

THE HISTORY OF
KALAHEO HIGH SCHOOL

EPISODE 1:
“THE FOUNDING
AND WHAT CAME AFTER”



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Author's Note

For the past two years, it has been my intent to write the 50-year history of Kalāheo High School. The book would be offered as a fundraiser for the Kalāheo High School Foundation. The required time and research have made this writing project my nemesis to overcome.

Here we are, celebrating 50 years. Despite many pages of collected information gleaned from school documents, student newspapers, newsletters, yearbooks, and other sources, I have written a mere 30 pages of book-worthy text.

Meanwhile, some say that if I don't write it, nobody else can or will. It is true that for over half of my life, the Kalāheo campus was my home away from home.

When I began my 43 years at Kalāheo Hillside Intermediate and Kalāheo High School, I had just received my Fifth Year teaching certificate. A guy from the DOE virtually begged me to accept a position at a new school in Kailua. He had not seen my application—eventually found in Leeward District—but had a recommendation from one of my UH Manoa profs. He offered help if I needed a car or a place to live, both of which I already had, but I accepted his offer.

The year was 1966. Mokapu Boulevard was a dead end, the Oneawa bridge was nonexistent, and some of my colleagues were teachers from the mainland, answering the call to move from various U.S. cities and towns to experience the wonders of Hawai'i and, in the process, alleviate the teacher shortage.

As it does so well, time passed. In 2010, I was the last original faculty member to retire.

Although I intend to persevere with writing the book, I share this draft of the first chapter on the occasion of the school's Fiftieth Anniversary, with a few personal memories at the end.

Kalāheo's story matters, and this is why former math teacher Apolonia Stice, former principal Jim Schlosser, and I—in cooperation with Kalāheo librarian Danielle Fujii—are striving to develop and protect an Archive Collection in the Kalāheo Library.

Kalāheo's past is now comprised of 50 years. An Archive reminds us that we are part of a great and important continuum. Its existence encourages institutional stewardship so that the lives of all who are affiliated with the school—not only the most outstanding or influential—will be remembered by those who come after.

Share your stories. Care for the school. Help preserve its history.

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FOREWORD

Concerning the Passage of Time

“Passage of Time is a 2001 album by jazz saxophonist Joshua Redman. In this album, Redman strings together 8 different original compositions into a continuous piece for the first time. Redman states, ‘One of my goals as a jazz musician is to construct a meaningful narrative. Not a literal or analytical narrative, but an emotional narrative of sound. That’s how I would describe *Passage Of Time*: a piece of music that says something from start to finish. It tells a story. It has themes and motifs that become topics for group discussion. It’s a long story comprised of smaller ones, discovered and articulated during the music-making process. The band speaks through conversations, and our dialogues give the music feeling, purpose, and direction.’ ” — Author Unknown

In the process of deciding how to frame in print the 50 years of Kalāheo’s history, I came upon this quote. It describes my goal in musical terms, that is, not only to record a half-century of facts but also a narrative with shared memories of the school high atop an Oahu hillside known as Kalāheo.

At a school, the passage of time is measured in varied ways. Students listen for the bells, count the days to the end of the quarter, semester, or year, and the years until graduation—all the while anticipating recesses, weekends, holidays, and breaks.

Teachers pay attention to these things but also count the meeting hours, the deadlines for grades, and the years until the next accreditation.

Even alumni participate in the counting—years since graduation, years for class reunions, and years their own children become the next generation of Kalāheo Mustangs.

As a Kalāheo educator for 43 years and one of the original faculty members when the campus opened as an intermediate school, writing this book is quite personal. Research resurrected memories long past, both achievements and challenges.

Although I retired in 2010, most of the school’s history is also my Kalāheo history which started in 1966 in a brand-new classroom that was fragrant with fresh paint and sawdust.

If I have overindulged my own memories, please pardon.

THE FOUNDING AND WHAT CAME AFTER

“If you don’t know history, then you don’t know anything.

