

Imua Polenisia

Celebrating
Fifty Years



A Newsletter from the Polynesian Cultural Center

PCC Celebrates First 50 Years



THOUSANDS OF ALUMNI, family, guests and special friends participated in the PCC's Golden Anniversary celebration from September 1–8, 2013, including these “gold” (1963–87) alumni night show veterans. They performed beautifully before younger “silver” counterparts took the stage. (PCC photo by Mike Foley)

Several thousand alumni and friends of the Polynesian Cultural Center came together from all over the world on September 1–8, 2013, to celebrate the PCC's golden anniversary, and though many of them had

not been back for decades, most agreed it felt like coming home.

For those of you who weren't able to be here in person, the PCC's Golden Anniversary celebration defies our stockpile of adjectives: fantastic, great, awesome, etc., just don't capture the wonderful aloha spirit those who were able to come enjoyed. We hope we can share a bit of it with you through this newsletter and other attempts.

set the stage for the Center included:

■ President Joseph F. Smith, known as “Iosepa” to the Hawaiians he served as a missionary in 1854, dedicated the Laie Hawaii Temple site on June 1, 1915. (President Heber J. Grant dedicated the temple on Thanksgiving Day 1919.)

■ Elder David O. McKay of the Twelve visited the Hawaii Mission's Laie elementary school on February 12, 1921, prompting him to envision establishing a school of higher learning.

■ President McKay broke ground on February 12, 1955, for the Church College of Hawaii, which started that same year in temporary facilities and was renamed BYU–Hawaii in 1974.

In his remarks that day, President McKay gave a blessing that said “this college, and the temple, and the town of Laie may become a missionary factor, influencing not thousands, not tens of thousands, but millions of

President's Message: A wonderful beginning to the next 50 years

Our Golden Anniversary celebration in September was everything we expected, and more. Thousands of us enjoyed an outpouring of aloha as we met again on the *marae* of the entire Polynesian Cultural Center, as we participated in the well-planned programs and events, as we laughed, ate, reminisced, enjoyed one another's talents, and especially as we met and talked-story with old friends — all together again in Laie.

I know we all look back on this place with deep aloha, great gratitude and a special fondness, because many of the most

Continued on page 11

A bit of historical background

It could be said that the foundations of the PCC date back as far as 1865, when Brigham Young approved purchasing Laie plantation as a gathering place for the Saints in Hawaii. Other historical precedents that

In this Issue

Alumni night show pictures.....	6-7, 9
PCC 'Living Treasures'	10-11
Many mahalos	12

Continued on page 2

50th Anniversary...

Continued from page 1

people who will come seeking to know what this town and its significance are.”

■ As the university grew, it quickly became apparent the students needed a nearby place to work. In January 1962 President McKay authorized the labor missionaries, who were already in Laie working on the second phase of the CCH campus, to begin working on a “Polynesian village,” that would be renamed the Polynesian Cultural Center on August 25, 1963.

■ President Hugh B. Brown, First Counselor in the First Presidency, dedicated the Polynesian Cultural Center on October 12, 1963, setting the stage for the many thousands of students and community workers, and millions of guests who would come over the next 50 years.

Leading up to the jubilee celebration

Based on our alumni response to the 30th and 40th anniversary reunions, the steering committee — chaired by PCC Chief Operations Officer Logoitino Apelu — began work several years ago to plan a very special 50th anniversary celebration.

The PCC marketing team launched a special web site — <http://www.pcc50>.



Maori Village alumnae await the arrival of Te Aroha Nui Maori Company survivors who helped open the Center in 1963, and their friends and family.



Representatives from each village prepare to stage the daily flag raising ceremony during the PCC's 50th Anniversary celebration (PCC photos by Mike Foley)

com — a year in advance, and is still up. It contains news items, schedules, information, thousands of old photos, approximately 40 years of in-house newsletter publications, video clips, alumni recollections and much more. Ticket sales soon followed, and the committee reserved the entire PCC on Friday, September 6, 2013, for the exclusive enjoyment of the alumni and friends — featuring, of course, the much anticipated alumni night shows.

To help alumni no longer living near the PCC to learn their songs and dance routines, the committee posted instructional videos on the web site. Also, recognizing that many alumni and PCC friends were not able to come to Laie for the reunion, the Center made arrangements to live-stream as many of the events as possible on the Internet.

