

Imua Polenisia

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A Newsletter from the Polynesian Cultural Center

PCC 'graduation' honors Orgills

Bits of *Haunted Lagoon* and *Christmas in Polynesia* came back on January 18 as well as a special train and canoe ride, all and more as part of a six-hour "graduation" party to express gratitude and aloha for PCC President & CEO Von D. Orgill and his wife, Sherri. At almost 13 years, he is the longest-serving president of the Polynesian Cultural Center.

The Orgills are getting ready to leave Laie soon in preparation for his serving as a Latter-day Saint mission president for three years, starting on July 1, 2013. They know they're going to serve in an English-speaking mission, but Church leaders have not yet announced their specific assignment.

The First Presidency gave President Orgill special permission to announce at a Team Meeting on December 14, 2012, that PCC Chief Operations Officer P. Alfred Grace will succeed him as President & CEO of the Center when he leaves. Grace, a Maori from New Zealand who first came to the Cultural



PCC President Von D. Orgill (left, front) does 'aiuli duties for Sister Sherri Orgill's Samoan *taualuga* dance during their January 18, 2013, "graduation" party. (Folifoto)

Center as a student performer in the night show in the 1980s, will be the first PCC president to "come up through the ranks."

Twenty-eight members of the Orgill's extended family also joined in the special celebration which, in addition to the special events elements, included PCC employees

and senior missionaries lining the banks of the lagoon to share their aloha with banners and well wishes. As the canoe went around, each village serenaded the Orgills and presented them with gifts.

Feast & Fun

Then, all available employees, volunteers and even some former labor missionaries and alumni joined the Orgills and their family in the Gateway for what PCC Senior Vice President Logo Apelu described as a Samoan 'aiava — a feast, entertainment and gift-giving usually held in honor of someone who is departing. In recognition of the Orgills' upcoming missionary assignment, everyone

Continued on page 2

PCC employees reach service milestones

"You're the reason we're glad we work here," said John Muaina, Vice President of Personnel, as he started the Polynesian Cultural Center's annual employee recognition event on January 31, 2013, in the Gateway.

"Today, we recognize the stellar and hallmark service of our fulltime workers who have reached various milestones of continuous service." Each of the following received a lei and gift package:

40 years: Ellen Gay Dela Rosa, Sione Fetu'u Falevai and Ali'imau Toelupe.

35 years: Maka Obina and Lindy Tufaga.

30 years: Halam Ah Quin, Bobby Akoi, Victor Daguio, McKay Ernestburg, Francis Ho Ching, Ilaisa'ane Kauvaka, Terry Na'auao Pane'e, Catherine Teriipaia and Liufau Tuifua.

Continued on page 4

In this Issue

23rd Moanikeala Hula Festival	2
Meet the new missionaries	4

PCC holds 'graduation' event for Orgills

Continued from page 1

sang *Called to Serve* as the opening song.

"This is a token of our love and appreciation for what you and Sherri have done for all of us," Apelu told President Orgill. He also thanked them for their spiritual impact. "No words can adequately express how we truly feel."

In addition to plenty of food, the farewell event included more gift presentations from all the departments, and lots of fun. To mention just a few of the highlights:

- Some of the gifts were serious souvenirs, such as the Hawaiian patch quilt made with pieces of every uniform worn at the Center, and another signed by all the members of the Maintenance Department and the Service Missionaries.
- Others gifts were fun, such as a picture of President Orgill doing a Michael Jackson impression.
- Sales & Marketing put together a special video for the Orgills and gave them lovely framed pictures of the latest advertising campaign models.
- CFO David Ralph, dressed and acting as a *kumu*, led his Finance division "men of manapua" in a hilarious hula.
- Guide Department employees dressed in their various ethnic and national clothes to present their gifts.

• All the departments in the always-talented Theater division put on a lively Bollywood number.

• Hawaii Islands Manager Raymond Mokiao presented several symbolic gifts, including one made from *koa* wood. "*Koa* also means warrior in Hawaiian, and represents a leader," Mokiao said. His villagers also presented a *leihulu* or feather lei, representing birds, which fly close to heaven and spiritual leadership. "We also have an '*umeke*, a bowl, in which we share our love for each other. It represents abundance, and how President Orgill has led us to learn to be frugal in our spending, and to save for the rainy day."

• A huge ceremonial Samoan *nifo oti* — created by retiree Pulefano Galea'i, similar to but larger than those presented to the winners of the PCC's annual World Fireknife Championship events.

Touching farewells

Of course, what's a Polynesian party without speeches? For example, John Muaina, Vice President of Personnel, told of going to China several times with President Orgill, and he shared three letters from Chinese leaders praising his leadership of the Center.

Food & Beverage Officer Fifita Unga said President Orgill reminded her that, similar to Joseph F. Smith who came to Hawaii in 1854 as a young missionary, he was "sent to Tonga, and like President Smith, he became a great leader and blessed our people. All these years

you have taken us to many heights, cleansing and lifting, and none of us is the same — because of your fine example."

