

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Leslie Keli'i Alapa'i

Leslie Keli'i Alapa'i was born in San Francisco, California, and moved back to Hā'ena, Kaua'i with his family at the age of one. He calls Hā'ena home, although he moved to O'ahu briefly with his grandmother who raised him for a short while before moving on to Maui to attend Lahainaluna for his last two years of high school. In Kaua'i, he learned many skills from his stepfather, who taught him how to work which adequately prepared him for his time at Lahainaluna. During his time as a boarder, he was one of three Kaua'i boys his junior year, and one of two his senior year. One of his jobs at Lahainaluna included working in the swinery, which was particularly memorable for him. He would often go off campus to spend time at the beach with friends, working in Kahana, or with his sponsors in Makena. In the dorms he remembers playing music with his classmates, and participating in the many boarder traditions such as liming the L, and David Malo Day. Keli'i graduated from Lahainaluna in 1974, returning to Kaua'i for a brief moment, leaving to Seattle Washington for a year, but then ultimately returning to Kaua'i where he lived with his wife and raised his son and daughter. He worked a number of jobs, and in 2003 started Keli'i Equipment Service which he still runs today. He is an active member in the Kīlauea and Hā'ena communities, and speaks to how a combination of both his experiences in Hā'ena and Lahaina were integral to his life's trajectory.



Keli'i Alapa'i at his baseyard in Kīlauea on March 1, 2024.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Leslie Keli'i Alapa'i (KA)

March 1st, 2024

Kīlauea, Kaua'i, Hawai'i

BY: Wailana Medeiros (WM) and Ty Kāwika Tengan (TT)

Note: Also present is Micah Mizukami (MM)

TT: Okay. Aloha. We're here. It's March 1st, 2024. We're in Kīlauea, Kaua'i with 'Anakala Keli'i, his son Kanoe. Interviewers are Ty Tengan, Wailana Medeiros, and Micah Mizukami. Aloha, Uncle.

KA: Aloha. Aloha.

TT: First, could you state your full name for us?

KA: Leslie Keli'i Alapa'i.

TT: What year were you born?

KA: Born in 1958. May 31st, 1958.

TT: And where was that?

KA: Uh, I was born in San Francisco, California. Because of my mom being hāpai. (laughs) But, yeah, I was born in, in San Francisco, and came back when I was still a baby. And, we came back to Hā'ena.

TT: And how, how did she end up in San Francisco?

KA: She was going to nursing school. And, she had met my father, my biological dad, when he was in the Navy. And both of them were from Kaua'i right. I don't know how, how dat worked. But they met up. And so, that's where I was born. And, yeah, he was, he was in the Navy. In the military. Yeah.

TT: How long were you guys there before you came back?

KA: I am, I am, I--- from what I was told, I was about a year old. I could travel ah? I was I was young enough to fly, I guess, you know.

TT: Yeah. And who are your parents?

KA: My mother is Bernadette K., maiden name, Alapa'i. Married name is Mahuiki. That's my stepdad, yeah.

TT: And you said they both were both from where?

KA: My--- both of them. My, my biological dad is born and raised in Kapa'a, Kaua'i. And my mom from here too.

TT: Okay. Could you talk a little bit more about your, your kūpuna on, on, on both sides or to the extent whatever side you feel you most wanna..?

KA: Uh so, I can start off with my, my grandmother. That's my mom's mom. Who was the lady that really raised me. Because I was young and, you know, at that time my mother was had to go work and you know how it goes. So my grandmother always took care of-- she, she raised me. And she used to be the cafeteria manager for both Hanalei School and Kīlauea Elementary, back then. And uh, so I was I and she lived in Kīlauea. And my, my mom them lived in Hā'ena. So, but I would go to school in Hanalei, because she was a cafeteria manager. Yeah? And, so I went to Hanalei, I went to Hanalei school. My nursery, nursery, they had nursery, yeah. Kindergarten, first grade. And then, I didn't like Hanalei School, I went to Kīlauea school (WM laughs) (laughs). So I went to Kīlauea School for a little while, and then I went back to Hanalei again. I was crazy, you know, in, in those days (laughs), I used to --- It's either going to be mad with my my mother them, I would stay Kīlauea, you know. But, so I went to Kīlauea school and then I ended up going back to Hanalei, finish up my third grade. And then from, from then my grandmother was um, when she retired, she was, she met this man who is my step-grandfather. It was her third marriage. And um, although I didn't get to know my--- or I was too young to meet, my first grandfather was, which was is Alapa'i. He was from, he used to work for Young Brothers. He used to be a captain of the tugboats. He died at sea. And then my grandmother married her second husband, which is from Hā'ena - the Maka family. So Sherman Maka them, their father's father, that's who my grandmother married, for her second husband. And so that's the way the relationship is yeah? With, with Sherman dem yeah?

TT: Could you tell us the name of your grandmother?

KA: My grandmother, my grandmother's name was Myra Elizabeth Kau'inohea. Alapa'i first. And then, her last name with her second husband was Maka. And then this third husband, which I'm sharing to you about, which lived here in Kīlauea, used to work for the Kīlauea plantation. I have no idea where how my grandmother met this man, but he was he, was one, he was one strict man. Big haole, big haole man, big haole, size 13 shoes. Big. Anyway, he was part of my life growing up.

TT: And his name was?

- KA: Jim Gloss. Yeah it was he's from Florida, but he got, he got um, he got a job at the mill. The plantation yeah? So um, that's how my grandmother met this man.
- TT: Which, which mill plantation was this?
- KA: Kīlauea plantation.
- TT: Kīlauea plantation.
- KA: Yeah, yeah.
- TT: Okay.
- KA: And then um, she she, when she retired from cafeteria manager, you know. When her time was up, and she ended up opening a small little restaurant across Hanalei School. And my grandmother's a good cook. They all good cooks, you know? Oh man, I tell you. So anyway grandma was uh, she was a special person in my life and, and raised me and and um, taught me a lot of stuff, you know? And, and you know, being the kupuna, you know, you you mingle a lot with a lot of older kupunas, you know? And that's how I know, I know a lot of people because I used to be with my grandmother.
- WM: Mhmm.
- KA: And they know, you know, they all know me. And so even their children, when they had their children, when I used to go to their house, they remembered me. And that's a different generation, already, you know. So yeah, I had, I had, I had good, good times with my grandparents and she was uh, she was a special one.
- TT: Mhmm
- KA: Yeah. She really, really, you know, showed me what life, taught me what life is about. You know, and, sweet lady.
- TT: Yeah.
- KA: Sweet lady. Her nickname, they used to call her Auntie Darling.
- WM: (Chuckles).
- KA: Auntie Darling. So whenever everybody "oh Auntie Darling is coming!", they know she go cook and good stuff (laughs). Yeah.
- TT: Yeah.
- KA: But that's how the old days was you know. Everybody came together and, you know, did everything together.

TT: Mmmmm.

KA: Yeah.

TT: Sounds like food was an important part of that time. Can you tell us a little bit about the kinds of food she'd make? Or if-

KA: Oh.

