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Dudley Kekaula

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INTRODUCTION

Dudley Kekaula attended the Church College of Hawaii from 1973 to 1975. Before he came to CCH he attended Honolulu Community College. He also served mission for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. His decision to come to CCH was based mainly on the fact that it was a Church institution and he was also given a return missionary scholarship. During the time that Dudley attended CCH, the office of student body president was a calling, and so in 1974, Dudley was called as student body president by the stake president, President Mailo.

Throughout his interview, Kekaula talks about his experiences as student body president. He worked mainly with the assistant dean, Carlos Asay, and his advisor, Ishmael Stagner. As student body president, his goal was to add more new, innovative and creative activities. He felt that he was able to accomplish his goals in that area. He did, however, experience some frustration in dealing with the representative assembly and thus, he suggested that the student government be converted to a more democratic organization. Kekaula also compares his administration as student body president to today's administration. He then describes the Fijian strike at the Polynesian Cultural Center and the issue of unfair labor practices.

Joe Whitford interviewed Dudley Kekaula on August 17, 1984. Alice Tan did the transcribing and James McCowan did the auditing. Oral History secretary Rachel Ord did the final edit and assembly. Such notations as "Dan Andersen [OH-124]" indicate that an interview has been conducted with that individual and is on file in the Oral History collection at BYU-Hawaii.

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SIDE A

INT Okay, this is an interview with Dudley Kekaula. He's the student body advisor for the campus and he was student body president for the years 1974-75. We're in his office in the student activities center, I guess. Today's date is August 17, 1984

Dudley, to start things off I'd like to ask you why did you decide to come to CCH?

DK My decision was based on furthering my education when I came back off my mission. Previously, before I went on my mission I attended Honolulu Community College, in their automotive program. I had hopes of becoming an automotive mechanic, but then after attending a year there I went on my mission and that changed my mind. I thought I'd like to pursue a degree.

INT Did you have any scholarships to come here, or is it just because it was a Church institution and--or did you have friends out here?

DK The reason I came here was because it was a Church institution. They had offered me a returned missionary scholarship, but other than that, it was because it was a Church institution.

INT Okay, thanks. It was during your term 1974-75, that the school still had the priesthood correlation set up as far as calling the president; I'm curious, how was your name selected to be called and sustained?

DK Well, coming to Church College as a freshman, I wanted to get involved and the student body president then was Randy Boothe and one of his officers--I'm not sure what the name of the, or the title that he had--was a good friend of mine. And he asked if I would assist him in one of their committees; I forget what that committee was, but my involvement in student government my freshman year was probably the reason I was selected. I became very good friends with Randy and I guess I impressed him, that individual.

INT So then was he the one that submitted your name to the administration?

DK I would assume that's correct.

INT And was that the same with your counselors, or did you have a say in the counselors?

DK Yes. My name was given to the stake president, because it was the stake president, President Mailo, then--because the entire area of Laie was under one stake--who had called me. And then I chose my officers.

- INT Maybe we can get into the cooperation part of your term. How did you get along with the--with the president during that time? That was President [Dan] Andersen [OH-124], right?
- DK No, it was President [Stephen L.] Brower [OH-107, Andersen replaced Brower in June, 1974]
- INT Okay, President Brower. How was your personal relationship with him?
- DK There was no personal relationship with President Brower. My voice stopped at my advisor; I never spoke to President Brower myself--personally. He seemed to be unreachable as far as student government was concerned. Not to say that he wasn't involved in decision making through my boss, but we never had contact with President Brower.
- INT So anything that the student activities--well, anything that the student government wanted to propose to the administration had to go through your advisor?
- DK That's correct. My advisor and, I think, then--you can verify this--Carlos Asay [OH-298].
- INT He was an assistant dean [under Dan Andersen, 1974-75]
- DK Right. He was sort of over student government; he administrated that.
- INT Oh. So then you had no personal contact at all with the president?
- DK [Not] with the president, but with the advisor and Carlos Asay.
- INT Do you think he--do you think President Andersen wanted it that way, or is that just how it was set up?
- DK Well, my personal opinion was that's the way he wanted it.
- INT Was that how it was the previous year with Randy, as well, or did he have close ties with President Brower?
- DK I don't know. I don't have any background on it.
- INT Okay, that, you know, that's really interesting. Did you have problems setting up your activities, thinking about the how president would react to them?
- DK The president of the university?
- INT Yes.

