

Why aren't Hawaiians in business?

By Linda Kephart

The Chinese have a business community. So do Japanese. Why not Hawaiians?

HAWAII'S business community is a mixed bag of ethnic sub-communities. The Chinese business community is a cohesive group with strong family and personal relationships among companies. There are also Japanese businesspeople who have worked hard together to build their prominence as a group in the business community. Additionally, a collection of businesses with a distinct Filipino identity has begun to take shape. Even the Portuguese, who represent a relatively small percent of the state's population, have a Chamber of Commerce on the Big Island.

But what's missing from this picture? The Hawaiians. Unlike other minorities in the state, Hawaiians have not created a business community for themselves. That's not to say there are no Hawaiians in business. On the contrary, many of the state's top business leaders are part-Hawaiian. Take First Hawaiian Bank CEO John Bellinger, for instance (see chart, page 18). Or Hawaiian Air chairman Jack Magoon. Then there's retired Alexander & Baldwin president Allen Wilcox, Theo Davies Marine president Kent Bowman, and entrepreneurs Aaron Chaney, James Pflugger, and Randy Lee. There's even a Hawaiian Business/Professional Association (HBPA) whose relatively small membership roster of approximately 100 contains some of the community's most recognized business leaders: People like John Dominis Holt, publisher of Topgallant Publishing Co.; Clem Judd, executive director of the Hawaii Hotel Association; and Fred Trotter, Campbell Estate trustee.

However, just because these businesspeople are part-Hawaiian, and belong to the HBPA, doesn't mean there's a sense of ethnic bond or community among them. "If you start with the notion of a like-minded group of people who share similar views, goals, characteristics, and values (as a culture) and ask yourself, 'Is there a Hawaiian business communi-



Hawaiians, unlike many other ethnic groups, have not established a distinct business community.

ty?' I think the answer is pretty easy," declares Hawaiian Business/Professional Association founder George Kanahele. "There is no Hawaiian business community."

Part of the reason for the lack of a Hawaiian business community is that beyond the small core of people at the top, there simply aren't many Hawaiians in business—only two percent of the state's approximately 175,000 full- and part-Hawaiians hold professional, technical, or entrepreneurial occupations. Entrepreneurs are especially scarce: Of the state's 20,625 minority-owned firms in 1977, only 1,368 were owned by Hawaiians. And of those, only 108 were large enough to have paid employees. Within the business community as a whole, the Hawaiian group's representation is disproportionately small. While making up almost 20 percent of the population, Hawaiians hold just seven percent of the management jobs in the state. By

comparison, other minority groups are well-represented in business: Japanese represent nearly 25 percent of the population, but hold 40.5 percent of the state's management positions; Chinese, while just more than five percent of the population, hold 10.4 percent of the management jobs.

If Hawaiians aren't in business, where are they? At the bottom. The median family income for Hawaiians is the lowest of all ethnic groups in the state. And they hold more "low-status jobs" than any other group except Filipinos (low status is defined as farm and non-farm laborers and foremen by the Department of Health).

Why aren't more Hawaiians in business? The reasons are varied and hard to overcome:

■ **Lack of exposure.** In the course of writing his dissertation on Hawaiian entrepreneurs two years ago, University of Hawaii doctoral candidate Gene Ward, co-founder with George Kanahele of the Hawaii Entrepreneurship Training and Development Institute (HETADI) found

that, of his sampling—which came entirely from the Hawaiian Business/Professional Association membership list—the more biologically Hawaiian a person was, the less likely he or she was to start a business. It wasn't, he explains, because of any negative relationship between the Hawaiian culture and business but, rather, it was a matter of exposure to business, which he believes is less for Hawaiians than other ethnic groups. According to Ward, it's a vicious cycle: Since there aren't many Hawaiians in business, Hawaiian children aren't exposed to business and, hence, aren't likely to go into business as adults. "Interestingly, it's who you hung around with, who you have now as your immediate friends, and who your parents were that determines your exposure and accessibility to business," says Ward.

■ **School daze.** One way to break that vicious cycle is to expose children to business through education. But public



Anderson



Chaney



Holt



Judd



Felix



Lee



Magoon

Guess Who's Hawaiian?

