Rose Lane at the playground I remember basically hapa haole, lot of auwana, no kahiko because we were, what... I was the youngest girl. Out of 7 children I was number 6. So when my brothers and my sister went to the park, the oldest took care of the youngest. So I was 3 years old at Pu'unui playground. So when they had hula I just stood in the back because of my leg. She mostly taught auwana. I remember a lot of hapa haole. (WITH AUNTY MAIKI, DID YOU UNIKI?) Yes. (WHAT YEAR?) 1973, August 27. The first year I uniki as "olapa". The following year we finished as kumu. (TELL ME ABOUT EXPERIENCES YOU HAD WITH YOUR KUMU HULA. TRAINING?) Aunty Maiki taught us to share what we learned, whether it be auwana, kahiko, implements, the study of the oli. Whenever there was a performance, and basically with church, we went and we danced for the sake of dancing. ...it's a lei contest that Aunty Alice had at the park and recreation. We went

to Tripler Army Hospital. Father Gregory would call and we would go up to Saint..., Pauoa church, "Blessed Sacrament" (church). We would do the lu'au. We were the first to dance in church. We were one of the first young children to dance in what is known as the "Gibson Mu'u" today, the white long sleeves, and everyone called that pajamas when we danced, or the "older ladies". I was there so now when I speak of it, I was a child but my older hula sisters, Aunty Momi, _____ Aarona, when they danced they danced in the white old fashioned and they were known to be pajamas. But Aunty Vicky gave Aunty Maiki that style of the high neck "Mother Hubbard" style, ...and then it became an ensignia for the halau; ti leaf skirts, sarongs, holokus, then the formal dresses. So today... one comment was made at the Merrie Monarch, "Oh! That halau doesn't have shoes on. They're going to cut off points", and I shook my head and I had to laugh; I said, "When did shoes become so important with different style holoku?" So they ask me, "Aunty, what's your comment?" I said, "Well, when we wore a long sleeve fitted and then a flaired skirt mu'u and we used a riding crop; if we didn't have boots then, we just danced the hula." I said, "Today, everything has to be so-so, and it's kind of scary, because I am saying, "What are they doing?" Some songs, yes, I can see _____, even though, when I saw as lovely as they look in white holokus for _____ at the Merrie Monarch, when we wore holokus and we had a little longer trains, we didn't wear heels. Tell me where did that come from.? (WHAT REQUIREMENTS DID YOU HAVE TO MEET TO BECOME A TEACHER?) Even if we were just in class?

We were dancing for _____. I was home here in Kona. When we got transferred, when we moved back to Honolulu and they started _____, Aunty Maiki's started the class, the requirement was the desire to want to learn. And I think back then when we studied, for myself having a young family, I did not know what it was while I was studying to become a kumu; what my goals, where I was going to be 2, 5, 15 years later down the road where I am today. I didn't

envision this. I was still the student so at times it shocked me that I am doing what I'm doing. To think that I'm teaching, I'm sharing what I was taught, and yet there's still much more to learn. The hula competitions opened up an area of bringing out more kumu hula that we never heard of from the different islands. It gave us the exposure to know that Aunty Edith was here on Hawai'i Island, and her two daughters. From Lana'i, Elaine Kaopuiki. Aunty Eleanor Hiram; different kumu around the islands. Aunty Kau'i we knew because she would come into the halau with Aunty Maiki on several projects when they needed to work with Aunty Kawena. Aunty Vicky I'i was always around. I grew up with many of these who, to me, were part of the halau unit. When Aunty Maiki said, "Oh, I need to go and sit with Aunty Vaina to do research on such and such," or, "I need sit with Aunty Vicky," or, "Aunty Genoa is coming over," or Uncle George. They were part of my hula family. So I've been privileged. If I danced with Uncle Bill Lincoln, Aunty Ina Gurrero for boat day. Kids today don't know that feeling of airport arrival. Going down and dancing for the boats. So I danced with a lot of musicians because of programs and concerts we were in . Pua Alameda. When we danced and then other halau didn't have dances to go to meet the boat, Uncle Joe would call Aunty Maiki, "Do you have any dancers? Please send me some dancers", so Pohai, Jackie and myself would go ahead and dance. So we danced with different musicians and had the experience to know how to dance with different sounds of Alekoki. Because each musician has their own routine, their own timing. (WHAT MADE YOU WANT TO BE A TEACHER?) The thought that my kumu said you are in class, study it, learn it. When we uniki that didn't mean that our studies ended. Many people think that now that you uniki you are your own kumu hula. That doesn't work that way because you are still an undergraduate. You have to go back to graduate studies. You have to wet your feet. You have to go out, and all of a sudden to say, well here, you have the credentials. You have all of this in front of you, now go and teach. There are many who had all of this but instead of becoming the teachers they were the