- DK No, because Brother Asay and my advisor . . .
- INT Brother [Ishmael] Stagner [OH-102]?
- DK Yes, Brother Stagner, kept watch over the flock, if you will. And it, we—the way the system worked, we had representatives from each of the wards. So that was a representative assembly and each was called as a young adult representative. So under the Church auspices, activities were planned, were implemented and facilitated by volunteers in student government and a representative assembly. So our activities weren't so liberal; we were conservative in standards, so, no, I don't think we had any problems at all.
- INT Did you want to, perhaps, be less conservative than what it was, or did you have, you know, instead of always conforming to what was going on, did you perhaps want to stray a bit, you know, in keeping within the guidelines of the Church?
- DK Oh, definitely, because, you know, if anybody gets into a new office they'll guess, in authority, or a person who pulls the strings, you definitely would like to continue with those successful activities and then add upon the program some new, innovative, and creative activities. That was my goal when I took the office; that's the challenge that was given to me by President Waite [Mailo].
- INT Okay, let me ask you, do you remember specific guidelines set down by President Brower, himself, you know, for example, dances. "All dances will finish at twelve midnight." Or a certain amount of light had to be on, or something? Can you remember anything?
- DK I can't remember anything specifically. It seemed to be operated as business as usual, because Randy had set the example and when I filled his shoes it was basically following, you know, the standards that he had set, which were high standards: high moral, respect, and so forth. But no, nothing specific.
- INT Okay. Let's make a comparison; you are the student activities advisor, do you think the president--student presidency now--is a lot more lenient than what it was when you were the president?
- DK Yes, I would definitely have to say yes on that. Even though, you know, I filled his shoes and followed their same procedures and tried to implement some new programs. Comparatively, with the present ASBYU-Hawaii administration it seems that their ideas and their new ideas every year, how to hold a dance and so forth, in regards to activities--but I guess it's my personal evaluation, that they are more lenient; they are more open, like about what takes place.
- INT Can you give us an example, perhaps some kind of a comparison, you know, one of the activities that has been put on now, as compared to one of your activities that was highly watched over, so to speak?

DK In my opinion, to that question was--I think they were the same type of activities that we're sponsoring today. I guess I can't remember.

INT When you say the same, you mean dances and movies?

DK Dances, movies, your traditional Holuku, Na Hoa Pono, Homecoming.

INT Let's talk about finances, as far as operating your government; where did the money come from to operate the student government?

DK It came from the school, the college. We were given an operating budget.

INT And did that come out from student tuition, or was--did the school just give . . .

DK I think it's an appropriation out of the student fees; that I'm not quite certain of.

INT Okay. Did you remember going over your budget during that year?

DK Yes, I remember having to budget.

INT High over your budget?

DK Yes.

INT So perhaps the . . .

DK Wait, wait, I can't say that, because I never finished my term.

INT Oh, okay. Well, let's talk about that for a minute. It was in the November 22nd issue of the Ke Alaka'i that you submitted your resignation; what was the reason for that? Did it have to do with school?

DK No, it didn't have to do with school. It had to do with my family. At that time we were having difficulties at home, I mean in Honolulu, and I just personally felt it was the best idea if I were to be at home at this time.

INT Now, did you come back to school the next semester in January?

DK No, I think--no, when I went back home I decided that I'd take a rest and got a job.

INT Okay. Getting back to your activities, did you have much red tape as far as setting up your activities. For example, if you were to set up a dance, did you always have the dean or the president of the school saying, "Sorry, you can't do it this way. You must do it this way." Or, Sorry, you can't do this because of this."

