



Where did you grow up?

I was born at Tripler Army Hospital. My family lived in La'ie (and many still do). I moved from Hawai'i to Nashville Tennessee in 1963 to live with my mother's youngest sister, Anna, and her husband. They met when they were in the Army. His family was from Nashville. I was 11 years old at the time.

What is your current occupation?

I am currently employed by The Lundquist Institute, a 501c3 clinical research organization housed on the campus of Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, for the Division of Cardiology as a Data Coordinator, and billing for The Diagnostic and Wellness Center.

What are your current hobbies and passions?

I have been consumed with Covid-19, particularly getting educational information to our community, food sustainability, testing, and vaccinations. And, looking beyond the pandemic and setting up a structure to enable us to be prepared when the next catastrophe occurs. I am passionate about being in spaces where we can advocate for our community and I mean our Pacific Islander community not just Hawaiians or Samoans. I truly believe that together we have strength and that we need to ensure we are all represented. I truly enjoy hula, singing, reading, hand crafts (cross-stitch, crocheting, knitting, sewing, quilting, painting).

What does it mean to be a Hawaiian living in California?

It means that I continue seeking equity in all aspects of life: health, political engagement, civics.

Do you have a favorite 'ōlelo no'eau or quote?

'A'ohe pau ka 'ike I ka hālau ho'okahi—All wisdom is not taught in your school. #203

When did you join HDG?

2000

Why did you join HDG?

I wanted to be part of a Hawaiian organization and be around Aunties. I also appreciated the fundraising for scholarships.

What have you gained or learned from being in HDG?

I have learned how to be a leader, conduct meetings, work with members and others, grow a thick skin, focus on what is important, remember that it is not about me, but about the success of the organization, navigate every officer position and committee as chair, learn how to represent the Daughters in community meetings and in the community, and I have learned to be a team player and let others lead. The most important lesson from the Daughters and my mother is to agree to disagree and move forward. So, relationships are to be tended and cared for as much as you can, but if no can, cut and move on.

How has HDG changed over the years?

We went from being a service organization to being a social organization. When the membership changed, the organization changed. You can be Hawaiian at heart, but there are still intrinsic things that we are taught in our homes and at the feet of our kupuna that cannot be transferred. There is a "knowing" of multigenerational trauma that is not transferrable. Aloha aina, aloha ohana, and aloha for knowing our history. Good, bad or indifferent, it is ours.



What do you hope to see HDG accomplish in the upcoming years?

I would like to see...

- *Us grow in membership*
- *Increase our interest base and enable us to engage in more educational pursuits through programs for our children.*
- *Language would be wonderful because there is so much nuance in learning and reading and speaking:*
- *confidence, pride, accomplishment, reaching back into the past to understand ourselves.*
- *Provide history classes to know the timeline of our history to understand why we stand where we are right now in current events and what can we possibly do as we move forward.*

How has education been important in your life?

I was never interested in higher education. I went to school to become a keypunch operator in 1970 and have worked ever since. I got a job before I finished the course and started working right away. As long as I could get the interview, I would get the job. I am good at selling myself. I have taken court stenography and did not graduate. Lots of school debt. Then I was let go in 2008 while working for a real estate development company and went to work for an office supply company, then released from work. I was out of work for nearly two years. I looked for work in an employer's market and everything was online and not interviews. I continued my community volunteer work, but needed structure. In 2010, I went to U of Phoenix for a BS in Human Services. I graduated in 2014. I decided to acquire a MPA and graduated in 2016.



How do you see education shaping the lives of future generations?

Educational degrees are of value in the western world because they place such high value in their pecking order. Western education is important to open doors that will otherwise be closed. I used to attend conferences and symposiums with all of my mana'o from my kupuna and what I had learned in community engagement work.

An exercise took place where they said to all of us in the room to move to the left of the room: If you have a 2-year degree, step to the right side of the room. Several moved over. If you have a 4- year degree, step to the right side of the room. More moved over. (I remember straightening up at that point because I knew I could possibly be standing alone shortly.) If you have a doctorate degree, step to the right side of the room. The remainder moved over. I was left standing on the left side of the room all by myself. And, I was the eldest of the group. The facilitator immediately acknowledged the scenario and said, You see Auntie Kawaiopua standing alone on the left side of the room and all of you are on the right. And while you may have the credentials, you have little to no experience. Auntie has experience and no credentials. What Auntie has between her ears cannot be taught. They do not give certificates for what Auntie has learned from her elders and experience.

If you had any advice for someone pursuing higher education as a Pacific Islander, what would it be?

- *Find your passion and pursue it.*
- *Do not let anyone tell you that you cannot do it.*
- *Find a way.*
- *Engage in relationships with people who can help you and mentor you along the way.*
- *Listen with your ears and eyes, and keep your mouth closed. Then ask questions.*
- *We know that our students need to start in elementary school, start tweaking their minds and find out what they are excited about, give them tools. Find people who are doing the types of things they are interested in and introduce them to see if that is really what interests them.*
- *Financial education is so very important.*
- *Be of service.*