TT: You guys had a party what would be the...

KA: Oh I tell you she – Hawaiian food you know for sure. You know, she'd all, all regular Hawaiian foods, but she could cook. She could cook, Chinese food. She could cook um, Filipino food. She cafeteria manager, you know. She love cooking yeah? I mean, yeah, I, you tell her she no can cook this, she gon cook em. And she going make em 'ono. (WM laughs) You know. But um yeah, grandma was—she could—she make good curries. She make good stews, hamburgers. Right you know, not this kind, Mae's, you know, homemade hamburger, and only her ingredients. And I mean her, own. Cook the noodles, make her own base, you know, soup base, and the whole works. So you know, we we missed, we miss that. There's only one place on this island that does that, that I know of that's really good, which is Hamura, Hamura Saimin. You know, so again, that's, that's, that goes back to generations. Yeah? Of cooking, you know, they. They get their ingredients down, you know. Uh yeah um. What else...

WM: Was her family from Hā'ena too or from Kīlauea?

KA: Grandma's family was was from, Honolulu. Yeah. Grandma's family, she had—they were in Honolulu, and then, you know, as they went their own ways, they got married, and I had aunties. I had one auntie moved to Moloka'i. And one auntie went to the mainland. And um, she had two other sisters that lived on O'ahu, Nānākuli. Um, and she also had, had a brother. That lived in O'ahu too. Grandma's maiden name was Newmann. Yeah. And I wanna say her, her family. Her. What was that? Is... I wanna say her, her parents are buried in Kōloa. Yeah. So we had, we had a family member that kept up. Looking for the old families, you know that had passed, and if, if we didn't even know. Until we read the she'd, she read my with us and out. So we got to go down to the grave, and go clean 'em up. Take care of the graves and you know. But yeah, so she was on the Newmann's side. She was, before she married Alapa'i. That was her maiden name. Yeah, yeah.

TT: So she was in Kīlauea and your mom was in Hā'ena.

KA: Yeah.

TT: And your mom at that time was married?

KA: To my stepfather, who is Samson Mahuiki. Yeah. And he's from, they're from Hā'ena. His family... And um, there's another one. He's the man that, taught me about how, how to live. How we going live. How to make one garden. How to use a shovel. How to use a pick. You know? And, you know, I'm at that time in, in an era that we were the age. Lucky we could, we we we listen because we we couldn't go play. Playing was, you have to go run away to go play. And you know already when you come back you gonna get lickers.

WM: (Laughter).

KA: (Laughs). So we wanted to go play so bad with the cousins right, right next door. We run through my aunties yard we go play. We had them, we had the parents calling us already, we know already. But, it was all good. Was all good. So anyway, this man, this man, my father, Sam Mahuiki, he was I call, he was, um—they work for the Princeville Ranch, the original Princeville ranch. He was on, he was on his, his job was to break the horses in. The young horses in to work cattle. So my father growing up. . . Had always, always had, they always had horses. Yeah? If you know, they growing up, the horse was our bicycle. We used to go catch the horse go Wainiha, we wanted to go up Wainiha or someplace go catch the horse. Because we know that was where the horses and cattle used to roam free. Free range. They go in the yard and you no can do nothing, you know. So we that's what we used to do.

So but my father, my father, I call him my dad because he raised me yeah. But um. His job at the, the ranch was to break in horses, make them work cattle. He was a good horse trainer. Really all up here and, you know, not not not with hitting the animal with something or anything. It's all with up here. And then um, as the ranch went through this—so when I used to go, when I was going to school now, after I, I left for Hanalei, I was going to Catholic school in Kapa'a. I was young, so anyway, I used to, at the end of the day, when the bus used to drop me off, the bus to drop me off at the ranch. Which is the old, the Princeville entrance, now, if you're going to Princeville, that, that, that whole area over there where there was a ranch. Big barn. Big. That was a ranch area, they had redwood corrals and beautiful. You never see that again, but the bus used to drop me off every day. And I used to go with my dad. And go. I was on on a horse every day. You know, and so. I—whether they were branding cattle, or driving the cattle on the road, we used to drive cattle from Hanalei up, come on the main road, cross the bridge and come up to the corral. So that's how it was. Never get the cattle trucks in those days yeah? All by horse. He drove all the cattle. And um so, fast forward a little bit that um, then that's how I got instilled with the animals, horses, cows. And he also, my father also was a rodeo man you know? He used to go compete. And so that's what we did. My sister and I started in 4-H, and we started. She was a year below me, when we started. My class, I would wipe them all out. (WM chuckles) All first place. My sister, her class, wipe them out. But that was us, we had that natural, we had the training. You know, and the people used to like, you know, I had. You know, I had white Americans, you know, I know I'd blow the shit out everybody. Anyway.

Everyone: (Commotion).

KA: You know, you know, the haole's the haole's used to.

TT: Oh no a bad word.

KA: They used to be like, man, when they see us coming, they they. Uh oh, here they come again. You know, we, we got to get these guys. Me and my sister, wipe them out.

WM: (Laughs).

KA: We go to state. We were state champs. We go state finals in, Honolulu. And we used to ship the horses go, you know. So that part of my life was yeah, I was young and still going, I was eight grade, seven grade, eight grade. And um. So as I got older, my father got us into rodeo. And, and then from there, I just. I stopped rodeo when I was this—y last rodeo competition was '89, 1989 and I and that was my final rodeo. There was a state rodeo over here. And um, but, but we we traveled the circuit, we went all on every island. You there's a circuit here in Hawai'i. And you travel the circuit. You go: Maui, Big Island, come Kaua'i, Moloka'i. And that's how I meet plenty people too you know? Some of them I go school with. They look at me like I never know you ride horse? (Laughs). Well, you know that's my history!

WM: Mm.

KA: You know? But yeah. So we had, we had. we had, I had all this upbringing from this man, my father. And um, hunting. Ocean. They had it all. Yeah.

TT: You mention your sister. How many siblings do you have?

KA: I, I get only, I had, I have only my sister now. She's, two years younger than me. Cheryl Alapa'i. I lost my younger brother, who was Sam Junior. He died. Now, he, he was he passed away now I want to say 4 or 5 years ago.

TT: Oh.

KA: Yeah. Young age, talented, good musician, good man, all the way around. But, you know, it's life, that's why you know, we every day is important in what we do, you know. Family and, you know. I look at it as my family, my grandkids and, every day we got to be thankful, you know.

TT: Can you tell us a little bit about your family now, your wife, children?

WM: How you guys met?

KA: Yeah so we met in—we live in Hā'ena.

TT: And her name?

KA: Is Taryn which she doesn't want me to say this name but I will because she's not here and she had a nickname Tootie (laughs) Nālani Hashimoto. But she was, we grew up together so she was my you know, childhood sweetheart we should say, yeah? And so we been together um—so my daughter is, like, almost 50 years old.

TT: How many children do you have?

KA: I have my son, only one between me and Nalani and my stepdaughter that I raised from three years old. Her name is Kalei, but um yeah and um, so we went to school together, we went to school, we went to church together.