You are a leaf that doesn’t know it is part of a tree.” -- Michael Crichton

If we drew a family tree of all those who studied and worked at a school over the course of fifty or more years, what would it look like? Who would be the roots, the young trunk, the sturdy trunk, the first strong branches, the many branches sprung from the strong, or the leaves of the canopy?

As students, faculty, staff, parents, and others in the community come to the campus, what are they thinking? Do students wonder what happened there before they arrived? Are teachers curious about who previously inhabited their classrooms, both students and adults, or why the teacher next door has an *ensuite* bathroom? Does anyone wonder why there are so many Monkeypod trees or why the school was built on a hillside in the first place because all the other public high schools in the area are on flat land?

Although Kalāheo High School celebrates its 50th Anniversary in 2023-2024, the complete history of the campus adds another seven years. To truly appreciate Kalāheo High School, both historically and in the present day, we must return to the beginning when, known by another name, it was conceived and born on the Oneawa Hills of a quaint Oahu town called Kailua.

The Way It Was

In the early to mid-1960s, the non-military population of Kailua, Oahu, grew from 26, 622 to 30,000, thereby surpassing Hilo as the second largest town in the State. This growth prompted many additions to the community including the Kailua Post Office, Kailua Public Library, Kailua Police Station, Kailua Village Center, Kailua YMCA, Safeway, Castle Hospital, Joe Pao’s housing development in Enchanted Lake, housing developments in Aikahi, Olomana, and Kainalu, and new elementary schools in Aikahi, Keolu, Lanikai, and Enchanted Lake.

After sixth grade, seven elementary schools sent students to Kailua Intermediate School which was already well-established in the center of Kailua Town. However, the demographics of the increasing population indicated a need for another intermediate school.

To relieve overcrowding at Kailua Intermediate, Hawai‘i Department of Education (DOE) officials considered various sites for another intermediate school. After input from consultants and community members, the 1964 *Kailua-Mokapu First Increment Site Plan* for Kailua-Mokapu Second Intermediate School shows its location on the Oneawa Hills at the dead end of Mokapu Road. The Saddle Road to Kaneohe had not yet been constructed, and across the road was the vast acreage of Kawainui Marsh.

Boring Data for the site revealed mud and decomposed rock; various colors of soil; and multiple layers of hard and soft clay, the latter a portent of settling buildings to come. Construction of Kailua-Mokapu Intermediate School, later named Kalāheo Hillside Intermediate, commenced in 1965.

The Architectural Plans show classroom buildings A, B, and C to be built first followed by several future buildings: a library-administration-classroom building D (later L); music building J, industrial arts building (later E), classroom buildings E (later D) and F; PE building K, central kitchen building (cafetorium), and horticultural building with lath house located on the slope across the driveway from the cafetorium.

At some point, the letters for certain buildings were changed on the plans, perhaps for the order of their construction. However, the horticultural building was never built, and the area was later used to build the current Kalāheo High School Library-Administration-Classroom building.

On April 13, 1966, the *Honolulu Star-Advertiser* announced that brand new Kalāheo Hillside Intermediate School would open on September 1, 1966, serving grades 7, 8, and 9. Classroom buildings A, B, and C had been completed.

In that same year, President Lyndon Johnson briefly visited the Mokapu Peninsula and also met with Vietnam's President Thieu and Vice President Ky. After sending U.S. troops to Vietnam the previous year, President Johnson came to Hawai'i to learn how many more combat troops were needed. With increased wartime activity, Kaneohe Marine Base was expanded and modernized with approximately a million troops spending time on Oahu, including at the Kaneohe Base. The growth of Kaneohe Marine Base dramatically impacted the student population of

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Kalāheo Hillside Intermediate with approximately 25% of its students from military families.

Many of the first Kalāheo Hillside students were unhappy at their new school because they were separated from elementary school friends who were assigned to Kailua Intermediate. Kalāheo's brand-new facilities consisted of only a few classroom buildings and was still under construction.

Among other things lacking were a cafetorium and an administration building. At lunch time, simple school lunches that were prepared in a Home Economics classroom were picked up by students and taken back to classrooms to be eaten.

