

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY: Susan Dee Yap

Susan Dee Yap was born in 1948 in Berkeley, California to parents Jean and Robert Ruley. Susan is one of two children, she has an older brother. Her parents came over to Maui in the late thirties, and Susan followed in 1970 after attending the University of Nevada, Reno and living in California for a number of years. While in Maui, she married Harry Yap, a local Chinese Hawaiian man and had two children; Kainoa and Kekoa, who both attended Lahainaluna. Susan worked at Hobie Sports for almost two decades before becoming a dorm matron at Lahainaluna High School in 1996 where she took care of boarders until the 2010s.



Susan Yap at Lahainaluna on November 11, 2022.

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ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

with

Susan Dee Yap (SY)

November 11, 2022

Lahaina, Maui

BY: Ty Kāwika Tengan (TT) and Wailana Medeiros (WM)

[NOTE: Also present in the interview is Micah Mizukami, Associate Director for the Center of Oral History]

TT: Okay. Let's fire off there. Okay. Aloha. This is November 11th, 2022. We're doing an oral history with Susan Yap out here at Lahainaluna, and we are in the conference room at the athletic department and the time is 4:16 p.m. Interviewers are Ty Kāwika Tengan, Wailana Medeiros, and Micah Mizukami. Aloha Susan!

SY: Aloha, aloha.

TT: Actually, I'm going to let Wailana take a stab at it.

SY: Okay, okay.

WM: So would you please state your full name?

SY: My full name is Susan Dee Yap. Mhm.

WM: So when and where were you born?

SY: I was born in Berkeley, California, and February 1st, 1948.

WM: And who were your parents?

SY: My parents were Jean Ruley and Robert Ruley.

WM: And where are they from? Both of your parents?

SY: My father was from Washington; Mount Vernon, Washington. And my mother was from Kansas.

WM: What did they do? What was their occupation?

SY: My father was a mechanical engineer, he worked with General Motors in Fresno, California, we moved from Berkeley to Fresno. And then my mother, she in the early thirties. . . . she read a newspaper article in the Kansas paper that. . . . Baldwin. . . . Alexander and Baldwin needed a social director, and she had never heard of Maui before. So, she came over in the late, late thirties and was a social director, she went to all the different plantation camps. And then she had I guess, been going with my father. The war broke out. She had to join the Red Cross and get on the Lurline and get back to my father, marry him off before the war. They were going to be married here. However, they never made it back for 35 years and my father made it. . . . Came and loved it so much, he quit the General Motors job and moved to Hawai'i. So, that's just a little off the wall story, but it's so interesting. Anyway, so that's—so what did they do then? They came to O'ahu and they were like residential managers of the condominium.

WM: Where are your ancestors from on either side?

SY: Well, my maiden name Ruley is Welsh, from Wales, and I'm pretty much just the basic white Scottish, Irish, English kind of thing. I did do a DNA or whatever, and I had all the basic white stuff, but I had a little bit of Basque. That was a. . . . It's a country right between Spain and Portugal in the Pyrenees, and they were shepherders and so I feel I have a little Basque.

WM: Do you have any siblings?

SY: I have one brother.

WM: One brother.

SY: Older, older. Four years older.

WM: Okay. So what are the places that you've lived?

SY: Okay, I was born in Berkeley and then graduated from high school in Fresno, California. Then, I went to the University of Nevada, in Reno. And then I was done with that after two years. And then, I moved to San Francisco to be in the heart of all the sixties. And then, I moved to Maui because my mother wanted to show me Maui. And I came here, was not interested in Hawai'i, came here to visit them. She brought me to Maui and then I said, okay, this is the place. So I went back, wound it up in San Francisco, and moved to Maui. And that was in 1970.

WM: 1970. And you live in Lahaina now?

SY: Yes.

WM: So what is your neighborhood like?

SY: You know, my neighborhood actually, we're. . . we're on the third generation in my neighborhood, which is really cool because my in-laws built the house, raise their seven children in the house, and then now we're still in the house, and real raised ours and now we have grandchildren. So I guess that's. . . four generations. Yes. So. . . And that's the kind of neighborhood we lived in, an old plantation house. And then we have just rebuilt—and—you know, my son lives with his family one side 'ohana unit, and then people across the street, Kaleopu's, they are on fourth generation, maybe fifth generation—and people on the corner—you know, my husband was raised with all this. It's kind of. . .

WM: . . . Its right in Lahaina town?

SY: Its right in Lahaina behind the wharf, right behind the wharf.

WM: Who's your spouse?

SY: Oh, my spouse is Harry Yap.

WM: And then where they from?

