

IWALANI TSEU
Founder/Dance Instructor
IWALANI SCHOOL OF DANCE
94-1004 Anania Place
Mililani Town, Hawaii 96789

Ho'ea'e'ae Ranch, Oahu's first Macadamia Nut Orchard, has a significant place in my life. I was born there in 1950, and raised in Honouliuli, a town noted for the ilima flower farms. At the tender age of six, I enrolled in Auntie Ku'ulei Clark's hula class at Hans L'orange Park in Waipahu.

Hawaiian composers have always taken time to write songs and chants about whatever caught their eyes. Be it the beauty of a pretty girl or even a handsome male, certain places, one's lover or one's ohana.

Many of my hula follow that same traditions, nothing to do with history, but my own inner feelings. I think of my childhood, of people and places, glimpses of moments that express the Hawai'i I've known. These have a way of bothering me until I put them into my hula and dance. To me the hula is the ability to create one's most inner feelings and not a copy of someone else. This I learned from one of Hawai'i's great Kumu Hula, Auntie Ku'ulei Clark. To me she was the matriarch of the Hula, she was Hawai'i.

Auntie Ku'ulei taught us first to be ha'aha'a (humble), Aloha kekahi kekahi (love and respect others), but most of all to respect yourself. Most importantly, she taught us that it would be wise for each haumana to keep in mind the wise saying of our kupuna, "Aohe pau ka ^{ike} iki i kau halau" (think not that all wisdom resides in your halau).

Under Auntie Ku'ulei, I learned the basic of the hula, kahiko and hula auwana. The hands and body jesters, the back feet movements. In my days of learning the hula awana was the in thing. Although we did some kahiko, like E ~~Liu~~ e, Kawika, ^{Lilive} Kalakaua, Kahi Kai A'o Mamala, and hula noho such as Pu'uonioni, Kona Kai O Pua, Moku Kia Kahi, and a few others.

The art of hula fascinated me as I continued to watch the older girls dance. The unity and aloha spirit they expressed gave me the incentive to work harder, as I desired to be as good as they. I did not realize then the impact hula would have in my life.

As a teenager, my mother was instrumental in enhancing my interest in dancing. Remembering my early training years, mother helped me to be aware of how vital it was to project the inner beauty of a mele (dance). She encouraged me to flow with each mana'o so that the story would be felt as well as viewed.

I later became a professional dancer and traveled to the mainland and aboard and danced in luau shows in Waikiki for Leina'ala Simmerson. Noelani Cypriano was our drummer, and Leimomi Ho our line captain. In shows at the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Kimo Kahoano, a fire knife dancer, was my partner and Marlene Sai was the featured female singer. Our dedication and discipline under the direction of Kimo Mansfield was a challenge. We had to adhere to strict rules in appearance, manners, and overall conduct. For being a hula dancer was very special back then.

I was offered to do a two week promotion for American President Lines on the passenger liner steamship PRESIDENT CLEVELAND. This promotion developed into a commitment which lasted nearly three years. Travelling to such exotic countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Borneo, India, Africa, Peru, Chili, Argentina, Acapulco, Brazil, Canada, Tahiti, and New Zealand brought rewarding memories and an opportunity to share our Hawaiian culture.

One day I was asked to teach a few young girls the hapa haole hula. These little girls brought their friends and before I realized it, the class increased tremendously. Their eagerness to learn was so refreshing, this brought back memories of my childhood. I was thrilled to watch the progress of my haumana.

Iwalani's School of Dance originated in Wahiawa on North Cane Street back in August 1974 and is now located in Mililani, Oahu. The dancing is made up of all the different cultures that make Hawai'i the melting pot of the world.

Waipio
gentle

The Art of Hula is recognized throughout the world for it is a dance form as well as the history of our Kupuna. Their mana'o was transformed through songs and dances within our body and soul as a way of communication. It is also a way of expressing our cultural heritage, the wealth of our Hawaiian Islands which make us so unique. In the Islands, unconditional love is shared through the hula haumana where mental and physical discipline are obtained. Respect and loyalty are traditions and values vital to our culture. Only in Hawai'i, a multitude of ethnic culture is able to accept the differences in peace and harmony. This is truly the meaning of ALOHA. I am honored to have the opportunity to share this art of Hawai'i and be a part of the Hawaiian Renaissance.

My appreciation and gratitude goes to a dear friend, Kimo Alama, who unselfishly continues to share his expertise, mana'o and encouragement. A special aloha to Hula Master, Uncle George Naope for allowing me still to be his haumana and inspiring me in spirit, love and knowledge. Both Kimo and Uncle George watch me with "eagle eyes".

Hula is first, ^{Ae} Ai Hawai'i ka aina O ke anuenue, yes, Hawai'i is the land of the rainbow.