entertainers. Then some went into the church to give it back to the church. Some went up into the University and became the professors in the University to carry on, through hula, more of the culture. It extended. Not everyone, though we had the foundation, could get up and say, "All right ladies, this is it." How do you start? I was fortunate since during my high school I sat behind the desk, I learned how to do the business end of doing the halau; signing in, taking tuition, checking who had what costumes, who was prepared, who was ready. So I was fortunate. I learned ground up. And then when Aunty Maiki was called away to go do something, I was left to mature. So I taught. And to teach you peers when you are in high school is not easy because they all look at you like, "Who said you can do this," you know how that goes. But I was put there and sometimes she said, "Eh, your manner. You have to watch. You can't be so bossy." Hello. But you don't realize it because you don't know how to do it. So I was fortunate, I had learned all these teaching techniques, methods, already before I even became a teacher. I knew that I was going to be a teacher. So that teaching method or principal or uniformity, I have an easier time than somebody who has danced just as long as me but has never stood in front of others to teach. So when you earn your degree, because you earned your degree, that doesn't mean that you can go out now and teach in class. And even some of our teachers, in any subject matter, they come into the school and they say, "How do you do this? Where do you learn how to do this?" (CAN YOU GIVE YOUR EXPLANATION OF A KUMU?) Life. Fulfillment. Enrichment that holds. When I think of a kumu I think of my kumu, Aunty Maiki, because she had all of these. And she taught life more than a method of saying, "We are going to do this, we are going to do this." So everything that we studied teach you the wrong life, because when things were good you learned real fast. When there was sadness, and it was shared because it is part of life. If the weather conditions were ugly because of the heavy rain and everybody came into class and were not up to par, she would explain the emotion of that older day. So hula to me is like the kumu gives off

this light. Through the ups and downs, it shares all of our emotions. Today it's more complex. I think it's harder to be a kumu today because we have to be on top of everything, whereas when I studied with Aunty Maiki, she took one thing at a time; this program for Tripler Army Hospital, this next program for Aunty Bina Mossman related to Aha Hui Ka'ahumanu. And you try to do that today, then all of a sudden we're faced with competition. And I enjoy the competitions. I marvel at what the kumu hula do for today, for all the young people, the adults. And yet I don't participate because when I danced for Aunty Maiki we were in competition; we were there in a different time period in her life where everything we did was like a growth of... "Oh, so and so is coming in, they need two dancers to go to Chicago tonight so go home and pack your bag." And I looked at her. We went home and packed our bag and we started off working for Aloha and United Airlines doing sales promotions. So our hula was different from what children are learning today. And when parents ask me I say... I know I went up for kumu but it just involves so much.

(AUNTY MAIKI ENTERED KEIKI HULA ONE YEAR BUT SHE SAID SHE DOES NOT BELIEVE IN COMPETITION, ENTERTAIN IS TOO DIFFERENT, IS THAT HER PHILOSOPHY?) Yes. When I moved home to Kona and opened up the halau, I enrolled our baby at Moku Aikaua and someone asked me, "What are you going to do?", I said, "Well, I am going to be opening a hula halau." "Oh, when and where. I'll be your first student." And so the ad went in the paper and I got the phone calls and we started, and they asked, "Are you into competition?" I said, "No". I said, "If you want to be competitive be competitive unto yourself. If you want to be the best, be the best unto yourself." Then Merrie Monarch came a long and we got an invitation and Uncle George said there's nobody from Kona..., so I talked to the ladies and said, "Ladies, I don't believe in competition, but I would like to share the thought that many of you are dancers, you have danced for many others, you danced here and there, and that if you like to share something share the competition of what you are learning. Share what you share rather than for competition for

