Aloha from HPS

Aloha kākou. We extend our warmest regards and best hopes to all of you, especially those impacted by the recent earthquake, and all of us mourning the loss of Uncle George Holokai and Auntie Emma Kauhi.

In the following pages, we remember those who have passed, and we share with you some highlights of our year. 2006 has been productive, and as ever, we thank our kūpuna for continuing to share their life stories with us as a historical record for future generations. We also mahalo our kūpuna, past and present, for having the foresight to gather and save so many items from their own cultural journeys. Preserving and presenting these materials is an exciting and crucial component of our ongoing work.

None of this would be possible without the continued generosity of our supporters, especially individuals like you. As you read our news, please consider making a contribution to our Annual Giving Campaign. For those of you who have already done so, mahalo a nui loa.

Aloha and Enjoy,

Mamie Lawrence Gallagher & Maile Beamer Loo

Uncle George Na`ope Honored in D.C.

This September, HPS’s Maile Loo travelled to Washington D.C. with Kumu Hula George Na`ope to document the National Endowment for the Arts’ National Heritage Fellowship Awards, the highest honor the United States of America bestows on folk and traditional artists. Uncle George was one of 11 masters feted.

The week-long celebration began with hula workshops by Uncle George and alaka‘i Iwalani Kalima for D.C. hula enthusiasts, followed by a series of official receptions, interviews, rehearsals, and banquets. The week culminated with the Awards Ceremony on Capitol Hill and a public Celebration Concert at the new Strathmore Music Center in Bethesda, Maryland. Evenings were filled with joyous kanikapila that Uncle and his entourage shared with fellow honorees.

The ability of HPS to document this meaningful trip was no small feat; however, we felt that the award merited coverage for the future. Through this Fellowship, not only was Uncle George’s lifelong commitment to hula commemorated, but our traditional Hawaiian arts were elevated and applauded on the grandest of scales.

Video and photographic materials gathered throughout the week are being processed and will eventually be accessible as part of HPS’s Archives. Mahalo to the individual donors who made this trip possible.
Remembering Uncle George Holokai

On November 1, 2006, Hawai`i Nei lost a beloved son, Uncle George Holokai. Uncle was one of the early kupuna HPS began working with after long-time colleague Nona Beamer brought us together in early 2002. At that first sit-down with Auntie, he confided in her, “To tell you the truth, I didn’t even know what I was coming for.” That humble meeting between old “hula pals” led to much more.

It was a blessing to work with Uncle in the last years of his life, helping record his amazing hula journey. Although initially planning to be a postman like his father, hula was, in the end, his destiny. His primary Kumu Hula were Tom Hiona and Lillian Maka`ena.

Uncle George Ainsley Kananiokeakua Holokai was born on July 2, 1930 in Honolulu to Alice and George Holokai, Sr.. In his teen years, he was invited to study with Tom Hiona, and with his natural talent, quickly became the alaka`i.

Uncle said of the day he became Kumu, “(Tommy) called and he woke (us) up...in the wee hours of the morning...we get down to the studio about four o’clock...And then he’s chanting in the room...praying and he said, ‘Alright George, I poni you. From now on, you’re gonna take over.’ I said, ‘Me? I’m not ready to run the studio.’ He says, ‘I’ve taught you enough.’”

Kumu Maka`ena and her husband individually dreamt the same dream of a young boy whom they knew would be the one to carry on her tradition. Maka`ena’s husband found Uncle George first, in Waikīkī with Tom Hiona at Don the Beachcombers. The next evening, he brought his wife to see if she would recognize him, too. Sure enough, the boy of their dreams was there - it was the young Uncle George! After being given permission to train him, she became his last teacher and required him to dedicate his life to the hula.

Not only was Uncle George a celebrated Kumu Hula, but he was also a master musician and entertainer. He sang, danced and taught countless students through both the Holokai Hula Studio and the City & County Parks & Recreation Department. Former students, near and far, email us about their fond recollections of time spent under his tutelage; we always made sure to share those with him.
Uncle George continued...

