

Institute of World Culture  
**Biography**

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**Speaker: Kehaulani Kekua**

Kumu Hula, Kehaulani Kekua – Hula Master of Halau Palaihiwa O Kaipuwai, is one of Kaua'i's most respected Hawaiian cultural experts. Her knowledge of Kaua'i and Hawaiian culture, history, ancestral practices and art forms are vast. She is well connected with native Hawaiian masters and practitioners who specialize in various disciplines from throughout the Hawaiian Island Chain. Perpetuation and practice of authentic Hawaiian culture is her passion and life's work.

Kehaulani Kekua has studied hula and the art form of Hawaiian oral traditions all of her life. Born in to a family of hula masters and practitioners, the foundation of her "ohana's knowledge is deeply rooted in the hula kapu. As the *hiapo*, she was brought up in the tradition of *hanai* – freely given to be raised and groomed in hula by her maternal grandmother, Helen Kaipuwai Kekua Waiau There was always an understanding that Kehaulani would inherit the responsibility of maintaining and perpetuating the family's hula traditions which originated in the celebrated heiau hula of Wahiawa, Kaua'i.

She is a progeny of Kumukamali'i – the ancestress from whom generations of hula disciples associated with Ka Ulu A Lono are descended. Her formal introduction to hula began as a very young child with her grandmother as her first kumu hula. Mrs. Waiau was always adamant that her granddaughter be exposed to other kumu to further her training. Kehaulani has studied with the late hula master, Joseph Kamoha'i Kahaulelio (Kamoha'i's Hula Halau), as well as with Leina'ala Kalama Heine, kumu hulu of Na Pualei O Likolehua. However, her grandmother remained as her primary kumu hula up until her passing in 1988.

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Kehaulani acknowledges the late Kahuna Wahine, Mahinake'oke'o Kele who first inspired her to seek the truth and knowledge of Hawaiian ancestral beliefs and customs in spirituality. She garnered formal training in Hawaiian chant, ceremony and protocol as a selected apprentice with Na Lehua Ku Makua under the direction of Hokulani Holt-Padilla – one of Maui's most highly respected kumu. She was also fortunate to study Hawaiian chant and its various styles and techniques under the mastery of Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahela – Hawai'i's most revered and knowledgeable "master of masters." Over the years, both of these kumu have transferred teachings, intelligence and practices associated with Hawaiian spirituality and sacred ceremonies to Kehaulani. She continues to study and mentor under them in her efforts to excel as a native Hawaiian practitioner. She exercises and exemplifies the understanding and ancient traditions of ka'a'ike, no'ono'opono, pule and hana ho'ohanohano as a lifestyle. Implementation of these practices provide a strong basis for her professional work as a Hawaiian cultural consultant, and especially so, in her capacity as Kumu Hula of Halau Palaihiwa O Kaipuwai.

After graduating from the Kamehameha Schools at Kapalama on O'ahu, Kehaulani pursued a very successful career in Hawai'i's Hospitality industry for 17 years. Since 1997, Kehaulani has committed her efforts entirely to the development and promotion of quality Hawaiian cultural programs, services and experiences for private and corporate clients. Professionally, she serves as Sr. Hawaiian Cultural Specialist and Consultant for the Kaua'i Heritage Center and Ka'ie'ie Foundation.

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