SY: He is born and raised in Lahaina. Born and raised in Lahaina. Father full Chinese. Mother. . . Hawaiian, Chinese. And once again, her family was generations on Front street. And. . . Grandpa Yap was mostly in Kēōkea, Kula, where a lot of Chinese people. His, his father was from China so we can't go too far back in there. But, Harry's mother was born and raised in Lahaina also. So. . .

WM: . . .And has he lived in Lahaina all his life?

SY: All of his life.

WM: All his life.

SY: Well, they were in Kula for a while and they built a house here. And then, the old road, you know. He was born here.

TT: What's the. What was his mother's family names?

SY: Bright. Bright, yeah. And then. And then before it was Bright, it was Pauly. So it was the Pauly family, which is kind of big in Lahaina also.

WM: How many children do you have?

SY: I have two sons. Two boys.

WM: Two boys. And how old are they?

SY: Oh, gosh. They were born in '75 and '77, so they're. . . . [Attempts to count how old they are]

WM: (laughs)

TT: . . . '75 is me, so that's 47. . .

SY: . . . 47 and 45!

WM: And where are they now?

SY: One is here, and one was in the—Kainoa was in the Coast Guard for 20 years, stationed all around, and he just retired from the Coast Guard. . . . And he lives in Montana. . .

WM: . . . Montana. . .

SY: . . . Where the wife is. . .

WM: And. . .

SY: . . . Cur—Kekoa.

WM: Cool! Alright, so I guess we are going to get into some boarding questions!

TT: Yeah why don't you give us the story of how you came to be working at Lahainaluna?

SY: Okay, I'm going to retrace back one little bit because it has to do with boarding. Harry, my husband's, grandfather was James Kay Bright from the Big Island from, Parker Ranch. He came over as a border in 1918. He came over as a border. He was one of those ones where they didn't particularly go all the way to 12th grade. They. . . . They were cadets. And when they graduated, maybe at 16 or 18, whatever, I'm not really sure the program, but. . . . when they graduated, they went out into the community and they were either firemen or they were policemen. They were some kind of supervisory job. And, when he graduated from Lahianaluna in 1918, he went out and he was supervisor of the cannery, the pineapple cannery. So, I just wanted to say that, that in 1918, my husband's grandfather. . . . Or his grandfather was a border and that's kind of cool goes way back. You know, so.

SY: Is your husband a Lahainaluna. . .

SY: . . . Yes. His mother was. He was. And my two children are. Yes. . .

TT: . . . They weren't boarders?

SY: They. . . . were not boarders. They were day students. And my grandson that's left, you know, he would have been Lahainaluna. But then he went to that Kamehameha School.

ALL: (Laughter)

SY: But anyway, sorry, I just wanted to tell that about boarding because it's so interesting and. . . . You know, that it's just generationally, it just means so much.

TT: Thank you so much. But could you tell us the story of how you came to be working at Lahainaluna and eventually the roles that you played?

SY: Okay. I was a. . . . I was a bookkeeper at Hobie Sports for 16 or 18 years and they got sold out to a bigger sports company. And, they said, "all of you people in the office don't need to come in on Monday morning." So, I was unemployed. . .

TT: . . .Where was Hobie sports?

SY: Hobie Sports was on Front Street and they were at Whalers Village and they just got bought out by a bigger company that wanted to bring in their own people. So I, I was. . . . Dealt with. . . . What do I want to do when I grow up? So, Mr. Nakano was a principal at Lahainaluna, and my son Keko had just graduated. And, so, he said, you know, I really need someone in the dorm—in boarding. Just try it for a little while, you know? And he said, just until we find someone. Well, 18 years later (laughs) they didn't find anyone because I don't. . . . But anyway, that's what happened. I just was at a time in my life where I was figuring things out and I was just going to do this for a little while and got right into it. So. . .

TT: . . .This was your youngest son just graduated?

TT: Yes. So this is in 94. He graduated 95. I started in 96.

TT: Could you talk about what it was like that first year, or perhaps the first few months?

TT: Oh, it was challenging. It was challenging both of my sons who were day students, they said, "you're going to do what?!" They said, "Oh, those borders are going to eat you alive!" I said, "Not!" So anyway, it was. . . . it was challenging because the previous person, the previous "dorm matron" had been real strict, real kind of hard edge, real strict, real good. But, you know, it was just from a time where it went from boys, and then they brought in the girls. And, you know, there was just a lot of changes going on in the program. But, I was a very different personality than she was. And that's just how it is. You know, the kids just they said, "wow you're really different than her", so it was a real growing time period for the students as well as myself, learning about them and the program. You know, I was just kind of thrown in there, but. . .

TT: . . .And who was the previous matron?

