



**ALOHA FESTIVALS**

## **NEWS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **“*HULU ALOHA – BELOVED FEATHER TREASURES*”**

*2015 Aloha Festivals Recognizes the Art of Featherwork*

HONOLULU – The 2015 Aloha Festivals theme, “*Hulu Aloha – Beloved Feather Treasures*,” recognizes the tradition and mastery of Hawai‘i’s featherwork. In its 69th year, Aloha Festivals, one of Hawai‘i’s most highly regarded and oldest cultural celebrations, commemorates this timeless art form, with special emphasis on the masterworks of the late Mary Lou Kekuewa and her daughter Paulette Kahalepuna.

“Aloha Festivals is proud to pay tribute to the amazing skill and artistry of two of Hawai‘i’s masters in the Hawaiian art of featherwork,” said Debbie Nakanelua-Richards, Aloha Festivals board of directors co-chair. “Both Kekuewa and Kahalepuna previously served as *Mo‘i Wahine* (queen) on the Aloha Festivals Royal Court and we are especially pleased to honor their memories.”

The Hawaiian culture has long incorporated intricate featherwork into its symbols and traditions.

The *kāhili* (feather standard for Hawaiian royalty), *‘ahu‘ula* (cloak), *mahiōle* (helmet), and *lei* are treasured works of art that distinguished the *Ali‘i* (ruling class) of the Hawaiian Kingdom. Now held in high regard because of their history and ceremonial significance, featherwork and other symbols of rank are worn each year by the Aloha Festivals Royal Court to perpetuate the pageantry and magnificence of the *Ali‘i*.

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Featherwork techniques differed among groups throughout Polynesia, practiced by Tahitians, Maoris and Hawaiians. However, the refined skills and techniques that exemplify the Hawaiian *hulu*, elevated these artifacts and their craftsmanship to a revered status throughout the Pacific and with collectors around the world.

Hawai'i's leading featherwork artist, Mary Lou Kekuwa was named a “Living Treasure” by the Honpa Hongwanji in 2003 for her mastery and perpetuation of the art of feather lei and kāhili. She and her daughter Paulette Kahalepuna also were honored by the Historic Hawaii Foundation and the Native Hawaiian Chamber of Commerce and worked with the Office of Hawaiian Affairs and the Bishop Museum.

"Aloha Festivals has been around for 69 years and we are excited to present another inspiring theme for Hawai'i's largest cultural celebration," said Helene “Sam” Shenkus, Aloha Festivals board of directors co-chair. “This year’s theme, ‘*Hulu Aloha* – Beloved Feather Treasures’ was carefully crafted to recognize the art of featherwork and the dedication to create such masterpieces.”

This year's Aloha Festivals takes place from Sept. 5 to 26 at various locations on O'ahu, sharing the history and traditions of Hawai'i and the unique spirit of aloha with both *kama'āina* (local residents) and *malihini* (visitors).

#### **Schedule of Aloha Festivals events:**

All events are free and open to the public. They are supported by the sale of Aloha Festivals ribbons and merchandise from participating retailers. Aloha Festivals merchandise will also be sold at all events.

#### **Saturday, Sept. 5**

***Aloha Festivals Royal Court Investiture & Opening Ceremony, 2 to 4 p.m., Investiture – Royal Hawaiian Hotel, Coconut Grove***

***Opening Ceremony – Royal Grove within the Royal Hawaiian Center***

The *Ali'i* – king, queen, prince and princess – take their places in the 2015 Aloha Festivals Royal Court. Court members receive the royal cloak, helmet, head feather lei and other symbols of their reign. Traditional chant and *hula kahiko* (ancient hula) highlight the event.

#### **Saturday, Sept. 12**

***Keiki Ho'olaule'a, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m., Pearlridge Center Uptown*** – Pearlridge Center will celebrate Aloha Festivals with a variety of activities, demonstrations and continuous stage performances by participating *keiki* (children's) musical groups and *hula hālau* (schools). The 2015 Aloha Festivals Royal Court will make a special appearance. For more information, visit [www.pearlridgeonline.com](http://www.pearlridgeonline.com).

#### **Saturday, Sept. 19**

***Waikiki Ho'olaule'a, 7 p.m., Kalākaua Avenue*** – The annual Waikiki Ho'olaule'a is Hawai'i's largest, most festive block party. Thousands of people will take to the streets for food, fun and entertainment. Top Island entertainers will perform along with *hula hālau* while Hawaiian crafts and floral *lei* will be on display and available for purchase.

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**Saturday, Sept. 26**

**69<sup>th</sup> Annual Aloha Festivals Floral Parade, 9 a.m., Kalākaua Avenue from Ala Moana Park to Kapi'olani Park** – A colorful equestrian procession of *pā'ū* (long-skirted) riders, exquisite floats with cascades of Hawaiian flowers, *hula hālau*, marching bands and dignitaries will enliven Kalākaua Avenue.

**About Aloha Festivals**

Aloha Festivals was first held in 1946 as Aloha Week, and over the past six and a half decades has become a celebration of Hawaiian culture, integrating the traditions and cultures of the Islands through music, dance, cuisine and art. All festivities are coordinated by a volunteer board of directors. Aloha Festivals is funded by the Hawai'i Tourism Authority, corporate and private sponsorships, and sales of Aloha Festivals ribbons and merchandise.

More information about Aloha Festivals and its events can be found at [www.alohafestivals.com](http://www.alohafestivals.com), Facebook ([facebook.com/AlohaFestivals](https://facebook.com/AlohaFestivals)), Twitter ([@AlohaFstvlS](https://twitter.com/AlohaFstvlS)), Instagram ([@alohafestivals](https://instagram.com/alohafestivals)) or by calling (808) 923-2030.

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