Uncle’s life in hula and music was indeed his destiny, and we always felt privileged that he allowed us to honor him through HPS, as he was a very quiet and humble man. Over our nearly 5-year association with Uncle George, our time together ranged from individual talk-stories, to HPS public panel discussions on both O‘ahu and Maui, to documenting his teaching style and some of his vast collection of kahiko and ʻauana routines through hula workshops that he included us in.

We were also able to document three tributes to him, including the Maui Ritz-Carlton’s “Celebration of the Arts” lifetime achievement recognition in 2003, the King Kamehameha Hula Competition surprise tribute in June 2005 under the leadership of Keahi Allen, and his surprise 75th birthday bash in July 2005 planned by Uncle’s ʻohana and haumana. A highlight for us was being asked to document the formal hula program at the gathering where specific dances were shared by his “master class” haumana that had not been seen in a generation.

In 2002, when HPS built a prototype for an eventual online Hula Research Library, Uncle’s initial interviews served as the foundation for the “Meet Our Kupuna” section, providing an opportunity to show one way our beloved kupuna and their stories may continue to guide and inform the global hula community. This section of the prototype is still accessible on our website, and we look forward to eventually being able to share more of the precious interviews with Uncle to help his spirit live on and allow his manaʻo to continue to ground and inspire us.

Uncle always gave of himself in every way, as Kumu to younger Kumu, as a judge at countless competitions, and as a mentor to those who looked to him for guidance. Mahalo nui loa e ‘Anakala Keoki. We will miss you.

HPS Researches Maui Hula

For the last two years, HPS has been conducting a great deal of research on the island of Maui. Not only are we documenting Maui-based hula lines and Kumu Hula, we have also been talking with those Kūpuna Hula who studied with late great Kumu connected with the island of Maui. Maui hula, as is the case throughout our history, has been passed on within specific families as well as through formal and informal “hula studios” in different areas. Community organizations, such as churches, and the visitor industries’ hotel shows, also played a role in bringing people together, nurturing collaboration and sharing of cultural knowledge at gatherings and events.

"HONORING THE PAST, GROUNDING THE FUTURE"
HONORING THE PAST, GROUNDING THE FUTURE

 Maui Hula

Maui continued...

NĀ KUMU HULA:
Gordean Leilehua Lee Bailey
Nona Desha Beamer
Dorothy Johnston Beyer
Kahili Long Cummings
Lorraine Joshua Daniel
Kent Keikanikolea Ghirard
The late George Holokai
Robert Lopaka Kalani
Hilda Akahane Keana‘aina
Momi Aaron Keipilo
Mae Kamamalu Klein
Blossom Joshua Kunewa
Joan Sniffen Lindsey
Edith Kawelohea McKinzie
George L. Na‘ope
Minerva Malakaua Higa Pang
The late Pulu‘elo Naipo Park
Alexa Keaunui Vaught

NĀ PUA O NĀ LOEA HULA:
Rhea Enos Akoi
Edna Farden Bekeart
Gladys Joshua Brash
Pauline Wessel Chillingworth
Queenie Ventura Dowsett
Lei Desha Becker Furtado
Myrtle Kahea Hilo
Betsy Jhun Hinau
The late Emma Stone Kauhi
Kahauanu Lake
Elizabeth Ho‘opi‘i Lee Loy
Irene Wakinekona Lum Ho
Noelani Kanoho Mahoe
Martha Medeiros
Helie Koehnen Rohner
Kamakanoenoe Hapai Sagote
Kenneth Nohealani Sharpe
Marge Murray Sumer
Lehua Lee Loy Weatherwax
Laua‘e Maluo Yung

(with HPS as of 11/06)

HPS has been fortunate to work with one of Maui’s true treasures - kupuna Kahili Long Cummings, whose mother, Ida Pakulani Long, was her Kumu. Two additional daughters also became Kumu, the late Mae Loebeinstein and Auntie Leiana Woodside. The Long family’s role is key in Maui’s hula history, and Auntie Kahili, who will turn 89 in February 2007, continues to live in Wai‘ehu, near to where she was raised with her large ‘ohana.

