

Aloha from Gladys Brandt

Kamehameha Schools bids farewell to famed Hawaiian educator Gladys Brandt

Gladys Kamakakūokalani 'Ainoa Brandt (1906-2003)

On Jan. 15, 2003 revered Hawaiian educator Gladys Kamakakūokalani 'Ainoa Brandt died at the age of 96.

Born in Honolulu on Aug. 20, 1906, Brandt studied at Kamehameha Schools for Girls and graduated from McKinley High School and the University of Hawai'i.

She earned her teaching certificate in 1927, and taught in public schools on Maui, O'ahu and Kaua'i. In 1943, she was named Hawai'i's first woman public school principal and in 1962 became Hawai'i's first woman district superintendent of schools.

In 1963, Brandt was named principal of the Kamehameha Schools for Girls – the institution's first Hawaiian principal – and was later promoted to director of the high school division following the merging of the boys and girls schools.

Brandt is credited with lifting the *kapu* on the standing *hula* at Kamehameha, allowing Hawaiian students the right to increase their knowledge of and pride in their own culture.

She retired from Kamehameha Schools in 1971, after a 44-year career in education, and was awarded the Order of Ke Ali'i Pauahi Medal in 1971 – the highest honor bestowed by Kamehameha Schools.

In 1997, Brandt co-authored the "Broken Trust" essay, which led to sweeping reforms at Kamehameha Schools. She maintained close ties with the institution as a member of the schools' Board of Advisors.

From 1983 to 1989, Brandt was appointed to the University of Hawai'i's Board of Regents, serving four years as chairman. She helped shape the university's Center for Hawaiian Studies, which was recently renamed in her honor.

Other honors include the 2002 Juliette Award for National Women of Distinction from Girl Scouts U.S.A., the 1985 Honpa Hongwanji Misson of Hawai'i Living Treasure Award, the 1982 David Malo Award from the West Honolulu Rotary Club and the 1988 'Ō'ō Award from the Hawaiian Business and Professional Association.

"Gladys Brandt's many contributions to Kamehameha over the course of her lifetime have enriched and improved the lives of thousands," said Kamehameha Schools Chancellor and Chief Executive Officer **Hamilton McCubbin**. "Her grace, presence, dedication and commitment were all attributes we sought to emulate. She nurtured leaders for tomorrow, and by her own example, demonstrated what it truly means to be *ali'i*."

In 1986, Gladys Brandt celebrated the 100-year anniversary of Kamehameha Schools by presenting the keynote address at the Centennial Staff Convocation.

While much has been written – and many quoted – following her passing, perhaps a more revealing look at "Auntie Gladys" may come from reading her own words.

In honor of this renowned Hawaiian educator, I Mua has reprinted on page 21 excerpts from her 1986 speech, which unveils a bit of the spirit and love she held for Kamehameha Schools.



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– GLADYS BRANDT

Memories of Kamehameha

by

Gladys 'Ainoa Brandt

I have been a part of the Kamehameha 'ohana since its beginnings and mine. My mother was a member of the first graduating class. My father, beginning in 1894, managed one of the shops at the Manual School for Boys.

The Kamehameha campus was our home at the time of my birth. And during my early years, before Kamehameha had an elementary program for girls, I was the only girl attending the Preparatory School for Boys. There I enjoyed the care and aloha given a hānai daughter by Mama Ida Pope, first principal of the Girls School.

Thus, I have been involved with these schools from my birth until this very day. And I possess a deep sense of gratitude, which time has not and cannot diminish, for having been allowed to make whatever modest contributions I could make to the work and programs of Kamehameha Schools.

I served as principal from 1963 until 1970. If you know anything about my personality or my tenure at Kamehameha, you must realize that "obeying" is not my long suit.

Because of this character trait, some of my friends and family questioned my decision to leave the island that I love, Kaua'i, and the district superintendency for the state Department of Education, a post which granted me a great deal of independent authority.

However, I would not be dissuaded from becoming principal of Kamehameha School for Girls.

I have always considered it very beneficial to expose young people to positive role models, particularly those with whom they could readily identify. Of course this is true for all youth in all settings. Likewise all adults serve as role models for our students and it matters not that you are called teacher or bus driver; that you are man or woman; Hawaiian or caucasian; or whatever.

Yet I must confess that in my heart I felt that as a Hawaiian woman I had a significant bond with the young ladies of Hawaiian descent who were enrolled in Kamehameha's School for Girls.

Yes, there were other Hawaiian staff members with whom the girls could establish a cultural identification. And there were scores of faculty of outstanding character who, regardless of ethnicity, set examples of moral and intellectual behavior that benefited our students.

But I thought that having a Hawaiian woman as principal could make a further statement to these young ladies. I wanted them to witness a Hawaiian in a leadership position, so that they would know that as a group we were not all born to be followers.

I wanted them to see a Hawaiian take on weighty responsibilities so that they might become more confident in assuming such challenges for themselves. I wanted them to share in another Hawaiian's success so that they would realize that this is our right and our potential.

It might in this telling sound a little presumptuous for me to think I could have so profound an influence on the students of my time. Frankly, I don't know whether they even noticed me. On second thought, given my taskmaster demeanor, I'm sure they noticed me!

But what I mean is I can't really say that I had a significant impact upon their lives. What I do know is that I wanted to. And that I was motivated by these objectives. And that I did my very best to achieve them.

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Take a look at where Kamehameha Schools is today.

Enrollment has increased. The scope of services has expanded. The quality of education is improved. Budgets have grown. Facilities have been erected and renovated. And a greater portion of the educational needs of our people are being met, enabling these beneficiaries to attain their potential and function effectively in society.

These are the achievements that history remembers. These are what constitute this institution's bottom-line.

Take a moment or two won't you: to look back upon our wake; to reflect upon the struggles and the progress.

You will see at the very edge of the horizon a Hawaiian princess with but a dream. You will see the dream transform into the reality of a manual arts school. You will see that school accelerate its quest for excellence. You will see the community pleading for more to be served and a responsive increase in enrollment. You will see the strengthening of Kamehameha's college preparatory curriculum.

And in near view, you will see many new programs extending from the firm foundation of the campus into the community to reach those who had never before been assisted.

Just imagine how Kamehameha will develop in the future.

And if Kamehameha strides ahead, advancement of the Hawaiian people, indeed all citizens of the state of Hawai'i, will follow closely behind.

I wish you well, good fortune and success. *Mahalo* and *I mua!*