TT: Which school did you guys go to?

KA: In Hā'ena, yeah Elementary, Kapa'a High School and then um after I left Kapa'a, I went to Maui yeah. This is when I went to Lahainaluna. I take that back. I went to O'ahu first, I went to school a little while in O'ahu, Castle High School.

TT: Was that your freshman year?

KA: Yeah. So and before, no so I am going to start this.

TT: Okay, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah.

KA: So my, my elementary days, so I left, I left Kaua'i after my fourth grade year. When the mill closed down, my grandfather got offered a job in Honolulu with um, Hawaiian Bitumuls Paving Company and they go pave the highways, yeah.

TT: What is it called?

KA: Hawaiian Bitumuls Paving Company, yeah. You get the big company, and so he took the offer. My grandmother was retired already, and so we moved to Honolulu. So my fifth grade, now fifth grade. Sixth grade, I went to He'eia elementary in Kane'ohe, and then from then, I went to King Intermediate School for my seven and eighth, yeah. In ninth grade, I went to Castle, Castle High. I didn't like Castle High. I came back Kaua'i I went to Kapa'a, and so I stayed home a little while through my, my freshman year. I went school half of my sophomore year there, over here and then I went back. I went back to Honolulu, finished up my sophomore year in Honolulu, then I lost my grandfather.

TT: Back at Castle?

KA: Yeah, back at Castle. So my, my education years was, was here they are, here they are, you know, but um, I finish, you know, and my grandfather—so we lived in Kane'ohe. We had um they bought a house in Kane'ohe and then moved out to Waikāne valley, and um so, I, I again, I met a lot of folks over there, you know, a lot of my friends and um

people that I met through school, yeah. And so when my grandfather passed away was my, I finished sophomore that was just going on my junior year. That's when I got my Uncle Abner DeLima, graduate. I want to say him and Uncle Masu are...

WM: Around the same age?

KA: Same age. He was the person that asked me. You want to go to Lahainaluna?

TT: How is he your uncle, what's the relationship?

KA: He was married to my mom's sister, and Uncle Abner was a policeman, but he was also in Lahainaluna. He was one good, good football player, and he played UH. Top notches back then, you know so yeah. And I like sports too, right, you know, and Uncle and I spent a lot of time with them too over there when we were living in O'ahu. When I was in my school days, yeah, fifth grade, to you know. I was always with him because he had three girls, no boys, but they were also involved in sports, Bobby Sox, or whatever. And my uncle was, he never had one boy, so I was like his boy. I was always with him, you know, and so when it when came that time, he asked me, you want to go to Lahainaluna? He said, I can help get you in, you know, so I said yeah and little did I know, I got accepted and started, that's where that's how I went to Lahainaluna my junior year. I was lucky to get in junior year, you know, normally at that time they don't take anybody junior. They take on some freshman or sophomores. Well, I guess he, he had good strings to pull to get me in there. But, you know, so was oh, man, when I got accepted, I was so excited. I was so excited to go there, you know. Of course I know because I, I was I knew how to, like, stay on my own because of the back and forth I went I think with my grandma, I know how to deal with stuff, you know. How I was home and you know, when you that kind of age, you do a lot of thinking and, shouldn't do that. No, I can handle this, you know, just independent. Should be. And so I went, I went to Lahainaluna.

TT: Do you—can you tell us a little bit about that first time that you were there, what it was like to...

KA: Yeah so.

TT: Arrive on the campus, even how you got there?

KA: Yeah so when we went, so when we found out, I got accepted, my mother flew up to O'ahu because it was only my grandmother, we lost my grandfather already. And the hardest thing was, was for me to leave my grandmother, you know, because now my grandfather passed away. We got to do—my mother them had to do something with my grandmother. So my father built a little house in Hā'ena for her. So she moved back with my mom there. So I felt good about that. And then she wanted to come back to Kaua'i, you know. And so that made things even better. So I know my grandmother was safe. She's with my mom them. You know, with family. And so we, so my mom flew up.

TT: It's what, year now?

KA: This was 19. . . so '74, '74, '74 or '75, '74, '74, had to be yeah '74.

TT: Your junior year yeah?

KA: Yeah. So we went, we flew up, and all I remember is like, wow man. The school is way up here, you know, two miles up this road and high, you know, we no see this school it's up there in the mountains. And so but before that, uncle explained to me, said, "you know, you're going to have to work for your, your um uh tuition", like, you know, you see, "like you're going to be in the army". You gotta get up early in the morning, 6 o'clock. You work one hour before you go to school. So you get one hour, you get 15 minutes to go back to the dorm. Get ready. You better be standing in line to go to breakfast. You go breakfast. You do your thing at breakfast. You go back, you get another 15 minutes to make sure your room is clean and intact because at the end of the day, from school if something you don't fold your blanket up right or you know, you never empty your trash. You're going to get punished, which is overtime. And when you get overtime, you got to go work that off on your own free time, yeah so that was the punishment. So anyway, I was I was all—I was pretty in tune with that, you know, because when and when I sign up to they ask you your areas that you're good in what you do, you know, like "I raise pigs I raise chickens plow the field, I run machine, I can do all that". So that's what I did when I went up there the first year, I was on a tractor plowing fields and all these other guys looking at me. This guy just come inside, junior, he's on a tractor and he's pulling weeds and (laughs), you know, so, well, that's what I learned, and that's why they put me on. They put you to the test to see, you know what you're doing, yeah. I hook up everything, jump on a tractor, go plow the field. So my first year, I was doing that, and then um so. . .so I jumping ahead. So anyway, so my mom and I, we went up.

TT: Had you been to Maui before?

KA: No.

TT: Okay so what was your first impression of Maui getting into there in 1974 now?

KA: It was like um one whole new place. Like I never know Maui, like what Maui look like and all these, I never go, I never go on trips, yeah. And um, so when I went, it was like, really, I was, I was just, it was a whole different island. I mean the set up, and how far you got to drive, and the coastline all the way down to Lahaina, you know. Nice drive, though, yeah. And so I just I, I just passed through I, when I, when we went on the way to Lahaina, I kind of got over that. I was more excited and getting to the place already. I really I mean like see what up against, see what am I up against, you know. So when we got up there went to go get registered, and unpack, and get all my stuff because you had to get all this, you know. Toothpaste and whatever you need, you know, your clothes have to be right, enough clothes to wear. You cannot take whatever. You cannot wear any kind clothes, you know. So I had everything, and time when a time to say goodbye to my mom. Was it really. . . No I not going see my mom, you know what I mean? But she said

you'd be all right. You're going to be okay. And then I met, I met, I started, you know, I had my roommate, which made it a lot more easy, which was Uncle Sherman's brother, Uncle Bobo. So I was, I was locked in. So when my mom left, I was all good because I see my cousin. We're from the same place right (laughs). We are from the same two cousins. My roommate was Uncle Bobo.

TT: Last name?

KA: Maka. And then right next door to our room was another cousin, Uncle Les Yokotake. His mother and Uncle Bobo's father, sisters and brother. See so being my grandmother married their father, so that was my mom's, like, um what would that be um? Married. Married. Not blood ties, but through marriage.

