

VIDEO



KUMU HULA DIES

One of the founders of the Merrie Monarch festival, George Na'ope, spoke before his death about the hula competition.

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POLL



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Missing paper

Council votes on rail today

A 'yes' would let city sign deal on historical impacts

BY SEAN HAO
Advertiser Staff Writer

The City Council today is scheduled to vote on whether to allow the city administration to sign an agreement creating a framework to address the impacts of the rail project

on historical resources.

Today's hearing will be the second of back-to-back council votes requested by the city as it races to start construction on the \$5.5 billion elevated commuter rail line by year's end.

Yesterday, the council Transportation Committee voted 3-2 to

SEE COUNCIL, A2

But report urges more bidding competition, better documentation

BY SEAN HAO
Advertiser Staff Writer

The city needs to improve the way it documents commuter rail contract awards to improve transparency and public confidence in the project, according to a study by city auditor Les Tanaka.

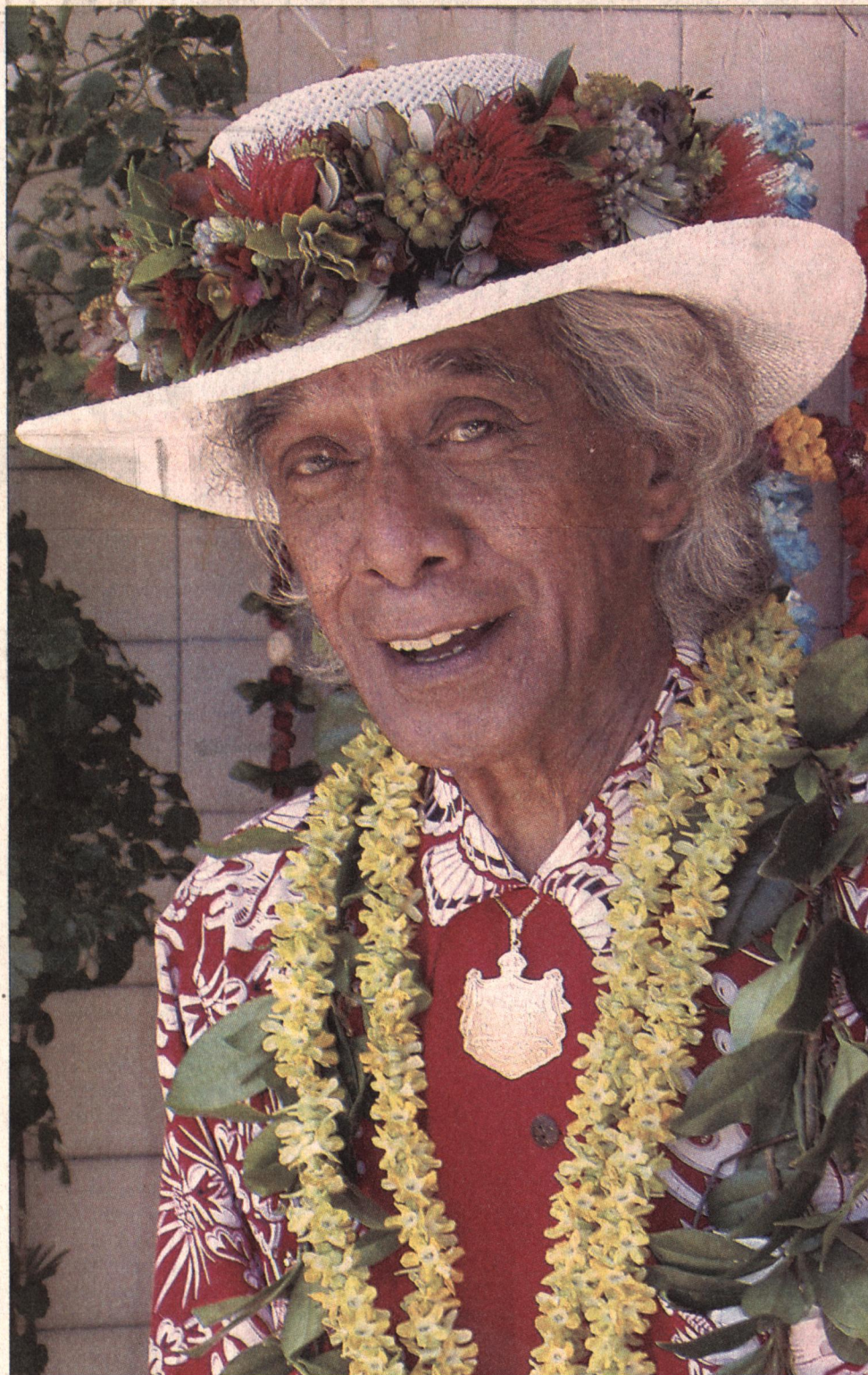
The audit, released yesterday,

found that the award of two train project contracts to Parsons Brinckerhoff and a third to a firm founded by former Parsons employees complied with procurement laws.