Tipa Galea'i, Guide Department manager, told President Orgill, "You've been an inspiration to our PCC *ohana*. May you continue to bring more blessings upon those that you will lead in your mission field." The various foreign language guides also shared sentiments in their respective languages with the Orgills.

"With your leadership example, I know the Center will be able to continue for another 50 years," said Ellen Gay Dela Rosa, Senior Theater Manager.

PCC Director of Cultural Product Cy Bridges shared a special Hawaiian chant with the Orgills, "for your love and all that you do for the Polynesian Cultural Center, with fondest aloha."

Aotearoa Islands Manager Seamus Fitzgerald related how his villagers always try to follow President Orgill's example, "and your example is that this is not a job, that the Lord trusts us to be here...to demonstrate and radiate a spirit of love."

"We recognize how much the Orgills have touched our lives in so many ways," said Steve Laulu, Samoa Islands Manager.

"You're a man of principle, and that's why we love you so much at the Polynesian Cultural Center. Through the highs and the lows, through the trials and tribulations, you never wavered from what you knew to be true," said P. Alfred Grace, who will succeed President Orgill when he leaves. "We saw that; it was like following a lighthouse through a storm, and you always shined brightly. We thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

The Orgills respond

At that point, Apelu brought the Orgills to the stage where they were garbed in Samoan costumes and performed an enthusiastic *taualuga* dance, with plenty of back-up support from officers and PCC Board member Kalo Mataele Soukop. As is customary, some in the audience showered the Orgills with *fa'apale* or paper money, which they will use for mission expenses.

Sister Orgill spoke first: "One of the first lessons we learned when we came to Laie was

Continued on page 3



THE 23rd MOANIKEALA HULA FESTIVAL: The PCC held its annual tribute to original PCC *kumu* Aunty Sally Wood Nalua'i on January 19, 2013, featuring a large number of dancers from Japan. (Photos and montage by Mike Foley)



Blue-shirt Maintenance workers and others await the arrival of President and Sister Orgill on January 18, 2013, at the beginning of a special "graduation" or farewell event. (Photo by Mike Foley)

it's not important what you have, but what you have to give. You have given so much to us, and we have learned so much from you," she said. "I feel like the Lord has blessed us so much to live among you and call you our friends; and I hope in the next life, we can build our celestial huts next to yours. Thank you so much."

President Orgill also thanked everyone: "This is a blessing that we never could have imagined would come to us." But he also noted that it was "difficult to find words: How can anyone do justice to who you are and how you have treated us right from the very beginning?"

He recalled that at their first luau at the Polynesian Cultural Center he received gifts and hugs, but also had the spiritual impression, "Remember, this isn't about you. This is about them, and from that moment until this I have remembered and treasured...that it was never going to be about us. It was always going to be about you, and what the Lord has been doing here for so long."

President Orgill explained that the "them" are "those who you touch and influence, and those who come to school to be prepared to become the men and women of God our Savior intended them to be."

"Everyone who comes here and feels the Spirit so strongly are also the 'them.' They usually don't know how to describe it or what to do with it, but it penetrates into their hearts and they are never the same again. They have felt the spirit that comes from you in the most genuine way."

"The spirit of aloha continues to ripple

throughout the world as everyone that you touch, and everyone that they touch, feels it — literally millions of people."

"This place is here by design of a loving Heavenly Father and our Savior who, from the very beginning, saw what needed to happen at the last days. He saw the need to bring people together as one; and through a prophet He inspired the construction of a school here and this special place, because the cultures that you represent in their truest form are, in fact, the very gospel of Jesus Christ," President Orgill continued.

"I have often felt since the moment we came here that the day would come when I would stand before the Savior to give an accounting of our stewardship here. Not because of us, but because of how important this place is to Him, and how important what goes on here is to Him."

"When that time comes, I imagine myself bowing at His feet and saying, thank you for allowing us such a blessing."

"The Lord knew that millions of people would come here, and that they would be touched by the spirit that you could share with them in a truly unique and powerful way; and literally millions of lives would be changed as a result. We thank you for the privilege that's been ours to be a small part of the process," President Orgill said.

He invited the Officer Team and their spouses to stand with him, and thanked them for their service. "I love you all," he said.

He also thanked those who have or are

now working as well as all the senior missionaries who volunteer their time, and the "many who are on the other side of the veil who gave so much" in building up the Cultural Center. "We owe our gratitude and our very best effort to each one of them, each day."

"There are no finer people on the earth, who have been brought to this place to do the Lord's work here. I bear my solemn witness that you are about God's work. It has never been about having a job. It has always been about serving a mission. It will always be that way."

"We have lived in many places, and have been blessed to serve with many wonderful people, but we have never known more wonderful people than you. We have felt love for the people in the places where we have worked and served in the past, but there are none we love more than you. You are and will be in our hearts today and every day for as long as we live."