Name	% Hawaiian	Title, Company	Name	% Hawaiian	Title, Company
Andy Anderson	1/4	Managing director, City & County of Honolulu, owner Anderson's Camera	Richard Smart	1/4	Owner, Parker Ranch
Aaron Chaney	3/16	Part-owner, Chaney, Brooks & Co. (real estate)	Fred Trotter	1/16	Trustee, Campbell Estate
John Dominis Holt	3/8	Publisher, Toppallant Publishing	E.K. Fernandez	1/4	Owner, E.K. Fernandez Shows, Fernandez' Fun Factory
Clem Judd	1/4	Executive director, Hawaii Hotel Assn.	Kenneth Brown	1/4	President, Mauna Lani Resort Inc.
John Henry Felix	1/32	President, Hawaiian Memorial Services	John Bellinger	1/4	Chairman, CEO, First Hawaiian Bank
Randy Lee	1/4	Owner, The Willows (restaurant)	James Cockett	3/4	General manager, Sheraton Princess Kaiulani Hotel
Jack Magoon	1/32	CEO, Hawaiian Air	Kent Bowman	1/4	President, TheoDavies Marine Agencies
Larry Mehau	1/2	Owner/president, Hawaii Protective Assn.	Eugene Banks	3/8	Vice president & manager, Merrill Lynch



Smart



Trotter



Brown



Bellinger



Cockett



Bowman



Banks

schools do little to educate children—of any ethnic group—about business. And, until the '60s, Kamehameha Schools, which only accepts Hawaiian children, offered a program that was heavily directed at vocational education. Unfortunately, that kind of curriculum prepared tradespeople, not business leaders. "Back then, those educators just *knew* the Hawaiians were inferior," says developer Kenneth Brown, one-quarter Hawaiian, member of a landed Hawaii family and graduate of a Connecticut boarding school and Princeton University. "So why would you teach something to someone who couldn't understand? That was actually done by loving, Christian people."

A few of those students eventually broke out of the mold, but many accepted the idea that they were meant to be worker bees. According to Alu Like, 32 percent of all Hawaiians over 25 have not finished high school, so at least a third of the group is more likely to remain worker bees. College improves the odds of Hawaiians getting into business. According

to Ward, 82 percent of the Hawaiian entrepreneurs he interviewed had attended college, as opposed to 23 percent for Hawaiians as a whole. Kamehameha realized that about 10 years ago when it started pushing its college preparatory curriculum. Since then, the school has upped its college-bound graduates from 70 to 90 percent, as opposed to public

Two percent of all small businesses are owned by Hawaiians.

school graduates of all ethnic groups at 65 percent. But, Hawaiians overall have not pursued higher education to a large extent. They are again underrepresented at the UH: Only four percent of all students are Hawaiian—let alone the even smaller numbers in the business degree program. If Kamehameha's teacher training program with the state Department

of Education that hopes to try to improve the quality of teaching Hawaiian children at public schools works, educational opportunities should improve. Says Kam Schools' public affairs director Neil Hannahs, so will the frequency of Hawaiians in business.

■**Boxed-in.** According to Alu Like, assumptions the missionaries made long ago about Hawaiians being inferior have also kept them out of business—and still do today. Only three years ago, Alu Like polled the Honolulu business community and found several interesting attitudes about Hawaiians. On the one hand, Alu Like was encouraged to discover a diminished perception in the business community of Hawaiians as "lazy and volatile" (Alu Like's wording). On the other hand, however, the majority of businesspeople questioned said they would still not place Hawaiians in the business world, except as workers. With that in mind, it's easy to see why there's a predominance of Hawaiians in blue-collar jobs (see chart, page 22). The busi-

