

Ulalia Ka'ai Berman

Besides being a resource teacher for the Kupuna program and working at the Royal Waikoloan Hotel, Ulalia Berman teaches hula at the Keauhou Shopping Village and at home.

While an understudy, ~~with~~ ⁱⁿ (Aunti Maiki Aiu Lake) ~~of~~ Hula Halau 'O Maiki, ~~she~~ sent me to teach hula at the Cathedral School. In September of 1973, I ^{also} had the opportunity to teach for the Kalihi-Palama Culture & Arts Society. This included Kuhio Park Terrace, Mayor Wrights Housing and Kamehameha Housing. A year and a half of working within the Liliha-Kalihi area provided a great learning experience. Mary Cash, Maile Montervon and Shirley Paras were supporters who continued to keep in touch when my contract ended with Kalihi-Palama, and contributed ^{of "} ~~to~~ kokua when I started on my own. With the blessing of Aunti Maiki, Ulalia School of Hawaiian Dance opened ⁱⁿ during 1976, at my home in Nu'uuanu. ^{Beginning my life} ~~This began the life of~~ a young kumu hula with a young family, ^{I was} grateful for all that was bestowed upon me.

Hula was taught to me at the age of one and a half years, by an aunt. Because one of my legs was shorter than the other, hula was an exercise to even out my legs. At three years old, my brothers and sister took me to Pu'unui Playground, where Rose Lane was teaching hula. She taught basically hapa haole songs, a lot of auana and no kahiko. Aunti Alice Namakelua also taught at this park. I though she was so strict. Little did I know that, when in high school, she would be a great influence on me and many of the halau. At the age of seven, Daddy wanted me to learn from his cousin Ku'ulei Stibbard but, by this time, I was enrolled at Hula Halau 'O Maiki and on my way to the life that gave me so much.

/ I was fortunate to have learned how to do the business-end of the halau while in high school. I took care of registration, collecting tuition, checking who had which costumes, and who was ready. I learned from the ground up. When Aunti Maiki was called away, I taught. And to teach your peers when you are still in high school is not easy. So, I learned all these teaching techniques before I became a teacher.

My family is Earnest Kaleihoku Ka'ai, Jr. and Josephine Ulalia Ikuwa, the Ikuwa Sisters. We were the Ka'ai kids, the Sai's, the Young's, the Cummings', the Kaa'a's, and my halau family, the Aiu's and all that goes on within. Reminiscences of Nihipali, cast parties, sleepovers, carnivals, beach, movies, horseback riding in Manoa, Maunawili, Wai'ala'e, hula at Wilder Avenue, Keeaumoku Street, Kalākāua off King Street, St. Francis, Kalākāua Waikiki (Halau Hawaii). The teachings of Aunti Maiki enriched us all as she shared the love of her mentors Lokalia Montgomery, 'Iolani Luahine, Kawena Pūkui, Vicky I'i Rodrigues, Aunti Bina Mossman and Ahahui Ka'ahumanu, Aunti Ida Naone, Kamehameha Alumni Glee Club and Sam G., Kahauanu Lake Trio, Bill Lincoln, Lei Collins, Aunti Genoa, Pua Almeida (the list is endless). We were surrounded with people and love for all that life has to offer: concerts, Ala Wai Boathouse, St. Louis Alumni, McKinley High School, NBC programs, Punahou School, Tripler Army Hospital, Lunalilo Home, Queen's Surf luau shows, Hilton Hawaiian Village's Tapa Room, Prince Kuhio Hotel and Uncle Pete Beamer, boat arrivals and departures with Lena Guerrero, Alice Keawekane, Aloha Week, Joe Kahalelio, the Bill Lincoln Trio, Halekulani with the Kahau'anu Lake Trio, shows at Mokulei'a, Rose Ranch at Ulupalakua, Hana Maui with Vangie; Keola shared his home, holokua balls--so many memories. And, of course, the hula skirts (150 ti leaves), two pua melia lei and a head lei, cellophane skirts, and the Dorothy Lamour look with our red and white sarongs. We were one of the first young children to dance in what is known today as the "Gibson Mu'u". Everyone called them pajamas. But Aunti Vicky I'i gave Aunti Maiki that high neck "Mother Hubbard" style, and it became an insignia for the halau.

When I moved back to Honolulu from Kona, Aunti Maiki had started a kumu class. The only requirement was the desire to learn. Having a young family at that time, I didn't know what my goals were. I couldn't envision where I was going to be years down the road. At times, it shocked me that I was studying to become a kumu hula. On August 27, 1973, I uniki as "olapa"

with Aunty Maiki, and the following year I finished as kumu hula along with the Papa Lehua class.

Hula competitions brought out kumu hula that we never heard of, from the different islands. We learned of Aunti Edith Kanaka'ole, and her daughters Pua and Nalani, from the Island of Hawai'i, of Elaine Ka'opuiki from the Island of Lana'i; and different kumu hula from O'ahu, like Aunti Eleanor Hiram. We knew Aunti Kau'i Zuttermeister, because she would come to our hālau to work on several projects with Aunti Kawena Pukūi. I grew up with many people who were a part of the hālau unit. Aunti Maiki would do research with Aunty Bina Mossman, or sit with Aunti Vicky or Aunty Genoa, or Uncle George would come over. They all were part of my hula family. I danced with Uncle Bill Lincoln and Aunti Lena Guerrero for boat days. I danced with different musicians, and had the experience to learn how to dance to the different sounds of "Alekoki" because each musician had his own routine, his own timing--fast!

Life. Fulfillment. Enrichment. That's the meaning of being a kumu hula, and my kumu Aunti Maiki had all of these. She not only taught us about hula, but she taught us about life. She shared the ups and downs because it was a part of life. It's harder to be a kumu hula today because we have to be "on top of everything", whereas while ^{ying}studying with Aunti Maiki, we took one thing at a time. This week, a program for Tripler Army Hospital, next week a program for Aunti Bina Mossman. Today, the kumu hula are faced with competitions and raising financial support besides being culturally conscious.

I still come from the hālau of Aunti Maiki and I continue her style, though I'm sure I have developed a few of my own motions over the years. I am honored when people recognize Aunti Maiki's style when we, Ulalia School of Hawaiian Dance, dance the hula.

Throughout the years, my husband Kona and our children, Kaleihoku-o-kona, Analu Ka'ai, Ho'olaikahiluonalani, and Lononuiakea have supported me through their work behind the

scenes. I'm proud that Ho'olai and Lono carry on our rich legacy of Hawai'i through music, dance, language, and love for cultural awareness. We, Kona and I, pass on our love so they may continue to enrich future generations. E ola mau!

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