



A Class Act

English teacher Darrell Schuetz recalls 40 years of Kamehameha history

In 1960, Chubby Checkers' "The Twist" went to No. 1 on the charts, "Ben-Hur" won Best Picture at the Oscars, Roger Maris starred for the Yankees and for the first time, shoppers could pick up "canned" Coca-Cola at the supermarket.

It was also the year a young teacher from Minnesota, fresh out of college, was offered the chance to come to Hawai'i and practice his trade at a school he knew "nothing" about.

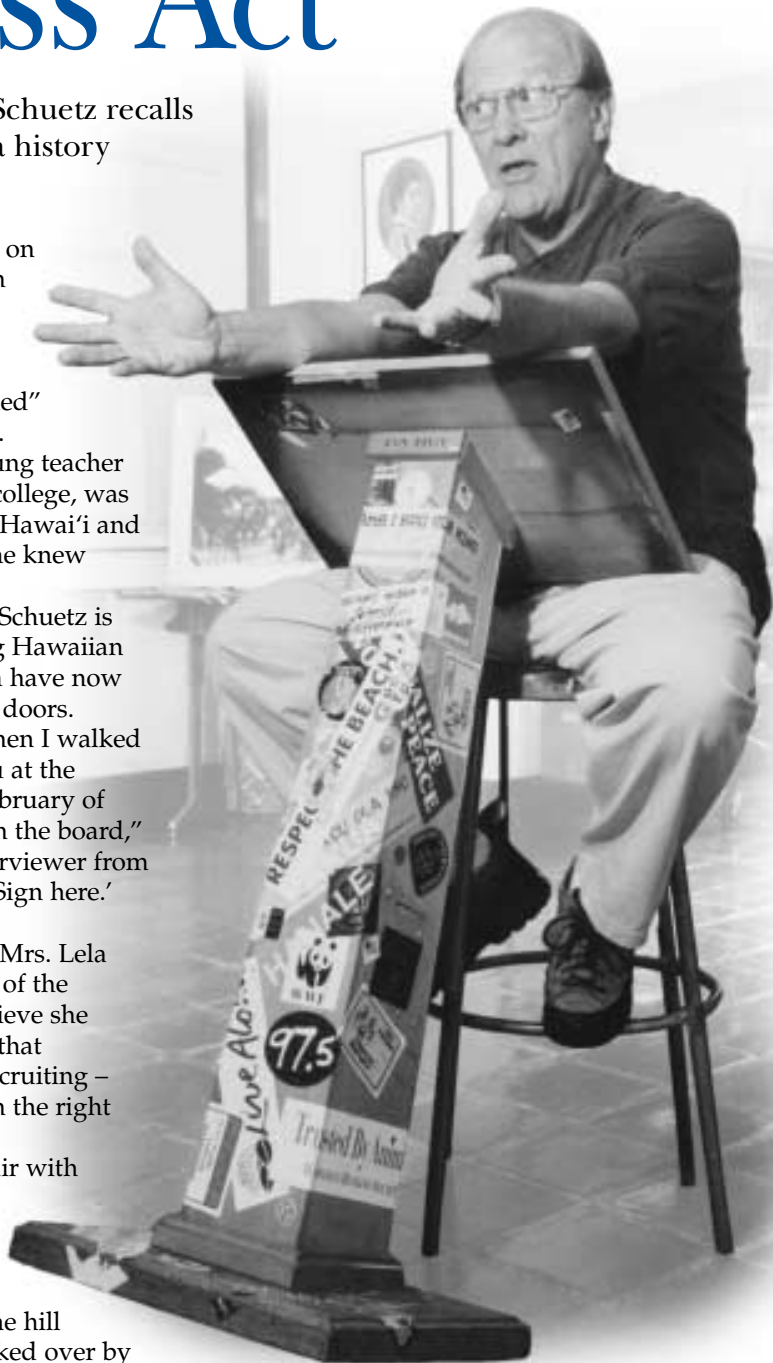
Forty years later, Darrell Schuetz is still teaching English to young Hawaiian students, some 2,300 of whom have now passed through his classroom doors.

"I heard about the job when I walked through the placement bureau at the University of Minnesota in February of 1960 and there was a notice on the board," Schuetz recalled. "It said 'Interviewer from Hawai'i - tomorrow.' It said 'Sign here.' I signed.

"My interview was with Mrs. Lela Brewer. She was the principal of the preparatory department. I believe she was the last such interviewer that Kamehameha ever sent out recruiting - teacher shopping. I was just in the right place at the right time."

Schuetz said his love affair with Hawai'i began immediately but that as a school, Kamehameha had a few surprises lying in wait.

"When I first drove up the hill Aug. 26, 1960, I was just knocked over by





DARRELL SCHUETZ

everything that people are knocked over by when they first come to Hawai'i. But, I did not know the school was a military institute.

"I had never been in the military. Ever," Schuetz joked.

"I didn't know a general from a private. Kamehameha didn't have any generals, but the students had rank. I had no rank, though. I still don't."

He began his career as a grade nine and 10 English instructor, and over the years has served as head of the English department, advisor to both the school newspaper *Ka Mō'i* (17 years) and yearbook *Ka Na'i Aupuni* and, for an 11-year stint, lived on campus as a dormitory advisor.

But since 1987, Schuetz has been very comfortable simply teaching, instructing Kamehameha juniors on the finer points of American literature.

Schuetz said he has no regrets about the decision he made some 40 years ago. In fact, he said he has come to love the life he leads at Kamehameha.

"Like other people who have been here so long, Kamehameha has become a very big part of my life. It's hard to imagine my life without it. I have an absolute lack of interest in going anywhere else – for any reason – because I don't think I would be happy anywhere else.

"It's not a bad life to be surrounded all day long by teenagers. It's a very good life. It helps keep one young. And the nature of the job is such that each year one gets to start all over again and renew oneself. Every year is a new challenge and a new opportunity and I feel very good about it."

Still, the realization that 40 years have gone by was not lost on Schuetz at last summer's Kamehameha Service Awards ceremonies, where he was the top honoree.

"I have an odd feeling about being in this position," he said. "I'm in denial and disbelief because it doesn't seem possible. In a lot of ways, 1960 seems like yesterday."



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