However, Tanaka had several suggestions on how to improve the process for awarding contracts as the city prepares to begin building the \$5.5 billion train in December.

Tanaka recommended the city consider whether it adequately so-

SEE AUDIT, A2



ADVERTISER LIBRARY PHOTO | Jan. 19, 2007

Na'ope was 'last living hula master'

Merrie Monarch co-founder brought aloha to the world

BY GORDON Y.K. PANG
AND WANDA ADAMS
Advertiser Staff Writers

One of hula icon George Na'ope's goals was to introduce hula to people around the globe, something he was able to accomplish when the Merrie Monarch Festival he co-founded with Doris "Dottie" Thompson grew into the world's premiere hula competition.

Na'ope, 81, died yesterday morning at his Waiākea Ūka



See video and more photos of hula master George Na'ope at

HONOLULUADVERTISER.COM

residence in Hilo after a long battle with cancer.

"His body was just shutting down this past week," said Jacqueline "Skylark" Rosetti, a family friend. Na'ope last year had a portion of a lung removed and recently he'd been diagnosed with an inoperable brain tumor, Rosetti said.

As news of George Lanakilakeikiahiali'i Na'ope's death spread through the hula community yesterday, kumu

SEE NA'OPE, A2



Na'ope in the 1960s: He co-founded the Merrie Monarch Festival in 1962.

Advertiser library photo

"Uncle George" Na'ope, a master in hula and chant, began teaching hula at age 13. His classes were held in a barbershop and the 50-cents-a-week fee helped him support his family.

Na'ope

CONTINUED FROM A1

hula who studied under him remembered his significant contribution to Hawaiian culture, referring to him as a hula lo'ea, a hula master.

"He was our last living hula master," Rosetti said.

Kumu hula Rae Fonseca recalled coming to Hilo from O'ahu in the early 1970s to learn hula from "Uncle George."

At the time, George Na'ope's Hula Studio was on the second floor of the KHBC radio station building on Keawe Street across from the downtown Hilo KTA store, said Fonseca, kumu hula of Halau Hula O Kahikihaulani.

By then, the Merrie Monarch Festival had begun to take off in popularity, especially after male hula and hula kahiko, or ancient hula, became part of the weeklong event.

Fonseca said Na'ope was a bridge between the hula masters of the past, such as 'Iolani Luahine, Lokalia Montgomery and Tommy Hiona, and the younger generation of kumu hula whose names became popular largely as a result of the festival, such as Johnny Lum Ho, Aloha Dalire and Fonseca himself.

"We were able at that time to meet these great kumu hula and learn from them also," Fonseca said.

Kumu hula Leina'ala Kalama Heine agreed. "As far as I was concerned, he was the last link between that time and today," said Heine, kumu hula of Nā Pualeioli'olehūa. "I regard him as a lo'ea. He is one of the great masters of our time."

Rosetti said Na'ope wanted to spread the message of hula throughout the world. Besides helping create Merrie Monarch and other hula festivals in Hawai'i and around the world, Na'ope made it a point to go to places such as Japan to teach hula, Rosetti said.

"That was his mission, to bring hula to the world," she said.