School personnel were a mixture of new and experienced educators. Because the Oneawa Street Bridge spanning 50 yards over the Oneawa Canal was not built until 1968, teachers who

commuted to Kalāheo from Honolulu had two choices: a longer route through Kailua Town or a risky drive on Kapaa Quarry Road which was barely paved, full of potholes, and flooded in heavy rains. Commuters from Kaneohe and beyond were also challenged since the Mokapu saddle road to Kaneohe was not constructed until 1972.

The Great Conversion

By 1970, it became apparent that, with 3000 students, Kailua High School had outgrown its facilities. For several months, where and how to build a second high school was discussed by school officials, community organizations, architects, and consultants as they explored wide-ranging options.

Purchase of additional land was considered for a second high school, including the area at the girls' section of the Youth Correctional Facility where 20 classrooms could be built to accommodate 650 students, with additional land acquired as needed.

Also considered was the acquisition of 60 acres abutting Kailua High School to create one "super school" where 50% of students' time would be unstructured for remedial, directed studies, individual study, and other independent and group activities. Using a "shopping mall" concept, classrooms and other facilities would be built around a central Library and Resource Center, easily accessible to all.

In January 1971, thirty acres adjacent to Maunawili Elementary School were rejected, and the consultant asked the State to consider the acreage adjacent to Kailua High. Still, no final decision was made about a site.

In February 1971, a report about building a high school in the Kalāheo-Kawainui area judged this to be economically unfeasible with 144 acres divided by H-3 and Mokapu Saddle Road "now under construction." Traffic and noise, pollution, grading, and the flood plain were also discouraging.

Another idea was to construct a new high school near the sanitary landfill site where it would have joint use of recreation facilities at a planned a major sports complex called Kawainui Regional Park.

After all of these scenarios, in July 1971 and instead of building a new high school, a proposal to convert Kalāheo Hillside Intermediate to a high school was favored by the community and other decision makers with the understanding that a new intermediate school would be built next to Kailua High School.

During the planning stages, the new school was called the Kailua-Mokapu High School which was deemed too mundane. What to call the school became a community hot topic when naming it after Kailua resident and real estate executive John A. Burns was suggested. In 1962, Burns had been elected governor.

However, the politically neutral "Kalāheo" prevailed. In Hawaiian, it is three words in one: *Ka* meaning the; *la* meaning day; *heo* meaning proud; and all together literally meaning "the proud day."

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Internally, the Hawai‘i Department of Education reacted to the conversion proposal with questions. In the short term, would it be 10-12 or 9-12? How would students be accommodated?

With grades 10-12 as at Kailua High School, the capacity would need to be for an estimated 1900 students. This would make major classroom additions in 1978 and 1979 a priority as the current intermediate school had only 40 classrooms plus five more with the enclosure of the first floor of Building F. For some reason, only the classrooms on the second floor of Building F had been completed while the first floor was one large open space which, as it turned out, was perfect for various large group activities.

Phasing in a high school and phasing out an intermediate school required fast action on new facilities. Immediately, the first floor of Building F would be enclosed and a Library and Classroom Building constructed. Land negotiations were immediately started to allow the construction of a three-story building, with the instruction that the Kalāheo Library be highly accessible on the first floor with classrooms on the second and third floors. As it turned out, only two floors were constructed.

In September 1973, conversion to a high school was initiated with the addition of 10th grade, 11th grade in September 1974, 12th Grade in 1975 plus 7th grade phased out and conversion completed with 8th grade phased out by September 1976 to serve Grades 9-12.

As a result of the phased conversion, three classes of Kalāheo students were on the campus for six years which for some must have seemed an eternity. Teachers might have a student three or four times for different classes and became well-acquainted with individual students, their siblings, and even their parents. It is no wonder that, in those early days, camaraderie and a feeling of *‘ohana* prevailed.

The effects of the conversion were widespread. In 1974, the overload at Kailua Intermediate was somewhat solved by converting Kailua High School from grades 10-12 to grades 9-12 and reducing Kailua Intermediate enrollment by changing Grades 7-9 to 7-8. Still on the table was the proposed construction of Maunawili Intermediate and phasing in students from Kailua Intermediate. Due to a sharp decline in enrollment, the DOE decided not to construct the new intermediate school.

