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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CELEBRATING THE LEGENDARY KENT GHIRARD AND HIS HULA NANI GIRLS

Kāne`ohe, Hawai`i – September 9, 2008

HPS invites the public to Honolulu Hale (City Hall) for the first-ever showing of select photographic works from the private collection of Hula Elder Kent Ghirard. The exhibit will be up from **September 15th - October 10th, 2008** and features his legendary troupe, The Hula Nani Girls. In conjunction with the exhibit, on **Friday, September 19th**, HPS is presenting a rare public performance with original 1950's Hula Nani dancers and Kupuna Ghirard himself, who just celebrated his 90th birthday on September 1, 2008. This free concert will be held at Mission Memorial Auditorium, and the public is welcome. See attached PDF poster for complete details.

Kent Ghirard was once described as a “Paradox in Paradise” because of his achievements as a popular, successful hula troupe leader and show producer, while being a native of San Francisco. His first visit to the islands was in 1931, and at the young age of 12 the immediate affinity he felt for what would become his “chosen” culture was undeniable. He had been forever changed by Hawai`i’s music, dance, and aloha.

He dedicated himself to learning as much as he could while still in the Bay Area, and that study continued upon his permanent arrival in the islands in 1947. Kent’s passion for Hawaiian music and dance eventually led to creation of *The Hula Nani Girls* in 1948 – a professional troupe that achieved legendary global fame and created an enduring legacy of aloha.

The Hula Nani Girls were “second to none.” Their beauty, integrity, professional standards and impeccable performances challenged Hollywood’s often unflattering stereotypes of Hawaiian culture and dance. Active from the late 1940’s through the early 1960’s, Kent Ghirard and The Hula Nani Girls influence and inspiration continue to be felt today. Among his many crowning achievements, Kent’s artistry in costuming and adornments, implement use, and choreography & catchy rhythms set a new standard in hula performance that is still being modeled.

The entire Kent Ghirard Collection encompasses ten priceless scrapbooks with over 1,100 individual historical pages, thirteen photo albums containing 1,091 photos, and two slideboxes with 1,275 radiant color slides. In all, they chronicle the captivating story of Hawai`i’s cherished treasures – Kent Ghirard and The Hula Nani Girls.

In 2001, Hula Preservation Society (HPS) began digitizing Kupuna Ghirard’s Collection and creating a master catalogue and archive. It is Kent’s wish that this Collection be shared with present and future generations. HPS is honored to be designated as the caretakers of this Collection and continues to work to make his wish a reality.

The Exhibit and Concert are sponsored in part by the Mayor’s Office of Culture & the Arts and the Hawai`i State Foundation on Culture & the Arts. Additional support is welcome and donations are tax-deductible.

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For more information on HPS, please call, email, or visit us at www.hulapreservation.org.

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