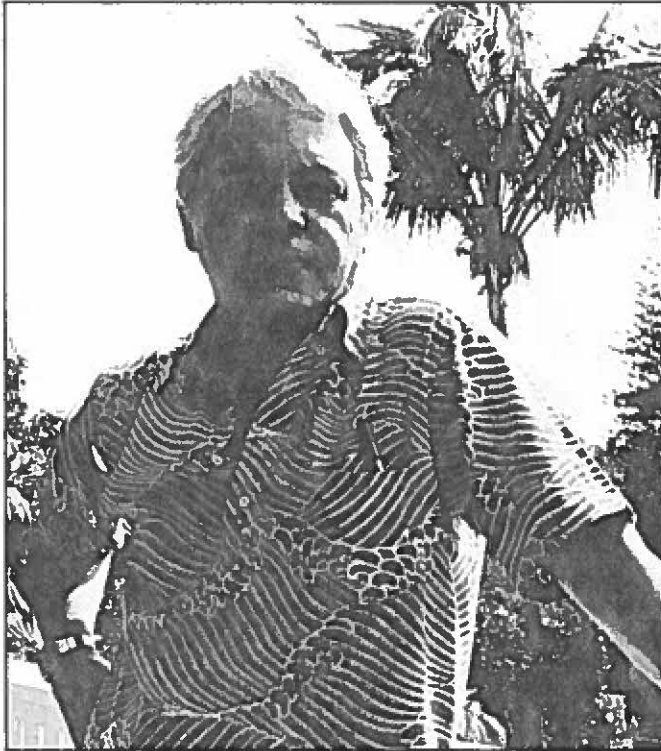
ness-oriented Hawaiian who wants to move up may find it easier to move out of state to escape discrimination barriers. That could account, in part, for the large number of Hawaiians living in places other than Hawaii, totaling around 55,000—or about one-fourth as many Hawaiians as are currently living in the state.

■ **Cultural accounting.** Perhaps the biggest reason Hawaiians aren't in business is the recurring belief by Hawaiians themselves that their culture and business

historically haven't placed a high priority on business: According to a 1975 Alu Like study, more than three-quarters of all Hawaiians would rather turn to the land to farm and fish than hold a job or go into business.

To each his own business. But there seems to be a growing emphasis among Hawaiian organizations to get more Hawaiians in business, especially to start their own businesses. Again, the percentage who have actually done that is quite

Professional Association. So far, according to member Ken Brown, several small group discussions have occurred. The main topic? Combining traditional Hawaiian values with a sound economic base. "The next step," says Brown, "is for Hawaiians to say, 'I can live by my culture. Why the hell can't I do business by my culture?'" Another HBPA member, Cardinal Mailing's Scott May, makes it a habit to get out and talk to school kids on career days and, in his own business, enlists a Hawaiian hiring priority to "give



Hawaiian Business/Professional Association founder Kanahela: "There is no Hawaiian business community."



Hawaiian activist/educator Trask: "Business exploits human beings and Hawaiians can't do that."

don't mix. Some Hawaiians in business mention they feel out of touch with their Hawaiian-ness, while others who've stuck it out say that everybody, regardless of ethnicity, loses touch while they're climbing the ladder: There's simply the need to

Career-oriented Hawaiians may move out of state to escape discrimination.

assimilate with the Western corporate culture and identity. In addition, the uneasiness of trying to combine the Hawaiian culture with business is often sustained by those who bad-mouth business. "Business, above all, exploits human beings," says UH professor and Hawaiian activist Haunani-Kay Trask, herself three-eighths Hawaiian and a graduate of Kamehameha Schools. "Hawaiians can't do that." Additionally, Hawaiians

tiny—two percent of all small businesses are owned by Hawaiians. According to Ward's study, the reasons for not starting a business are typical of all would-be entrepreneurs: Lack of capital, inability to obtain credit, and no knowledge in how to start a business. "If your only experience with business is just paying for things, it can be intimidating," agrees Hawaiian entrepreneur Momi Cazimero, owner of the Graphic House (see story, page 26).

To help Hawaiians overcome those obstacles in starting a business, Alu Like began an entrepreneurial development program that has helped approximately 350 Hawaiians since 1981 to start their own businesses—ventures like Jimmy's Appliance Service, Island Sandwich Shop, and Aipa's Yard Service. Additionally, the Office of Hawaiian Affairs has established a Business Assistance Program which funnels grants of \$120,000 apiece to small potential businesses.