A major issue for Kalāheo also emerged. The original intent was for the new school to share the athletic facilities of a planned “major sports complex” called Kawainui Regional Park which had not been developed and never was. Additionally, further hillside development was restricted. Planners sought alternatives and, in 1980, the State proposed the acquisition of three parcels of Harold K. L. Castle land abutting the Kalāheo campus.

In 1998 on the occasion of Kalāheo High’s 25th Anniversary, the school’s first principal, Moss Ikeda, described the school’s early years in the September issue of *Kalāheo High School Foundation News*. He documented the program and facilities changes necessary for the new high school:

“Upon accepting the challenge to lead Kalāheo, my vision was to quickly build a school that would offer all aspects of a sound high school education, from a full and challenging aca-

demic program, through strong programs in the fine, performing, and practical arts, to an exciting and challenging co-curricular program. Co-curricular activities were essential so that students would have a real feeling of being in high school and would be ensured a well-rounded, total education experience.

“Intermediate school academic programs were quickly and efficiently converted to a high school curriculum, and we developed a strong co-curricular program. Students excelled in academics, in various arts, and in co-curricular activities. We quickly built boys and girls athletic teams that competed with established OIA teams.

“Program development and our students’ successes were attributable to the capable leadership of many faculty and staff, including Sharon Ehrhorn, Eleanore Burson, Sara Iwai, James Schlosser, Lee Cashman, Ernesta Masagatani, Gwen Shigekane, Beth Fincke, Karen Muronaka, Karen Kanda, Judy Saranchock, Lewis Fuddy, Rachel Tao, Gail Fujimoto, John Connelly, Jean Noguchi, Martha Robertson, Andrea Kitaoka, Chuck Smith, Bruce Shultz, and others.

“As programs grew, so did the need for facilities. It was exciting to be involved with the design and construction of the ‘new’ library and administration building.

“The building of a gym was also an exciting, successful project. In addition, various locations were considered for a full athletic complex: across the highway bordering the Kawaiinui Marsh, with access via an overpass; the plot set aside for an elementary school off Iliaina Street toward Aikahi Shopping Center; or digging deeper into the valley above the tennis courts. Apparently, none of these proved feasible because of concerns about zoning, neighborhood objections, and funding.”

With the conversion completed, the school that had been known for several years as an intermediate school--and subsequently an intermediate *and* high school--was now “the other Kailua high school.” As facilities grew to support the needs of high school programs, the school’s identity and pride of place were established through academics, athletics, traditions, and the community’s positive perception of Kalāheo High School.

These early days of both the intermediate and high school set the stage for all that followed, including construction of more buildings, but that’s another episode called “Building and Construction.”

“It must be accepted that students who are comfortable are more efficient learners. If students are to hear better, see better, and feel better, consideration for acoustical, thermal, visual, and aesthetic treatment must be considered in all construction.” -- Albert H. Miyasato, District Superintendent, Windward Oahu District, July 6, 1970, letter to William A. Waters, Acting Superintendent, Hawai’i DOE

Kalaheo Memories

Kalāheo High School Library

Gail Fujimoto, Kalāheo High School's First Librarian.

I was just so very lucky to be Kalaheo High School's first librarian. I am ever so grateful to Mary Jaburek, Kalaheo Intermediate School librarian, for selecting me for the position. She told me I would be in charge of transitioning the intermediate program and I would have the opportunity to actually help design the new high school library. It was so exciting and a tremendous opportunity. I grew professionally and personally.

My two daughters remember spending many hours hiding, doing homework, sleeping, and just hanging out in the library. What I remember and cherish most about the library was the fact that it really was the hub of the school. The fact that the teachers' workroom was adjacent to the library made it a natural gathering place.

The camaraderie among the staff was really strong which made it really easy to build the program and develop strong friendships which have lasted for many, many years.

The students immediately impressed me because they generally spoke freely and very well. I did not hear any pidgin used even among the locals. It was such a stark contrast from my previous school. I really grew to love working at Kalaheo and I remember it was a very difficult decision for me to leave. I have many fond memories and love the fact that I am still recognized in the community by former students as "their librarian." That is special.