competition. So we went in in 1980-81. We took what we were sharing. We had a hula brother who walked out and chanted the ladies on with a ho'okupu to the court. We were one of the first. The court to me was very important, regardless of time period. We were the first, I think, and the only halau in all of the competitions to do the same chant for kahiko and the same dance for auwana, and that was "la 'oe e ka la". To show that you can do a kahiko and then you can change in the time period of Kalakaua and show it. So you share different things. You have different thoughts. When children come, I let the parents know I am not into competition. Basically, your childrens' competition here on this island happens to be a Thursday night in early September, and I refuse children to be taken out of their home to go and dance, and they can't make it to school the next day. At their young age there's too much for them to compete in learning and then to put hula above other things... I love it and I know they enjoy it. But I want them to know that they can dance just as well and be just as groomed when they go to _____, our nursing home in Kona Hospital to dance for the Cancer Society, to dance for whatever they are ready and they are prepared. I tell some parents, "If you feel that your child wants competition, please, there's Etua, there's Iwalani, there's Lanakila out mauka, there's others who do teach, and that's fine. (CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR DANCING STYLE?) I still come from the halau of Maiki. I am continuing her style. I'm sure I have developed a few of my own emotions through the years, but I can always hear when I dance in line, "Oh! She must have danced for Maiki," and I am honored when I hear that. It makes me feel good. (SO SHE HAD A GREAT INFLUENCE ON YOUR TEACHING?) Very much. (DID YOU ENCOUNTER ANY DIFFICULTIES DURING YOUR HULA CAREER?) Oh yes! The growing pains of being a kumu hula, being a young mother, and being a wife. I would like to think, first of all, that I am me as an individual, I am the wife to my husband Kona, the mother of his children, and then as in career I'm a kumu hula. But I'm also a resource teacher in the kupuna program. I work as a hostess at the Tiare Room at

the Royal Waikoloan. And to me all of these jobs or work that I do, they all compliment one another because it brings me out to be who I am. The difficulties in life is like itself. We have to meet everything that comes to us; a loss of a great friend, of a teacher; how the rest of your family life works around it or accepts it and supports. Through my hula life I've lost a dear friend here, 'A'Ala Akana, who was a hula sister. Though we studied with different kumu hula, our bond and love for hula was there. The loss of Aunty Maiki, Aunty Alice, Aunty Bina, Aunty Vicky; all of these people had different influences on me at different times of my life, so when I lost them I had a different hurt. Then I had to re-evaluate: "What am I doing today as a young teacher to carry on what they've given me," or to stop, to try and guide our children in one direction and yet still be a family. And so the thing of it today, I had to work at everything; I have to work at being the wife, the mother, the kumu, the hostess. And I can compliment them all because I have the support and love from my family. At times it's not easy. (YOUR MOST JOY IN YOUR TEACHING?) Oh, the children. And the ladies, well, it all depends. You can teach a chant and then if it doesn't come across, you know it, so then you leave it and you move on to something else. And then you'll teach something and then they'll go, "Hana hou, hana hou, do it again." Then you come back and they'll say, "Aunty, how come we don't dance that one anymore?", even if it's a hapa haole, even if it's "Suzianna 'E" or, today we started "Waikiki Hula". And, "Oh, I don't know Waikiki. I don't live on O'ahu." I say, "That's why we're going to study it, so you know about it." "Oh, how come?" I said, "Because that's my home. That's where I come from." So the "lips" come from different people all the time. Today it was Ashley and she is 2 years old, and she is following her 6 year old sister around. "Ashley you can't do 'ho'opuka' but you can do the other steps, move." So it's watching that new baby who wants to learn and not having to put the babies out of the line. It doesn't matter because they are learning from hearing, and so that is a joy, that hope to go on to continue. Sometimes hula is draining at times