TT: Mary Helen Lindsey. And prior to that, it was Pua Lindsey, her mother. So, you know, they were. . . . you know, led with a strict---they had boys for so long, too. So, the girls

changed the whole dynamics of it---even though they came in the eighties. It just, you know, change is something that has to work, work through. So, so I came in and I kind of just learned the. . . . Learned the ringers of what you go through, and I'd say the wrong thing and, you know, learn that I shouldn't go with that---go another direction. . . . And. . . . Just. It was a learning process and. . .

WM: When you got hired, was there some sort of kind of an orientation process that you had to go through?

SY: Not much. (laughs) not much. And when, you know---they worked in the morning, they worked in the morning, and so I had to be there at 6:15, right when they checked in time clock. And, if anyone was sick, then I had to take the sick ones, you know, to the doctor. And so I never knew what was ahead for me. You know, I never knew if it was going to be one sick plan or, you know, five sick ones or, you know. And I learned that at the beginning of the year, a lot of the freshmen were a little sick because they were just adjusting. You know, they were tired, they were home sick. They didn't understand, "why am I here?" So, you know, I kind of had to get that balance going. And. . . . um. . . . I just no, I did not have anyone. So the helpful ones to me were when they worked in the morning, you have students assigned to you. And so the four students that I had that were dorm workers, they were seniors and they were very helpful. They were very nurturing. And so they really would would help me along. You have to do this. You have to do that. But that was, that was the core of the whole program was the nurturing, the mentorship, the growing, the leadership, you know, the freshmen to, to help them out understand the nurture. And then as you got older, the seniors were able to take the leadership programs and, you know, be lovingly with the homesick ones. Like, "you'll get over it" and, you know, "you need to work", and, "this is how it is, and if you don't want to be here, it won't work for you." And, you know, just the structure of the program is so unique. And when it's all working right, it just is all working right, you know?

TT: So what were your duties as explained to you when your first to take on the role?

SY: Not much. I don't think that they---I don't think you really know the job unless you sit in the job. You know, I. . . . I don't think, you know, the department is a boarding department unless you're ingrained in the boarding department. Because, when my sons were in school and they were day students, you know, sometimes I'd wake up in the morning and I'd have a living room full of boarders. They said, "Oh yeah, the boys didn't have anywhere to stay, so they just stay here." I said, "Oh, okay, that's fine." Well then I started working in the boarding department and realized that they have to have a signed pass by their parents, they have to get approved to leave. And, you know, there's just so many things that you learn once you're in the program. Like those ones on my floor back when the kids were in school shouldn't have been there. They were jumping some kind of secret loop, you know! So anyway, so the kids were helpful. Bobby Watson was the farm foreman and he was, you know, kind of strict with them. He was strict with them. And he was a little hesitant with me because people come and go, you know, including boarders, you know, they come and go and you want to. . . . you want to get an impact that the person is going to stay, you know, like they mean it and you're going to be here for the

long haul. So anyway---and Mr. Nakano was new also. He was a new principal. He had only been here a year. So the boarding was new to him also. And there were---there's two dorm counselors at each---two at the girls dorm, two at the boys dorm. So four, and three out of the four were all new. And I was new, the principals new. So it took a real---you know, we were all---so there was one dorm counselor that had been there a number of years, Katie Greer, who I hope you will get around to interviewing. And she had been here a number of years under Mr. Ariyoshi, so she kind of was our leader, you know, and she was very helpful.

TT: And so there wasn't any handover or discussion with Mrs. Lindsey or. . . ?

SY: No.

SY: She had left. She took emergency leave to take care of her children. . . . Oh, her children--her parents! She was the caretaker/guardian for her parents. And there wasn't really much---I wasn't---I would try and ask her questions and she would, you know, she would answer. But just so many years of experience, she just knew how to do things. So I just kind of grew with it. You know, I felt that the seniors were very helpful because it was a strong program then. But, then you just had to let it grow. And I grew with it almost, so.

SY: So when you came to sort of find out what it was that you did, what would your daily routine be and what were your roles that as you came to go into them?

SY: Okay. So. I would come I worked a split shift. I worked 6:15 to 11:15, and then 2 to 4:30. So, I was---my presence was when the boarders were not at school, mostly. So 6:15 I was kind of helped oversee them at work, made sure they went out to work and so forth. And if there were sick people then they'd go back to the dorm and I'd have to get them breakfast and eventually take them to the doctor. I also, if there was no one sick, I would go back to the dorm and check the rooms, you know, make sure they made their bed, go over some if some of them were having trouble with their schedules, I'd go talk to the registrar, just kind of getting that situated. So, then I was off at 11:15 and then I came back at two when school was pau, and then they would go back out to work again. And, you didn't really go to the doctor in the afternoon. So, that was---unless there were appointments or something. And, towards the end of school they would have senior projects and some of them would be off campus. And so I would drive them to a senior project, internship, or they had to go apply for scholarships, you know, things like that. I was just kind of the, a "dorm mom" is what it was, overseeing them and, you know, also in charge of, you know, inventory for the dorms and making sure that the cleanliness was there. And also, I was in charge of their weekend passes. They could go home and they had to earn it. They had to be in good standing. And they could go home Friday after work and come back Sunday by curfew. If they were in good standing. If they weren't and they had overtime hours or their grades were off or something like that, they maybe either couldn't go on the weekend and get denied or they took an overnigher, which was Saturday after work till Sunday. So, a lot of times you had to weigh that, if they got denied, the parents would be upset. And I kind of---I was like a liaison to the parents also because after all, they had entrusted their children with us and someone needed to be on