TT: Step?

KAL Yeah. Step, step. Right.

TT: Well, yeah.

KA: Well we don't know what is step.

TT: Yeah yeah yeah.

KA: (laughs) right. So anyway, then we were we're in the same room, and I said, oh, man, cousin, this is awesome. We moved in when I went in the room, and I saw our room. We're up the higher dorm, um Hoapili Dorm. Yeah. The lower dorm was David Malo, and the upper dorm was Hoapili dorm. And oh when I, when I walked in the door and I saw—when I open the dorm all you could see is ocean. And I was going, what is this man? So I went to, went to the window and I look wow, could see the whole Lahaina. Beautiful. Would see like one picture, you know, all the way you can see as far as you can see down Ka'anapali because was all open. He hardly had any buildings back then too, you know. Never get a lot of buildings like today.

TT: And sugar cane.

KA: Sugar cane, was sugar cane the rest yeah, and only the camp homes down below. And if you see the mill, the mill was over. The mill was working, you know. And so um going through, um our first year going through school, and got used to the system and, and uh I just—cousin, my cousin and I, you know again we all we all know what the word work was. So we had no problem with that. So we, we had enjoyed for the first year went through like too fast you know now we're going to—they going to graduate. Just going to be only me now because they're two cousins going to graduate already yeah. So the next year was only me now.

TT: From Kaua'i?

KA: From Kaua'i.

TT: Oh okay, so only three of you at one time?

KA: Yeah um, no I take that back on my. So my, my senior year, there was this other uh person that I met that was from Kaua'i, but he was from Lihu'e side, Kalaheo side. Robert Broome was his last name. And so we got to talk story and then class, we became good friends too, because we all did the same thing, and he knew our family, you know, and horses again. So, but the my last year, then my last year when I went back, we um, I was in the swine department, the pigs. I was head of one crew because then they like to move you around there, you know, so I had my crew that I ran, and I had one good crew. And you know, the foreman was a Japanese man named Mr. Hiromata. You don't want to get on his bad side. Him and Mr. Kukahiko. Mr. Kukahiko's name was Chief. They call him Chief, short man, but when he talk to you he get one deep voice. "Alapa'i, How come you late at the time clock? How come you go to the time clock late? No do that again eh", you know. So if you talk to us, then he would he no fool around, Hawaiian man, not knowing that he's Uncle Abner's cousin. So Uncle Abner never tell me that, yeah (laughs) until I told him and he told me he had the biggest laugh. He said I hope you on his good side. I go yes I am. I never forget him right. So anyway, they put me back on um—I had my own—I was with the pigs, with our swine department and we had to do everything.

TT: Do you remember who was in your crew you said you said you had...

KA: Ah man, I, they were younger. Yeah, they were the younger ones. I forget who they were, already. But good boys, man, they never forget me. And we take care each other, you know. And um but our crew, because we did so good in taking care of the pigs. If It was your shift and the pig was pregnant and they had to give birth. You have to be there too, you know, so he gone tell you, Mr. Hiromata is gonna tell you "hey tonight you got, your shift got to—go watch the pigs", and we got to go. So anyway, we did we did such a good job the whole crew and Mr. Hiromata was—I had this little pig I call Julio.

TT: Julio?

KA: Julio. From Piglet I—funny of all these piglets that came out, this one, this one little guy came to me and used to follow me all over. So one day Mr. Hiromata comes down to the, the pig pen. And we start cleaning the pen and he see, he see Julio out on the grass running around like this. So he came running inside, "Alapa'i! The pig stay loose!" I go "No, Mr. Hiromata, no. It's our pet,"

WM: (Laughter).

KA: "It's our pet." And he look at me like. "What?" "Yeah, that's our pet. I let him out every time he comes". So, he knows, he stay playing around. Time for go in, he go back in the pen. You watch. Come, I show you. I walk inside, I call the pig, the pig come to me. I open up the gate, he goes right inside.

(Laughter).

KA: I told you, but you know, we are I said, you know, we get that. We get that inside us, you know? The animals can feel all this kind of stuff, you know. And so that, that, last year, that last year doing that. Oh, I had the best, I had the best time in the department was so fun. Good fun. We have to go pick up the slop on the Jeep, and especially after school. After school you work two hours. Four o'clock we pau. And then after that, if you no more nothing, you get free time till six o'clock and then you, you know, you do what you like do, sports or. But you cannot leave campus. So it was, it was good fun. You know, it's old red Jeeps and we used go the cafeteria. Go get the slop with the crew. You know, we got all these young boys sitting in the back, and I tell, I used to tell them. You say eh, lucky ya? We get this job and look everybody, what they got to go through. They stay in the koa bushes, they got to go cut koa. I said so why, no go do bad? You know, used to tell them no, no get overtime. Listen, because I was senior already, I when see, see that already. And so time when I, when I graduate man, all of younger boys man it was just like thank you. You know we, we came fam. . . You know we family, we were family. You know? that's one thing about this school, you know. Everybody's close, especially the boarding department. The boarding department grew the food. Grew the food. Raised, raised the pigs, I mean, raised the chickens, to support the school. I mean, and the garden was just immaculate. You know and, I never forget that. I never gonna forget that, man. When you grow up there and you see all this um vegetable that is growing. You never, you never did see that kind of stuff grow you know? and when I saw that man, I said, man, Mr. Hiromata is a smart man. They really know what they doing, you know, and majority of the vegetables was for the borders. We grew everything,

TT: You remember which vegetables?

KA: Oh you name it.

WM: (Laughter).

KA: Almost everything, from peas to, broccoli, to cauliflower to... Oh. Some vegetables I never know what it was.

WM: (Laughter).

KA: You know. Onions, round onions, ginger, garlic. Everything, it's amazing.

WM: The watermelon.

KA: Watermelons!

WM: (Laughter).

KA: Oh, corn! So that's one other, that's one other thing. Yeah, you know, some of the the younger ones, the, the we used to call them the underclassmen, yeah? They so hungry because if you know, you never eat lunch or you know you got a bite. You got to make sure you get snacks for you. After, you know, after school or something, you know? But they used to be so hungry and the corn used to come ripe, was getting ready to ripe, so they would go pick the corn, or somebody would go pick orange or watermelon. Mr. Hiromata knew about this. He knew, he knew exactly how much had of each. The next day, everybody stand at attention. "Who when go pick up the corn? Who when go pick up the watermelon? If you folks don't own up, that whole crew gonna get 20 hours overtime". And we're looking at like, okay, who had go take, cause 20 hour over time remember now. You got to go work that off on your own time. If you get overtime, come the weekends, you cannot go downtown. You restricted to the dorm.