"This has been a place of miracles, and the Lord has not yet finished with His miracles here," President Orgill said. "Everything that has transpired here has been but a prologue to what the Lord has in store in the next 50 years."

Upcoming events...

The Samoan World Fireknife Championships and Samoan High School Arts Festival from May 8–11, 2013, are the next scheduled special events at the PCC; but there are also several exciting things coming up:

- The grand opening of the completely renovated "volcano" theater featuring the Center's new large-format multi-media experience, *Kamaaina: Child of the Land*.
- The official opening of the "new" Hawaiian Village.

Dates and details will be announced.

Employee milestones...

Continued from page 1

25 years: Yvonne Ho Kum, Kaimana Kim, Siaosi Lautaha, Tia Muti, Susan Naihe, Lasela Tevaga, Eseta Toelupe and Tofa Unga.

20 years: William Mahoni, Inoke Suguturaga, Ila Talapa and Freida Taulapapa.

15 years: Tiotala Leiataua, Falefatu Leauanae, Momoe Mikaele, Leilani Soliai and Tai'ao Enesa.

10 years: Lili Fuimaono Filipo, Tama Halvorsen, Luseane Ha'o, Pane Meatoga III and Ichiko Richardson.

5 years: William Sellers.

In addition, emcee Delsa Moe cited several part-time employees who have worked at the Center for a long time, including Gregory Magalei, 14 years; Auntie Mildred Enos, 17 years; and Carolyn Purcell, 38 years. She also acknowledged several other "old-timers," including Cy Bridges, Nona Warner and Les Steward, 44 years; and also T. David Hannemann, who was hired in August 1963 as the Center's first fulltime paid employee and is now retired.

The program also included door prizes, employee videos that can be seen at <http://www.pcc50.com>, and a luncheon after.

Speaking on behalf of the recipients, Fetu'u Falevai recalled when he first started at the PCC in 1973 he was a night show performer. "A few years later they said he's



Some of the employees recognized (left-right, front row): William Mahoni, Leilani Soliai, Ali'imau Toelupe, Yvonne Ho Kum, Eseta Toelupe, Lindy Tufaga, Maka Obina, Catherine Teriipaia, Luseane Ha'o, Kim Kaimana and Ila Talapa; (back row, left-right): Bobby Akoi, Tai'ao Enesa, Tofa Unga, COO Alfred Grace, Fetu'u Falevai, Inoke Suguturaga and Na'auao Pane'e (photo by Mike Foley)

too ugly, and sent me away to work in Motor Pool," he joked, but quickly thanked the "great men" he worked with in that department.

Falevai later worked in the Tongan Village, where his countrymen "helped me learn my culture," he said in appreciation of that experience. "It helped open my eyes to how important it is that we learn our cultures." He currently works in Maintenance. "I really enjoy working with the missionaries," he said. "We love them."

When Muaina asked him how he managed to work at the Center for 40 years, Falevai replied he considers the PCC his "second home. It hasn't been like working."

"Working at the Center has been the most dear thing in my life. We work in a place where we feel the Spirit, which makes it more special. We work among leaders who have honesty in their hearts," he said.

Responding on behalf of President Or-gill, who was unable to be at the meeting, COO P. Alfred Grace thanked him for his own record of service. "At 13 years, he is by far the longest serving president and CEO of the Polynesian Cultural Center. He took us through 9/11, the collapse of the economy, and the largest building phase the Center's had in the last 30 years. He did all of that without ever raising his voice, ever getting angry, and never saying a mean word or anything contrary to what we believe in. He is the epitome of radiating the Spirit."

Focusing on the 40-year recipients, Grace recalled first meeting Falevai on the

BYUH rugby team years ago. "He comes across as this nice man, but he used a stick to motivate our running, and I never ran so fast. Ali'imau was one of my supervisors in Reservations, and when I would ask why we were doing something, he would answer, 'Because Mommy said.' Mommy was [the late] Fia Mau Sataraka, who many of us knew and loved."

"And I got to know Ellen Gay when she came to the Sales Division, which I was over, when she was head of the Promo Team. She took the Promo Team to new heights: They've done so much, and gone so many places, and so many of us owe so much to Ellen Gay for a lot of memories."

Grace concluded by reminding the PCC Team that our Golden Anniversary throughout 2013 will be a "wonderful year. There are a lot of activities planned. There will be a lot of new things, but they'll all be based on those who have gone before us."

"Never forget those who went before us, who literally are the foundation upon which we've built the Polynesian Cultural Center," he said. "This place has never been about the buildings, it's always about the people."

Meet the missionaries

From San Tan, Arizona (near Mesa): Elder Phillips learned land surveying during his 23-year career in the Air Force, and is assigned to Physical Facilities. Sister Phillips, who formerly served in the Philippines as a welfare service missionary, is assigned to the Islands Office. Welcome to PCC.



The Phillips



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