on the page with them about, yes, they're sleeping and, you know, they're they're eating. And, you know, because I'm sure you know that there was homesickness, you know, and it is usually with freshmen and how it spreads can spread really fast from one room to the next quickly. So. So that was my duties. And then I was like the social director too, for dances, for Halloween parties, for dances, Christmas parties, you know, stocking stuffer kind of part, just to keep the celebration of holidays present in the dorms.

SY: How many holidays would you be celebrating? Halloween, Christmas?

SY: Halloween, Christmas. There were two dances. There was usually a dance right before Thanksgiving when they went home. A dance then and then maybe a Christmas dance or--and then there was a, a senior dance, you know, where they honored the seniors, you know, did a tribute to the senior boarders. And it was always very special, a border stance, because a border would ask a day student, so, you know, day students, sure, somebody if you got asked to a border dance. So you know kind of coordinating that, their activities and, yeah, it's it every day was different. I think, you know, things would come up and. You know, and they get in trouble, you know, and then that cause drama, there is always drama, you know. But that was just life and was young girls. Young boys.

SY: And could you talk a little bit about the differences with the boys and the girls, and being the dorm matron?

SY: Yes, it was. But we got that got taken away. It was a "dorm attendant" after that, I think. And so I felt like a dorm advisor kind of. So---oh, the boys and girls! Well, girls, you know, because I had two boys, I kind of know the gig on the boy thing. Girls. Oh, my, goodness. They were a mystery to me. And, they can take you around the world and back. And, they got to you know—I tried to give them advice and they would say—you know, they break up with a boyfriend and the world was going to end. And I would say, "just wait till tomorrow, it'll all look differently tomorrow." And then I could I overheard him telling me one day somebody would say, "Oh, go talk to Miss Yap." "No, I'm not going to talk to her. She's just gonna tell me to wait for 24 hours" (laughs) so you know, the girls—and then they could get like—I deny weekend or something. They'd be so mad at me, they could not talk to me for a year! I mean, they were so mad at me. They never let it go. But the boys, they could be mad at me and 2 hours later, "hoo Miss Yap, come taste this, you know, you'll like this!" So they just, you know, went right out. They didn't hold any of that. So if I had my way, I would go hang out, sit at the boys dorm over the girls dorm. I hope girls don't watch this. I do. I do love you. But yes, it just it was different. It was different. And, you know, the girls were cleaner. The boys weren't. And I think that's just how it is. But there was a lot of strict rules. You know, they had to wax the floor. And, you know, the seniors would make the freshmen clean the cracks with a toothbrush. I mean, it was real a real pecking order that you had to go through because when you were going to be a senior, you got to do that to a freshman. You have to clean the cracks with a toothbrush. So, so, anyway, there was a difference. But, you know, they all came together. They all had each other's back. And I talked to a border and he said one of the. . . . one of the really endearing things he remembers is when they had, like, Spirit Week or Homecoming and the, the girls' dorm is up on the hill and the boys' is

here, and they would stand out on their balconies and do cheers to one another, yell cheers, and then end up singing the alma mater. And just the camaraderie of that was so special. So and there was always differences with the day students. You know, the day students could be mean. They could say, "you boarders, you just slaves of the school." And, you know, sometimes there was dissension in that. But, you know, we tried to work it out.

TT: Could you talk a little bit about the ethnic background, and the differences, perhaps if you noticed anything with regard, especially with Hawaiian boarder students. . .

SY: Yes. . .

TT: . . .And in relation to the others?

TT: Yes, of course, there was more---everybody got in there. You know, there was always---there wasn't a lot of prejudice. I mean, everybody was just, you know, you--you're Hawaiian and you're going to carry your ukulele all around. And, you know, well, you can help me with Japanese class. And, you know, but I'm just saying this as an outside adult too, you know, living in the dorm is--I wasn't sleeping in the dorm with them. So, I'm sure things went on. I'm sure there was some hazing too that went on, but. Um. . . Well, I'll say that I am quite sure haoles got a harder time, but there weren't as many. But, the Hawaiian part of it was. I think, they were very proud. There's a lot of a lot of history, a lot of Hawaiian history, at this school and in the boarding department. And I think I would I would say that the Hawaiian culture carried that with great pride, and I think always tried to personify that, like, you know, the traditions of going to the L, of carrying on about David Malo, of, you know, sometimes the spirits and just the whole area of of the Lahainaluna. And I think the Hawaiian culture, the boys and the girls felt that. They felt it, and they were able to teach it on and pass it on too, I think if everyone was willing to learn. But they definitely had the empowerment, I think.