Auntie Kahili
Long Cummings, eldest living daughter of the Long family of Maui, smiles during an interview at her home in Wai‘ehu, July 2006. This photo is a closeup of the camera’s viewfinder; it shows the high quality that this form of digital documentation offers.

HPS has also focused on the Farden hula legacy built around the acclaim of the late Emma Sharpe. In addition to talking with her younger sister Edna Bekeart and son Kenneth Sharpe, we have also had the opportunity to talk with niece Holoaumoku Ralar, Auntie’s alaka‘i Martha Medeiros, and Betsy Jhun Hinau who was an emcee of Auntie Emma’s Lahaina shows. Recently we began working with Alexa Vaught who trained with Auntie Emma from the age of 8. Auntie Emma’s influence on Kumu Vaught extended well beyond hula and continues to be reflected in her work on Maui.

This past summer, we were fortunate to meet Uncle Lopaka Kalani, a “Maui boy” through and through! We are so grateful for his recollections of early hula memories with his ‘ohana in Makena and later talks with aunt Cecilia Paki Makekau (trained in the “old school” ways of hula). He also has wonderful accounts of many Kumu unique to Maui who influenced his own hula life. They include Johnny Hokoana, Rena Ching, Emma Sharpe, John Pī‘ilani Watkins, and Elizabeth Lum Ho.
Maui Research continued...

Auntie Gordean Lee Bailey, initially a Beamer hula student and an eventual graduate of Kumu Maiki Aiu Lake, lives and teaches on Maui. While her hula lineage is not “Maui” per se, her stories of studying with Auntie Maiki touch upon many of the late Maui Kumu we are learning about from others. Auntie Gordean embodies an age-old practice of sharing one island’s hula lineage upon another. She, like many Kumu before her, has incorporated Maui into her own teachings in her hālau, composing and sharing mele and oli for the island she now calls home.

Our dear late Uncle George Holokai also has ties to Maui through his Kumu Tom Hiona. He was born on Maui although much of his hula teaching and performing took place on O`ahu. Late greats such as Tom Hiona and Alice Keawekâne, in addition to the Long and Farden family names, come up in almost every conversation on Maui hula. We look forward to continuing this research with your kind support.

Honoring Manaleo Auntie Emma Kauhi

“Aona o hana me ta hinano o Puna,… We welcome you. You have come to smell the fragrance of the lehua blossom, of the hala, and the hinano...we welcome you with aloha, Aloha e, aloha e,...”

If you have ever visited our website, you have no doubt heard these words greet you. Auntie Emma Kauhi is the first of three of our kupuna to share their Oli Aloha or chant of greeting on our homepage. As you can experience through her oli, she was soft spoken with a gentle nature, but she was a passionate master of her mother tongue.

We were introduced to Auntie Emma by revered Kumu Nona Beamer. She and Auntie Emma met and became friends in Pāhoa, when Auntie Nona retired. Auntie Nona first took us to see Auntie Emma in November of 2001. She was spritely at 85 years - very active with her local kupuna program, dancing and singing for community events and weekly cruise ship visits.

Auntie Emma Kapūnohu ulaokalani Kaʻōhai ulaokalani Martha Stone Kauhi was born on September 3, 1916 and was from Kapa`ahu, “Pele’s land,” on the island of Hawai`i. She lived with her maternal grandparents, Kaha`ikauila
Auntie Emma continued...

Punahoa and David Marshal Konanui, and grew up speaking only Hawaiian and living off the land. When we first met her, she shared that music was a big part of family evenings in Kapa`ahu, but only after the work was done, because as Auntie said, “I heard this many times – if you’re lazy, you’re gonna go hungry. But if you used your hands and work, you’ll never go hungry.”

The first chant she recalled hearing was her Tutu as she went about such regular tasks as preparing `öpihi or de-thorning lauhala. “She always chanted…Most of the time, whatever she does, whatever she’s doing, she’s always chanting.” Auntie Emma regretted she “never took interest…because now, I have that feeling. I love to chant.”