- DK No, I don't think there was much red tape. The only red tape was in getting groups approved. Back then discos were popular and so, you know, live music so to speak. So just getting groups approved, prepaying the groups, and insuring that they were in proper dress standards and their music was in standards, too, was probably the only problems we had. But other than that there wasn't much red tape.
- INT Who was on that committee to review the groups? Did that include the president of the school?
- DK No. It was basically a student committee. I'm not sure--I'm not positive right now, but it had to have been some dance committee out of the social activities.
- INT So that there were students that made the decisions.
- DK Right, students made the decision.
- INT Did you also have a viewing committee for the movies that you showed?
- DK Yes. I would imagine, because I can't put my finger on it, that that committee would be--consisted of our advisor and maybe one or two of the faculty, and then a couple of the student officers.
- INT Dudley, can you think back-- I labeled this portion of it "cover-ups." Cover ups meaning something that the administration did not want the entire student body to know. The reason why I added this, I think, is because of the situation that happened a couple of months ago concerning our student body election. Can you think of any during that time?
- DK Cover-ups--during my term--gee, I can't think of, I can't think of anything.
- INT Let me ask you, how did the students view President Brower?
- DK Well, being a freshman and having a large freshman class there, and I can, you know, I could only base my opinion on the opinions of others. And particularly, you know, as student body president and being in contact with him, the basic opinion of him was that as far as an administrative relationship he was unreachable, untouchable. As far as the talk and rumors around campus, he wasn't very well liked.
- INT He wasn't very well liked?
- DK He wasn't very well liked, no. You've heard of, you know, different incidents in previous years of threats, slashing of his tires, simply because he came to quote unquote "clean house." So definitely an image like that wouldn't be well liked,

but his purpose and his goal I admired because it did bring some respectability back to Church College.

INT Okay. Did President Brower get down on you for anything at all during your term, something that you did that perhaps he didn't like so he had to personally come and visit you for it?

DK I can't remember President Brower ever coming to see me.

INT (Laughs) Something good or bad?

DK Yes, something good or bad.

INT (Laughs) Oh, that is . . .

DK No, I can't remember ever meeting him; probably even when I was called as student body president--I can't even remember it then. But, like I say, everything was done through the assistant dean.

INT And did you live on campus during that time you were student body president? Did you live in dorms?

DK Yes, I think so. Yes--I can't remember. Did I live in the dorms? Yes, I think I did.

INT Okay, take me back to your term in office, do you think you did fulfill the needs of the students with your activities?

DK I--of course, this is a biased opinion--I think we did. I think when we first got organized as an administration of student government we had those goals in mind. We had the intent of carrying on in the most successful of past administrations, activities, and began to add, I guess, a more personal touch of reaching the one--that was the model of that year. We were going to reach the one and so that our activities became more personal. We had little gatherings, little oh, what's that word for it--ho'olauleas, those kinds of things.

INT Talent things?

DK Yes, talent searches, those kinds of things. You know, more outdoor type activities, casual activities, but then you had your dances and your balls and your productions and pageants.

INT How did your counselors help you, Kevin and Te'au'i?

DK They were my best friends; and yet they worked hard and I knew I could depend on them. That's the only reason I chose them. They were a great help to me.

Kevin had experience in student government; I think I was in one of his committees when I was--as a first semester freshman. And he had some good experience. Whereas Te'aui, he got along well with most everybody. With that type of a combination we got along fine; we got to find out what the needs of the students were. I think for that part of my administration they helped and assisted me very well.

INT It was also during your term, I think, that the name of the school was changed from CCH to BYU-HC; what were your personal feelings about the change?

DK Being a first semester freshman, or just finishing my first semester there, I didn't have an opinion one way or the other. I talked to some, and these were some of the old timers who thought that the tradition was being lost by changing its name. And yet, others were mentioning some of the benefits that could be derived from a title--the word university and the college sister campus to BYU-Provo. And, you know, after hearing both sides of the story, my personal opinion was that I was more in favor of the change, becoming Brigham Young University-Hawaii Campus. So, you know, I was very much in favor of the change.

INT And as you look back now, in your present position, do you think that the change was for the best?