TT: And could you talk a little bit about differences that you notice in terms---maybe not differences, but is there any distinct qualities of students coming from different communities? Because, you know, there is the rural Maui, those from Hawai'i Island. . .

SY: Oh, those. Yes. And in my time period. . .

TT: . . .Where are they coming from too also, is part of the question. . .

SY: I can remember going to O'ahu and recruiting out in Wai'anae and they, they thought that Lahainaluna was a private school. I mean, you know, they just---O'ahu just didn't know that much about it. O'ahu kids would come and they'd get in trouble kind of quickly, and they would always say, Oh, they're too worldly, they're too street smart. You know, they can get by everything. So they're, a lot of their time was limited. We didn't have many Kauai kids. We had a lot of well---of course---mostly Maui. And, you know, to be a border, you couldn't live in Lahaina. But we got Kahakuloa that was the---so Kahakuloa and then, you know, over the Pali, anywhere other than that, you could come. Lāna'i and

Moloka‘i, of course, we get them. And that was a lot of tradition. A lot of tradition. “My father went there and my grandfather went there” and also, Lāna‘i and Moloka‘i, there was so much here to offer, you know, extracurricular activities, bands and sports and all that things—so—and sometimes it was a little too much for kids, you know, that were from rural and the same with Hāna. Hāna would come but Hāna was tradition too, a lot, of a lot of family tradition. The big island, we got a lot from Ka‘ū, and you know on that side, Curtis Town and and even what is that Hāmākua Coast but what’s the one right out of some of the. Yes, yes. We got kids from there---and then you know, so then you get to the boarding department and then the big island kids would gravitate together, and the O‘ahu kids would gravitate together. And then Marshall Islands, too. They also had Marshall Islands. And that was that brought in another dynamic because they could never go home. They need. . . . just they needed to find friends right away and sponsors because they couldn’t it was too expensive for them to go home even at Christmas. So, but they had family here and so forth.

TT: Could explain a little bit about that Marshall Island collection.

TT: You know, I don’t know how that started. I know that the Pinho family, we talked about this, we’re from Hāna. And they graduated from---they were boarders, they were from Hāna graduated from Lahainaluna. And then he went off and Curtly Pinho went off to Marshall Islands and had a construction company. And when his kids got old enough go to high school, he just, he had a lot of kids and he just kept sending them. I don’t know if it was his connection that was the Marshall Islands, but he did perpetuate it and continue it on. Yes, he was Hawaiian, Pinhos, Portuguese, I think, from Hāna. And and so that was the Marshallese connection. And then now in Maui, there’s quite a. . . . Quite a culture of Marshallese. So and, you know, they come to us.

TT: And those boarders that were coming, there were also Marshallese students as well? Or were they mainly Hawai‘i based students that were from the from the Marshall Islands?

SY: Oh, they were, they were they were half Marshallese. Yes. Spoke. And we even got one year we got a boy from Chuuk and we had two girls from Marshall Islands. And he was he was so---oh gosh, he didn’t speak much English, and just spoke Chuukese, and who knew that? And so the Marshall Island girls, I would say, “you can go talk to um” and they’d go “miss it. . . . It doesn’t mix the language!” and I go, “it’s got---there’s got to be something that mixes.” And they just said, “no, no, no mixing!” But yeah, he lasted for a while. We got a couple from Bikini Island, you know, because that was, you know, such a grim story with the nuclear. And they didn’t they didn’t last too long. It was difficult for them because, you know, they’re shy and it’s a close inner culture. And so they either made it or they didn’t. But, you know, when I’d interview kids and they’d I’d say, “why do you want to come to boarding?” And they’d say, “Oh, my grandfather came here.” And I would say, “You can’t come for your grandfather, you have to come for you.” And you know, and they got homesick and they just said, “This isn’t for me.” We used to have to tell them,” once. . . . once you go home, then that’s it. There’s no going home for the weekend and feeling better and come back. If you make a decision to leave, you have to leave.” And so it would make them second think because, you know, in a little while,

maybe they in a low moment, they'd made a bad decision and then they wouldn't have the opportunity to come back. So that was always a second thought. And we could talk ourselves blue in the face, you know, like, "no, this is a good program. You like it here. I can see leadership in you. . . . la la la la." Talk to um for hours. And some of them would go, "okay, I'm going to reconsider." And some would look at me and go, "okay, I'm out of here. I'm leaving, I'm calling my mom." So, you know, it's it just is what happens happens with the personalities, the balance, all of that. Sorry. You were asking about the Marshallese. Oh, okay.

