



Honoring
NALANI KANAKA'OLE
Distinguished Alumna

Raised in Keaukaha, Faith Nalani Kanaka'ole is the youngest of six children born to Luka and Edith Kanaka'ole. Nalani attended Keaukaha Elementary, Waiakea Kai Intermediate and graduated from Hilo High School in 1964.

After high school, Nalani joined her accomplished mother teaching hula, doing summer tours, and producing luau shows for the Mauna Kea Beach Hotel. She attended the University of Hawai'i Hilo in the early 70s, took a break, then went back to finish her B.A. degree in Art in 2001.

Nalani has served as Kumu Hula of Halau 'O Kekuhi for 47 years and as its Artistic Director for 30 years. She has also worked as a design consultant for Sig Zane Designs and as a lecturer at Hawai'i Community College Hawaiian Studies program.

Very prominent in the global hula community, Nalani has traveled extensively to participate in international hula events and workshops, while keeping Hilo and Hawai'i island as the focal point for creativity in hula and olelo (language). Her work has taken her to such far-flung places as New Zealand, Tahiti, Washington, DC, Russia, Los Angeles, Amsterdam, Greece, Japan, Mexico, and other distant locales.

Like her sister, Pua, Nalani's accomplishments also include writing scripts for films, stage plays, and performances, as well as award-winning books on subjects ranging from dance to design. She has also designed fabrics used for uniforms at the Kaanapali Beach Hotel and the Outrigger Hotel. Nalani has garnered awards and recognition that would easily fill a small library, including a National Endowment for the Arts Cultural Fellowship and multiple Nā Hōkū Hanohano awards for Traditional Album of the Year.

Nalani continues to teach hula today at the family halau, Halau 'O Kekuhi, located on Kalaniana'ole Avenue in Keaukaha. She explains, "Our hula was in the family for seven generations and it keeps us focused on the hula, the culture, and how it is transmitted to the next generation."