DK Definitely. Every time I get mail, particularly brochures and catalogs, sometimes they send under the Church College of Hawaii's name and I think about that and every time I see those I am glad the name has changed, for only the name sake, if you will. Because I am like that, too--I don't think nothing was lost in the name change because that's all it was. We still hold true to many of the traditional activities of Church College of Hawaii.

INT Also, during the summer of your term, there was a problem over at the Cultural Center.

DK Oh, the good old strike.

INT Yes, it was the Fijian strike; What were some of the effects here on campus?

DK What were some of the effects here on campus? I remember when--I used to work there, and worked there after, in fact, at the Polynesian Cultural Center, before my term and after my term when I came back to BYU-Hawaii. And I had gained a personal friendship with the president of the Polynesian Cultural Center, it was Brother [Vernon] Hardisty [OH-69], because he was the high councilman assigned to the student government from the stake. So not only did we work with the president of the university's administration, but also we were counseled by the high council. So Brother Hardisty and I were good buddies; I met more with him than I did with the president of the university. And I guess, for the most part, I'm not sure what type of effect, I couldn't any. There were students that were for,

but many were against; much more, I think the majority were against the type of movement to strike against the Polynesian Cultural Center. I guess mainly because it was a--I guess, labeled as a Church institution, closely, closely connected with Church College of Hawaii.

INT Were there any bad effects as you had to go outside the campus and outside the community, to set up different things? Did they refer to CCH as a place where the strike is?

DK My opinion, again, was you had a minority, and a small minority of people in favor of the strike, and particularly the effects of the strike. If I recall correctly, most of--I call them dissidents--were not so much from the community, both the Laie community and the university community, but were outside instigators. The leader of the strike, the striking Fijians was not from the community, but was their voice and they had some very radical ideas. Again, you know, most of the community and the university community as well, very conservative. If there were any infractions well then, they would be substantiated through the right--I guess what I'm trying to say is that we left it up to a better system than having a strike. But it did bring them to the attention--we're almost at the end--you know, unfair practice, labor practices was, I guess, the reason they were striking in the first place. And an investigation was being done and it was clearly substantiated that there were some infractions. And it could have probably been done without the strike. I guess the labor board could have found those results, those same results if they had made an investigation themselves without having to go through all this negative publicity. You're talking about buses being stoned; buses having to be police escorted. Again, it was a small group, a minority.

INT Dudley, during your term what was your relationship with the community? Perhaps the community people as a whole, and also, perhaps, some of the kids that used to come on campus, did you have any problems with them?

DK We didn't have, you know, we didn't have too many problems with off-campus. I don't recall too many problems, type of problems that we're facing today: vandalism, being harassed and physically threatened by teenagers today. Because it was one stake, university and community met together as a stake, so I would imagine because of this there was a pretty good rapport between the university and community.

INT Can you remember some of the frustrations that you possibly had in trying to fulfill the students' needs?

DK Again, one of the main bodies that's supposedly represented the students was a representative assembly and some of my frustrations were with that group. We had individuals that, unfortunately, saw their positions as more political than

INT Spiritual.

DK Yes, we used to get interesting meetings; probably spend the entire time, you know, just determining who was the boss of that representative assembly. But, again, there were personality conflicts, non-attendance, so those wards where representatives were very lax in their responsibilities were not represented well.

INT So, mainly, it was them that sort of stopped your progression as far as

DK Yes.

INT How was that assembly set up?

DK We would have weekly meetings where we would have a chairman to represent the assembly and we would sit as a committee for the student government.

INT Did they come from the wards, or were they . . .

DK Yes, they were organized from the wards, called as young adult representatives.

INT So that was their title.

DK And my title was young adult president.

INT Okay. So you weren't really called the student body president?

DK No, I wasn't called the student body president.

INT So you were the young adult president.

DK Yes, I was the young adult president.

INT Okay. So then they were called as the young adult representatives for their ward and they in turn represented their wards and fed it up to you.

DK Yes. And within this organization, I think a chairman was selected; I think Richard DeMello, was called. We used to have fun with those.