Oh man, the guys used to get mad! Somebody going rat, rat them out, yeah. Sure enough, the guy finally admitted. "I took um". So you no can, you no can, they get ways of catching you over there (laughter). So I, you know, ah.. been, you know, that's what I said, you know everybody close, close you know, together. So no can humbug because one go do wrong, all gonna get punished. You know, and that's what kept everybody together, you know that. So we try to help out each other, they going struggle. We try to help them out, you know. But um, yeah um that's one big family, man. That school get—we did so much. We had Hawaiiana, we used to go, we used to go perform down at the hotels, the boarders, you know. And um, amazing, amazing stuff that we did way back. The only thing that they didn't have in the working program, the farm program, I should say, was cattle, cause they used to make their own milk, yeah. They milk the cows. And that's what my uncle, them, Uncle Masu them did. Back then we had chickens, hundreds of chickens. So that was there. Whoever was with the poultry department, you go stay there, and the swine department and garden three different departments had. So we had, we um to see the school, go through that and survive through when I was young and kept on going after that, I mean, how many years and years of of doing that. You know, it's it's a tradition, you know, culture—cultural practice.

We used to go hike up the L because that's where David Malo is, you know, and have a ceremony up there. I mean, it's something special, you know. No but I had no idea my first year, but I heard about this. So, you know, you for sure. You're going to learn. You're gonna learn all the history. And you know, what that place is about. Who this man was, you know. And um, it was um, what a beautiful place, man. When you walk up on the top of that mountain, that L, and, and look down and see, wow. So nice, man, and this man is up there. You know, and, seeing the L for the first time and carrying the lime bags up. You know, everybody had the chance, yeah, carry the lime bag. It's so amazing of how much time that lime that L took man, oh my. Yeah, man, trenches, you know. "What? We got to fill this thing up?". Oh, man. And walking up that hill, you know, but I so I did that the first year. Second year, was cruise. I just walk behind the young ones. "You tired? Rest. Take a break, take a break. But I not gonna carry your bag. You got to carry your bag". It's part of the, it's part of the tradition, that man. You know? "You gotta make em, you got to make em, come on." Give him the pep talk, you know.

WM: (Laughter).

KA: But yeah, we had my my years up there. Man I tell, yeah it's just, I so happy I went to that, I went through that boarding department. You know it's one whole different—From—I don't know how others, the other boarding department are in the other schools, but when you gotta work for your tuition it's something different. You know, because, when you no do your job, next. They no give you, they want you only so many times. And if you no put out. You get your bad, you know, you get your um. Um, they warn you, they warn you, and then if, you no listen, then they're going start taking more action, you know? And then call home. Your son has been doing this, or something. You know, we just letting you know. Now this warning number two or whatever, you know. But, yeah, we was all, Hā'ena was all good. We was all good. We had good, we had good people. Never get no troublemakers or, you know. Everybody was sharp, was yeah.

TT: Were you involved in any sports when you were there?

KA: Yeah. We, um, I, I wrestle. Um, I played tennis. Um I couldn't play football because my year when I went into football was um. Well, I'd played a little basketball, but, had um, too late for the season. Every time I went back there, I missed, you know, they had one. You had to go camp, you had to go, football camp, and I stay here. I mean, so I stay home. It's my time with my family, and, I got to go. So it was, was a little bit, you know, but I did play. I did get to play a little bit sports, you know. And um, cross country. So when I went to Hana. Was because, because we used to run, run through the ranch yeah. Oceanside. Yeah. Driving to Hana on that small little bus. Man. Ohhh, boy, (laughter). Thats one, that's a journey, you know. Take, I don't know how long take you in one car now, but just imagine with the bus, lucky you never get that much traffic, back then right? So yeah, I mean, that was it. I wish I got to play more, more, more sports. But then, I didn't. I was, I was. Funny no, younger time I was, I was into sports more. I played Pop Warner football. I went through all that. I was, in sports when I was in Honolulu because I told you my uncle, yeah? And then when I went to high school, I was like, oh, I did, I was just different. I just wanted to, mingle with my friends and talk story, and play music. You know, our free time we used to play music, you know? And then Hawaiiiana, was you know, we had our Hawaiiiana group. Yeah. Our club, the boarders, you know. We all, every Sundays, Sundays and I want to say Wednesday I think was. Then we get one time where we had to go sit down, everybody rehearse and, and um, learn new songs and all that.

TT: Who was leading that? Who was the teacher?

KA: This lady at that time...

TT: Auntie Laurie? No.

KA: No. Um, Laurie Gomez. Yes. Sweet lady. Oh, she was one sweet lady, man. Auntie Laurie you know.

TT: Yeah, we met her.

KA: Oh, yeah. Oh, man. She's so. You guys had do, do talk story with her?

TT: Short...

KA: Yeah.

TT: . . . story, we wanted to do more, but then we, we didn't really get to go back to Lahaina yet. Planning to . . .

KA: Oh.

TT: . . . before the fire.

KA: Oh Yeah. Oh man, but she was so, she was a sweet lady, man. And, everybody loved her. Everybody loved her, man. And so we she, she did real good. Auntie Laurie. Thank you. I forgot I was trying to. I know her last name or whatever. But what was her first name,

TT: Yeah.

KA: We used to call Miss Gomez, right? We couldn't call her Laurie, or you know. But yeah, so she was our Hawaiiiana teacher back then. Yeah. And um. We, we had, we had. Oh, man. The boarders were. On our free time. You know, guys would do their own thing if you're not in sports. And like I said, you stay back at the dorm. Well, what would get, is a Hoapili, Hoapili dorm would challenge David Malo dorm. So we get the young ones or the underclassmen, box, you put on boxing gloves. But we'd challenge in dorm, yeah? We'll see what dorm going win you know. And went from 9 to 10th grade to 11 like Uncle Bobo, 12. Uncle Bobo, nobody touched him.

WM: Oh yeah.

KA: He knock them all out.

WM: (Laughter).

KA: He was known for that. That's why everybody knew him, Murph. You call Murph, watch out. And, and so he used to they used to box against their own, yeah. Their own, the the seniors man, and I started watching these guys and they boxing man. Full on, until somebody knock out or give up. But hey Hoapili was champs. Hoapili dorm (laughs), we never forget that, our dorm was champs man. But we do crazy stuff like that, you know. And it wasn't against the rules, you know. It's just sports right. You know everybody do it's your free time what you like do, well you'd have a bunch of guys like I said like do that or once the guys go make teams, basketball and we would challenge again. So you had boxing. You had basketball and what else, Foosball. They had all that kind stuff,

yeah. They had a lot of activities after school. On your free time for do, but us guys like that good ones you know. We like the boxing and basketball. Yeah. It was, ah boy.

TT: How often would you go down into town?

KA: Okay, so town would be like, Friday nights if you were on good terms, you from your grades and all that. You could go downtown. Upperclassmen only Junior, Senior, Friday night. The sophomores and they couldn't leave until Saturday. So we would go downtown, we'll go downtown for eat. We'll go down McDonald's. That's what we do. Spend our time, go down eat, go buy, go shopping, go buy stuff that we need. And then you have to be back up in the dorms, checked in by 10 o'clock, not 10:01, 10 o'clock. If you're not, you never checked, you never know because you gotta go clock in, yeah? You're gonna get, you're gonna get something coming to you. So I was I, I was on, I never had any problem with that. And on Saturdays we could, we could leave from the morning 7:00 in the morning. And come back 11:00. So we go friends place. We go to some friends house, you know. And hang out with them. We go surf. I always brought a surfboard, we go surf.