The Cultural Center also participated in the 2012 and 2013 Days of '47 parades in Salt Lake City, Utah, to promote the reunion.

Day 1, Sunday, September 1

The official Polynesian Cultural Center 50th anniversary event began with a musical fireside program in the BYUH Cannon Activities Center, featuring Hawaiian, Chinese, Tahitian, Filipino, Fijian, Samoan, Korean, Maori, Japanese and Tongan choirs as well as the Koolauloa Children's Choir, all dressed in the costumes and clothing of their respective heritages.

In his opening remarks, anniversary chairman Apelu welcomed all returning alumni home. “We are all gathered here this week for one reason, to express our gratitude and appreciation to the Lord for the Polynesian Cultural Center,” he said, “and the positive impact and the profound influence it has on each one of us and our families.”

“Wherever we served or worked at the PCC, we as alumni have also impacted the lives of more than 37 million guests who have visited the sacred grounds of PCC since its opening in 1963.”

In introducing the Tongan choir's song, PCC alumna Lupe Funaki Piena said, “It seems to me it was not an accident that a prophet of God chose this place, Laie, as the gathering place for his international learning laboratory. This also suggests that God has a

Continued on page 3

Pres. McKay OK's "Polynesian Village" FEB 12, 1961
 Pres. Hugh B. Brown dedicates PCC OCT 12, 1963
 PCC creates the original Pineapple Deelite DEC 1963
 Elvis Presley films for one week at PCC JUNE 1965
 First canoe pageant: Samoans and Maoris APR 10, 1966
 PCC takes 175 on promo to CA and UT AUG 31, 1966
 PCC begins Laie Tour OCT 5, 1972
 Elder Howard W. Hunter dedicates PCC expansion JULY 4, 1976
 Lee Majors, Six Million Dollar Man film at PCC NOV 1977
 Elder Hunter dedicates The Gateway Restaurant JAN 12, 1979
 PCC hosts Geng Biao, first high-ranking PRC official JUNE 4, 1980
 Mike Douglas Show tapes at PCC DEC 8, 1980

Imua Polenisia



The "Bluenatics" — the blue-shirt Physical Facilities guys — line up for the PCC 50th Sports Festival parade.

soft place in His heart for the people of the land, that He would have the confidence to bring people together from all over the world to learn how to live and to teach others the art of living together in peace and harmony. To our brothers and sisters from Hawaii, we say mahalo [thank you] for sharing your homeland with all of us to be a part of building God's Kingdom internationally."

Day 2, September 2, 2013

The historical, cultural and fun parts of the PCC's 50th anniversary reunion began in earnest, with presentations in the newly renovated Hawaiian Journey Theater on the early beginnings and prophetic nature of the Polynesian Cultural Center.

Welcoming activities followed in each of the Center's villages that, of course, included familiar Polynesian food, and in the case of the Maori Village, involved another powhiri ceremony, this one for the returning alumni but with the previously welcomed Te Aroha Nui Maori Company people now proudly standing again at the village they helped open 50 years earlier.

But it was the welcoming reception that evening in the Hawaiian Village that provided hundreds of alumni with their first real opportunity to greet, hug, kiss, eat together, laugh a lot, and just "talk story" with each

other. A lot of the entertainment included impromptu talent by alumni — including hula, music, comedy, and more — all under a starry sky with pleasant trade winds.

Other day-two activities included a special islands craft fair that repeated throughout the week, and a free concert series each afternoon at the Front Entrance Courtyard featuring island musicians and hula groups.

Day 3, September 3, 2013

The third day of the PCC 50th anniversary featured early-morning sessions at the Laie Hawaii Temple, and a tribute to the labor missionaries — many of them from the South Pacific — and more recent senior service missionaries who have so generously donated their time and talents to help and continue to build the Polynesian Cultural Center.

Also on this day the PCC/BYUH Alumni Brass Band, which originally performed in the 1970s-90s, marched through the villages again and played several of their old favorite numbers — something they hadn't done since 1995.

Other day-three activities included a golf tournament at nearby Turtle Bay Resort, a special presentation honoring Elder Matthew Cowley — the well-known "Apostle to

the Pacific" who almost 20 years before the Center began envisioned building "little villages" in Laie, plus mini-reunions in each of the respective PCC villages and several other departments, and alumni show rehearsals.