SY: No, no this is fine. I mean. I mean all of this. You know, the dynamics of your role.

SY: Right.

SY: As that counselor.

SY: Yes.

SY: This is really another important part of it.

SY: Yes.

TT: So far as I know for this project, we're kind of looking at that period that you were primarily the dorm attendant, dorm matron, dorm mom, in the in the nineties. With a little bit of meal afterwards as well. Could you, could you talk about what the program look like in those, I guess, sort of been five years when you were first starting up until around '99, 2000. What was the boarding program like then?

SY: When I came into it. It, I filled it really, really had a lot of strengths because it was coming from Mr. Ariyoshi who was a devoted principal to the boarders. He was he was a fill-in father. He was a good overseeing principal. And, all of this structure of boarding from the, you know, the seniors being the leaders and. . . the mentors to down to the freshmen, all the things were in place. You know, there was a prese. . . there was officers, and there were lieutenants and captains, and lieutenants were upperclassmen. And they were in line for being an officer. And, you know, they would say, "you need to do this and you need to do this", and "your room isn't clean" and "you need to weed in the front yard." And, and they were the leaders, and then the little sergeants were the class below and they were mentored by them. And then the president and vice president would oversee them. And the structure, it was probably almost like military was, you know, if something was wrong, you went to the lieutenant and if the lieutenant said, "I can't deal with this", you go the captain, and then the captain would go to the president. And so there was a structure and it worked so well. You know, it was---kids were they would mind their grades and they would do their work out in the yard. And, you know, the structure was just there. Then eventually, you know, there was a new principal, Mr. Ariyoshi left. Mr. Nakano---you had to learn that skill as being overseer and I had to learn, and it was a lot of learning going on. And we tried to---I don't think the strength of the boarding was ever as unique as it was when I first came there. And not that it went

downhill, it just the operation of its in the structure was it was there in a different way, but it wasn't as disciplined in working, you know, all the the places, the blocks in line, like when I first got there.

TT: What do you attribute that to? Aside from different people coming in? It seems like something like that is also attributable to a lot of changes in education. . .

SY: Yes.

SY: Diff---yes, different people coming in. The students being a little different. Their. . . their willingness to come into the programs wanting to better themselves and work hard, listen to their peers, you know, that kind of change. The grades went down a little bit. It was still there. You know, the heart and soul, they are the heart and soul of the school. But and we tried to, um, we tried to keep that. At least I had that as an example, you know. But then and parents were different, children were different, parents were different. They would get in trouble and they would say, "No, my child would never do anything like that." And, you know, there was a lot of challenges as there is today. We it's that structure was so good. And then out on the farm, too, you know, there wasn't, there wasn't poultry anymore. There wasn't---the piggery was starting to close down. There were fewer and fewer. So the responsibilities that an animal was dependent on you was kind of slack. Boarding was very connected with the ag department. And when you came in to boarding, you had to take an agriculture class. You get two credits for---you get credit for taking an ag class. And so the ag teacher would kind of have a two week workshop when they first came in to boarding, learn how to rake leaves and pick up rubbish and just kind of the basics and then that. . . that two. . . two credits and ag got taken away. It got taken away because other departments were feeling like 'why should ag get that advantage?' We want to get it in the Culinary Department, we want to get it in the voyaging department. We want to get it, you know, so it kind of fell through with the ag and---and, you know---Lahainaluna, there was a time when the---it was completely self-sufficient and harmonious. And, you know, the ag teacher was in line with the principal. And there was a auto shop, and there was a carpentry, and there was a machine shop, and they repaired things on the campus. And, you know, it just all clicked. And a lot of that got not taken away, but it phased out. And, I think we were just there were many, many changes going on.

TT: Do you know, why, especially on the side of the farm, things were starting to get phased out?

SY: A lot of it involved Department of Health. You know, the the eggs had to be graded and, you know, they were sold only to---mostly the staff or, you know, the schools down the hill. We would grow things. And corn oh, corn was really sought after. Every teacher of every school wanted the Lahainaluna corn. Um. . . So the poultry closed. The dairy had closed way before I got here. And then the piggery was limited. You know, we would sell a pig every couple of months or, you know, but not enough to make a lot of money. So I think there were just changes in that---in the whole thing---I'm probably not doing justice in my explanation of it. But everybody saw a different, you know, way of looking at it.