KALAHEO AT THE CUTTING EDGE: Among the DOE high schools, Kalaheo was one of the real leaders in technology. We were able to acquire computers before they became available in schools. Requests were being denied statewide while some massive study was being conducted. I remember working directly with the local head of Computerland to buy computers. We agreed that we would call them, "interactive learning tools," and not use the word "computers" because the purchase order would be denied. We got the first unauthorized computers in the school and were definitely were the envy and the talk of other schools.

Remembering Christine Snyder on 9/11

Pat Hascall, Alumnus

We were at Kalaheo together. Though we weren't what you would consider close friends so to speak, and she was two years behind me, we had a few classes together and I remember how nice of a person she was, and she was one of the few girls who gave me the time of day and was always friendly to this skinny, shy, quiet little dork. I always remember when I first met Christine. I was always sitting alone in art class (I wasn't one of the popular kids) and she would come and sit with me from time to time while working on projects and talk to me. As I look back, Christine was one of the few at Kalaheo that helped me feel like much less of an outcast and helped me become more outgoing during my journey through high school. Although those may have been brief moments during my four years at Kalaheo, and though they may not sound like much to most, they meant a lot to a guy that felt like an outcast and was always feeling depressed and alone. The fact that I still remember her kindness towards me speaks volumes about what kind of person Christine was, and she will always hold a special place in my heart.

Student Life

Sharon Reynolds, Alumna Class of 1979

When I think about my days at Kalaheo, fond memories crowd my mind: gathering with friends on the second floor of H-building. Wearing slippahs and muumuus. Sneaking onto campus with classmates, under the cover of darkness, to paint “79 shines” on the pavement. Taco lunches.

The sound of heavy equipment clearing the hillside to build the gym. Homework. Pee-Chee folders. Shave ice. Senior prom at the Sheraton Waikiki, where the band showed up in shorts and slippahs. Our senior-year Wizard of Oz-themed homecoming float falling off the truck during the parade. Football games at the Aloha Stadium. Yearbook deadlines. The end-of-the-year speech show, From Here to Senility. Singing our class song, Greatest Love of All, during graduation at the Waikiki Shell.

While all my teachers contributed to my growth, Ms. Carol Senaga, my Speech teacher, is the teacher who made the most impact on me. She challenged me and cheered me to speak up and speak out! During my years at Kalaheo, I made several life-long friends. Even after all these years, and although miles physically separate us, those friendships are still going strong!

Present and Past

Karla Reed Derton, Alumni Class of 1985

Graduated 1985 1999-2003 held public office as council member, Sahuarita, AZ Advocated for veterans and young families. 2000- present career in Escrow. I don't have any degrees or letters behind my name but I am a proud wife, mother and grandmother. My time at Kalaheo was the best time, the life-long friends made and the memories I will cherish for ever.

Kalaheo Memories

Pollyanne Wilson (P.S.Wilson/Polly Smith)

Looking back and reminiscing about my high school days
Kalaheo helped me grow in oh so many ways
I forged lifelong friendships while preparing myself for college
It was a fun place to grow and learn while gaining valuable knowledge

A small public high school compared to all the others
We were like a family, school sisters and school brothers
One big ohana, so many familiar faces
Sitting up on a hill in one of the world's most beautiful places

I'm a Mustang for life, I love the orange and blue
Thanks are in order and they're long overdue
The teachers who stand out, the ones etched in my mind
The ones who made a difference,
these kind are hard to find

Mr. Funasaki was inspiring, so young, creative, and cool
Mr. Cashman was my coach and AD of the school
Mrs. Bickmore was the one who encouraged me to write my rhymes
My first attempts at poetry began back in those times

Their guidance and influence was my inspiration
Like them I chose the same path,
I chose education
I became a teacher and had a 30 year career
Influenced by Kalaheo, a place that I hold dear

Fifty years of history is cause for celebration
It brings back many memories of good times and relations
Kalaheo, my beloved high school, a little slice of heaven
I'm proud to be a graduate from the Class of '77

I played for the first girl's basketball team at Kalāheo in 1977. We won the OIA championship and took the consolation in the state tournament in our first year of competition. That one year allowed me to receive a basketball scholarship on the mainland where I went on to graduate college and earn a teaching credential. My older brother, Pete Smith, a Kailua grad, came back from college while I was on the mainland and became a legendary coach for the boy's team starting in the mid-eighties. His sons, Josh and Alike, played for him as you probably know.