because there is so much going on, and yet there's so much energy. After Merrie Monarch, sending off my daughter to go to hula kahi when I wanted to get on that plane and go over, but the reality is we are raising a family, hoping to build an addition to our home so that... if we were to take off for everything with hula many of us could not have families, so it's not easy. That's why, I said, the support, and at times when he knows that we're going to be busy we talk about it and say, "Hey! I need the time." Another high is to stay in a phone call to be participating in the "Na Hoku Hanohano Award", to have as many kumu hula from Aunty Maiki, as many different classes that she uniki to be part of this. So I'm going, "Oh, good. I get to see Millie, Georgie Boy, May, Ho'ulu, Kalena, whoever is going to be able to come down, Ke'ahi, and all the classes, and she finished 20 classes. So if just to get so many from that, can you imagine if we were to get 30 maybe out of 65 kumus that she uniki on a stage at one time... (WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE YOUNG STUDENTS THAT ARE LOOKING TO BE A TEACHER TODAY?) What age are you thinking of? (WELL, IF YOU SEE IT IN SOMEONE, WHAT KIND OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO HER?) All that I've taught, all that you've learned from others, because all learning doesn't come from one area. In high school you have different clubs... (break in tape) ...some of it's very exciting; some of it, I don't understand it, because we know that kahiko is of tradition and we are setting the tradition for tomorrow. So if they look at our hula today in bombastic motions, in flamboyant movements, in gymnastic exercise on the dance floor. If that's what they consider kahiko, then I would like to say I come from the old school because I'd like to see something more simple, and yet just as energetic as what they're doing. (FAVORITE DANCE? CHANT?) I enjoy "Kaulilua". (SPECIAL MEMORIES/SIGNIFICANCE FOR YOU?) Yes. Doing the three, the trilogy. To dance it up at the Bishop Museum, and then doing "Keawe 'O'opa" at a concert and having that longest walk out, that's a nice memory because I was in the center and you don't think that you have the longest walk up until kumu reverses and takes the two ends

first so you end up having the longest walk, and to do the 'o'opa was nice. I marvel in the many hula steps that kumu are sharing that I am still learning today. There was a step that Holo'i did that was called "heleilua". I've never heard of that before. And it was nice to know that still yet in 1991 we are still learning steps that were done 150 years ago, but because not every hula halau did it, only a certain few, and when this kumu hula from Moloka'i, John Kaimikaua, shared it we are learning from him. So it hasn't ended. (IS HAWAIIAN LANGUAGE IMPORTANT IN HULA?) Yes. (WHY?) The language is art, the breath of all kahiko, all oli. (FAVORITE SONG IN HULA AUWANA?) Of formal song, "Ia 'oe e ka la". Hapa haole, "Million Moons Over Hawai'i", or "Hawaiian Hula Eyes", the flirty 'Cutie' hulas; it's hard to just pinpoint a song, but when you think of different times and places... "Ia 'oe e ka la", I say that one because when I was finally able to go to the next... as we grew and you're the young teen behind the gracious ladies class and you're dancing, and all of a sudden you move from maybe Tuesday to Thursday classes, that's a better class. Your development goes from age and then different levels of understanding, and when you, to go forward, to "Pua Lililehua", when you can dance a song with the rest and all of a sudden you think, "Hu!", you're grown up at 15 years old and you're dancing with the 18, 19, and 21 years old, and then when you get to 21 and you're dancing with the ladies, the women, who are in their 40's and 50's, and the style of dancing, your body just awakes in a different time period. ("PUA LILILEHUA", BECAUSE IT IS HER SONG?) We were taught it as not that it was composed for her first, but that it was just of a love, a very deep love, and "Hilo Pa'a" was taught on how this love was bound by 8 tie rope. It wasn't talking about the rope, it was talking about how Kahauanu would watch Aunty Maiki braid her hair. And automatically, all of the dancers who danced at that time, my hula sisters, we all had long hair, and we all used to do this. And of course when I met Kona, that was the song that he learned and he sang it at our wedding. So besides Kahauanu writing it for Aunty Maiki, he gave it to all of us who shared this