We were able to, you know, and I don't---from the time I was there, from '96 to until 2014, 16, whenever I left. . . . It wasn't a dynamic---slowly get downhill. I mean, you know, we found ways to generate the you know, the kids and get their pride in being good workers or whatever. But from what I hear in the olden days, maybe in the eighties and nineties, there were waiting lists for boarding department. When they interview, there was like lines of people that wanted to apply for boarding. And that application of applying kind of went downhill also. You know, we didn't have as many. I'd go out and recruit and, you know, there just wasn't as many. And I think a lot of that attributed to the base student formula---what is that? That standard student formula where you got Moloka'i and Lāna'i, you got the D.O.E., public schools, got x-amount of money for each student. So when you that's how much money you got. So your enrollment got you a little more money---I'm explaining this in a bad way. But therefore, other schools didn't want to encourage our recruiting as much as used to, you know, because when they would lose a student, they would lose that—a school's—I forget what the, you know, the proper terminologies. Student weight based formula or something like that. Yeah. So that had an impact also. That had an impact.

WM: Kind of backtracking a little bit.

WM: Oh, how would you. . . . Oh, I guess discipline is the word? How would you go about doing that? Because you would have to check the rooms, right?

SY: Right.

WM: So what was your method? And like, how is that a little different than the Lindseys?

SY: Yeah, I'd give them a few more chances. Yeah. You know, I would tell them what they were doing wrong, you know, and if they just didn't. . . . Just didn't comply with it, you know, didn't care or had an attitude, I would give them 3 hours, 3 hours of overtime. And that was if you were late, if you were late for work, you got 3 hours, if you were late for breakfast, you know, if you had a dress code, if you forgot a belt, you know, maybe the first time. But if you give one---oh, this is what I learned in the first week that, that, that you have to stick with. That is a standard. You must not deviate from, is that you must treat them all the same. And if you let a kid go who didn't have his belt and you said, well, bring it tomorrow, and then another kid comes, they go. And I said, 3 hours you're you get 3 hours on a belt. Well, how come that kid didn't---ho, you learn right away. What's good for one is good for all. I, I really got called on that. So. So they were, there were different infractions that you would get overtime hours. Overtime hours meant that you had to work in addition to your regular work hours. So you work from 6 to 7 in the morning, 7 to 7:30, you got ready for school and 7:30 you walked over to the cafe and then school start at 7:45. Then you're out of school at two, at 2:15, you're back at time clock, you punch in, 2:15, you work till four. If you played sports, you work till 3:30. So all boarders want to play sports because the coaches would—actually—not they wouldn't start their practice right after school if they had boarders they would respect that and go later. So, if you had overtime hours and you were an athlete, the athletic department, I mean, your team lost, which really sucked, you know, so it made you kind of have to rise

if you were to commit to being on a team and don't get overtime hours. So, if you got overtime hours, your name went up on the chalkboard, down at time clock; 3 hours, and you had to work that off with the farm foreman. You had to work it off after 4:00 after it was pau hana for everybody else. So then maybe you'd get. . . get late somewhere and then you wouldn't have a belt and you didn't make your bed. You could have, you know, accumulation of hours and you get 9 hours. Then you won't be getting a weekend going home and you'll be up here working off those hours. Now, the other thing was a major, and that would be if you got. . . If you were late from curfew coming up for the weekend, you could go to town. You signed out at the dorm and you had to be back by 10:00 curfew if you weren't back, not good. And that was more than 3 hours, or it was a major. . . Let me see, a major would be a drinking or a well, a boy caught in a girl's dorm and a girl in the boys' dorm. That was immediate dismissal. Majors were, you know, late for curfew, swearing, getting in a fight, you know, some---a big, big flaw. Then you had a major. And that meant that you had to basically work off about an acre of land. And that was given by the farm foreman, and you were confined for a week until your major was worked off and there was a advisory board hearing. And the advisory board was the adults of the boarding department, the dorm counselors, the vice principal, and, you know, the ag teacher, the cafeteria manager. And we'd have an advisory board meeting and decide whether this kid was worthy of staying or not, and whether he'd get kicked out or not. . .

TT: And you were on that?

SY: . . .The principal would. Yes, I was on that. The principal would have the final---if we all voted to kick them out, like if they really weren't living up to making an effort. . . we would vote and then never got to see the ballot and the ballots were taken to the principal. The principal would read the ballots and inform the boarder and his parents whether they got to stay or not. It, it fell in the lap of the principal made a final decision. So if they if we voted them out and the principal changed that decision, that was up for them to decide. So. But that was it just there was always a, there was always a consequence for your misbehavior.

TT: You notice a pattern in which students. . .