Also pounding the business drum in hopes of expanding Hawaiian exposure to business is the Hawaiian Business/

them a chance," says May.

In 1981, OHA, Alu Like, Kamehameha Schools, and Department of Hawaiian Home Lands pooled their resources to sponsor a 21-day intensive training program for 25 potential Ha-

"Keeping the culture alive is important. But making a living is important, too."

waiian businesspeople. The course was given by Ward and Kanahela's HETADI and was designed so the attendees would know how to start their own businesses upon completion. But, like many such programs, there was no follow-up training, so not even Ward knows how many Hawaiians actually went into business after the program and how many of those businesses stayed alive. "To me, training people and then pushing them out of the

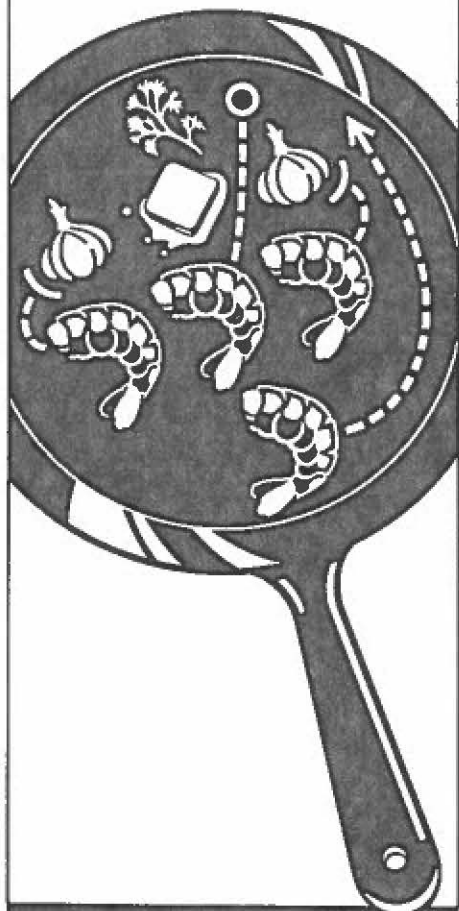
MAILE RESTAURANT

HOW WE PREP OUR PRAWNS.

Tender Hawaiian sea prawns split down the middle and spread in wide formation. Herb butter rushes down. Prawns under fire for three minutes. Time out! Garlic, breadcrumbs, parsley — sprinkle right and left! Fire again and touch down on plate with saffron rice.

Hawaiian Sea Prawns with Garlic and Herbs. Come taste it at the Maile Restaurant. Kahala Hilton.

For reservations, call 734-2211.



Kahala Hilton

classroom is not a cost-effective way of doing it," says Ward. "The follow-up should've included walking them to the bank, making sure the business plans and the loan packages were very crisp, sitting them down with a loan officer, lending your credibility to them, right through negotiating the leases with them. That was not done. Therefore, I don't feel that good about it." But while this type of hit-and-run approach is not comprehensive, it is starting to expose more Hawaiians to the fundamentals of business—and that's the important first step.

Growth or no-growth? Other things make it appear as though the Hawaiian business community might grow. For one, society as a whole is focusing more on business. According to Hawaiian businesspeople active in career days at both public and private Hawaii schools and groups like Alu Like and OHA, Hawaiian communities in Waianae and Waimanalo are already showing a greater receptivity to business. Additionally, as inter-marriage continues, Hawaiians

as a group will naturally and biologically expand, increasing as well as diversifying the Hawaiian population, which will expose more of its members to more cultures, lifestyles, and to business. Already, young, up-and-coming college-educated Hawaiians have entered the management ranks at corporations like Bank of Hawaii, Kaluakoi Corp., and Hawaiian Telephone, as well as started their own companies such as Rabbit Transit, Playco, and Flower Farms.

If the number of Hawaiians who feel they can combine culture with business increases, the chances are greater that a Hawaiian business community will emerge. "We still have to get our act together," says Alu Like's chief executive officer Winona Rubin. "We have a lot of work to do." Says Hawaiian general contractor Charles Isaacs, "I used to dance hula, and pursue the search for my roots with a vengeance. Now, being in business, I just don't have the time. I understand that keeping the culture alive is important. But making a living is important too." □

Hawaiians in business: Who owns their own?

