

Peter William Kauaimaka Lonoae'a

At the age of twenty-one, Peter Lonoae'a started teaching hula for workshops sponsored by the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts. He is presently a teacher at the James Campbell High School in Ewa Beach.

My first formal hula lessons were taken from Aunty Sally Wood Naluai when I was attending college in 1969. She was teaching at the Polynesian Cultural Center. Keith Awai, Cy Bridges, Sunday Mariteragi and her sister, Ellen Gay and I were part of her select group that branched out from the night show. Other students came and went, but the five of us were the steadies. We would perform at private parties and at hotels. Unfortunately after I graduated from school, I started teaching on the other island and I wasn't able to 'uniki with the others.

I didn't know Aunty Sally Naluai began training for an 'uniki. Unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond my control, I left to teach on Lana'i. After I left, she trained the other students for an 'uniki. That was her last 'uniki and as fate would have it, I missed out.

Aunty Sally's style of dancing is a really straight back, dancing tall which I try to teach my girls. We do bend, but it's not real low, not in the 'auana anyway. In the kahiko, we bend more. When she taught us "Kaulilua", she said that it was Pua Ha'aheo's step for this particular move. This was what she learned from him. She taught us specific motions for the girls and specific motions for the boys for "Kaulilua". She went into the kaona behind the words. That was interesting especially since I was young to learn things like that. I liked the drum beat. She had different drum beats, but she used one specific style and that's the one that I use.

My knowledge broadened because of the Church College of Hawaii and the State Foundation on Culture and the Arts program with Aunty Hoakalei. I danced with her and her son, Wailana. That's how I got into it. I taught at the workshop because they didn't have too many male teachers at that time. Male teachers came later on. Cy and I would usually teach the male classes. When I look at the video tape of the ho'ike, many of the male kumu hula today were in

my workshop. Through these workshops, I met all these other instructors who I considered very interesting and a learning experience for me. People like Aunty Eleanor Hiram Hoke, Uncle Henry Pa and Lokalia Montgomery.

I taught hula everywhere I went. When I moved to Lana'i in 1976, I taught hula kahiko for Aunty Elaine Kaopuiki. She was only teaching 'auana at that time but eventually she picked up the hula kahiko. My students performed at the May Day program and I also taught the physical fitness team so they could perform when they went to the mainland. After one year in Lana'i, I taught in Moloka'i for four years. I was a traveling resource teacher for the DOE. I taught music and performing arts to the preschoolers up to the seventh graders. Hula was part of the program. I also got together with some of the kumu on the island. I taught kahiko to Rachel Kamakana, Ritti, and Nora Katahara because they were interested in learning hula. They had Aunty Harriet Ne on the island but they wanted to broaden their hula interests. From Moloka'i, I went to Hana where I taught the intermediate and high school students for six years. In 1987, I returned to O'ahu and ended up teaching at James Campbell High School.

My dancing style is a combination of Aunty Sally and John Kaimikaua. We wanted to perform Moloka'i numbers at the Merrie Monarch Festival which were unique to Moloka'i so we asked John Kaimikaua for chants. He introduced basic steps and I have incorporated some of his basic styles with the style that I already had. So it's a mixture now.

Most of the students who take my class come from different halau or they don't know anything. They just come to my class thinking it's a cruise class. A lot of my former students ask me to start a class but I always tell them that my classes are the jumping off point. I'd suggest after you see what I have to offer and you want more, then seek out other teachers. I will suggest other hula teachers because I don't have the time. Otherwise my students in school would suffer and I don't want that to happen.

I have never thought of opening a halau because I did not 'uniki. I don't feel proper. I do have ho'ike for my students. The requirements are almost the same. You have to create a chant, create motions, teach other students and everything else except you will not 'uniki.

There are so many young kumu hula that I don't even know their names. The only time I see them is at competitions. Although they have Hawaiian roots, not all of them are Hawaiian, even the ones I consider real good. Some of them don't even have an ounce of Hawaiian blood in them but they're so into the culture that they have adopted it and it has become a part of them. We all have to do more research and more learning, but the newer kumu are very accomplished in their own right.

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