Day 4, September 4, 2013

The fourth day of the PCC's 50th anniversary celebration began at 6:30 a.m. with a fun-run/walk around the perimeter road circling the Center. Then at 7:00 a.m., hundreds of current employees and some of the heartier alumni and service missionaries joined in the PCC sports festival.

Each team, dressed in distinctive tee shirts, marched around the BYUH soccer field to start the event, then warmed up with lively zumba led by Penny Taosoga Toilolo. Following a team cheer contest, the



Harry Brown (left) and Della Haase Kim help greet fellow alumni at the Welcoming Reception in Hawaii.

Continued on page 5

- AUG 1981** First six Asian executive interns arrive at PCC
- JULY 1983** This is Polynesia Premieres
- JAN 7, 1984** PCC hosts PRC Premier Zhao Ziyang
- JULY 25, 1984** Hawaii Mission Settlement opens
- FALL 1985** PCC begins sponsoring State Teacher of Year Award
- MAY 12, 1987** PCC launches high school Sterling Scholar Awards
- APRIL 1988** PCC inaugurates Ambassador Fine Dining
- JULY 8, 1988** Elder Marvin J. Ashton dedicates relocated Tongan Village
- SEP 2, 1988** PCC begins new Aliri Luau
- AUG 18, 1989** Hit TV show Full House tapes episode at PCC
- OCT 19, 1990** PCC Brass Band plays for Pres. George W.H. Bush

50th Anniversary...

Continued from page 4

games began — including a coconut relay, volleyball and dodge ball, a mu'umu'u relay, coconut croquet, and other imaginative physical activities.

The day ended in the BYUH Cannon Activities Center that evening, starting with a special tribute to various PCC “living treasures,” followed by an awesome alumni and current employees talent show. Remember, Polynesian Cultural Center performers are known around their world for their talents; but now we know those talents extend far beyond doing island songs and dances.

For example, we enjoyed hula and island music, of course, but also among others a Navajo hoop dance with 22 hoops, a Fijian comedian, a Hawaiian cowboy singing his own comic creation, an outa'sight Samoan “love boat” fashion parade, a little Bollywood and lots of creative group numbers by management and the PCC Officer Team.

Day 5, September 5, 2013

Thursday's activities again included early-morning sessions at the Laie Hawaii Temple and the first session of the Mormon



The PCC recognized some of the original labor missionaries as well as former and current service missionaries during the 50th Anniversary celebration (along with overall event chairman and COO Logo Apelu).

Pacific Historical Society's annual conference, which this year focused on the Polynesian Cultural Center. In his presentation, Dr. Ishmael Stagner II, a member of the CCH Polynesian Panorama performing group which pre-dated the PCC, demonstrated how Hawaiian Latter-day Saints living in Laie for the century before the Center started helped preserve and showcase their cultural heritage, laying a strong foundation for the PCC.

But it was the Golden Jubilee Ball that evening in the Gateway that brought the big crowds. Many of the Gateway fixtures were removed to create a gigantic dance floor, while heavy *pupu* were served continuously on the Terrace. In addition to dancing to live music, the ball was a great time for alumni to get together again and enjoy each other's company after so many years.

Day 6, September 6, 2013

On the morning of the sixth day, quite a few alumni and friends met on Hukilau Beach, where the Laie Community Association put on a traditional Hawaiian hukilau, with many hands helping to pull [huki] the nets. This took place on the same beach where Latter-day Saint residents of Laie put on their famous hukilau tourist event from 1948–70 that helped prove the viability of the Polynesian Cultural Center concept.

Otherwise, if PCC alumni could only come to the 50th anniversary celebration for one day, this was it: The Center sold out this Friday to its own alumni, who enjoyed an afternoon in the villages, ate a luau dinner, and then the highlights — attended one, or for a lucky few, both of the alumni night shows.