Minority	All Firms		Firms With Paid Employees			
	No. Firms	Gross Receipts*	No. Firms	No. Employees	Annual Payroll*	Gross Receipts*
All Minorities	20,625	\$1,711,964	2,988	26,563	\$243,546	\$1,501,839
Asian & Other	20,226	\$1,708,034	2,962	26,437	\$242,789	\$1,498,879
Asian ^a	14,225 68.9%	\$1,424,579 83.2%	2,438 8.1%	21,028 79.1%	\$181,162 74.3%	\$1,262,160 84.0%
Hawaiian ^b	1,368 6.6%	\$29,011 1.7%	108 3.6%	686 2.6%	\$ 4,494 1.8%	\$17,059 1.1%

* Figures are in thousands of dollars.

^a Asian Indian, Chinese, Japanese, Korean, and other Asian, but not Filipino.

^b For the United States as a whole, Hawaiians owned 1,614 firms with gross receipts of \$45,198,000. These totals included 448 Mainland firms with gross receipts of \$16,147,000.

Source: The State of Hawaii Data Book 1981; U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1977 Survey of Minority-Owned Business Enterprises.

Who's got the jobs?

Job title	Total No. jobs	Hawaiian	Japanese	Chinese	Caucasian	Filipino
Management-% of total	12,370	7.2	40.5	10.4	30.7	6.9
% of ethnic group		1.9	3.7	4.5	3.0	1.5
Teachers-% of total	13,650	6.7	45.2	8.6	31.3	1.0
% of ethnic group		2.0	4.6	4.1	3.3	1.0
Clerical-% of total	18,630	8.5	41.2	6.7	31.3	8.4
% of ethnic group		3.5	5.8	4.4	4.6	2.8
Police & firefighters-% of total	3,158	29.9	17.9	6.8	31.2	6.4
% of ethnic group		2.1	.42	.75	.78	.36
Farming, forestry, fishing-% of total	14,154	13.7	22.6	1.9	22.7	33.3
% of ethnic group		4.3	2.4	.96	2.5	8.4
Construction-% of total	20,977	11.8	36.0	3.2	29.1	14.2
% of ethnic group		5.5	5.7	2.3	4.8	5.3
Food service-% of total	32,461	11.0	24.7	9.0	27.3	17.6
% of ethnic group		8.0	6.0	10.3	7.0	10.2

Source: Hawaii Business, based on U.S. Census 1980.

The Hawaiian "school" of business

By Thelma Chang

"ALU LIKE" means striving together, which is appropriate for the organization by that name which has rallied business community support and participation to help Hawaiians get into and stay in business—both as entrepreneurs and as employees. Founded in 1975, Alu Like is a private, non-profit community organization, led by chief executive officer Winona Rubin, which offers a range of counseling and training programs in business, as well as in the social development areas of education, housing, and native rights.

But it's through such programs as the Alu Like Private Industry Council, and the Economic Development Institute, which offers business counseling to aspiring Hawaiian entrepreneurs, that the organization is helping Hawaiians build an economic base, both individually and as a group.

Fund finders. What Alu Like does best is raise funds from government, private foundations and individual donations to finance its efforts. It is annually among the top five grantees for national employment and training funding, of an estimated 200 to 250 total grantees scrambling for monies. "Alu Like brings into Hawaii more than \$40 (in funding) for every dollar it receives from the state," says Rubin from the organization's Kamakee Street office. Program funds available in 1983 (the last 12-month period measurable due to restructuring of its fiscal year) totaled some \$6 million, with \$4.6 million of it coming from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services through its Administration for Native Americans, and \$1.2 million from the U.S. Department of Labor through the Division of Indian and Native American Programs.