love and to be complemented with this song. You can't help but have a great memory. (WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT WORKSHOPS?) Wonderful! Workshops for all ages is wonderful. It takes your kumu hula from different areas. It brings many students together who love hula. When the workshops first started and we went, after a while you had many who were the entertainers who came, because when you become an entertainer in Waikiki you don't have time for classes, and the workshops gave them the time to learn something that they truly love. Some of them go, "Why do you want a workshop?" They say, "I love it!" They are the entertainers in Waikiki and they are learning something more than they have time for. So basically classes for hula work I am for, I'd say adults - 18 and above. For children, it gives them an idea that there are many more teachers around. We don't have any workshops here in Kona. We need it. (WHAT KIND OF WORKSHOPS ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?) I'd love a workshop on oli, on kahiko, . . . but it is a subject matter where like you have Queen Lili'uokalani, the children learn more about her. They bring the past to the present, we compliment, because I am sure down the road they are going to say, "Oh! That was the tradition in 1990. That's what they danced and hula came way before that." But we are setting it and we don't realize that what we are setting it because all of a sudden we're here. When I was a teen all I could remember was get my holoku, my ti leaf skirt ready, my leis, be ready, and you are going to dance here. And when we had to learn other dances of other cultures to incorporate a whole show, we learned it because we had to do it, that doesn't mean we need the culture...

(WHAT DID YOU KEEP FROM MAIKI, A STYLE?) It is more than her style, it was her warmth, her love, her enthusiasm that she could instill in all of us, a sense of belonging, of feeling life and giving it out through dance form. She was very proud of the fact that she shared mannerisms with us, protocol, to know how to be and appreciate being Hawaiian, to know how to extend to the next person if we were going to watch a program, to dress accordingly. So if that

meant wearing a mu'umu'u and making leis so that we would give their halau the thought that we came to watch them. This was little mannerisms. (ABOUT STYLE OF DANCE, DID SHE HAVE HER OWN?) Her style came from Aunty Lokalia, from Aunty Kawena, from Aunty Vicky. So she incorporated all of those even from her mama, Aunty Honey Du Pris. When you say style, well, hula ku'i, that was her style of dancing. The high carriage of, see I don't want to say ho'oiio because she wasn't ho'oiio. (HULA KU'I WAS AN ERA) The era of the time. And the dignity that she had; and she could show that dignity when we danced in selophane skirts and did "Rhythm of the Islands", and "Hawaiian Hula Eyes"; when we did "Red Opu" in a little tie skirt and bandanna around, you know, it was always there no matter what the hula was it was her expression of living each . . .

(DO YOU HAVE ANYTHING SPECIAL YOU WANT TO SAY?) Yeah. I am just grateful. It gives us a chance to share where we are at, what we've done. I've been fortunate; I come from a background of father and grandfather being entertainers and musicians. They spread their aloha through music, and I can continue with what I've learned. I don't know all. I'm still learning. But to be given the respect from my peers and elders and from young ones is quite a wonderful feeling, and hoping that I can instill in someone else to pick up and want to do it. (DO YOU HAVE SOMEBODY IN MIND?) I have several, not that they are continuing students with me, but in the schools where I teach I notice it in a certain child. So to reward that child, to let that teacher know, continue, push him in that direction. And because we work in the Hawaiian Studies Program they are always asking for students who will do something. So their recommendation of a student to be part of a group to carry on, there are so many scholarships that are out there for them.

(FOR YOURSELF, DO YOU HAVE SOMEBODY THAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT TO CONTINUE?) There are several. Right now I am working with a young lady who is 22. She doesn't know that I

have in mind for her to, uh, I want to see how she would handle it. I would like her to be a contestant only because I think she needs the challenge. But she's been away from hula for 6 years. She came back, and she picked up that ipu heke, and she started to chant for the young children. She missed a verse here and there. To give her some lessons so that she's studying it and not knowing why she's doing it, just because she wants to learn again. (DO YOU WANT TO UNIKI SOME STUDENTS LATER ON?) Yes. I think that would be the complement to any kumu hula of today. To uniki, maybe, as an olapa, as dancers, because that's the first beginning. Because even after becoming a kumu hula I still considered myself a dancer. And being part of that South Pacific Festival that we went. . . I was invited to be a dancer, and that's what I did, I danced and I loved it! Because I didn't have to go there to teach, though we did when we had a private party, that was one time. But to be a dancer and then to go in the different areas of our culture.