Her Aunt He`eia, who lived in Punalu`u, Ka`ü was the first one to expose her to hula. Her aunt used to organize concerts for church fundraisers featuring the many talented musicians in the family. As Auntie Emma explained, “…I was the hula dancer. Can you imagine? … That’s the first time I had that title…oh my gosh. But it was all fun time.” Auntie continued: “…as I recall, nobody taught me. You just watch, right? You watched the uh, older people. The way they do it, and that’s – that’s how you’re gonna do it.”

Auntie Emma received “formal” hula instruction on O`ahu from Alice Keawekâne, Joseph Kaha`ulēlio, and Lillian Vincent. After returning to the Big Island, she danced with Kumu Ray Fonseca, a graduate of Uncle George Na`ope, and won a kupuna solo hula competition in Kona under Ray’s guidance.

While her hula experiences were rich, the stories that Auntie Emma shared with HPS from 2001 to 2003 cover a variety of topics. She spoke of how growing up on Pele’s land shaped her viewpoints, and described eventually losing her home to Pele. She recounted the challenges she faced as a native speaker and later teacher of Hawaiian language, and what it was like to work with Charles M. Langlas on her Hawaiian and English book (the first of its kind) He Mo`olelo No Kapa`ahu: Story of Kapa`ahu. We were privileged to document some of Auntie Emma’s life stories, and we look forward to sharing them in the future.

Auntie Emma passed away on November 8th at the age of 90. We will surely miss her sweet nature and generous spirit.

“HONORING THE PAST, GROUNDING THE FUTURE”

An excerpt of a note Auntie sent to HPS in 2002.
2006 Activities

Documentation - Oral history work with kūpuna has been the core program of HPS since 2000. To date, we have worked with nearly 40 hula elders to varying degrees, documenting their stories and activities in approximately 900 hours of digital video. Thus far in 2006, we have engaged 23 of the 40 kūpuna in our circle in by conducting 27 oral history sessions, documenting 14 kupuna events, presenting 7 public programs, and visiting our kūpuna on 54 occasions. Documentation work has been carried out on O‘ahu, Maui, and Hawai‘i, as well as in Washington D.C..

HPS Archives - In the past few years, we have acquired a number of remarkable material Collections from our kūpuna. Earlier in 2006, we dedicated a room in our office to house these Collections. The room is temperature and humidity controlled and features floor to ceiling shelving to fit our archive containers. The contents of the Collections vary from slides to costumes, from implements to memorabilia. Janet Zisk, the Archivist for the Kamehameha Schools, continues to advise us on best practices of sorting, working with, cataloging, and storing the contents of our material Collections. It is our intention that these will eventually be made accessible to the public.

HPS Research Materials - As part of our documentation and archival efforts, we are building a number of research libraries for future scholarship in hula, Hawaiian history, language, and traditional practices. Our libraries are both physical and electronic, and consist of Video, Audio, Photographic, and Paper resources. Apart from our in-house efforts, we also assist others in preserving their own valuable hula resources. For example, in 2006 we helped Kupuna Momi Kepilino digitize and transcribe an audio cassette recording she made 33 years ago of a lecture given by her Kumu Maiki Aiu Lake on Maui. We have also worked with Tip Davis on his film of the late `Iolani Luahine (see back page story).

Mahalo for your support!

Hula Preservation Society Annual Giving Campaign 2006-2007

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Shortly after her passing in 1978, a documentary featuring Auntie `Iolani Luahine was shown on Hawai‘i public television. The program on Auntie and her hula was produced by filmmaker Tip Davis, from Kāne‘ohe, O‘ahu, who worked with her during her last years. Broadcast only once in 1979, the film has been housed within the Bishop Museum Archives.

This past year, HPS Videographer Gene Kois, of Specific Video, worked closely with Tip to transfer the original reels to High-Definition format. Tip and daughter Lokemele are now in the final stages of re-editing the “new” film with Daniel Bernardoni of DBBC, a post-production company in Honolulu.

We are grateful to Tip for making this preservation project a priority. Such projects are an important part of HPS’s long-term goals, as there are many visual and audio resources leading up to the 1980’s that feature legendary Kumulu Hula like Lokalia Montgomery, Henry Pā, or Rose Joshua to name just a few. Ho‘omau!