The organization actively works with 3,000 to 5,000 persons per year statewide, with five centers throughout the islands staffed by 90 employees. Their programs attract people with a wide range of interests, many of whom receive help in starting businesses or even receiving basic job training:

■ **Economic Development Institute.** EDI was established in 1981 to provide technical assistance in business planning; marketing research; profit, loss



Alu Like's Rubin: Teaching Hawaiians about the bottom line.

and cash flow projections; financial statements; and loan packaging. With an approximate \$100,000 annual budget, it has directly affected more than 350 existing and potential Hawaiian entrepreneurs, usually through informal counseling sessions, and has assisted individuals and private agencies to obtain data and research expertise from government, including testimony at state and Congressional hearings.

■ **Employment and training.** Alu Like has worked with local businesses to provide employment and training to an estimated 7,000 participants since 1978. In 1984 alone, Alu Like provided job assistance for 1,719 adults and young people at an average cost of \$540 each (the national average is almost four times that amount), and placed 75 percent of its "graduates," compared to a national average of 54 percent. The training runs the gamut, from veterinarian aide and radio announcer, to painter and hospital laundry worker. These on-the-job-trained workers are paid by employers, who, in some instances, are partially subsidized through the Job Training Partnership Act.

■ **Private council.** The Alu Like Private Industry Council was established in 1980 and is composed of 26 of mostly Hawaiian business, labor and community sector representatives,

chaired by Jimmy Kurita, economic development director for the county of Kauai. PIC, initially conceived as an advisory group to the Alu Like job training program, today provides consultation and recommendations on economic development, job creation and employment on other Alu Like programs as well.

■ **Alu Like Enterprises.** A wholly owned, for-profit holding company called Alu Like Enterprises, Inc. may one day generate the bulk of revenues to support the non-profit purposes of the organization. One of its current projects is the Pacific Technology Center, Inc., a word processor training operation based at the Armed Forces YMCA. Started in 1982, the classes cost \$6,000 per month to administer and broke even for the first time last year, charging tuition at \$10 per hour per student.

Striving together. Despite the strides Alu Like has made since its inception, Rubin says there is much more to be done toward realizing specific projects and its ultimate goal—becoming largely self-sufficient and less dependent on outside funding by the year 1990. One of the projects Alu Like is pursuing is the establishment of a cold storage plant in Kaunakakai, Molokai, which would cost about \$300,000 to build and \$1,700 to \$3,000 per month to operate. It would not only help approximately 100 farmers on the island (the state's largest producer of bell peppers is on Molokai), but would aid about 45 fishermen, who could do more than subsistence fishing. Funding for the project, however, is a problem and has stalled progress, but at least two bills have been introduced at the state Legislature this year to appropriate \$200,000 to \$360,000 to the venture.

Alu Like's administrators are hoping to shatter the unfounded stereotype that Hawaiians don't make good businesspeople. But to do that, it needs to help generate more success stories. "We need to have more models that are identified as entrepreneurs and successful businessmen," says A. Van Horn Diamond, Alu Like's economic development director. "We need some Babe Ruths in the area of economics." □

Profiles encourage



Cardinal Mailing's May: All'i had to take care of their people.

ALTHOUGH THE HAWAIIAN business community may now be nearly non-existent, there are individual part-Hawaiians who've made names for themselves in corporate or entrepreneurial careers. Sometimes they were lucky—they were born into families which had the money to send them to top-flight schools and later set them up in the family business. Other times, however, they had to wage wars against their own and their culture's expectations of what they should do for a living—as well as face the same financial or educational barriers as other ethnic groups. How did they do it?

Some, like Theo Davies Marine Agencies president Kent Bowman or Sheraton's Princess Kaiulani Hotel general manager James Cockett have put in the sheer time that corporate ladder climbing requires. Bowman, one-quarter Hawaiian and the youngest of 12 children, started his waterfront career at maritime school just before the war and reached his present position in 1979. If the war hadn't drafted him out of sleepy Honolulu, and shown him how the rest of the world lives, Bowman says, he may have stayed on the docks as a deckhand all his life. Cockett, three-quarters Hawaiian and ninth in a family of 12 children, also credits the military with shaking up his ideas of what was available.



Graphic House's Cazimero: Worked her way through school doing laundry.