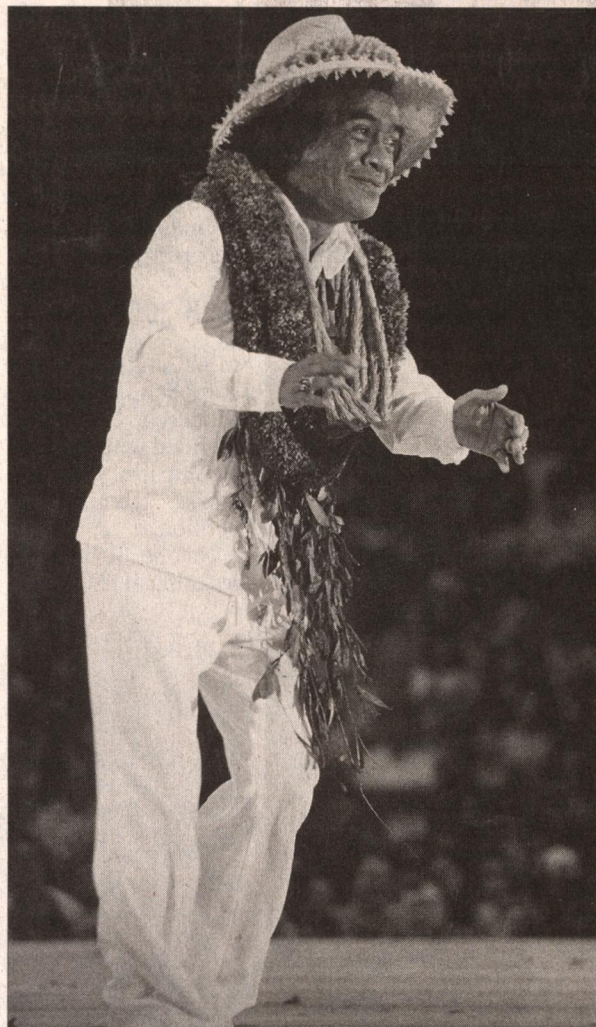
SPREADING A MESSAGE

Etua Lopez, another of Na'ope's students, said Na'ope "believed in the word aloha," and helped spread that message throughout the world through hula.

"He thought hula would help not only the Hawaiian people learn about their culture but he thought it would help people around the world understand their own nation and their languages and cultures," Lopez said.

In 1981, with the help of the Tokyo Hula Association, Na'ope began the Japan Merrie Monarch Hula Festival.

Na'ope was born in Kalihi on Feb. 25, 1928, and his family moved to



ABOVE: George Na'ope sang at the 42nd annual Merrie Monarch Festival Wednesday Night Hō'ike in 2005.

LEFT: Na'ope got onstage at the 1982 festival. He was known to some as "The Menehune" because of his diminutive stature.

Advertiser library photos

ki Hula Festival and its sponsor, the Kalihi-Pālama Cultural and Arts Society, as well as Kalākaua Invitational Hula Festival, the Kaua'i Mokihāna Festival and the Kupuna Hula Festival. There are also hula festivals in the Pacific Northwest and California named after Na'ope.

In later years, Na'ope was known not just as a kumu hula, but as a raconteur, a dapper man decked out in bright clothes and huge rings. A fixture at the festival and its many auxiliary events, he was adored by hula-loving visitors, often seen in a huge peacock-style chair having his picture taken with visitors from Japan.

In latter years, when he crept up the ramp to the Merrie Monarch stage to perform a hula during the finale, the crowd would go wild.

He was called "The Menehune," for his small stature, or sometimes "Dandy," a reference to King Kalākaua's hula master Dandy Ioane, also a dapper dresser.

Na'ope is survived by a brother, Francis Na'ope; sisters, Aileen Crum, Bernie Konanui and Emma Werley; and hānai grandson, Hoapili Na'ope.

Services are tentatively scheduled for the evening of Nov. 6 and the morning of Nov. 7 at the Afook-Chinen Civic Auditorium, near the Edith Kanaka'ole Tennis Stadium that has been home to the Merrie Monarch for nearly the last half century.

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Hilo when he was a youth. He began his hula studies when he was 3 under Mary Kanaile Fujii, mother of Edith Kanaka'ole.

As a young adult, Na'ope traveled the world as the featured chanter for

the Royal Hawaiian Review and the Ray Kinney Band.

Besides co-founding the Merrie Monarch Festival with Dottie Thompson in 1962, Na'ope also helped create the Lili'uokalani Kei-

facts than women. But the rates of men improved from 2.5 percent in the earlier period to 2.2 percent in the second time frame while women's rates increased from 0.7 percent to 1 percent.

Men's cardiovascular risk factors improved or remained stable over the two study periods while the only risk factor that improved in women was high-density lipoprotein levels. This suggests that precursors to heart disease, such as high blood pressure and high cholesterol, are not assessed or treated as aggressively in women as they are in men, said Towfighi, also chairwoman of the neurology department at Rancho Los Amigos National Rehabilitation Center.

"There have been several studies that have found women have their risk factors checked less frequently than men," she said. "When they are checked, women are less likely to receive medication than men. And when they receive medication, their symptoms are not as controlled as much as men."

PROGRESS MADE

However, a second paper published in the same journal reveals that some strides are being made in treating women's cardiovascular health. That study found survival rates following a heart attack improved in both men and women between 1994 and 2006, with the biggest improvements seen in women.

Researchers led by Dr. Viola Vaccarino of Emory School of Medicine, looked at in-hospital death rates following heart attack in 916,380 patients. Women younger than 55 years had a 52.9 percent reduction in the risk of death over the time period while men of the same age had a 33.3 percent reduction.

The two studies looked at somewhat different risk factors and different time periods, which could account for the more positive findings of the study on death rates, Towfighi said.

"The second study is encouraging. But although mortality is improving in recent years, women are having more heart attacks," she said.