TT: Can you tell us a little bit some about some of the, the the families and the friends that you visit and some of these places?

KA: Well I had so we, we, I hooked up with a lot of um, well there was our classmates and our friends too. That were day students yeah? So they would come pick us up. We had this one guy we used to call Olfie, James Pawol. His father was a doctor, in Lahaina, but he was my classmate.

TT: So how do you spell?

KA: Pawol, P, A, W, O, L. His nickname was Olf. We used to call him Olf. Haole boy. Tough Haole boy. Tough Haole boy. Then I had um, I had, the Archangels, Aaron Archangel. I had the Wesley Ladera. Ladera. Um I had, Jeff, Jeff, Ampong. Clayton Babayan. All them, my—all the kine you know? Umm, who else was? I would have um. Man this is...Keahi's the Keahi's one of them which was a sister, was Paula. Paula Keahi, Kalepa.

WM: Okay.

KA: Yeah. Archie's sister, Lehua and Archie had a younger brother. Had a brother. There was little, he was my, my classmate. I want to say Darren I think was his name. And um but yeah, we used to. hang out together, go surfing. Then the other class, the other boarders would come down too. Oh, we had a whole gang go down there. Or if they came down late, then everybody knew who everybody was. Come down and cook steaks. Oh, that was all our time, free time yeah? Oh. Cook steaks our time for go up to the dorm oh boy, here we go back to the same thing, you know? But that was our getaway. In those days. So I got to go. Go Honolua slide, go um then I used to go—me and Uncle Bobo and Uncle Les. Uncle Les had one nickname, they used to call him "legs". I was telling you because he was, he had long legs. You know you watching—he was one good basketball player

too. But we had—me and Uncle Bobo was, I think. Yeah, we when go apply for one, one part time job. At one condo, Kahana. And so, the manager for the place, would come up to the dorm and pick us up. Take us down. We go work. We'll work Saturday. If we wanted to work Sunday he would, he would pick us up Sunday, but Sunday we would church, ah. So three of us would walk down from the dorm. We'll walk if you no more ride, you gon walk down. We go church Sunday, the Hawaiian church in Lahaina. Forget the name.

WM: Waiola.

KA: Yeah. And we_because Hawaiian church yeah, we so we go church. The pastor, I knew it I knew the pastor's family from here, on Kaua'i. Williams, his name was Pastor Abraham. Yeah. And so, we go to church. After church would be finished, we go to they house. Three of us. So from the church we walked to the church, the house is only you know, close by. We used to call him uncle, yeah, and aunty his wife, Japanese lady. Cook for us always. So we, all of us, sit down and have lunch at their house and just relax. And then after that time for go back up. If we didn't have anything to go pick up from the stores or something, then they take us back up. So we did, we did, sometimes we would go walk, and you know, long time walk.

TT: What was Lahaina town like?

(Cough)

KA: Oh, man, was. Everything at the time I remember was. . . it was just starting to take off as far as being busy, you know, crowded, but you still had a lot of, a lot of locals around, a lot of locals around yet. You had and I and all I had had, this one man that he must have been like 90 something years old, still walking the front street. He was like one homeless man. I should put it that way. But he had a house for stay in. But he was always like that, long hair. Everybody knew him. And some of us, I don't know, I was told, some of the guys used to tease him and, you know, make trouble to him. And I kind of, you know, when we came across him one day, I never, you know. I never had any trouble like that. But this, oh I forget his name. But turn out and turn out, every time he seen, he seen us, he would come talk story with us. He would come talk story with us, I forget his name. But he one really nice man—

TT: Hawaiian?

KA: Filipino, mixed I think. Yeah, but um the some of the people, the tourists would give him money and stuff like that, but he always used to come sit down with us when we go McDonald's or something and, you know, buy, I have one hamburger, I give him one hamburger. But, um was it wasn't that busy. It was, that time. No was crazy. Front Street was wide open because we used to walk Front Street all the time. We used to surf over there, by the harbors. You know, that was all close by fast surf, you know. But yeah, had a lot of had a lot of local people. Had a lot of local people back then, and not as much

shops as now. Let me see. Yeah, yeah, it was just it was simple to get to Front Street. Yeah, it was really simple. Let me see what else I can tell you about this.

TT: What was the nightlife like, you said sometimes you guys would go down there at night?

KA: Yeah. And, you know, and if we would go, we would go. Um, depends if it's a Friday night, then we got to be back up early yeah, so. But we used to just go, you would have guys play music or they would, you know, certain places they get Hawaiian music. We used to just go hang out, listen music until time for us go, or go to one movie. Saturday, most of the time would have been time for us go to a movie daytime ah, you know, no can go late yeah. But I, I, I was one that spent time a lot at the beach. But church was always every Sunday. Then we used to go, you know, I had friends and long weekends, I would go out and stay with Uncle Abner's parents. They were still alive, Grandpa DeLima and, and Grandma. They lived Makena.

TT: Do you remember their names?

KA: Yeah. Grandpa Abner DeLima and Grandma Caroline. And they would come pick me up Friday, because long weekend. If I wasn't going-on the long weekends, the off island boarders had certain long weekends that you could come home. You couldn't come home every. . . . Unless it was a special week request, then you could go. So on the weekends, the long weekends that we couldn't go home, they come pick me up.

TT: Were they your sponsors?

KA: Yeah, yeah. So they would pick me up, so I can drive yeah already? Junior? Yeah. So I would go stay with them. And they had this, they had one, one El Camino, one old type Ranchero El Camino. I used to go drive down Lahaina on Saturdays because I free right weekend, you know? And I see all of see all the borders, I see some of my friends, we go surf, we go do whatever, you know. Then Sunday check in. You say, oh man. Eh, us guys crazy, why what we used to do then. So, and then, I used to stay out Makena, they had a nice house at Makena, right right off, right there on the beach, Makena Landing. Makena Landing is right across the house right there. And they still have that house till today, yeah. But, oh. That's dakine, you know these memories, like. . . . And that's how I got to see part of the island. I got to see Maui. Choose a school, Hāna, go Kīhei, you know on my own, I never get to see that. So then in my, as I, when I, when I, went through when I was in my 20s, like a 20s, 24 is when I had my son. And I was, I was doing rodeo too. I kind of knew Maui. And that's when I ran into some of my friends like Gordon Kalaniopi'o from Hāna. He used to work the ranch. He competed in rodeos. He was one bronc rider. Saddle bronc. Bareback, bronc, yeah. So when we had meet up Maui, Makawao Rodeo. I hear the name, Kalaniopi'o, I only know one Kalaniopi'o. Funny, had two of us had hear our names. I was looking for him. He was looking for me. And we had find each other. And then what did we do? First thing you do, we had reminisce about our time at the school. What we did, about the boarding department. Again, the boarding department was something special, you know. And yeah, and that just carries on. Every time I see somebody, or we run into somebody. That always comes on, you know?