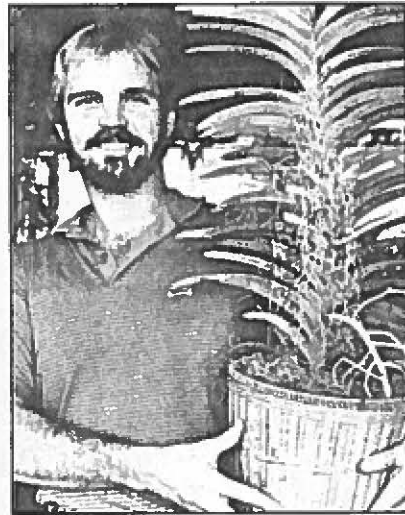
Many Hawaiians have broken out of the mold on their own as entrepreneurs. It's certainly the fastest way, they've found, to rise in the business world, and into the upper income brackets. According to the study by HETADI co-founder Gene Ward, (see story, page 17) the average annual income of Hawaiian entrepreneurs is two to three times higher than the average income of the Hawaiian community in

Waging wars against cultural expectations.

general. And though they're few in numbers now, they're shattering the stereotypes and showing that Hawaiians indeed can be good businesspeople. And, they add, they can also be good Hawaiians.

■ **Mixed plate.** One example is Cardinal Mailing Services owner Scott May. Three-eighths Hawaiian and a graduate of Punahou, Menlo College, and the University of Hawaii's MBA program, May bought Cardinal in 1972 and has nearly quadrupled the company's annual gross sales since then. Rather than talk about losing his culture in the business world, May says his own ethnic mixture of Hawaiian,

Chinese, and English has been an advantage in Hawaii's business community, giving him the ability to use attributes from each of his cultural heritages when he wants or needs to. For example, he thinks his protective and almost-paternalistic style as a boss comes from his Hawaiian ancestry. "If there is to be a rebirth of an *ali'i* kind of leadership, it can come in business," insists May. "*Ali'i* had to take care of their people if they wanted them to be



Nurseryman Fiddler: A green thumb for plants and profits.

productive. If their people weren't productive, they couldn't tax them."

■ **Two strikes.** Not all Hawaiian businesspeople, like May claims he is, are descended from *ali'i*. Some Hawaiian businesspeople have even an additional strike against them: Being a woman in business. When Graphic House owner Momi Cazimero, three-eighths Hawaiian and a former Hawaiian Business/Professional Association president, elected to go to college, it wasn't only because education was important—it was also to show her mechanic father that women could be more than housewives like her mother. To prove her point, the Hilo native worked at Sears and took in laundry to pay her own way both through Kamehameha Schools and the University of Hawaii. Once she graduated with her bachelor's degree in design, Cazimero went to work for a graphic designer in downtown Honolulu. After 10 years, her experience with her father was to repeat itself: Her ailing boss decided to sell the business, but not to a woman. So, in 1972, Cazimero opened her own shop and turned a \$6,000 net profit in her first nine months of business. "Big deal—I'm a woman, I'm Hawaiian and I was raised in a cane field," says Cazimero. "If you're good at what you do, you can be anything. Even if you're cross-eyed."

■ **Exposure factor.** Unlike Cazimero, Al Fiddler was exposed to business heavily—by his non-Hawaiian father. Fiddler, owner of the Nuuanu nursery called The New Leaf, is a Punahou graduate, one-eighth Hawaiian and blond like his European ancestors. He opened his nursery in 1978 at the age of 23 with no college education. His only credentials were having grown up with his businessman father, Bill, owner of the Kakaako shutter shop called



Carnival king Fernandez: A priceless business degree.

Fiddler's. Much of Al's work experience came from his dad who put him to work weekends and summers at the store, giving his son a close-hand look at how to run a small business. Some things, however, dad couldn't teach him. Although Fiddler originally opened his doors as Oma'o Nursery, when he changed the company's name to "a haole name" last year, sales picked up by 25 percent. "The only thing better than being your own boss," says Fiddler, "is being your own boss and making money." Although his business hasn't gone gangbusters in its seven years of existence, it is growing—Fiddler recently launched an interior plant decorating business and will open a second nursery location this summer.