For this reunion, because of the large number of alumni who wanted to perform on

Continued on page 6



Alumni with New Zealand ties won the 50th Anniversary golf tournament at Turtle Bay Resort: (left-right) John Katene, Joe Memea, John Elkington and Angus Christy

- PCC premieres Mana! The Spirit of our People **JULY 6, 1991**
- The PCC launches a continuing series of special events **SPRING 1993**
- King Tupou IV bestows Tongan title on President Les Moore **JULY 7, 1993**
- The PCC debuts Horizons: Where the Sea meets the Sky **JULY 1993**
- The Ali'i Luau opens in the “new” Hale Ohana **JULY 13, 1993**
- PCC Special Events features Beqa, Fiji fire walkers **NOV 1993**
- PCC Special Events features Tjapukai Australian Aborigines **FEB 1994**
- China welcomes Pres. Hinchley as “president of the PCC” **MAY 28, 1996**
- A PCC promo team participates in the Hong Kong “hand-over” **JULY 1, 1997**
- Wheel of Fortune, Vanna White tape segments at the PCC **DEC 1998**
- First Presidency OKs PCC to show Last Testaments **MAR 25, 2002**
- Easter Island exhibit opens at PCC **FEB 3, 2003**

Imua Polenisia



The "Samoan Love boat," one of the most colorful numbers in the 50th Anniversary Alumni Talent Show on Wednesday evening, September 4, 2013, in the BYUH Cannon Activities Center.

the PCC stage again, the steering committee divided the shows into two groups: "Gold" alumni were those who originally danced in PCC night shows from 1963–1987, while "silver" show participants had originally danced from 1988 to the present.

Many had been practicing, with the help of online instructional videos, for months to learn their numbers. Then, during reunion week, they practiced together in their respective "sections" to adjust the choreography and technical aspects of the respective shows. The excitement backstage rose as 6:00 p.m. drew near — and the beginning of the long-awaited Gold Alumni Show.

It's impossible to do justice with still images to the energy, color and just how well the two alumni shows turned out; but the following few samples share some of the enjoyment we all felt that evening.

The "gold" alumni show

Cy Bridges started the "gold" alumni (1963–87) show off by singing a "coming home" song, and then cracked up the audience when he said they would see something never before seen in a PCC night show — benches for the *kupuna* performers.

Granted, there was a lot of gray hair and

some huffing... but the "gold" alumni aptly demonstrated they've still got it; and it was a delightful to see some of the older night show numbers reprised during their performances.

The "silver" alumni show

Originally scheduled for about 90 minutes, the "gold" alumni held the stage for a more than two hours, while the "silver" show crowd waited for their turn. It's hard to hurry 50 years of pent-up talent.

Soon enough, however, the younger, livelier "silver" alumni came charging out of the tunnels onto the PCC's famed Pacific Theater stage. Their moment was at hand.

The "silver" show started with a bit of a surprise — Alfred Grace, the first PCC president & CEO to work at the Center as a student, including a stint as a night show dancer back in the 80s — came out in a bright-white outfit, set off by a red carnation lei, to lip-synch This is Polynesia. The home-town audience, so to speak, loved it. In another surprise later in the same show, Grace's wife, Valerie Enos Grace, also a former PCC night show dancer, joined the Samoan section to the audience's delight.

Day 7, September 7, 2013

The morning of day-seven dawned with

Continued on page 8



PCC alumnae get together during the 50th Anniversary ball (left-right): Leema Tufaga, Sherry Beatty, Tina Unga Fabiano, Verna Tonga and Selai Damuni Lesu

PCC welcomes 30-millionth visitor during 40th anniversary
APR 25, 2003

Ali'i Luau opens in the Hale Kuai
AUG 2, 2004

Night show cast directors begin using "new" backstage area
APR 6, 2007

HVCB presents Ali'i Luau with Keep it Hawaii Award
APR 6, 2007

Mark Willes dedicates halau wa'a in Hawaii
JUN 25, 2008

PCC premieres Haunted Lagoon Halloween attraction
OCT 21, 2008

PCC debuts Ha: Breath of Life night show
AUG 14, 2009

The renovated Gateway Restaurant reopens
NOV 10, 2011

President Orgill announces Alfred Grace will succeed him
DEC 14, 2012

"New" Hawaiian Journey Theater opens, film premieres
MAR 23, 2013

PCC 50th float, alumni march in Salt Lake City parade
JULY 24, 2013

PCC celebrates Golden Anniversary
SEP 1-8, 2013



50 years of aloha