In 2000/2001, I sent my son, Skyler Wilson, to Hawaii to play his senior season for my brother at Kalaheo. They won the state championship that year. The Smith Ohana was instrumental in helping to make Kalaheo a basketball powerhouse in Hawaii. I'm proud to say that I was there first, laying the groundwork back in '77!

Last Day for Seniors

Dee Walsh, Alumna Class of 1983

It was 83, last day for seniors. I was hanging upstairs H -building when Doug and David came out of I think their English class, whooping and laughing because they found out they passed and were going to graduate. I think Doug jumped on David's back piggy backing laughing.

It was so surreal. People were celebrating, feeling great for them and then next minute they went over the edge. I could not believe it! I looked over and they were both just laying next to the planter. I went screaming down the stairwell to the office. Everyone was pretty hysterical. Though their injuries were horrible, thankfully both were able to participate in graduation. That's how I remember it.

Keeping It Real

Francoise Lum

I remember being in Mrs. Kozak's class for our "Women in business class" not sure if that's what it was really called but basically that's what we did. We created arts and crafts to sell and raise money for a class trip to Kauai and a couple of us were already 18 years old and the first

thing she did was rent a car for us to cruise in. She had a room with one of her friends and us girls had our own room. We got to go to the only hotel there and hang out in the lounge have a couple of drinks later we went skinny dipping after were done we all ran back to the room. I was the 1st to get to the room and I locked the door behind me leaving my naked slightly drunk friends out in the hallway. I eventually let them in. No feelings were hurt, we just had so much fun! If you were there then share your favorite part of this trip. Mrs. Kozak is an Amazing, Inspiring and Thoughtful person and friend. She even visited me in Vegas after graduation.

A Terrific Education

Tricia (Sczepaniak) Casey, Alumna Class of '93

I attended Kalaheo after 9 years of Catholic school. I went from being one of 24 in my grade to one of about 250 in the freshman class in the fall of 1989. I remember that it was a much needed opportunity to start fresh. I have a big personality and loads of enthusiasm which didn't really fit where I was and the "real me", the me I didn't know yet, emerged at Kalaheo. I made friends in student government, sports, clubs and classes.

I tried basketball, track, and paddling, was in a production of Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, was our class treasurer, successfully lobbied for our senior prom theme and song (Don't You Forget About Me by Simple Minds), and sold hundreds of boxes of Girl Scout cookies to the football team my senior year! I took five different science classes, all while avoiding chemistry and physics.

Mrs. Ehrhorn's AP European History and Art class was my favorite at Kalaheo. It inspired me to travel to Europe again and again, starting with a semester abroad in college where I visited museums in Amsterdam and Paris to see some of the work we'd studied. There were 19 of us in Mrs. Muronaka's Zoology class (also a favorite of mine!) and of us just two were boys. I remember dissecting a fetal pig and the boys looked horrified that the girls chucked entrails across the lab at one point! I read *Don Quixote* in Mr. Tam Sing's Spanish 4 class and fell in love with history in Mrs. Nakamura's World History and Ms. Fincke's US History classes.

Bruce Spencer was our student government advisor and he used to call me "Spaz" because my maiden name, Sczepaniak, made him go cross-eyed. I participated in Model UN and started to think about the broader world around us. I "voted" in the mock election held on campus my senior year, the year Bill Clinton first ran for President. I have voted in every election since then.

At Kalaheo, I had a terrific education thanks to the incredible teachers who challenged me and fed my interests. I made lifelong friends who I am still in contact with today. The person I am today - a working professional, a mom, a volunteer, engaged citizen and lifelong learner - was heavily influenced by my time at Kalaheo.