■ **A matter of degree.** Although E.K. Fernandez's father, E.K. Senior, took his son's business education one step further than Al Fiddler's did—by giving him the amusements company which bears his name—young E.K. wasn't content to just walk in the front door some day as president without any formal preparation. So after his Punahou graduation, one-quarter Hawaiian E.K. Junior headed for the UH to pursue a bachelor's degree in business. The degree's been invaluable, he says, because, even though he was raised with the circus and he certainly had an easier start than some green

entrepreneurs seeking first-time financial backing, the amusements business has changed dramatically in the past several years. Business has dwindled from the thousands of annual carnivals his father once set up around the state, to now 60 to 70 days a year in actual operations, with only 35 to 40 of those days providing the company with nearly all its entire year's revenues. Without business expertise, he says, he's not sure he could've handled it.



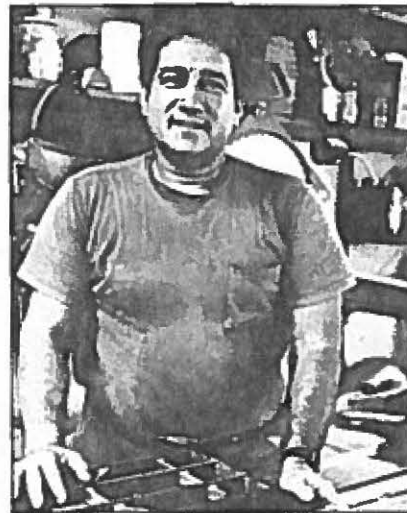
Ukulele maker Kamaka: Wanted to be an entomologist.

■ **Play it again, Sam.** Sam Kamaka started out preferring to study *ukus* rather than making ukes. Kamaka, who, with his brother, Fred, now owns Kamaka Hawaii, was nearly through an entomological Ph.D. program at Oregon State in the early '50s when his father fell ill and asked him to return to Hawaii to help out with the business he'd started in 1916. Sam, a half-Hawaiian St. Louis High School graduate,

Some were born into business families.

came back and briefly learned from his father, already on his deathbed, how to keep the business alive. After his father's death, Sam Kamaka decided to stick around for a year or so and see how it felt to run the company. Before the year was out, he found himself married and fairly well entrenched in the ukulele business. Luckily for the man who feels business is not his calling, his brother came along to keep the books and office in order. Additionally, his eldest son, Chris, has already shown an interest in his dad's company, and is now working full time at the Kakaako factory/store after receiving his business degree from the UH.

■ **Go for broke.** Some Hawaiian entrepreneurs, like many entrepreneurs everywhere, started out working for someone at a job. Licensed contractor Charles Isaacs is one of those. Isaacs was a salesman back in 1970 when, on a routine drive through Hawaii Kai, he saw some carpenters working outside. It was a hot day and he was sporting a shirt and tie while they were shirtless. Right then and there, Isaacs, who's three-eighths Hawaiian and had at-



Contractor Isaacs: Acting as a role model for Hawaiian children.

tended two years of college, decided that carpentry was the job for him. He sought out a carpenter who gave him an apprenticeship, worked up to journeyman, got his contractor's license and, in 1978, opened his own business. It hasn't been all rosy, however. When times get rocky in the construction industry, Isaacs wonders if he's "doing what a Hawaiian should be doing." Instead of dropping out of business last year when times were particularly rough, however, Isaacs established a new niche for himself—in custom Corian countertops. It was a move that paid off. Already, Isaacs' revenues have exploded this year.

Like many Hawaiian businesspeople, Isaacs wants to do more in business than just keep his head above water. He even wants to do more than just make profits. Charles Isaacs wants to help give business a better name within the Hawaiian community. He says that by living a life that combines his feelings of Hawaiian pride and ethics with business achievement, he's acting as a role model for Hawaiian children—both his own and others. Already, Isaacs has increased the Hawaiian business community by one: He helped his 13-year-old daughter set up her own key-chain business, teaching her how to keep books, define her markets and close a sale. ☐