WM: I'm a little bit curious about. Did you guys have like a band, or you would just play music for fun in the dorms?

KA: Yeah, just fun. Just ukulele. Yeah, ukulele, but we did have guys that did that, you know. Okay, so back then, Cecilio and Kaponu, Kalapana. Hui 'Ohana, oh this is our groups that we listen to yeah way back. I know I leaving plenty out, Country Comfort, all these guys. Right? So what. . . . Everybody, we like try play the songs that these guys, you know, playing and that's they kind we used to do. Every time we go in our free time. Somebody get the guitar, somebody get the ukulele. Or if we trying to find one tune, we whistle one tune. Get everybody thinking now. So we try then, "Eh I get um, I get um." Everybody come back together and we try we play them, and we listen. Yeah. Then we continue like that, you know. But had these two guys. Peter Cosma Pekelo. Pekelo was there. His brother Leroy was my classmate. He was another good, my good friend too. The Kalalau's, The 'Auamo's. Yeah. I had, Keith Kawano from Moloka'i. He is a policeman. My classmates, these guys. But anyway. But Pekelo and this other brother, Biesen was his last name, I think. Those two guys was top notch, man. They played Cecilio and Kaponu, Kalapana, oh man, just natural. Then Pekelo started playing more of that and then got into his Hawaiian, oh beautiful man. So beautiful. But yeah, we was so Hawaiiana. Yeah. Besides this kind music, we never like the kind funky kind music or the hard rock guy of these guys. Well, luckily, hardly had anybody listen to that kind our time. Oh, no can listen that kind music.

(Laughter)

WM: Did you guys have David Malo Day?

KA: Yeah, yeah. David Malo Day? Yeah.

WM: I heard about the imus that you guys would make.

KA: Yes, yes. Or again, you know, Chief Kukahiko that's where he comes in, you know. But we do everything. We do everything for David Malo Day. And then we get the Hawaiian show we put on and on that, you know, the borders, right at borders field, you know, and a people, man that place is packed. You know, all the folks come you know. And it's a big thing David Malo Day. David Malo Day was oh man, yeah laulau and whatever man. Oh, never forget that boy. Until the last graduation night was on borders field. That was, that was, that was impressive. That was really impressive, man. That last night, together with all my classmates. Our class, our class wasn't that big. But again, like I said, you know, everybody is really close. Whether you one day student or you're not, or you one boarder. We all, everybody was really, small place here, you know, Lahaina is small man. And you go down in Lahaina, you're going to run into somebody you know, I mean, the families, plenty families. And, but I did I did, I did...I do, I do miss that, that school. So I was hoping, like, you know that this this boarding department can continue. You know, because again, this is this is like generations, this is history. That school is history alone by itself. There's no other school like this. You know, you learn about, you get

Hawaiiana. Sustain yourself, how to sustain yourself. How to be an independent person. I mean, it raises you. The values of that place, of that boarding department. The values are so high, it's amazing. You know, and all you need to do if you somebody that never go through those values like we did. There's a lot of help over there, that's how it is, way to get the program, how it's set up, how it is, you know. And, and once you go through all these values in in what they have to share with the boarding department. You, you really... that gonna stay with you for the rest of your life. You gonna remember that, you know, and you get something to pass on to your children and on and on. Because, like I said, that kind I teach you how to use one pick, you never go forget how to use one pick. To where how you used to run the pick. You know, that's one simple example, like when we were on the farm working... these boys, work I watch them, how they go with the pick. You like soften up here. Why are you starting from over there? Work your way back. You know? They stay over here killing themselves. They fighting the Earth. Work like this from over here, soften this part. So when you hit the next part, it's going to break. It's going to be so much easier, you know, you common sense kind stuff. You know, just like the shovel. They like shovel the whole pile. The pile is high like this, how you going shovel that whole pile I tell um, start from the top of the pile. You take, what the shovel, what the shovel can you take from the top, you work your way down. How easy is that? I didn't have to, go like this, I just push the shovel inside. But they no think like that. They never that value, see, growing up. You know? And, and so all this, I know, I know for sure all the ones that I had, teach, when going always remember, going always remember just like how I just showed you guys, they gonna get my face, you know, I tell them, you remember when you can run the thing oh you remember me, now. You know what I what I show you because, you try watch when you go, you watch people how they work. Maybe you can help the next guy, you know, I couldn't let you dig um like that and kill yourself. But I not like that, I will correct you, I won't let you. Eh, I like you learn the right way, you know. And so that's why all my my gang, they never gonna forget me, they never gonna forget me.

WM: Uncle, you said you were in 4-H, yeah?

KA: Yeah.

WM: Were you also in FFA?

KA: FF—Ah no, I wasn't in the Future Farmers. Yeah. I wasn't. Because, in one way, we had. We was there every day.

WM Yeah.

KA: We did it in the morning and in the afternoon every day, you know. So I, I, I never, I never take that class. I never take that class. I did, I did something else, like, I went woodshop, all the different stuff. Did. I never experience it, you know? Farming was...

WM: (Chuckles).

KA: I had farming already.

WM: So you did the woodshop, did you do like auto shop?

KA: Auto shop? No, I never go auto shop.

WM: So, what would you do in woodshop?

KA: Woodshop, I made um, what we did... Oh, first thing we made was one, um spice rack. You know, for spices. They start off simple at first. So, yeah. My first, that was my first project I made. I made one spice rack and, you know, it was for my grandmother, you know, bring, bring them home. And then from there, you can, you can make other stuff, you know? Guys would make some...some tables, you know, like with wood, regular wood they made tables. I couldn't make that kind of stuff, but I just wanted to get one idea of how to, how to run one skilsaw or ... um what nails to use for so-and-so because different us guys man I like nail something, the nail can be this long and, you know no need them that long. You need one like this. I going use the long nail for that's what I would think, you know. It going stay solid. But no, so just the, the steps through that I need to learn how to do that kind of stuff you know which and again it helped me. You know? I never know how for run one skilsaw or... and all that.

TT: You got any questions that come to mind? You got any questions for your dad? You must have heard some stories he's probably not sharing with us that you. . .

(Laughter)

KA: I did have one time. My first year. It wasn't my fault, but it didn't matter, because I had, I had get involved. And um, this upperclassman came in, came into my room after we were done working, after school. And just came inside a room and just started hitting me and hitting me, and he's like, oh. But you know what? The saying is back then, you know if you first year. Or you're an underclassman, you cannot talk back or you cannot do nothing. You know, that was discipline. Yeah? Well, I couldn't help myself. So I got in trouble. I, I went fight back. And so I got 20 hours overtime. But after that, things they get taken care of because after the incident it got finished. Who comes walking in the room? My cousin, Murph. And that was his classmate that came in the room and was doing that to me. That was it man. (Laughs). That was it. Mr. Murph when lose um, that was it man, these guys. They never—we never had no trouble. It's not that I couldn't—I follow the rules, you know, you got to listen and—but know you when he started—when you start hitting one person. I no think that was good, you know? And so um, I took defense, you know, and um, and I got punished for it. And that was the last. I never get no... Ever since then, I didn't get no overtime. I was good and um, enjoyed the rest of my school year. Put all that kine stuff behind me and and what's nice because when, when he graduated, when my cousins classmate graduated, he had come apologize to me. He was from Moloka'i. Luczon. Andrew Luczon. Yeah. But um,yeah, it was just one of those, those, those incidents that you're not think gonna happen, it happen and, that was it. Yeah.

