

MEET DEE JAY MAILER

Dee Jay Beatty Mailer '70 takes the reins as chief executive officer of the Kamehameha Schools

If Dee Jay Mailer is feeling the pressure of her new position as chief executive officer of Kamehameha Schools, she certainly doesn't show it.

Relaxed, comforting and caring, Dee Jay comes across as that friendly, calming nurse who once reassured and settled patients at Kapi'olani Hospital. She knew the importance then and now in giving people confidence to face the challenges before them.

It's no wonder – she's trained as a professional nurse.

And though she is assuming one of the most high profile positions in the islands, there is no swagger in her walk and no pretense in her voice. This is a woman confident not only in her own abilities, but of those who surround her as well.

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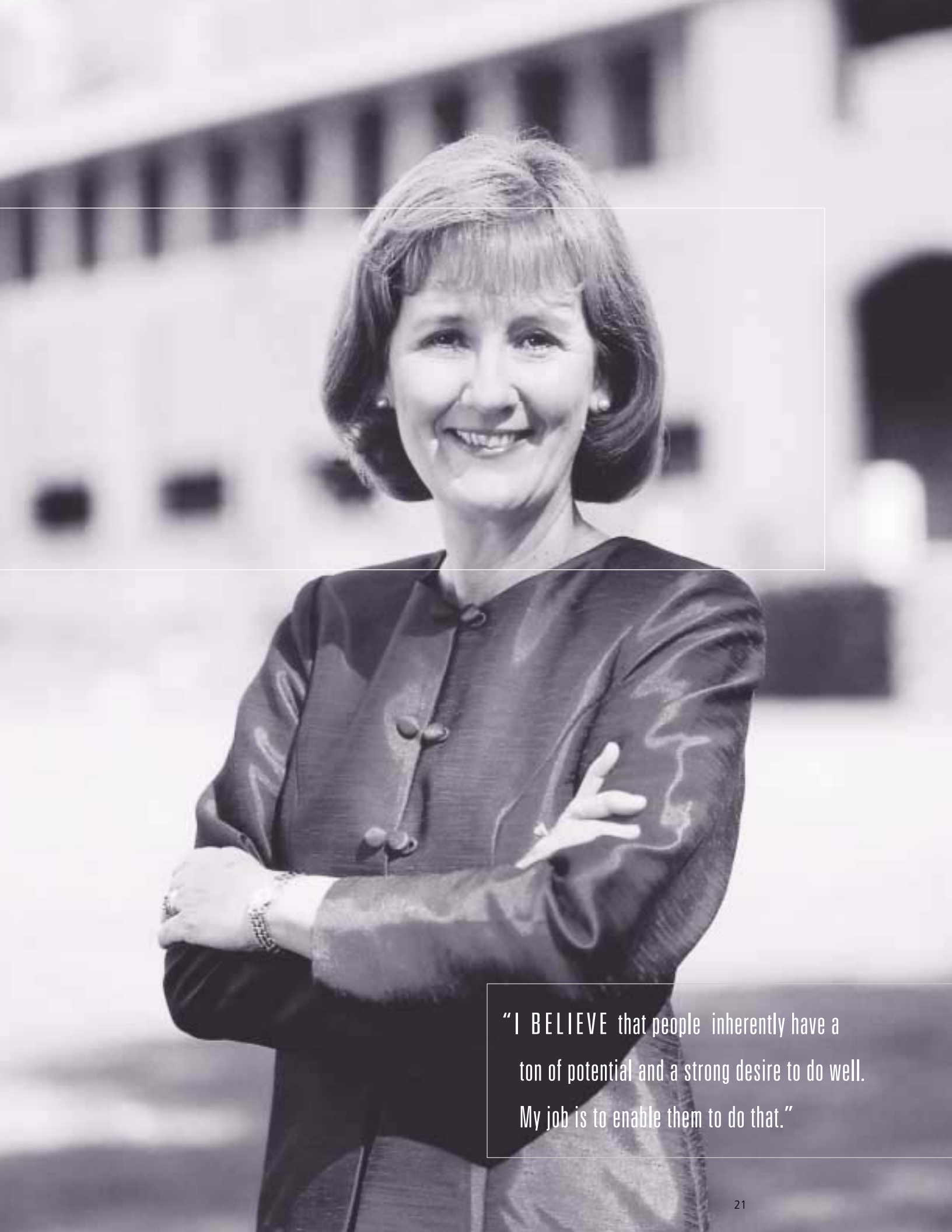
of potential and a strong desire to do well," she said. "My job is to enable them to do that."

Dee Jay began her role on Jan. 19, and has just completed a whirlwind state tour where she has met with Kamehameha alumni, parents, staff, students and community members.