INT Perhaps, finally, let me quote something you said on May 3, 1974; it was the issue of the Ke Alaka'i and perhaps I can ask you the question pertaining to this. What was the proposed organization that will help us achieve this? Apparently, from my point of view, everything was not quite set up the way it should have been. So with this proposed organization, things would have been better. Can you remember that?

DK I had an organization?

- INT Yes, well, in essence.
- DK Gee, if I can recall correctly, the representative assembly, in my opinion, was not doing a good job in representing the students and it was felt, and I personally felt, that it was time for a more democratic type of organization where student government, student body have a choice of who they wanted as a student government president. So I'm assuming, because I can't recall any other organization where I had [been] on the drawing board then, I'm assuming that it was converting from being called to a Church calling, to a more democratic, elective student body.
- INT So that just meant the R.A., the representative assembly, or did that also mean your position as well?
- DK That meant both my position and the representative assembly; dissolving it entirely and establishing a more democratic organization.
- INT Did you have problems, perhaps, with non-members the way the government was set up?
- DK Not at all.
- INT No feedback?
- DK I don't recall any.
- INT So they just went along with the program, so to speak--the elected assembly. Did they have any type of representation because they were not in the wards?
- DK No. I recall that there was none, I think, to accommodate them--the non-members.
- INT Okay, what about students that lived off-campus, did the on-campus wards take them in as part of their wards?
- DK Yes, they were divided into boundaries; where you lived, you went to your on-campus ward. You had the option to attend your off-campus wards, too.
- INT So really then, really then the non-members were not represented?
- DK No. Not to say that they couldn't voice anything by coming into the offices where we were accessible to them, but as far as I know, no structured organization.
- INT Overall, perhaps we can just draw a short conclusion now, how would you summarize how the student government is run today with the elected officials, as compared to those who were in during your time, 1974, 1975--ten years ago?

DK Let's see, I reported, when I was serving as president, to President Mailo, high counselor, who was advised by the school administration and now I report-- well, the student body president reports to their advisor and to the assistant dean.

INT Who's that?

DK Charlie Goo [OH-354] and then to Brother [Larry] Oler [OH-272], who's the dean. Just the reporting aspect, it is much clearer now, with an elected student government. There are not too many people involved in the process. Comparatively, it works better using the democratic system. I would not recommend it going back to a church calling; I guess I'm too much of an American (laughs). I like the democratic process, people to be involved in the election process. I think that's an important experience for all students. Particularly for those from European countries, or foreign countries, to get a--just to get a glimpse, that's all it is, of how, you know, the democratic process works. As far as how far it's come since a church calling, I think there has been vast improvement. Because when I left and worked for a couple of years and came back, I've always been with the student government and as each year progressed, more positive changes have been made. You know, I've seen it--everybody wants you to change the constitution every year, and that's exactly what happened last year. And that will probably be the last time it will be changed for a long time to come. But I can say very confidently that the organization that we're using presently is very effective in caring for the needs of the students, not to mention the individuals who hold each post on their reference in trying to fulfill the needs of the students.

INT You know, you talked about the present organization, do you mean how the system is set up with all the various vice-presidents?

DK Yes, I mean the structure.

INT I forgot to mention several things and perhaps we can cover that before we close. Did you receive much help from the clubs back in your time?

DK In fact, it was operated like--we depended a lot on the clubs. In fact, they were more successful back then than they are now. The attendance of those clubs were much larger; they seemed to be more participative; they cooperated very well. I guess back then they had activities like initiation. You could call them good old days, because they are not like that today.

INT What do you think is the difference for the clubs being the way they are today as compared to how they were actively participating back then?

DK (Laughs) I was going to say because the academics have changed--I can't say that. I think it has to do with the student, today's student. If you comparing this

year's student with last year's students and the years before, I think they're becoming more competitive now. As a result, the student isn't into more extra curricular activity and so you find that the clubs are hard-pressed for attendance, with some exceptions. There are some ethnic groups that are very strong because of the ethnic intensity, but they seemed to have more fun back then. I'm not sure if it was because they were . . . [End of tape]

END OF INTERVIEW