TT: So we're kind of coming towards the end, and I know there's at least probably 2 or 3 more interviews you could do with you, just about your life afterwards and work with Hui Maka'āinana, and so forth. But in the short version, could you just tell us after, when you graduated Lahaina, and then after that from there to here?

KA: So, yeah, so I graduated in 1976, and um, after I graduated, I came home. Worked for a while. And, I was working at the hotel in Hanalei, Princeville. And um, and then back in the '76... '82 I had my son.

TT: You got married what year?

KA: Um, way back we were married.

TT: Oh it was back back.

KA: Oh I was married way back from Grandma's school, from elementary.

(Laughter)

But. No. So. No. So, you know, this the saying is, you know, legally, we not married legally. But that's not that's today's legal stuff. Us we went far, way back, we seven years is past. We together almost 50 years. You know. So anyway, I, we, when I graduate, I went to the mainland for. I worked little while. I went to the mainland for one year. In Seattle, Washington. Just to get away, I wanted to see what the mainland was like. So I went, stayed in Seattle for a year. Nice place, everything. I didn't like the lifestyle. I couldn't handle the cold, every day, I mean, especially when the cold months come, you know? You got to wear jacket. You got to wear glove every day. I mean, I no can go on days. And so—

TT: What kind work you was...

KA: I was working in the bank, Seattle First National Bank, the head office downtown. I was working in the vault department. I was a messenger. I used to go to all the Federal Reserve banks, and go pick up all the coupons and bonds and stuff like that. And, it was spooky man. There was a guy that used to be with me, they told me hey, you know, anybody you can get a lot of winos or any kind, they talk to you, just ignore them. So, so a whole new living for me, you know? Cause they like money. Yeah and so you always get somebody with you. We go in a Federal Reserve. I went into the Federal Reserve Bank that the... Who's that well-known bank robber that had robbed that bank? Pretty boy Floyd. Something like Pretty Boy, or something like there was one no bank robber I went to the bank did. And yeah, I mean, I was like. And so, I that's, that's, experience that I went through all that. Yeah. So I couldn't, I couldn't---met some wonderful people up there. You know, I mean, I had one of my, my coworkers, one old retired man. He was a mailman in Seattle. He came down one summer, and stayed, he came vacation, stayed Hā'ena. And he was just blown away, you know? So we—I met nice people there. And

then I got to come back home after. And I came back home, and then um my wife and I, we got back. We were, we were kinda away for a year. Then when I came back, she found out, we, we got back again. And then um, '82 I had my son. Along with raising my daughter, before that. And then that's when I worked for this construction company in '82 doing construction.

TT: What was the name of that company?

KA: Kobayashi Trucking. Yeah. Oh, before that I take that back. I work for Po'oku stables. They open up a riding stables, you know, like a Po'oku hill, when you when you came to Princeville, they had riding stables over there. That had just opened up. And they, were looking. They knew that. Because I work with my dad at the ranch, the trails for the people. Yeah, I do the trails. Helpful. Go on. Any from the top, right down and all that. So I work for them four years. And then I went work construction for Kobayashi Trucking. And then. There was. That really changed my life to get into something different, you know? Again, I was coming from the horse country, you know, on the horse every day at the stables and doing all that. And I said I got to start doing something different now. So construction came into my life and, and then I went to the airport. Like I was saying, I worked for Aloha Airlines. And um, then in 2003, I started my own business. And from then until now.

TT: And the name of your business is?

KA: Is Keli'i Equipment Service. Yeah. Yeah. So, you know, it's it's. I have a grandson and a granddaughter. My granddaughter lives in Maui. She comes back and forth, you know, and she's 16. And then I have my grandson who is six. And so you get them started that's why you see the small excavator over here we start off small, you know, and then they work their way up. Yeah. Yeah. And then, you know, we going through. Going through the whole lifespan. We get a lot of um 'ike that was passed on to us through my father in law, fishing, we work, we know how to work. We know how to cook. We know how to plant, you know? And, so this is what I share with my my children, and their children. You know, as young as how young they, they are. That's that's the age I was when I was learning. And you'd be surprised. Yeah. They so young. They sharp. They pick up, they pick up fast and stuff that they are not, they will get stuff that they never forget. I know my grandson. Once you put him on his machine. He never gonna forget that. You know, for the rest of his life. He knows he even know that already. They come. They know what to do. He knows what to do already. And he learning boy. So. So you get to be, you know. No start that thing before you check the oil. Know, my father always used to tell me that. No start a car before you. And if you know, check the oil. No start the car. So you got to go check the oil. Check the water before you start the car. You know? Because you don't know maybe you might have one leak overnight. You don't know. And then you start the car with no oil and burn the engine. So all this kine simple stuff yeah? And so simple made easy. Simple made it easy. You know. You never have to think so much, you know. But yeah, I really, you know, speaking for the boarding department that I, I if there's anything else that I can do to. If I have to go stand in front of a crowd and goes, goes say one speech, let me know. Let me know because I no like see this thing go away.

TT: Maybe if we just have a final kind of thought about the role that boarding Lahainaluna has played in your life and brought you to this place that you are. I mean, I've heard a lot about it already in the values and things.

KA: Yeah.

TT: If you could kind of maybe give us, kind of closing, kind of wrap up mana'o on the why it's so important to sustain that boarding and what, what it's done for you.

KA: Um for me, like I said, for me. It is. It had. It, it it---really showed me how important our Hawaiian values are. Oh, this is Hawai'i. Lahaina was a kingdom of of of of Hawai'i. And there's a lot of people that don't know that, you know. Yeah. You know? And the man that had the vision to--for Lahianaluna, was a very smart man. Unbelievable. David Malo, you know. And and, the things that he, he went through. But he didn't leave our culture out. He was so strong about our culture and our values in our life. And. That's that's...that is what. It is to be a Hawaiian, if you can you know, those carry those, carry those very important values that we had learned through the school. Through history, through practices, through knowledge, through whatever, whatever it is. But those values that we went through with this school. I don't know if you can get them any other place. You know? Cause this is Hawai'i, and Maui is Maui. I real I gon- I gon remember that's Maui, that's the kingdom. That's the, that's the kingdom there. The place has, is incredible. You know. So I, I. I mahalo ke Akua for all that I had learned. What my life time there, that I spent, going through my years has made me the man I am today. You know. And so I will always be a Luna.

TT: (Chuckles).

KA: I will always be a Luna. Yeah.

TT: Mahalo nui again for taking this time for sharing that mo'olelo.

KA: Yeah. No problem. Mahalo you folks.

TT: Mahalo.