"The KS 'ohana has embraced Dee Jay and welcomed her back to Hawai'i with open arms," said vice president for legal affairs **Colleen Wong '75**, who served as interim CEO. "Her leadership style is very collaborative, empowering and solution-oriented. She's a wonderful role model and mentor, and we're all delighted and fortunate to have her at our helm."

Dee Jay returned home to Kamehameha from Switzerland, where she served as the chief operating officer of The Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Created in 2002 by the world's top developed countries, the Global Fund is a private Swiss foundation which finances country submitted proposals to fight the three diseases that are devastating much of the developing world.

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Dee Jay said she found a correlation between her work there and Pauahi's desire to create educational opportunities for her people.

"I've learned through the Global Fund and its work to curb the crisis of AIDS that if people don't have education, if they don't understand the impact of their ways and if they don't have access to learning, then people die. Literally," she said.

"Pauahi was incredibly wise in her time, and I think she knew that without education, individual Hawaiians would not only not be able to reach their highest potential, but she also knew her people and her culture could die off at some point. And she wanted to make sure that didn't happen."

Though Dee Jay has held numerous top-level positions – among them senior vice president and chief administrative and operating officer for Health Net Inc., and chief executive officer for Kaiser Permanente Hawai'i – she steadily maintains her role is of no more importance than any other member of Kamehameha's staff.

"I believe that we all have important roles here," she said. "As the CEO, I have a responsibility to Pauahi, the trustees and the people we serve to lead with head, heart and hands, lending support to others who have equally important roles in teaching,



Above: Dee Jay takes a moment to meet with Kamehameha parent Alison Lyman and son Kainui O'Conner '14. Right top: Kamehameha's new CEO is greeted by some friendly Kapālama Campus seniors, from left: Dayson Akiona, Kana'i Bento and Mounia Nihipali. Right: Dee Jay shares a laugh with Kapālama instructor, and 1970 classmate, **Alyssa Brown** Braffith and Dr. **Michael Chun** at a welcoming reception at the Midkiff Learning Center.

administration, land management, counseling, security and so many others. Everyone who has a job at Kamehameha Schools does important work as I do – period.

"I believe in people. And I'm happiest when I see someone else filled with pride because they've succeeded. Then I can go home at the end of the day and feel really cool that I was a part of that."

Dee Jay credits her successful professional career to her early development at Kamehameha.

"Most importantly, Kamehameha Schools taught me that no matter where I was in my ability to learn, that they would always meet me where I was. What that allowed me to do was gain confidence in what I could do versus chastising myself for what I couldn't do.

"So for me at Kamehameha, it was about celebrating your successes versus dwelling on your failures. It was about building confidence in myself, and I've carried that throughout my life. At every point, I've had this belief that I could accomplish anything – and I have Kamehameha Schools to thank for that."

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Dee Jay said her desire to give back to the schools that gave her so much was one of the reasons she wanted to return to Kamehameha. “I have a real sense of pride and appreciation for what I carry inside of me. Having the opportunity to come back to Hawai‘i and lead the organization that gave me a passion for helping others, and to work with others equally as passionate, is what really brought me to apply for the CEO position.”

While Dee Jay agrees that Kamehameha Schools should not be perceived as the “savior” of the Hawaiian people, she does have realistic goals for the organization – goals that will importantly contribute to the well-being of Hawaiians.

“We need to provide ways for children who cannot get on our campus programs to have a good education,” she said. “We need to do that better and faster.

“And while we may not be able to touch the entire Hawaiian community all at once, I think we can greatly improve the percentage of Hawaiian children we do reach. Even a small

increase in the percentage of Hawaiian children served can mean better education for thousands of our *keiki*. Now, that would make Pauahi proud!

“And we know that we won’t achieve those percentages by simply providing education through our campuses.”

As an experienced leader, Dee Jay definitely sees the big picture when it comes to the role Kamehameha plays in the community. “We have a responsibility to ourselves, but we also have a responsibility to the communities in which we live,” she said.

“Kamehameha Schools has a singular focus in mind, and that is to provide access to education to improve the well-being of Hawaiians. And when we are successful in doing so, we will have made all of our communities, including the state of Hawai‘i, stronger.

“Then, when our kids go beyond our *hale*, they will make the world stronger. This is Kamehameha Schools’ contribution to our world.”

And whenever the stress of being the chief executive officer may start to get to her, Dee Jay says she has a solid foundation on which to base her decisions.

“Since I’ve come back home, every time I’ve had a question about a decision I’ve needed to make, I always check in with Pauahi. I always think of what she would say. She literally guides me every single day.”

THE MAILER FILE

- Kamehameha Schools 1970
- Bachelor of Science – Professional Nursing 1975
University of Hawai‘i
– Phi Kappa Honor Society
- Master in Business Administration
– Executive MBA Program 1985
University of Hawai‘i
– Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society
- Married to Don Mailer
Daughters Renee Mailer McDonald ‘96 and Brandy Mailer ‘98