TT: Ones that didn't want to be here accumulated a lot of hours, you know, and just you know some kids would have like 30 hours there. They're not going to make that up. So, was there a pattern? Um, I think mostly the, the kids that didn't care, you know, they just didn't want to be here. Otherwise they would have, you know, made a commitment, I think. And it is an it is a commitment, you know, I mean, day students are going home after school, eating McDonald's, playing video games, and the borders are here working, you know. And then after that, they're studying and everything was, you know---so that's why at noon on Saturday, they could get off work at 11. Go back to the dorm, clean their room and sign out and go to town and not come back till 10:00. And they were all on their own. And that was another thing that they had to have the maturity to be a freshman at 14 years old, and sign out and go down to, Lahaina town and behave, you know, like a good representative of the school. You know, if you got caught shoplifting in town and

the principal had to go get you from the police station, the worst people that gave that border the worst time was the other fellow boarders, because they brought a black mean to them. You know, that was, that was shameful. So that was their hardest. . . . you know, a peer to have to deal with almost more than the adults. And yes, that would get you a major and that would probably get you kicked out. There was a zero tolerance, you know, with drugs and alcohol. There was a zero tolerance. And sometimes I felt that kids got influenced. . . . And wrong place, wrong time, you know. But that was how the rule was.

TT: Was there quite a bit of drinking and drugs going on?

SY: Well, you know, we always if you got caught in a dorm that was pretty—that wasn't too bright of you, you know. Like I said, I know you guys are going to do this, but go away. Go do it at your sponsors or, you know, go to---I'm not encouraging them to do it, but don't do it on your campus. This is your home. This is your backyard. So---it and you know it's going to happen. You know that they're going to do that stuff, but. Oh, well. The Hawaiians from Hāna were the best uh, pulehu. Barbecue guys. They were. They were the best hands down. Let them do the barbecues. The Moloka'i kids brought the best venison. Pipi kaula. Oh, let me see. Well, pineapple was done in Lāna'i, but that was just the different things that, that---Marshallese would bring us jewelry and baskets. They made these beautiful baskets. And I remember seeing one of the Marshallese girls brought me a basket and her daughter is in boarding now. And I said, "oh, you know, your mother made this basket for me and I still have it is so beautiful." She said "my mother didn't ever make any baskets" (laughs), so it was kind of funny. But yeah, there was just an order and I think that as time went on, it was just—the kids got a little—their personalities were different, they were a little lazier. The parents kind of have their blinders on like—they had to—we all had to be on the same team. And, you know, sometimes that just kind of fell apart. So. But it is truly a wonderful, wonderful program when it was working right. And it's so valuable. And I'm sure those boarder, those alumni boarders have many, many fun stories to tell. And that's what I---and I don't know if I said this before, but that's what was so special about that reunion, that 175th reunion that was at Royal Lahaina. That was with all the alumni, and with the current borders and to to see them all there together, the old ones and the young ones and telling the stories about, "Oh, we used to do this and we did that." And, you know, even that class of '65 that was just here that we gave the tour for one of the borders, I said, "So what were you one of those drinking beer on top of the roof?" And he said, "No, we were fried chicken. I work, I work poultry. And we bring the chicken up there and grill it." And it was just, you know, you never would have heard that story unless you, you know, weren't—it wasn't—they were sharing talking with each other. So anyway, it is such a wonderful program. And there's just so much there's so much to it that by saying it was run so structured and well when I first got there and then, you know, it phased out, I would like to say it changed. You know, it didn't phase out to go down. It just took a turn, just took a different turn. And then that wonderful harmony that it had in that one time.

TT: Well, I know you need to report in a little bit to your position. And again, we said this is only just the first of many sessions with you. . .

SY: Sure.

TT: So we'll come back with more of this the next time. But any last words and it sounds like those.

TT: Are some of those some of your last words?

SY: They are I can't really say I---I just knew nothing about the boarding program and I was thrown into the middle of it. And I grew to love it dearly. You know that L, I was worried about the fire and, you know, it's still there. I wondered if lime burns. I don't know if--you know the white lime, but I did, I was watching it when it was by the L and it got to the top and something ignited it. And I hope it isn't those you know, there's plaques all along, David Malo's grave. There's plaques from boarders of all the different years. And they---so it's seniors and they go "class of" and they list all their names and they're made out of clay, and wood, and, you know, tin and glass. And so I hope that they're still there. But yeah, it is. . . . It's a pretty terrific program. And I love it and I love boarders. And, you know, I think I've said, people say, "oh, yeah, my daughter goes up there and I have to say, oh, are they a boarder or day student? And I said, "oh, I don't know her."

(Laughter)

TT: But thank you so much.

SY: Yes, I, I hope I haven't said anything detrimental to the boarder part or. . .

TT: You can always edit anything. . .

SY: Yes, I mean, explaining about the---that I'm sure there's a better explanation of the Ed Department and the two credits—and but that just wasn't my you know—here it can explain it but can't give the right.

TT: Why don't we just close this up for now? Thanks.